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Emotional and Motivational School Readiness of Six-Year-Old Children and Parental Support in Mothers' Assessments

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to determine the readiness of 6-year-old children to start school education, especially the emotional and motivational readiness and the level of support for this readiness in the assessment of mothers. 131 mothers of 63 girls and 68 boys participated in the research. Three proprietary research methods were used: the Child's Emotional and Motivational Readiness Questionnaire for the Parent, the Parent's Child's School Readiness Assessment Questionnaire – version 3 and the Parent's Questionnaire for Supporting the Child's Emotional and Motivational Readiness. Both the level of school readiness of children and the level of support were assessed by the surveyed mothers as high. Numerous positive correlations were observed between the manifestations of school readiness and the manifestations of mothers' support. Supporting the development of the child's autonomy and independence turned out to be the predictor of the child's emotional and motivational readiness.

Keywords: school readiness, parental support, six-year-olds, emotional and motivational sphere, school start.

Introduction

The issue of school readiness due to the practical dimension of the application of the obtained results is the subject of numerous empirical studies and theoretical considerations (Barbarin et al., 2008; Bernier et al., 2017; Fecenec & Matczak, 2017; Michalska et al., 2018). From a psychological point of view, school readiness is most often understood as a moment in the child's existence when it achieves optimal development in the physical, social-emotional, cognitive and personality spheres in order to successfully start school (Brzezińska et al., 2016). The above understanding of readiness results from psychological practice and includes the assessment of three areas: psychomotor readiness, emotional-motivational and dictionary-notional readiness. In the presented research, attention was focused on the dimension of emotional and motivational readiness, which consists of emotional maturity, task motivation and motivation to learn (Fecenec & Matczak, 2017). High emotional and motivational readiness is created by skills such as: expressing one's own emotional states adequate to the situation, appropriate behavior in a group of adults and peers, independence in action and self-service, following orders, the ability to postpone gratification, developed emotional resistance to difficult situations. A manifestation of low emotional and motivational readiness in a child is excessive impatience, inadequate social behavior, difficulties in playing together with others, non-compliance with the rules or withdrawal in case of difficulties. This study deals only with the emotional and motivational sphere, because – as shown by the research results so far – this area plays a key role in determining the school readiness of children (Michalska & Szymanik-Kostrzewska, 2020a). It may seem that only the child's cognitive competences are important for a successful start of education, which is suggested by the still encountered social practice assuming the concentration of parents and educators when assessing school readiness on the child's intellectual functioning and coping with the tasks assigned to them. However, research indicates that in the assessment of a parent whether his child will cope with

the school's requirements, the sphere of emotional and motivational functioning is important (Czub & Matejczuk, 2016).

Moreover, research indicates a strong relationship between a child's emotional problems and their learning failures (Kochanowska, 2012). This is due to the fact that school requires a child to adapt to new living and working conditions. For most children, this is a difficult task because becoming a student involves, among other things, learning about being a student. According to Brzezińska (2000), it is a long process consisting of the following stages: 1) the so-called entering a role – this stage consists of the orientation phase (gaining new information about the role and the conditions for its implementation) and the cognitive phase (learning by imitating the behavior of others); 2) the so-called full adaptation to the role – this stage consists of the adaptation phase (more efficient and effective implementation of the new role) and the innovation phase (introducing changes to the new role within the known convention); 3) the so-called creative transgression of the role – the stage consists of the phase of creative adaptation (creative use of the knowledge, skills and experiences) and the phase of self-realization (the role of the student is subordinated to the personal goals and vision of their own development). This approach to the problem proves that becoming a student is not tantamount to the fact that a child enters the school and is a student, but it is a complex and difficult psychological process of early school age children in their first years of education. Brzezińska with colleagues (2012) emphasizes that support and facilitation of development are useful for children at this stage.

Longitudinal research (Puccioni, 2015) shows that parents' beliefs that their child will cope with school coexisted with the child's actual coping – initial school achievements and progress in development. Considering the functioning of most Polish families, it is the child's mother who most often provides the aforementioned help and support, being aware of the child's needs and difficulties, caring for him and taking up educational activities for him (Cudak, 2012). On the other hand, from the mother-child dyad research (Bernier et al., 2017), it can be concluded that the support of cognitive development by the child's mother translates into higher school readiness already in five-year-old children. The above assumptions prompted us to try to explain the issue of the child's school readiness in the context of the support de-

clared by mothers in relation to their six-year-old children in terms of development of the emotional and motivational sphere.

