Parental attitudes about play in preschool aged children

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Abstract
Play is a universal and innate disposition that is believed to be one of the most significant components of holistic wellbeing and development during the foundational years of childhood. This quantitative study examined parental attitudes about play in pre- school children aged 4 to 6 years. This study involved 327 parents, with children aged of four to six years not in full- time childcare. A survey was designed specifically for this study due to a lack of pre- existing measures. This study aimed to make a theoretical contribution to the field of early childhood research. It will provide insight into the under-researched area in parent's beliefs. About play it uses a measure called the Parental Play Belief Scale (PPBS) has been designed in order to investigate the two research factors Play Support and Academic Focus. The main finding was that parental belief work associate with the way in which infants and toddlers spent their time. Most of the parent's perceived play to best support early development and, consequently, offered children a large amount of daily time to become involved in freely chosen play. The study also identified that demographic factors, such as parent's age, parent's educational levels, race, religion, marital status were associated with parental attitude. Environment barriers faced by parents, parental attitudes about play support during the fundamental years of 4-6 years old and parental attitude towards academic focus supporting learning and development in the childhood. These findings were discussed in relation to the implications they raise for the role of the parent, early childhood education, parent education, and child development and.

Keywords: Parental attitudes, play, play support, preschool, children, childhood education.

Introduction

This study provides an analysis of parental attitudes to play in school and the perceived value and importance of play in supporting the development of children aged four to six years. There is a wide range of literature supporting the idea that play promotes healthy development in young children (Almon, 2003). Inborn character is believed to be one of the most important components of holistic wellbeing and development, especially during the foundational years of early childhood (Brown, 2010). The developmental theory supports the idea that children progress through a sequence of clear phases in their thought processes that increasingly approach those of adults.

The play has been defined as children`s occupation. It is through play that kids at an early age draw in and communicate with their general surroundings. Play enables children to make sense of and explore the environment they can adapt, overcome their feelings of dread while grown-up, once in a while in simultaneousness alignment with other kids or grown-up parental figures (Whitebread and Pasternak, 2010).

Current research shows that individuals of all ages are increasing exposure to technology such as smartphones, television and iPads. Children spend their time using technology often but not necessarily in a productive way. They are less physically active and use their imagination less (Laura. D, 2018). A lack of control in screen time usage can have harmful consequences for children (Kaneshiro, 2015). Parents can help their child by reducing

screen time. Screen time should be limited not more than two hours per day (Donnelly, 2018). Technology can be essential for child development, but too much usage damages the brain. Parents need to ensure their child gets a minimum of one hour of physical exercise every day (Pagani, 2010).

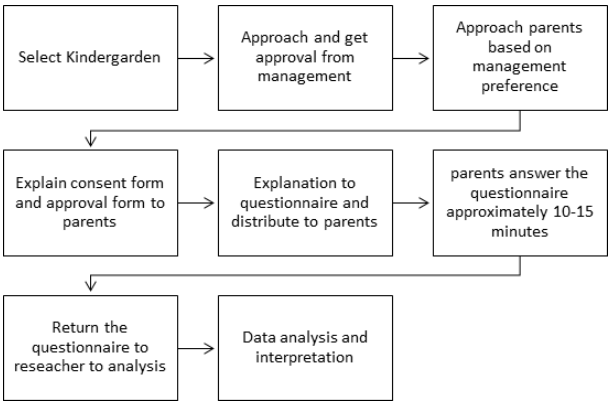
The previous study has found that parent and child play based on culture influences of joint or separate caregivers are only now beginning to gain increasing research attention in the wide psychological literature (Edwards, 2000). In this regard, projection models should test for the control and mediating effects of other variables on the relationship between parent-child play and childhood outcomes in developed, newly developed and developing economies (low income).

There is a limited study done to investigate the discrimination among parents towards play in Malaysia. Therefore, present study aimed to investigate the parental attitude about the importance of play in children.

Methodology

Sampling

This study utilizes a non-experimental study research plan which is most appropriate to recognize the attributes of a populace and look at the thoughts, attitudes, values, belief and behaviors (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). An anonymous questionnaire survey, asking parents how children spend their time and including the Parental Belief Play Scale (Fogle & Mendez,2006) was used as the data collection instrument. Since the point of this thesis is under-investigated, this quantitative study configuration empowered parental conviction about play to be considered to give fundamental information. A finishing up subjective open-finished proclamation was solicited toward the end from the study to acquire an inward comprehension of parental convictions around the estimation of play to empower further investigation of the quantitative discoveries.



