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The Influence of Parental Educational Expectations on Children's School Readiness

Erni Agustina Setiowati[1*], Lihanna Borhan[1], Zainurin Abd Rahman[2]

[1]Department of Psychology, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak 53100 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia[1,2]

[2]Department of Language and Literacy, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Gombak 53100 Kuala Lumpur Malaysia[2]

**Corresponding Author: erniagustina@unissula.ac.id*

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between parents' educational expectations and children's school readiness, given the crucial role the former plays in the latter. The sample included 482 kindergarteners and 482 parents from Semarang City and Semarang Regency, Indonesia, who were selected using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (N.S.T.), which demonstrated an internal consistency of .87, and the Parents' Educational Expectations Scale, which comprises academic, social, athletic, art, and compliance domains, with reliability coefficients of .86, .52, .40, .50, and .77, respectively. The data were analysed using multinomial logistic regression analysis. The results showed that parents' educational expectations in the academic, athletic, and art domains had significant main effects on children's school readiness, χ^2 (2) = 43.099, $p < .05$; χ^2 (2) = 8.477, $p < .05$; and χ^2 (2) = 51.446, $p < .05$, respectively. However, expectations in the social and compliance domains did not make a meaningful contribution to children's school readiness. These findings provide evidence that parents' expectations in the academic, athletic, and art domains contribute to the development of skills required for school readiness. The study further suggests that parents who hold expectations in these three domains are more likely to encourage relevant activities, thereby enhancing their children's readiness for school. In contrast, parents' expectations in the social and compliance domains, which represent more fundamental life skills, do not appear to be directly related to the acquisition of skills necessary for school readiness.

Keywords: *Kindergarten children, parents' educational expectations, school readiness, multinomial logistic regression, stratified random sampling*

INTRODUCTION

School readiness is a crucial issue for young children when they reach the transition period from preschool to primary school. Better school readiness skills in kindergarten can enhance young learners' achievement in later stages (Pagani & Fitzpatrick, 2014), and gross and fine motor skills influence school performance. Specifically, fine motor skills are correlated with students' mathematics, reading, writing, and spelling scores (Wang & Wang, 2024). Moreover, school readiness has been linked with one's social and behavioural competencies in adulthood as well as improved academic performance in primary and secondary school years (Britto, 2012).

School readiness is a term commonly used to illustrate children' capabilities when they start school. Furthermore, school readiness is a multidimensional concept that comprises children's physical health and well-being, social and emotional competence, language and cognitive development, and general knowledge (Guhn et al., 2016; Miller & Kehl, 2019). Children who are ready for school have the basic minimum skills and knowledge that lead them to be successful in school (Britto, 2012).

Teachers normally expect children entering first grade to demonstrate good basic academic skills such as reading, writing, and counting. In several cases, in Indonesia, to anticipate children's entry with low academic skills, teachers contended that testing for basic academic skills is necessary; when they do not conduct the selection procedures, they will select children from certain kindergartens that already teach children those skills, because a lack of those skills may cause learning problems or children's failure to fulfil academic tasks in school (Fridani, 2020).

In addition, the government of Indonesia has used the percentage of children who have attended early childhood education institutions as an indicator of school readiness, and surveys between 2019 and 2023 showed that the percentage ranged approximately from 74% to 76% (Girsang et al., 2023). A previous study that evaluated children who had at least 1.5 years of exposure in kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal (Islamic kindergarten under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia) in 11 districts across 8 provinces in Indonesia provided evidence that 69.57% of children were classified as ready for school and performed significantly better in scholastic evaluations (Irwanto et al., 2015). However, children assessed after four semesters in kindergarten reached 76% readiness for school (Srinahyanti, 2017). Furthermore, other studies found that 72.67% (Wangke et al., 2021) and around 80% (Febrianti & Mariyati, 2023) of first-grade students were ready for school. These pieces of evidence indicate that the duration of exposure in kindergarten, maturation, and stimulation from both parents and teachers play a role in children's school readiness.