Research problem

The aim of the presented research was to determine the school readiness of children, made by mothers, especially the emotional and motivational readiness, and selected conditions of school readiness in the form of support for the development of the child's emotional and motivational sphere by the parent. The research results were to answer the following questions:

1. What is – in the opinion of mothers – the emotional and motivational readiness of children to start school?
2. What is – in the opinion of mothers – the level of support provided by mothers for children's emotional and motivational readiness?
3. Do the results in terms of children's emotional and motivational readiness to start school correlate with:
 - 3a. the results concerning the manifestation of selected school competences?
 - 3b. the support of the emotional and motivational readiness of children by mothers?
4. What controlled variables (age and sex of children, having siblings, birth order, parents' age and education, place of residence, mother's marital status, financial situation) are important for:
 - 4a. children's emotional and motivational readiness?
 - 4b. individual competences that make up children's emotional and motivational readiness?
 - 4c. supporting the development of the emotional and motivational sphere of children by mothers?
5. What are the significant predictors of children's high emotional and motivational readiness to start school?

We adopted the following general hypotheses:

H1. The examined children show high emotional and motivational readiness to start school, as assessed by their mothers.

Previous research by our team (Michalska et al., 2018; Michalska & Szymanik-Kostrzewska, 2020a) showed that the school readiness of children was at least average, and in terms of selected competences – high.

H2. The surveyed mothers declare a high level of support towards their children.

Research (Kaczan et al., 2014) shows that for parents, the most important factors in making a decision to enroll a six-year-old child to school are the assessment of their school readiness in terms of independence, reading/writing skills and emotional maturity. It can therefore be assumed that mothers' support will also be provided to the child in this regard.

H3a. The emotional and motivational readiness of children correlates with the results of selected school competences.

In the studies conducted so far (Michalska et al., 2018; Michalska & Szymanik-Kostrzewska, 2020a), a moderate harmoniousness of the obtained results has been observed.

H3b. Children's emotional and motivational readiness correlates with mothers' support for their children's emotional and motivational readiness.

Similarly, to supporting cognitive development (Bernier et al., 2017), the actions of mothers may be important for the emotional and motivational development of children. The last research problem was assumed to be an attempt to summarize the obtained results in the form of one coherent conclusion.

Participants

131 women aged 23 to 49 ($M = 35$; $SD = 5$) participated in the study. 2 (1.5%) mothers had primary education, 7 (5.3%) – vocational education, 34 (26%) – secondary education, and 88 (67.2%) – higher education. 92 (70.2%) of them declared an average financial situation, 5 (3.8%) - below average, 33 (25.2%) – above, one (0.8%) did not answer. 109 (83%) were in formal relationships at the time of the study, 16 (12%) – in informal relationships, 6 (5%) – were not in relationships. The examined women were mothers of children from 6 years to 6 years and 11 months of age ($M = 6$ years 5 months; $SD = 4$ months). The group of children consisted of 63 girls and 68 boys, while the group of girls was characterized by a higher mean age – the difference was moderate and

amounted to a month on average ($t = 2.05$; $p = 0.04$; $d = 0.36$). Children of the surveyed mothers started attending kindergarten on average at the age of 3 and a half years (at the earliest at the age of 21 months, at the latest at the age of 6 years and 9 months). 31 (24%) children had no siblings, 65 (50%) had a brother or sister, the remaining (26%) – brothers and/or sisters, with only two children having as many as five siblings. Of the children with siblings (76% of all children), 46 (46%) were born first, 44 (44%) were born second, and the remaining 10 (10%) were born next. 37 (28%) of the surveyed children lived in villages, 50 (38%) – small towns with up to 100,000 inhabitants, and 44 (34%) – large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The fathers of the children were 24 to 59 years old ($M = 37$; $SD = 6$), 3 (2.3%) of them had primary education, 14 (10.7%) – vocational, 44 (33.6%) – secondary, and 70 (53.4%) – higher.

