

Parental Involvement Level on Preschool Student's Communication Development

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23646> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/23646

Published Online: 13 November 2024

Abstract

Children's communication development can be improved with parental involvement. However, busy working parents spend less quality time with their children. Thus, this study identified the parental involvement level in the development of communication among preschool students. Research design used in this study was a quantitative approach through survey study. Parental involvement in reading was applied as the questionnaire instrument with some modifications to measure the parental involvement level in the development of communication. The questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale were distributed to the respondents via Google Form. The respondents of this study were 300 parents or guardians from 29 preschool classes in Telupid, Sabah, who were selected via simple random sampling technique. Data collection and analysis was performed by Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the mean value, standard deviation and percentage of parental involvement on the development of communication among preschool students. The results of this study indicated that the parental involvement level in the development of communication was very high. This showcased the awareness of parents of their responsibility to be involved in their children's communication development. Discussion of the results found that parental involvement has a positive influence on the development of children's communication. Parents must increase their involvement to achieve optimal and holistic development of their children.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Communication Development, Children, Preschool, Parents

Introduction

Preschool education is an important experience for a child before entering Standard 1. Experience in effective learning that is meaningful and fun can improve various skills, and students become more self-confident with positive attitude (National Preschool Standard Curriculum, 2017). Therefore, parental involvement in preschool education is in line with the ninth shift in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013 – 2025, which also emphasizes the involvement of community and private sector in empowering school achievement.

It is commonly recognized that parents are the closest individuals as well as primary and first educational institution for children (Hasanah & Deiniatur, 2019). In addition, parents are also

individuals who have direct involvement in children's life and help shape their development from birth to adulthood (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Parental involvement in children's activities helps improve their development in physical, spiritual, personality and emotional aspects (Abd Halim & Yunus, 2017). Therefore, parents need to get involved by supporting their children's development to encourage them to achieve an optimal and comprehensive level of development.

Children spend more time with their parents than teachers (Milkie et. al., 2004). However, high living cost nowadays demanding parents to work hard to provide for their families, including providing the best educational experience for their children. Quality time with children is increasingly limited as parents spend more time at work than at home (Mohamed Makhbul, 2019). As a result, it becomes one of the factors that leads to the lack of parental involvement in children's development.

Time constraints and busyness of parents in meeting the demands of their careers and workload cause them to not be able to spend time with their children at home (Jamil et. al., 2022). This also prevents them from participating in activities related to their children development. A previous study has found that the busyness of parents causes them to not have the opportunity to participate in their children's learning when at home, which contributes to a moderate level of involvement (Gosman et. al., 2020).

Previous studies have reported on parental involvement in education (Thartori, 2019), academics (Gosman et al., 2020; Nyah & Arshat, 2021), preschool or early education activities (Norjumira et al., 2020) and learning of children at home for the purpose of assisting them to improve academic achievement (Edek & Isha, 2020; Tembak Sinau & Yunus, 2020). However, research on the involvement of parents in the development of children's communication is still scarce. Thus, this study was conducted to explore the level of parental involvement in communication development among preschool students.

Literature Review

Parental Involvement

According to Smokoska (2020), parental involvement means the level of parental involvement in learning at home, communication level with school or the extent to which parents place themselves as the main authority in their children's education (Loera et al., 2011).

Parental involvement includes attitudes and values as well as practices used by them to guide, educate and raise their children (Zeynep, 2016). Parental involvement consists of two main aspects, namely involvement at home and school (Durand, 2011). Involvement at home is related to activities, such as reading, discussion and outdoor activities. Meanwhile, involvement in school can be defined as the presence of parents in programs or activities at school (Durand, 2011).

Based on previous studies, children's development is influenced by parental involvement. It has been reported that parental involvement is related to the holistic development of children (Badli & Mohamed, 2021). A high level of involvement can exert a positive impact on the overall development of children.