Hence, research evidence seems to suggest that children's participation in preschool and maternal education status predict children's school readiness (Wangke et al., 2021). Ivanova et al. (2016) contended that the levels of basic mathematical and reading skills are strongly correlated with sociocultural capital, experience in early childhood education, and the language spoken at home. However, location in a specific region has no impact on these children's skills.

Based on the survey report by Savanta (2024), it was revealed that in 2023, teachers found that over one-third of children (35%) were not ready for school based on their standards. Furthermore, many teachers (51%) and parents (49%) argued that children who started school in 2023 were not school-ready because parents were unaware of the expectations of school readiness. Regarding the family background factor, Britto (2017) stated that the first five years of a child's life are generally known to be a critical period for assisting children in reaching their developmental potential and addressing developmental difficulties through early intervention. Hughes & Devine (2017) found that family context, including family support, family financial disadvantage, and the presence of an older sibling, has a considerable influence on children's school readiness. In a similar vein, family support makes a positive contribution to children's school readiness (Syahputri & Risnawati, 2024). Assessing kindergarten children's school readiness by considering only children's skills places an undue burden, which is particularly unfair due to economic, experiential, and cultural inequities (High, 2008).

Furthermore, parents tend to frequently prioritize socio-emotional aspects such as positive relationships, self-regulation, and emotional maturity, and academic development, such as academic skills, including reading, writing, arithmetic, language, and communication skills, when considering children ready for school (Jun et al., 2025). Parents' expectations of preschool children pertaining to social behaviour include cooperation with others, self-control, and positive interaction in school. Furthermore, parents' expectations and goals play a meaningful role in providing a conducive environment, giving guidance, and cultivating expected social values; in turn, they highly contribute to children's development (Ningrum et al., 2024). Parents' expectations also strongly correlate with parent involvement in guiding preschool children to study (Shanmugam et al., 2022). These findings suggest that parents' educational expectations considerably influence the provision of facilities to support children's activities at home, thereby contributing to either inhibiting or facilitating children's school readiness.

Several studies provide evidence regarding the importance of parents' educational expectations in contributing to children's readiness for school, both in terms of pre-academic and socio-emotional skills. However, parents tend to stress pre-academic skills and knowledge (UNICEF, 2012), placing greater emphasis on academic aspects. Previous studies also demonstrate that parents emphasize pre-academic skills (Rimm-kaufman & Sandilos, 2017). Other studies conducted in Indonesia provide evidence that the success of the teaching process in kindergarten is influenced by parents' involvement, as measured by children's ability to read, write, and count (Erhamwilda, 2007). Parents emphasize cognitive skills over non-cognitive skills, such as self-discipline, socio-emotional maturity, and communication skills (Rahmawati et al., 2018). Most parents focus on academic skills, such as reading, writing, and counting, rather than non-academic skills (Setiowati, 2020). Parents of second-year kindergarten children emphasize self-help strategies for enhancing independence, adapting to new routines, time management, and money management. They also focus on basic academic strategies, and finally, on social skills to help children transition into primary school (Lim et al., 2021).

Thus far, parental educational expectations are positively correlated with children spending more hours on both planned academic and non-academic activities. Conversely, it has a negative association with children spending more time on unplanned activities. This link is partly explained by parents' educational expectations for their children, parental supervision, parental support, and economic investments in education (Mu & Hu, 2021). Much research has been conducted to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how parents influence preschoolers' transition to primary school. Based on the theories and findings mentioned above, it can be assumed that parents' educational expectations for their children are associated with children's school readiness.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and children's school readiness, stemming from the assumption that parents' educational expectations influence how parents interact with and support their children. In short, issues concerning children's school readiness, when viewed in relation to parents' educational expectations, are important to investigate. Therefore, the research question of this study is: *To what extent do parents' educational expectations influence children's school readiness?* The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance current understanding of the importance of parents' educational expectations for children so that existing practices can be improved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