Inclusion criteria:
-Any of the parents (Father /mother)
-Parents age between 21 to 50 years old
-Parents with children age between 4 - 6 years old

Exclusion criteria:
- Parents without children age range of 4 -6 years old

Data Collection

Total 327 respondents participated in this study via convenience sampling. Self-report questionnaire technique was used as the primary method of collecting data to review the belief regarding play in school, whereby 2 different questionnaires was created to receive feedback from respondents.

Instruments

Self-report questionnaire was distributed to the participants. The respondents were asked to answer a set of 41 questions;
Section 1: Eleven (11) questions on Demographic Data about clients' information.
Section 2: Parent Play Beliefs Scale (PPBS; Fogle & Mendez, 2006) was used to assess parents' beliefs about their preschool children's play, the part of play in learning and their part in playtime with their child. PPBS is 30-item parent questionnaire rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- Play Support contains 16 items that replicate parents' beliefs relating to whether play

- Academic Focus contains 8 items that replicate parents' beliefs relating academically.

Data analysis

SPSS 23 (Statistic Programmed from Window Package Version 23.0) was used to analyze the data. The finding of Section A (Demographic Data) illustrated in table and numbers.

To examine the crude information two parametric tests had been used which is t-Test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Nonetheless, t-Test is used to look at just two change or gathering though ANOVA is utilized to think about various difference or gathering. Increasingly over in this investigations t-Test and Anova was utilized to examine the information demonstrated as follows;

- t-Test (Gender)
- Anova (Age and Education)

Additionally, Pearson's connection is utilized to quantify the factual relationship, or association, between two constant factors.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained from Perdana University Research Committee (PU IRBHR0189) before starting this investigation (Appendix B). When the study has been endorsed, data collection was begun as needs to be. Respondents consent to take part in this study were acquired before giving out the questionnaire.

Result

Demographic factors

Table 1: Demographic data

Variable		**n**	**%**
Gender	Mother	218	66.7
	Father	108	33.3
Age	26-30 years old	33	10.1
	31-35 years old	49	15.0
	36-40 years old	148	45.2
	41-45 years old	66	20.2
	46-50 years old	31	9.5
Education	School Level	22	6.7
	Certificate Level	39	11.9
	Diploma Level	31	9.5
	Bachelor Level	163	49.8

Master Level	65	19.9
PhD Level	7	2.1

Table 1: Demographic data that comprise of test factors gender, age and education level, the factors are recorded regarding number of test(n) and rates of every classification. Most of respondents were somewhere in the age range of 36 and 40 years of age. Just under half of the respondents stated that their highest qualification was a bachelor degree.

Environment barriers faced by parents

Table 2: Barriers faced by parents

Variable	**n**	**%**
Barriers		
Time	186	56.9
Strangers Danger	166	50.8
Hygiene/ cleanliness	140	42.8
Weather	123	37.6
Poor facilities	114	34.8
Space	92	28.1
Travel	65	19.9
Own anxiety	23	7.0

Table 2 shows the barriers faced by the parents. The most barrier is the time and secondly the stranger dangers for parents to bring their child to play followed by hygiene and cleanliness the equipment in playground and environment surrounding. Weather also play a role due to changes in climate, poor facilities space, travel and own anxiety.

Parental attitudes about play support duringthefundamentalyearsof4-6yearsold

Table 3: Parental attitudes about play support during the fundamental years of 4-6 years old

Variable	**Play support**

	Mean (μ)	**S.d (σ)**	**95% (CI)**	**p-value**
Gender				
Mother	66.63	10.05	2.44 - 6.78	.000*
Father	62.02	7.88	2.61 – 6.61	.000*

* Correlation is significant at the p< 0.01 level

Table 3 shows, t-Test was used to examine the parental attitude about play support during the fundamental year of 4-6 years old compared to play support by gender and marital status. There was a significant difference (p <0.01) in the scores for gender, mother and father.

Whereas table 4 shows, Anova was done to examine parental attitudes about play support during the fundamental years of 4-6 years old compared to play support by age and education. There are significant differences between younger aged parents and older aged parent (p<0.01). There are significant differences between the education level of the parents (p<0.01) as shown in the table.

