

Background

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- Currently, there is limited literature that investigates how engagement impacts feeding but also in parent-child interactions.
- Engagement is emotional availability and sensitivity that is reflected in different actions and behaviors.
- Engagement during parent-child interactions can be displayed in various ways, such as being attentive to the child’s needs and wants.
- In the context of feeding, parents that are more sensitive towards their child attend better to their level of fullness and hunger (McMahon & Meins, 2012).
- In parents, depression symptoms, low parent self-esteem, low parenting satisfaction and low parent self- efficacy have shown to create controlled and restrictive feeding style (Barrett, Thompson, & Bentley, 2016).
- Controlled and restrictive feeding behaviors by parents have been related to unhealthy eating behaviors in children (Mitchell, Brennan, Hayes, & Miles, 2009).
- Parents that are not involved in their child’s feeding have been shown to be closely related with negative outcomes in childhood obesity (Hughes, Power, Liu, Sharp, & Nicklas, 2015).
- While feeding styles can create different outcomes, examining how social support may interact with feeding styles can help clarify how these variables interact together.
- Increased social support may be a factor for parents to effectively cope with stress and different adverse factors in order to engage with their child better.

Research Questions

- Is there a correlational relationship between overall social support and social support in the domain of parenting?
- Is there a correlational relationship between engagement and overall social support?
- Is there a correlational relationship between parent stress and overall social support?

Methodology

Participants

There were parent and child pairs (*n* = 58) that participated in the study. Participant demographics are available in Table 1.

Measures

The following measures were also used to examine each variables used in the analysis.

- Overall Social Support:** Functional Social Support Questionnaire (FSSQ); (Broadhead, Gehlbach, DeGruv & Kaplan, 1988) : Scores on FSSQ were acquired using a 5 – point Likert scale decreasing in social support (1 = Lots of social support and 6 = Less social support).
- Social Support in Parenting:** Parenting Social Support Scale (PSSS); (Frankel & Powell, 2016): Scores on PSSS were acquired using a 5 – point Likert scale increasing in support in parenting (1 = Not having enough support in parenting and 5 = having enough social support in parenting)
- Parent Stress:** The State – Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI); (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg & Jacobs, 1983): Scores on the STAI were acquired using a 6-point Likert scale increasing in stress. (1 = being calm and 6 = being worried)
- Engagement:** Noldus Observer XT software was used to code recorded videos for engagement.

Procedures

Data were collected from parent and child pairs (*n* = 58) in the laboratory. The participants were provided with snacks and toys to play with while it was being recorded. The participants were also asked to answer surveys for additional data collection.

Data Analyses

- Correlation analyses were used to examine the relationship between engagement, parent stress, overall social support, and sodal support in the domain of parenting.
- Pearson’s correlation coefficient (e.g., *r*) was used to measure the linear correlation among variables.
- Descriptive statistics were used to examine the demographics of participants.

Table 2 – Correlations Between Four Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Engagement	1	-		
2. Social Support (FSSQ)	-.137	1	-	
3. Parent Stress (STAI)	-.009	.335*	1	-
4. Social Support in Parenting (PSSS)	-.015	-.432**	-.048	1

** *p* < 0.01.
* *p* < 0.05.

References

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7. Functional Social Support Questionnaire (FSSQ); (Broadhead, Gehlbach, DeGruv & Kaplan, 1988)

8. Parenting Social Support Scale (PSSS); (Frankel & Powell, 2016)

9. The State – Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI); (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg & Jacobs, 1983)

Results & Discussion

Results

Table 2 shows the following correlations.

- There was a significant correlation between overall social support (FSSQ); and social support in the domain of parenting (PSSS), *r* = -.432, *p* < 0.01.
- There was no significant correlation between overall social support (FSSQ) and engagement.
- There was a significant correlation between parent stress (STAI) and overall social support (FSSQ), *r* =.335, *p* < 0.05.

Discussion

- Negative Correlation : As overall social support (FSSQ) scores increased, social support in the domain of parenting (PSSS) increased as well.
 - It is important to note that despite the negative correlation shown in Table 2, PSSS is a reversed scale; meaning the positive relationship between the two variables still exists. a slight decrease in overall social support (FSSQ) as engagement increased.
- No significant correlation : There was no causal relationship between overall social support (FSSQ) and engagement.
 - It is important to note the engagement score (*M*=4.78) was high, so there are different factors that may hinder engagement, while social support does not impact engagement in parent-child interactions.
 - Engagement may have been higher, due to Hawthorne effect. The parent participants were aware that they were being observed, so their behavior may have been modified.
- Positive Correlation : As parent stress (STAI) increased, overall social support (FSSQ) increased as well.
 - Increase in overall social support (FSSQ) may have created self-induced expectation for better parenting, which may have increased parent stress (STAI).
 - Finding different social support that the parent can benefit from can help reducing parent stress.

Table 1 – Participant Demographics Table

Participant Demographic	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i> (SD)
Child BMI			17.64(3.56)
Child Age (Years)			4.06(1.07)
Parent Age (Years)			31.13(6.11)
Child Gender:			
Male	26	44.8	
Female	32	55.2	
Parent Gender :			
Male	2	3.4	
Female	56	96.6	
Race :			
White	30	52.6	
African American	22	38.6	
Indian/Alaska Native	1	1.8	
Asian	2	3.5	
Multicultural	2	3.5	
Parent Relationship:			
Married	29	50	
Not Married	29	50	
Enrolled in College since child’s birth :			
Yes	39	67.2	
No	19	32.8	

Conclusion

Conclusion

- This study examined how social support relates to parent stress and engagement in the context of feeding.
- There was a relationship between overall social support (FSSQ), and social support in the domain of parenting (PSSS).
- There also was a relationship between Parent stress (STAI) and overall social support (FSSQ).
- There were no correlations detected with any of the variables and engagement.
- There may be different factors (e.g., status in romantic relationship) that could actively display a correlational relationship with engagement, but social support was not a variable that displayed the correlational relationship with engagement.

Limitations

- Since some measures were based on self-reports, there may be potential risk of biases in the collected measures of data (Donaldson & Grant-Vallone, 2002).
- There may have been some adjustment period in duration of the recorded behavior in both parent and child pair since they were in a new environment.

Future Directions

- Gender variables will also be closely looked at as an additional variable. Finding out whether a participant’s status in their romantic relationship could be a factor that have correlational relationship with engagement, which will be looked into in the future.

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