School Readiness

Britto (2012) stated that school readiness is a product of the interaction between children and environmental and cultural experiences that maximize developmental outcomes. He further proposed that readiness for school implies being prepared to succeed in formal schooling with a structured learning setting, and that children who are ready for school possess the minimum basic skills and knowledge across several domains that enable them to be successful in school. Pianta (2002) contended that school readiness includes the skills children possess as they begin formal schooling and how family backgrounds, preschool experiences, and primary-grade classrooms interact with children and lead them to school success or failure. Furthermore, school readiness is seen as multifaceted, complex, and systemic, combining a child's home experiences and resources, those available in child care and preschool settings, community resources that support high-quality parenting and child care, the extent to which elementary schools are well linked to family and child care resources, and the degree to which classroom experiences in kindergarten and first grade effectively build on the competencies that children bring to school.

A classical definition of school readiness is the extent to which children are physically, cognitively, linguistically, and socio-emotionally ready for the environment, routines, and characteristics related to formal education (Torabian, 2019). Currently, school readiness is considered as children entering formal education who have the necessary social, emotional, cognitive, and language competencies and skills to be able to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences, successfully learn and progress to later stages of learning, and become capable and responsible citizens (Aide et Action, 2019). Therefore, in relation to this concept, families, schools, and local authorities need to work together to provide environments and developmental experiences that promote growth and learning to ensure that all children enter school eager and excited to learn.

Key elements of school readiness are school-entry academics, attention, and socio-emotional skills, and the strongest predictors of later achievement are school-entry math, reading, and attention (Duncan et al., 2007). Determining factors of school readiness that promote children's positive development include early language and math abilities at preschool age, spending more than 10 hours in preschool, classroom engagement, lack of behavioural problems, partnership transitions, and middle to higher family socio-economic status (Mariano et al., 2019). Britto (2012) stated that school readiness is a combination of domains: first, learned behaviours such as knowing shapes, colours, counting numbers, and mentioning letters of the alphabet; second, attitude and emotional competence, such as listening to directions, being interested in learning, and behaving in a socially acceptable manner; and lastly, developmental maturation, including motor development and the ability to sit for a certain period of time.

Another definition of school readiness is characterized by two features across three dimensions. The features involved are transition and gaining competencies, and the dimensions include children's readiness for school, schools' readiness for children, and families' and communities' readiness for school. Furthermore, the dimensions of school readiness include: first, **ready children**, which focuses on children's learning and development; second, **ready schools,** which focus on the school environment that facilitates and supports a smooth transition for children into primary school and beyond and promotes children's learning; and lastly, **ready families,** which refer to parental and caregiver attitudes and involvement in their children's early learning and development and transition into formal schooling (UNICEF, 2012).

In addition, children's school readiness is a combination of three domains (Britto, 2012): (1) Learned behaviours, which include knowing colours and shapes, counting numbers, and uttering letters of the alphabet, (2) Attitude and emotional competencies, such as listening to the teacher's directions, being interested in learning, and behaving in a socially acceptable manner; and (3)

developmental maturation, which includes fine and gross motor development and the ability to sit for a certain period of time.

Parents' Educational Expectations

Parents' expectations refer to parents' views and aspirations regarding their children's future success and potential for achievement (Lindberg et al., 2019). Specifically, parents' educational expectations involve parents' estimates of what their children can accomplish at school based on evaluations of their abilities relative to their peers (Francis et al., 2020). In this study, parents' educational expectations are understood as parents' beliefs and standards regarding their children performance. These expectations encompass both academic and non-academic domains. Rescorla et al. (1990) developed an educational attitude scale to measure parental expectations across three skill areas—academic, athletic, and artistic/musical—and two social areas (peer relations and compliance). Accordingly, the present study developed items based on these domains to capture parents' expectations of their preschool children.