Methods

The study used three self-authorship methods. *The Child's Emotional and Motivational Readiness Questionnaire for Parents* (CE-MRQ-P) consisted of 51 diagnostic items and 4 control items. The theoretical basis were the symptoms of high and low school readiness of the child (Brzezińska et al., 2016) and the determinants of school readiness (Piotrowski, 2014) (see Table 1). *Questionnaire for Assessing Child's School Readiness by Parent – version 3* (QACSR-P 3) consisted of 30 items based on 9 areas of development for diagnosing a child's school readiness in terms of the IDS-2 Intelligence and Development Scales (Jaworowska et al., 2018) (the authors of the original version of IDS-2: Grob & Hagmann-von Arx, 2009). The items reflected the competences necessary for the child to acquire at least an intermediate level to assume that the child is ready for school (Table 1). Questionnaire for Supporting Emotional and Motivational Readiness of a Child by a Parent (QSE-MRC-P) were diagnostic and 4 control items. The theoretical basis for the construction were three categories of parent's knowledge of the child at the threshold of school (Edwards et al., 2008, Table 1): (1) Sensitivity to the child's needs and their satisfaction; (2) Supporting the development of autonomy and independence; (3) Active participation of parents in the process of learning by the child. The examined mothers gave answers on

a scale of 0–6 – from completely disagreeing to completely agreeing with the given statement. The theoretical validity of the questionnaires was assessed by 6 competent judges (psychology students) and assessed as high (Kendall's $W: r = 1$). The measurement reliability coefficients (Cronbach's α) with the methods are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics and reliability of measurement of scales and subscales of the methods used

Name of scale/subscale of the questionnaire	Description of scale/subscale	Number of items in scale/subscale	α
1. Scale of High School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	The child is able to express its own emotional states adequately to the situation. It is independent in action, in self-service activities. S/he is able to obey, carries out orders. S/he can endure unpleasant tensions. Has developed emotional resistance to difficult situations. Can postpone gratification.	12	0.89
2. Scale of Low School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	The child cannot play in a group of children. S/he is not very independent and constantly expects help from adults. Does not follow the established rules, refuses to follow the teacher's instructions. Cries and protests at separation from his parents. S/he gives up on any difficulties encountered, refuses to continue performing a difficult task.	14	0.85
3. The Scale of Determinants of School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	Total subscales 3a-3d.	25	0.93
3a. Self-Control subscale in the field of attention (CE-MRQ-P)	The child shows self-control in directing his/her attention, can focus on the task, control his emotions.	4	0.77
3b. Subscale of the level of linguistic and mathematical skills (CE-MRQ-P)	The child is able to verbally convey his needs, desires and thoughts. S/he has mastered reading, writing and counting.	11	0.87
3c. Subscale of Initiatives in Action (CE-MRQ-P)	The child shows initiative in action, shows assertiveness and independence.	4	0.81

Table 1. (continued)

Name of scale/subscale of the questionnaire	Description of scale/subscale	Number of items in scale/subscale	A
3d. Subscale of the intensity of exploration of the environment (CE-MRQ-P)	The child is characterized by a positive attitude to undertake new activities, motivation to learn.	6	0.89
1. Visual analysis and grapho-motor skills (QACSR-P 3)	Ability to control movements, eye-hand coordination and speed, depending on visual-spatial abilities.	3	0.71
2. Any short-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	Ability to short-term storage of information from memory, retrieval and processing. Auditory memory.	3	0.72
3. Any long-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	The ability to store information in long-term memory and extract it from it. It requires remembering and recreating.	3	0.79
4. Mathematical competences (QACSR-P 3)	Knowledge of mathematical concepts (quantity, set, number), the use of these concepts in solving mathematical tasks and performing activities in memory, reversibility of thinking.	4	0.83
5. Language competences – communication skills (active and passive speech) (QACSR-P 3)	Understanding of speech (passive speech) and its generation (active speech).	4	0.75
6. Emotional maturity (emotional regulation and social strategies) (QACSR-P 3)	Knowledge of adaptive strategies for dealing with negative emotions – fear, anger, sadness (emotion regulation). Social competences based on knowledge of effective ways of coping with interpersonal situations (social strategies) – establishing and maintaining relationships, resolving conflicts with respect for the interests of others, respecting rules and pro-social behavior.	6	0.85
7. Motivation (for learning*, task-oriented) (QACSR-P 3)	Commitment and persistence in competitions aimed at achieving and exceeding performance standards (motivation to learn). Ability to perform externally imposed tasks, readiness to overcome obstacles in their implementation (task motivation).	6**	0.81