Table 4: Parental attitudes about play support during the fundamental years of 4-6 years' old

Variable	Mean (μ)	S.d (σ)	95% (CI)	p-value
Age				
26- 30 years old	65.94	4.15	64.47 – 67.41	<0.01
31-35 years old	65.00	11.18	61.79 – 68.21	
36-40 years old	62.61	8.04	61.67 – 63.91	
41-45 years old	69.77	12.61	66.67 – 72.87	
46-50 years old	66.23	6.70	63.77 – 68.68	
Education				
School level	66.77	8.01	64.22 – 71.32	<0.01
Certificate level	61.44	9.43	58.38 – 64.49	
Diploma level	66.00	6.29	63.69 – 68.31	
Bachelor level	63.75	8.10	62.50 -65.00	
Master level	66.02	6.30	73.47 – 117.96	
PhD level	95.71	24.05	64.05 – 66.14	

Table 5: Parental attitude towards academic focus supporting learning and development in the childhood

Variable	**Academic focus**			
	Mean (μ)	S.d **(σ)**	95% **(CI)**	p-value
Gender				
Mother Father	20.54 22.45	9.08 6.58	-3.81 – 0.01 -3.65 – -0.18	>0.01 >0.01
Marital status				
Married Divorced	21.39 15.09	8.36 6.43	1.28 – 11.31 1.92 – 10.67	>0.01 >0.01

Table 5 shows t-Test was done to examine the parental attitude about play support during the fundamental year of 4-6 years old compared to academic focus and gender. There were no significant differences (p>0.01) in the scores for gender, mother and father.

Table 6: Parental attitude towards academic focus supporting learning and development in the childhood

Variable	Mean (μ)	S.d (σ)	95% (CI)	p-value
Age				
26- 30 years old	29.36	15.55	23.85 – 34.88	<0.01
31-35 years old	20.65	5.40	19.19 – 22.12	
36-40 years old	20.28	6.68	19.19 – 22.36	
41-45 years old	21.74	7.52	19.89 – 21.59	
46-50 years old	16.35	4.25	14.80 – 17.91	
Education				
School level	28.55	7.91	25.04 – 32.05	<0.01
Certificate level	25.36	5.69	23.51 – 27.20	
Diploma level	19.94	5.89	17.78 – 22.10	
Bachelor level	20.04	9.32	18.60 -21.48	
Master level	19.35	6.62	17.71 – 20.99	
PhD level	23.43	0.53	22.93 – 23.92	

Table 6 shows Anova was done to examine parental attitudes about academic focus during the fundamental years of 4-6 years old compared to play support age and education level. There were significant differences between the age ($p<0.01$). Majority of the parents between 36-40 years old agree with play support. There were significant differences between the lower to higher educational level of the parents ($p<0.01$). Majority of the parents having Bachelor level and PhD degree agree with play support.

Discussion

To identify demographic factors, such as gender, parent age and parent education levels, influence parental attitude.

This study shows the older age parents are more aware of their children development. Parents tend to spend more time with their children whereas they also sending their children to extracurricular classes to develop their child social and psychosocial skills.

In this study, it was shown the correlations between parental education level and parental attitude about play in children, as well as how parental education level and academic positive result success in their child development. The findings showed in this study that parents who held a masters and bachelor's degree are majorities who had participated in the survey compared to school level and doctorate parents.

Environment barriers faced by parents

In this study parents are mainly having barrier in time because as most of the parents are full time employed so that may cause them to have short of time to bring their children to play or spend time with them. Then most parents also are fear of stranger dangers to explore their children due to society issues. According to certain parents, hygiene and cleanliness is an issue for them to explore their children into the environment. Parents have issues in weather due to sudden changes of climate that may cause illness.

Parental attitudes about play support during the fundamental years of 4-6 years' old

Play Support includes items which capture parents' positive beliefs about the developmental significance of play and their own involvement in children's play. In general, mothers who report valuing and enjoying play on tend to report more prosocial behavior for their children during play.

Parental attitude towards academic focus supporting learning and development in the childhood

In contrast, Academic Focus demonstrated significant, positive relations with parent ratings of both disruptive and disconnected peer play and a significant, negative relation with parent ratings of interactive peer play academic focus includes items which reflect an emphasis on academic skills, such as learning numbers or letters, and a belief that play does not have a central role in facilitating the development of these skills. However, some parents had high scores on both factors, suggesting that they had generally positive attitudes towards play, but believe that it may not be the best way to encourage the development of academic skills.

Conclusion

This study found that most parents valued play support more highly than academic focus. However, respondents were educated in their parenting roles, that parental guidance can empower parents to make informed and responsive decisions around child raise practices. The availabilities of such education, based on innocent in the child's inborn developmental, therefore contribute to a better parental understanding about the value of play in holistically supporting child. In turn, could minimize the reported negative impacts of the hurried child environment.

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