Parental educational expectations have a crucial contribution to children development (Xin & Yu, 2024) and also in children's higher educational attainment, and parents' academic expectations are positively associated with children's cognitive development in both rural and urban contexts (Lai et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Parents' educational expectations were positively related to their children's overall school performance (Areepattamannil & Lee, 2014). Parental expectations mediating the correlation between motivation beliefs, social norms, and perceived life context on parental participation in children early literacy activities (Solichah & Fardana, 2025). These expectations reflect parents' realistic beliefs and judgments about their children's potential school performance and likely academic outcomes. However, few studies have examined parental educational expectations among preschool children; therefore, surveying parents of preschool-aged children is important for identifying when such expectations begin to form (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010).

In addition, parental educational expectations also predict kindergarten outcomes among children from low-income families (Loughlin-presnal & Bierman, 2017). Furthermore, parents' expectations in gaining knowledge and having socialization skills for children's development influence parents' orientation to the task and process in early childhood education (Sunarti, 2020). The degree of parents' engagement and participation in children's learning activities associated with readiness for school success (Edwards et al., 2010). Moreover, within a transactional framework in which parent-to-child and child-to-parent influences are considered (Briley et al., 2014), research indicates that child characteristics can shape future parental educational expectations beyond earlier expectations. Importantly, while moderate parental expectations support cognitive development, expectations that exceed children's own educational expectations may negatively affect cognition and increase the risk of depressive outcomes (Liu et al., 2022). Realistic expectations encourage parental involvement in children's literacy activities, whereas excessive expectations can cause stress in children (Perkasa & Fardana, 2025).

Parents' educational expectations and responsibilities for their children's education are shaped by socioeconomic background and geographic context (urban or rural). Children's after-school activities are also strongly associated with religion, socioeconomic status, and parents' educational level. In the Indonesian collectivist context, responsibility for children's education is often shared within local communities (Yulianti et al., 2019). Theoretically, parents' educational expectations encourage their participation in preschoolers' activities and influence children's academic and non-academic performance, including social adjustment, peer relations, and emotional regulation, thereby facilitating a smoother transition from preschool to primary school. These expectations encompass academic, social, athletic, artistic, and compliance domains.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design. The approach is quantitative because numerical data were obtained through standardized psychological testing of children's school readiness and a structured questionnaire measuring parents' educational expectations. The design is cross-sectional, as all data were collected at a single point in time without any manipulation of variables or intervention. It is also correlational (non-experimental) in nature, as the study aims to examine the relationship between parents' educational expectations and children's school readiness rather than to evaluate the effects of a treatment.

Research Sample

The sample consisted of children and parents from second-year kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal (RA) in both rural and urban areas of Semarang City and Semarang Regency, Indonesia. A total of 482 kindergarten children participated to provide data on school readiness, and an equal number of parents (n = 482) provided information on their educational expectations. The parents' ages ranged from 22 to 59 years, with a mean age of 36.41 years (SD = 6.51). Most parents were between 28 and 45 years old, which falls within the WHO-defined fully productive age range (25–44 years). At this stage, parents often face challenges related to career demands, income, and limited time with their children. In terms of educational background, 8.5% (n = 41) had completed elementary school, while 18.7% (n = 90), 50% (n = 241), and 23% (n = 110) had completed junior high school, senior high school, and university education, respectively.

Sampling Procedures

The sample of 482 children and 482 parents was selected using stratified random sampling based on school location (rural and urban areas) and school quality. In this study, school quality was represented by the accreditation status of Islamic kindergartens and Raudhatul Athfal (RA), a private early childhood education institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia. The strata were defined by accreditation levels A, B, and C, with accreditation A indicating the highest quality. Kindergartens in both urban and rural areas were grouped according to these three accreditation levels and then randomly selected, resulting in a total of 18 kindergartens. In summary, the study involved 482 parents of Islamic kindergarten and Raudhatul Athfal children, as well as 482 children who had completed three semesters of kindergarten. The sample size was determined based on a statistical power of .80 and a significance level of $\alpha = .05$ (Cohen, 1988). For practical considerations, a larger number of participants was included.