Table 1. (continued)

Name of scale/subscale of the questionnaire	Description of scale/subscale	Number of items in scale/subscale	A
8. Concentration (QACSR-P 3)	The ability to focus their attention on important elements of the tasks performed.	3**	0.83
1. Sensitivity to the needs of the child and meeting them (QSE-MRC-P)	It manifests itself in perceiving the child's needs and responding to them by providing various stimulation, frequent verbal communication, responding to signals sent by the child, physical closeness.	12	0.91
2. Supporting the development of autonomy and independence (QSE-MRC-P)	It consists in encouraging the child to show more and more mature behavior and self-fulfillment of needs in areas such as nutrition or hygiene, independent decision-making, showing behaviors adequate to the social situation, as well as modeling correct behaviors.	10	0.84
3. Active participation of parents in the process of learning by the child (QSE-MRC-P)	It is based on verbal communication – naming objects, describing situations, asking questions, singing, reciting, using picture books, reading/ telling stories by the parent.	8	0.85

Legend:

* *The subscales Task motivation and motivation to learn were combined due to the too low reliability of the measurement with the Motivation to learn scale ($\alpha = 0.68$).*

** *The number of items in the questionnaire was given in the case of 79 respondents, for the remaining 52 in both cases it was lower by one.*

Source: Authors' research.

The following variables were controlled with the use of personal data: the age and sex of the child, the starting age of the kindergarten, having siblings (the number of children in the family), the order of birth (first or next in the family), place of residence, age and education of the parents, financial situation (in the opinion of the parent) and the fact that the parents (in this case, the mothers, because they filled out the questionnaires) remain in the relationship.

Organization and course of research

The research was voluntary and anonymous. They were conducted using both the paper-and-pencil method and the on-line version. Over 80% of the surveyed mothers filled in the on-line form. The selection for the sample was deliberate, it was carried out using two methods – “door to door” (selected kindergartens in Bydgoszcz, towns in pilski and turecki poviats – about 70% of the respondents) and “snowball” (about 30% of the respondents, people known to the research team). The inclusion criterion for the study was having a child aged 6.0 to 6.11 years of age, without diagnosed developmental delays/deficits. Due to safety issues in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, studies with direct participation of children were abandoned (objective measurement of school readiness). The presented research is the result of a research project which received a positive opinion of the ethical committee [detailed information was removed due to the double-blind review]. The research was conducted from June 2020 to July 2021 in Poland by a research team [as above].

Results

The results were analyzed with the use of Statistica version 13 by StatSoft and the Effect Size Calculator available on the Internet to calculate the values of the differences (Social Science Statistic, b.d.).

Taking into account the response scales 0-6, the results were assumed as:

- 0–1 – extremely low;
- 1.01–2 – low;
- 2.01–4 – medium;
- 4.01– 5.0 – high;
- 5.01–6 – very high.

The results on the emotional and motivational readiness of children (CE-MRQ-P) were high in the High School Readiness scale, the Determinants of School Readiness Scale and the Self-Control subscales in terms of attention and Initiative in Action, very high – in the case of the Linguistic and Mathematical Ability Level subscales and the intensity of exploration of the environment, low – in the case of the Low school readiness scale. The results re-

garding the competences constituting the school readiness of children were high for most scales, and very high – for Short-term memory, Long-term memory and Language competences (active and passive speech). The results for supporting mothers in the emotional and motivational school readiness of their children were very high on all three scales (Table 2).

Due to the predominance of high and very high scores, most of the distributions significantly deviate from normal, characterized by negative skewness (below -1) and high kurtosis (above 1). Therefore, the use of non-parametric tests to analyze the mutual relations of variables was adopted.