Research Instrument

The present study collected primary data on school readiness and parents' educational expectations, the two constructs under investigation, using the Nijmeegse Schoolbekwaamheids Test (NST) and the Parents' Educational Expectations Scale. The NST is a test to identify school readiness that is widely used by psychologists in Indonesia. This test consists of 10 subtests, each with 8 items. The number of answer choices or the tasks the test taker must complete varies based on the subtest's characteristics. For example, the first subtest, which measures children's perception of form, requires them to select one correct picture from several provided. Meanwhile, for the fine motor subtest, children are requested to imitate certain shapes and add incomplete parts of the picture. Responses are scored 1 if correct and 0 if incorrect. The latter was adapted from Rescorla et al. (1990) measuring five domains: academic, social, athletic, artistic, and compliance. This instrument is a 32-item Likert-

type questionnaire, all items scored on a 6-level scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree. There are also reverse items in this scale. The final score of each domain is the result of the sum of the scores for each item within the domain. Sample of item for academic domain is "*It's important for preschoolers to learn to be good at recognizing letters*", and the item sample art domain is "*It's important for me that my preschooler be good at drawing.* The scale was translated and adapted into Bahasa Indonesia.

Regarding the psychometric properties of the school readiness test (NST), Tarigan & Fadillah (2022) examined its construct validity and found that four factors—logical reasoning ability, memory, fine motor skills, and conceptual maturity—adequately represent children's level of school readiness. These factors demonstrated good validity and reliability, with a CFA RMSEA value of 0.05 and internal consistency, as measured by McDonald's ω, of 0.87. In addition, the Parents' Educational Expectations Scale measures parents' expectations of preschool children's skills and behavior. The reliability indexes of the 5-domain measures using Rasch analysis are indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Reliability Estimates of the Parents' Educational Expectations Scale

	Item reliability	Person Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha (KR-20)	Chi-Square	p value
Academic Domain	.99	.81	.86	5213.49	<.05
Social Domain	.98	.62	.52	1387.03	<.05
Athletic Domain	.91	.52	.40	2143.90	<.05
Art Domain	.94	.59	.50	1861.02	<.05
Compliance Domain	.99	.52	.47	3849.05	<.05

This indicates that the athletic domain has good item reliability, and the other domains have excellent item reliability. However, the domains of social, athletic, art, and compliance have low person reliability. The academic domain exhibits high reliability, while the remaining domains demonstrate an acceptable level of reliability.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data Collection

This study involved 482 parents of Islamic kindergarten and *Raudhatul Athfal* children and 482 children who had completed three semesters of kindergarten. As the study employed psychological testing, ethical clearance was first obtained from the Komisi Bioetika Kedokteran/Kesehatan, Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang (No. 485/XII/2023/Komisi Bioetik). Following this approval, parents were approached and asked to provide informed written consent to participate.

The Parents' Educational Expectations Scale was distributed to parents when they dropped off or picked up their children at kindergarten. Some parents completed the questionnaire on site in the presence of the kindergarten teacher and enumerators, while others took it home to complete. Enumerators' contact numbers were provided to address any questions from participants. Children's school readiness was assessed using a standardized psychological test administered by trained testers with backgrounds in psychology education. The test was conducted in each child's kindergarten using a tester-to-test-taker ratio of 1:6 and required approximately 45 minutes per group. After administration, responses were scored and interpreted.

A total of nine enumerators, recruited from the psychology laboratory assistants of Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang, assisted with test administration and questionnaire distribution. These assistants were trained in psychological assessment and experienced in supporting both cognitive and personality testing. Data collection took place from December 2023 to early March 2024 in both rural and urban areas of Central Java Province, Indonesia.

Data Analysis

Multinomial logistic regression analysis was employed to analyze the data. This method was selected based on the level of measurement of the variables: school readiness was treated as a categorical outcome with three levels (not school-ready, quite school-ready, and school-ready), while parents' educational expectations for each domain were measured at the interval level after transformation from raw scores into logits.