Table 2. Results for the scales and subscales of the used methods for children's emotional and motivational readiness (CE-MRQ-P), competences that make up school readiness (QACSR-P 3) and support for children's school readiness by parents (QSE-MRC-P)

Scales/subscales of the questionnaires	M	SD	SKE	KURT	MIN	MAX
1. Scale of High School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	4.71	0.78	-1.59	4.11	1.08	6.00
2. Scale of Low School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	1.88	0.93	0.76	1.12	0.42	5.33
3. The Scale of Determinants of School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	4.78	0.79	-1.21	1.72	2.00	5.98
3a. Self-Control subscale in the field of attention (CE-MRQ-P)	4.17	1.11	-.61	0.09	0.75	6.00
3b. Subscale of the level of linguistic and mathematical skills (CE-MRQ-P)	5.02	0.85	-1.21	1.44	2.09	6.00
3c. Subscale of Initiative in Action (CE-MRQ-P)	4.72	1.03	-1.19	2.54	0.00	6.00
3d. Subscale of the intensity of exploration of the environment (CE-MRQ-P)	5.20	0.78	-1.55	3.63	1.67	6.00
1. Visual analysis and graphomotor skills (QACSR-P 3)	4.87	0.94	-1.52	3.61	0.67	6.00
2. Any short-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	5.05	0.87	-1.27	1.76	2.00	6.00
3. Any long-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	5.07	0.95	-1.28	1.55	1.67	6.00
4. Mathematical competences (QACSR-P 3)	4.96	1.04	-1.68	3.75	0.25	6.00
5. Language competences – communication skills (active and passive speech) (QACSR-P 3)	5.18	0.75	-1.73	4.78	1.75	6.00

Table 2. (continued)

Scales/subscales of the questionnaires	M	SD	SKE	KURT	MIN	MAX
6. Emotional maturity (emotional regulation and social strategies) (QACSR-P 3)	4.23	1.02	-.64	0.31	0.83	6.00
7. Motivation (for learning, task-oriented) (QACSR-P 3)	4.75	0.79	-.79	1.09	2.00	6.00
8. Concentration (QACSR-P 3)	4.32	1.13	-.51	-0.02	0.67	6.00
1. Sensitivity to the needs of the child and meeting them (QSE-MRC-P)	5.36	0.61	-2.17	6.84	2.17	6.00
2. Supporting the development of autonomy and independence (QSE-MRC-P)	5.34	0.57	-2.14	8.89	2.00	6.00
3. Active participation of parents in the process of learning by the child (QSE-MRC-P)	5.08	0.82	-1.53	2.88	1.75	6.00

Source: Authors' research.

Correlation analysis showed (Spearman's correlations) significant low to high correlations between all CE-MRQ-P and QACSR-P 3 scales and subscales, except for Low School Readiness and Any Long-Term Memory Scales (Table 3), as well as significant correlations ranging from low to medium between all the CE-MRQ-P scales and subscales and the QSE-MRC-P scales except for the Low School Readiness and Sensitivity to Child Needs and Satisfying Scales (Table 4). The above results allow for the adoption of all the postulated hypotheses (except H3b for the Low School Readiness and Sensitivity to Child Needs and Their Satisfaction Scales).

Table 3. Correlations between the CE-MRQ-P and QACSR-P 3 scales and subscales 3

Scales /subscales of the questionnaires	1. Visual analysis and graphomotor skills (QACSR-P 3)	2. Any short-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	3. Any long-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	4. Mathematical competences (QACSR-P 3)	5. Language competences - communication skills (active and passive speech) (QACSR-P 3)	6. Emotional maturity (emotional regulation and social strategies) (QACSR-P 3)	7. Motivation (for learning, task-oriented) (QACSR-P 3)	8. Concentration (QACSR-P 3)
1. Scale of High School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	0.59***	0.55***	0.55***	0.52***	0.51***	0.72***	0.71***	0.62***
2. Scale of Low School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	-0.36***	-0.27**	-0.17	-0.32***	-0.23**	-0.46***	-0.42***	-0.42***
3. The Scale of Determinants of School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	0.67***	0.56***	0.58***	0.63***	0.59***	0.7***	0.76***	0.69***
3a. Self-Control subscale in the field of attention (CE-MRQ-P)	0.65***	0.41***	0.4***	0.49***	0.44***	0.68***	0.61***	0.64***
3b. Subscale of the level of linguistic and mathematical skills (CE-MRQ-P)	0.52***	0.57***	0.57***	0.74***	0.6***	0.41***	0.55***	0.5***
3c. Subscale of Initiatives in Action (CE-MRQ-P)	0.46***	0.44***	0.5***	0.45***	0.46***	0.47***	0.51***	0.38***
3d. Subscale of the intensity of exploration of the environment (CE-MRQ-P)	0.49***	0.51***	0.53***	0.47***	0.43***	0.5***	0.65***	0.44***
Legend:								
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$								

Source: Authors' research.