RESULTS

Statistics and Data Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of the school readiness assessment administered to 482 kindergarten children.

Table 2

Distribution of School Readiness Levels among Indonesian Kindergarten Children (n = 482)

		School Readiness Level						
		School Ready	Percentage	Quite School ready	Percentage	Not School Ready	Percentage	Total
Age	5 y.o (n= 107)	60	56.08%	25	23.36%	22	20.56%	100%
	6 y.o (n= 357)	203	56.86%	77	21.57%	77	21.57%	100%
	7 y.o (n= 18)	12	66.67%	2	11.11%	4	22.22%	100%

The distribution of school readiness levels across age groups shows a generally consistent pattern. Among five-year-old children (n = 107), 56.08% were classified as school-ready, while 23.36% were quite school-ready and 20.56% were not school-ready. In other words, only one-fifth of the sample were categorized as not school-ready. A similar distribution was observed among six-year-old children (n = 357), with 56.86% categorized as school-ready, and equal proportions (21.57%) classified as quite school-ready and not school-ready.

Although the seven-year-old group was much smaller (n = 18), a higher proportion (66.67%) were school-ready compared to the younger groups, while 11.11% were quite school-ready and 22.22% were not school-ready. Overall, these findings suggest that most children across all age groups demonstrate adequate readiness for school, with a slight increase in the proportion of school-ready children among the older group.

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of parents' educational expectations based on data from 482 parents.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of Parents' Educational Expectations (n = 482)

Domain	N of items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Academic	12	26	72	57.72	7.921	62.737
Social	4	11	24	20.22	2.471	6.108
Athletic	4	4	24	13.95	2.798	7.829
Art	4	8	24	17.18	2.754	7.584
Compliance	8	24	48	35.08	4.045	16.362

Before conducting the multinomial logistic regression analysis, the underlying assumptions must be examined. Field (2018) notes that logistic regression shares several assumptions with Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. However, because the dependent variable in logistic regression is categorical, the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are not required. In contrast, testing for multicollinearity remains necessary, and statistics such as Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) are used to assess the relationships among the independent variables. Table 4 shows the collinearity statistics of the data.

Table 4

Collinearity Diagnostic

Coefficients[a]			
		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)		
	Academic domain	.765	1.307
	Social domain	.857	1.167
	Art domain	.690	1.449
	Compliance domain	.821	1.218
	Athletic domain	.864	1.158

Table 4 indicates that the tolerance values for the academic, social, art, compliance, and athletic domains were 0.765, 0.857, 0.690, 0.821, and 0.864, respectively. The corresponding VIF values were 1.307, 1.167, 1.449, 1.218, and 1.158. According to Menard (as cited in Field, 2018), tolerance values below 0.20 indicate potential multicollinearity, and VIF values greater than 10 also suggest a problem (Field, 2018). Therefore, these results indicate that there is no serious multicollinearity among the independent variables.

First, examining the model fit is necessary to determine whether the model adequately represents the data. The Pearson and deviance statistics were used to assess whether the predicted values from the model differed significantly from the observed values. If these statistics are not significant, the model is considered a good fit (Field, 2018). As shown in Table 5, the Pearson statistic was not significant ($p = .292 > \alpha$), indicating that the model fits the data well.

Table 51

Model Fit Test

	Goodness-of-Fit		
	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Pearson	957.174	934	.292
Deviance	772.791	934	1.000

The coefficient of determination was examined to assess the contribution of the independent variables—in this case, the domains of parents' educational expectations—to the dependent variable. The analysis showed that the Cox and Snell R^2 value was 0.285 and the Nagelkerke R^2 value was 0.328. These values are reasonably close, indicating a moderate effect size. Based on the Nagelkerke R^2, approximately 32.8% of the variability in the dependent variable can be explained by the model, while the remaining 67.2% is attributable to other factors not included in the analysis.