Table 4. Correlations between the scales and subscales CE-MRQ-P and QSE-MRC-P

Scales/subscales of the questionnaires	1. Sensitivity to the needs of the child and meeting them (QSE-MRC-P)	2. Supporting the development of autonomy and independence (QSE-MRC-P)	3. Active participation of parents in the process of learning by the child (QSE-MRC-P)
1. Scale of High School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	0.54***	0.44***	0.43***
2. Scale of Low School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	-.17	-.2*	-.26**
3. The Scale of Determinants of School Readiness (CE-MRQ-P)	0.52***	0.36***	0.55***
3a. Self-Control subscale in the field of attention (CE-MRQ-P)	0.38***	0.22*	0.49***
3b. Subscale of the level of linguistic and mathematical skills (CE-MRQ-P)	0.49***	0.4***	0.38***
3c. Subscale of Initiative in Action (CE-MRQ-P)	0.46***	0.44***	0.37***
3d. Subscale of the intensity of exploration of the environment (CE-MRQ-P)	0.53***	0.46***	0.48***

Legend:
* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' research.

Results of regression analysis using the descending stepwise method for the scales of emotional and motivational readiness of children (average of the scales of High school readiness and Conditions of school readiness; as predictors, all scales of competences constituting school readiness, all scales of support for the child's emotional and motivational readiness by the mother and all controlled variables were taken into account) are presented in Table 5. Statistically significant predictors were the manifestation of competences: in terms of motivation, mathematics, visual and graphomotor analysis and emotional maturity, as well as living in larger locations and supporting the development of the child's autonomy and independence by the mother.

Table 5. Results of the regression analysis for the explained variable: the child's emotional and motivational readiness to start school

Predictors of the child's emotional and motivational readiness to start school (for the entire model R ² = 0,85)	β	p
7. Motivation (for learning, task-oriented) (QACSR-P 3)	0.17	0.01
4. Mathematical competences (QACSR-P 3)	0.18	0.01
1. Visual analysis and graphomotor skills (QACSR-P 3)	0.13	< 0.001
1. Sensitivity to the needs of the child and meeting them (KWGE-MD-R)	0.10	0.22
6. Emotional maturity (emotional regulation and social strategies) (QACSR-P 3)	0.17	< 0.001
The age of the child	0.01	0.06
Place of residence	0.08	0.04
2. Supporting the development of autonomy and independence (CE-MRQ-P)	0.17	0.05
The gender of the child	-0.08	0.21
2. Any short-term memory (QACSR-P 3)	0.05	0.22
Age at the start of kindergarten	< 0.001	0.29

Source: Authors' research.

Conclusions and discussion

The conducted research was aimed at determining the children's school readiness by mothers, focusing on the emotional and motivational area and the level of support provided to children in this regard. The surveyed mothers highly rated both the emotional and motivational readiness of their children to start school, as well as other selected manifestations of school readiness and the level of support they provided to their children. This may be related to the specifics of the sample of respondents. 93% of the respondents are women with secondary or higher education. More than 86% of fathers of children also had higher education. Over 95% of mothers declared an average and higher financial situation. In the light of previous studies (including Frydrychowicz et al., 2006; Bernier et al., 2017), these characteristics have a positive effect on the school readiness of children. Participation in the re-

search was voluntary and anonymous, in most cases it took the on-line form (due to pandemic conditions). It can be assumed that mothers worried about whether their level of support towards their children is sufficient or whether their child is ready to start school, due to the fear of assessment (Brzeziński, 2004), did not take part in research.

In the course of the research, numerous positive correlations were obtained, both between the various manifestations of children's school readiness and the support of mothers. Of particular interest in this context are the lack of correlation regarding Low school readiness. It correlated negatively with the manifestations of school readiness taken into account, except for long-term arbitrary memory. According to the theoretical foundations, a child with low school readiness expresses emotions in a socially unacceptable way, cannot fit into a group, is dependent, does not follow the rules and refuses to follow orders, is impatient, not very persistent, and has an excessive need for closeness and support (Piotrowski, 2014; Brzezińska et al., 2016). Indeed, these characteristics are not necessarily related to the ability to encode information in long-term memory. Interestingly, they also did not enter into a relationship with the mother's sensitivity to the child's needs and their satisfaction, although they correlated negatively with supporting the development of the child's autonomy and independence, and with the mother's active participation in the child's learning process. It was initially assumed that the mother's low sensitivity to the child's needs and satisfying them would be important in the relationship under study. Presumably, however, there are other factors that may be related to the low school readiness of children, going beyond the studied area of variability.

The manifestations of the child's emotional and motivational readiness to start school were correlated with both competences constituting school readiness and numerous sociodemographic variables (the presentation of a detailed analysis was omitted), while only regression analysis revealed significant predictors that allowed to explain the variability in as many as 85% of cases. They turned out to be motivation to learn/task-oriented and emotional maturity, which consisted of effective regulation of emotions in the field of coping with anger, anxiety and sadness and the use of adaptive social strategies in interpersonal situations. These are symptoms of emotional and motivational competences. Interestingly, mathematical competences, visual

analysis and graphomotor skills as well as random short-term memory, i.e. cognitive competences were also important. Their importance can be considered in the context of the child's skills in counting, writing, drawing and current memory, which may translate into high self-esteem, a sense of being competent and initiative in action due to the expected success (Oszwa, 2006; Uszyńska-Jamroc, 2008). The significant role of the mother in this matter was limited to supporting the development of autonomy and independence, which can again translate into high, adequate self-esteem (based on the experience of successes and failures), as well as taking initiative and trying, even in a difficult situation, instead of going to for help to a parent or educator. Among the sociometric variables, only the place of residence was important – higher emotional and motivational readiness to start school was noted in children living in larger locations, which may be associated with a greater possibility of experiencing interactions with peers (more children living in cities than in villages), and thus exercise the ability to regulate one's emotions in dealings with others.

The issues discussed in the article are of practical importance. Despite the fact that the subject of the importance of the role of parents in children's education is the subject of numerous studies, the studies relatively rarely refer to the moment when the child starts school, focusing on older students and the importance of support from teachers (Jasiński & Jaworska, 2019). Research shows that preparing a child for the role of a student and entering a new environment begins primarily in the home environment. This is an important process because achieving the correct level of preparation for school conditions the use of development opportunities and potential by a student entering institutional education (Musiał, 2018). A successful school start is important for the entire complex process of adapting to school reality, and providing parental support ensures the child's comfort and facilitates adaptation to school.

Limitations and further directions of research

First of all, it should be emphasized once again that the studied group is not a representative sample for the population. The nature of the research (i.e. online form, anonymity) predisposed to the participation of mothers, who

most probably have no doubts about the school readiness of their children and actively supported and support it. Mothers of children with diagnosed developmental delays/deficits, i.e. those whose school readiness may be low, were also excluded from the study. This decision was dictated not only by the desire to ensure the homogeneity of the group of children, but also by ethical issues. In our opinion, the study of mothers of children with disabilities or experiencing developmental difficulties would require special care for support during and after the study, as well as the implementation of possible assistance, which in the conditions of a pandemic was significantly difficult, if not impossible. In the future, it is planned to purposefully select mothers who are not sure if their children are ready to start school.

A significant drawback of the research is the lack of objective measurement of children's school readiness. The research conducted by our team to date (Michalska & Szymanik-Kostrzewska, 2020b) shows that the manifestations of children's school readiness and their mothers' declarations about it correlate with each other, however, mothers' opinions are a poor predictor of specific skills or competences of children, contributing to the overall school readiness. In the presented research, it was planned to measure the Intelligence and Development Scale for Children and Youth (IDS-2), while pandemic conditions prevented the implementation of this aspect of research. Thus, the results of the research reflect mothers' declarations and are therefore prone to both perceptual distortions and conscious distortions of facts in order to present themselves or their children in a better light (Brzeziński, 2004). In the next research project, we assume a diagnosis of school readiness of children, which will provide objective data on the actual level of school readiness of six-year-olds in the emotional and motivational area.

Finally, focusing solely on the opinions of mothers, excluding the opinions of fathers, whose education in the presented research correlated with some manifestations of children's school readiness (as well as mothers' sensitivity to the child's needs and their active participation in the process of acquiring knowledge by the child), constitutes a certain limitation in terms of the whole parental interactions.

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