In addition, an analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable. Table 6 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 6

Likelihood Ratio Tests

	Likelihood Ratio Tests					
	Model Fitting Criteria			Likelihood Ratio Tests		
Effect	AIC of Reduced Model	BIC of Reduced Model	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig. <.05
Intercept	810.336	877.183	778.336[a]	.000	0	
Academic domain	849.435	907.926	821.435	43.099	2	<.05
Athletic domain	814.813	873.304	786.813	8.477	2	<.05
Art domain	857.782	916.274	829.782	51.446	2	<.05
Compliance domain	811.096	869.587	783.096	4.760	2	>.05
Social domain	805.655	847.435	785.655	7.319	6	>.05

Likelihood ratio tests, as presented in Table 6, were used to determine the significance of each predictor in the model. The results indicate that the academic, athletic, and art domains had significant main effects on children's school readiness, χ^2 (2) = 43.099, p<.05, χ^2 (2) = 8.477, p<.05, and χ^2 (2) = 51.446, p<.05, respectively. In contrast, the compliance and social domains did not show significant main effects on children's school readiness, χ^2 (2) = 4.760, p >.05 and χ^2 (6) = 7.319, p >.05. Overall, the art and academic domains emerged as the strongest predictors of children's school readiness, whereas the compliance and social domains did not have a meaningful influence.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the research question proposed in the present study reveals that parents' educational expectations significantly influence children's school readiness. Parents' educational expectations consist of five domains: academic, athletic, art, compliance, and social. Among these five domains, the compliance and social domains do not have a significant correlation with children's school readiness. However, the academic, athletic, and art domains were significantly correlated. Therefore, it can be concluded that some domains of parents' educational expectations have a significant influence on children's school readiness.

Parents' expectations for their children's education in the academic domain include letter recognition, reading, writing, and arithmetic, which contribute to children's pre-academic skills. Furthermore, in the athletic domain, parents' expectations include practicing various sports, swimming, and being good at sports, and in the art domain, the focus is on learning to draw and play a musical instrument. These activities seem to support children's motor development, especially fine motor skills, as learning to draw stimulates children to use a pencil properly, such as making lines, writing letters, and drawing geometric figures. Moreover, engaging in sports and art enables children to form wider relationships with peers who share similar interests, thereby enhancing their ability to assess social situations. This is a crucial domain in the school readiness test.

The analysis shows that parents' expectations in the academic domain significantly influence children's school readiness after three semesters of kindergarten. Meanwhile, kindergarten teachers stimulate pre-academic skills, which appear to align with parents' expectations that children studying in kindergarten will eventually be able to recognize letters, read simple words, write letters and simple words, and count. This creates continuity between what parents expect and what teachers do at school. This then ensures that children receive support both at school and at home to master pre-academic skills such as recognizing shapes, number concepts, fine motor skills, concentration, memory, judgment of objects and situations, and understanding information delivered orally, as well as telling stories, as tested in school readiness measurement by the NST. A previous study, Loughlin-Presnal and Bierman (2017), found that parents' academic expectations contribute to children's emergent literacy skills. Sunarti (2020) found that parents' educational expectations have a substantial influence on parents' cooperation with early childhood education institutions. In turn, the willingness to cooperate with kindergarten will have an impact on encouraging children to acquire knowledge and enhance social competence. These studies imply that the academic domain in parents' educational expectations encourages them to promote children's early literacy and acquisition of basic knowledge, which supports children being ready for school.

Parental educational expectations have a considerable role in child development. Xin and Yu (2024) contended that parental educational expectations have a significant effect on children's development. High parental expectations can cause anxiety, which in turn encourages parents to engage in children's activities at home and support their children's learning. Therefore, educational expectations encourage parental involvement, which will ultimately affect children's performance in the skills needed to face the transition from kindergarten to elementary school, ensuring children are ready for school. This also seems to be similar to the present study: educational expectations in the academic, athletic, and art domains have encouraged parents to stimulate children's development according to their expectations, so that the children in this study reached the stage of being ready to learn at school after following the process in kindergarten for three semesters. The number of children who were prepared for school reached 70% (ready and quite ready for school).

Moreover, in the Indonesian setting, parental expectations related to children's attitudes and academic outcomes mediated parents' psychosocial factors to promote preschool children's early literacy (Solichah & Fardana, 2025). The present study revealed that parents' expectations in the social and compliance domains have no significant relationship with school readiness, which was measured by the NST and comprises items to test logical reasoning ability, memory, fine motor skills, and conceptual maturity in children. Therefore, it is acceptable that expectations regarding children's compliance behavior and social skills do not directly encourage parents to promote children's cognitive and fine motor skills.

Interestingly, a study conducted by Perkasa and Fardana (2025) in well-educated samples found that parents' expectations of their preschool children have a negative link with parental involvement in literacy stimulation for their children. This finding seems to contrast with the present study, in which approximately two-thirds of the sample have a good educational background, and the

results provide evidence that their educational expectations contribute to their children performing well in the school readiness assessment.

Furthermore, the athletic domain had a significant main effect on children's school readiness. In this context, the athletic domain encompasses physical activities related to swimming and practicing various sports. Parents' expectations of the skills their children should master can lead to efforts to develop sports skills that support physical health, which in turn influences the likelihood of children attending school and acquiring the skills taught. In line with the findings mentioned above, the art domain also had a significant main effect on children's school readiness. In this context, the art domain includes skills in drawing and playing musical instruments. Generally speaking, drawing activities that involve fine motor skills, such as holding a pencil or crayon and scratching on paper, help children improve their fine motor coordination, which is necessary for writing activities. Therefore, when children frequently engage in drawing, their fine motor skills are trained, and they ultimately develop good fine motor skills and are ready for school.

In addition, parents' educational expectations for their children will lead them to provide adequate support at home for activities aimed at developing children's potential, such as in academic, social, art, and athletic domains. Parents' educational expectations and aspirations influence children's achievement and understanding and promote children's performance in school (Areepattamannil & Lee, 2014; Francis et al., 2020) . Hence, high parents' educational expectations lead them to pay more attention to their children in many matters related to school and also to prepare an adequate environment for learning and play at home. This finding aligns with Edwards et al. (2010), who found that more engaged parents prepare their children for the learning environment, leading to children who are more enthusiastic about learning activities. In turn, children who feel excited about learning engage more in learning activities and will achieve greater improvement in their abilities and skills.

This finding indicates that the social and compliance domains of parents' educational expectations do not significantly contribute to school readiness. Parents may consider social interaction skills, such as getting along with classmates and learning cooperatively, as already sufficiently developed after three semesters in kindergarten, and therefore no longer a priority. Similarly, the compliance domain receives less emphasis because most children at this stage are able to behave politely, express gratitude, and seek help appropriately in preparation for formal schooling.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In summary, parents' educational expectations play a substantial role in children's school readiness. Variations in children's logical reasoning, memory, fine motor skills, and conceptual maturity can be partly explained by parental expectations, particularly in the academic, athletic, and art domains. Expectations in these areas encourage parents to support the development of pre-academic and motor skills that are essential for successful school entry. In contrast, expectations in the social and compliance domains do not significantly predict school readiness when readiness is defined in terms of cognitive and motor competencies.

The limitation of the present study lies in the diversity of educational expectations based on the local context. This study does not consider parents' educational expectations related to their children's religious education, despite the kindergarten children being from religion-based schools. To address this, future studies should consider areas of parents' expectations that are grounded in the local context. Another limitation is the low internal consistency estimates of four measures, namely the social ($\alpha = .52$), athletic ($\alpha = .40$), art ($\alpha = .50$), and compliance ($\alpha = .47$) domains, which were below the commonly accepted threshold ($\alpha = .70$). Therefore, the results related to these four dimensions should be interpreted with caution. Future research should address the limitations of these measures and improve their reliability.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors report no conflict of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of this article. This manuscript has also not been published elsewhere and has not been submitted simultaneously for publication elsewhere.

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