Parents have a positive attitude about involvement and sensitivity to academic and psychological aspects in education (Kalayci & Öz, 2018). This sensitivity is a contributing factor to their involvement in the teaching and learning of their children. Parents' motivation also contributes to their involvement. A study by Fatonah (2020), found that parents' self-motivation encourages them to be involved in the development of children's literacy and language. The self-motivation provides awareness of their responsibility in supporting children's development. In addition, the parents' motivation has a relationship with their involvement to support students' readiness for mainstream schools in addition to being able to foster a positive belief in the importance of early childhood education (Fatonah, 2020).

Parents' motivation also encourages them to do appropriate interventions to support children's language development. According to Handayani (2020), motivation and intervention by parents will facilitate and accelerate children's language development through directed, planned and continuous language construction by parents.

Significance of Parental Involvement in Communication Development

Parents are an important source who can provide information about their children to teachers even though they probably have less knowledge regarding children's development or certain related fields, such as language (Cole, 2008). Previous studies have reported that parental involvement has a positive impact on children's development and learning.

Active and continuous involvement by parents contributes to the holistic development of children Jamil et al (2022) and assists the school to overcome challenges through collaboration that exist between them (Ramalingam et al., 2019). Parental involvement not only contributes to children's communication development but can also be linked to children's cognitive development. Parents have high involvement rate in their children's learning (Lau et. al., 2012), and this involvement indirectly encourages children to excel in their learning and foster positive behavior (Lara & Saracosti, 2019).

In addition, the development and emotional changes of children are also influenced by the emotions of parents (Md Isa & Abu Bakar, 2021). If parents often show angry emotions to children, it is possible that parents will foster similar emotion to their children. Therefore, it is important for parents to manage emotions well as an example to children.

Parents' awareness of the learning functions benefits the children's development process and contributes to parental involvement in their children's learning (Abd Halim & Yunus, 2017). According to Jin Wan and Kutty (2023), the involvement of parents is necessary because their support influences the language assimilation process of children, which requires them to adapt to a language or educational culture that is contrary to their daily life.

Apart from contributing to the process of children's language assimilation, parental involvement also influences children to master literacy skills through the active involvement of parents in their children's daily lives (Arnold et. al., 2008).

In similar findings, the development of children's early literacy skills can be enhanced by the involvement of parents in teaching reading and writing skills to their children (Sénechal & LeFevre, 2002). In addition, children who are exposed to books tend to develop their

vocabulary and listening skills as well as understanding and responding to speech. This is in line with the findings of Pellegrini, Brody and Sigel (1985) that the interaction between parents and children through the activity of reading story books can influence children's ability to be proficient in the development of communication.

Research Methodology

Research design used in this study was a quantitative approach through a survey study. Through survey, a number of subjects were selected as respondents from a population, information was collected from the respondents, and then the information was analyzed to answer the research questions. Survey through questionnaires was conducted to obtain data on the parental involvement level in the communication development among preschool students.

This study was conducted on preschools located around the Telupid district. In summary, Telupid is one of the districts in Sabah, with at least 29 preschools. The location of this study was chosen as it met the criteria to achieve the objectives of this study. In addition, the selected study location was the area where the researcher worked, and it could facilitate the process of data collection by the researcher.

The study population was parents or guardians of preschool students in the district. This study focused on the parents of preschool students as this study population, which was in line with the stated objectives. Meanwhile, simple random sampling technique was used in this study, adopting sample calculation formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Table 3.1 shows the number and percentage of respondents according to gender, age, relationship with children, and education level.

Table 3.1

Number and Percentage of Respondents According to Gender, Age, Relationship with Children and Education Level

Item	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	178	59.3%
	Male	122	40.7%
Age	20 – 29 years old	57	19%
	30 – 39 years old	160	53.3%
	40 – 49 years old	81	27%
	50 years old and above	2	0.7%
Relationship with children	Mother	177	59%
	Father	121	40.3%
	Guardian	1	0.35%
	Others	1	0.35%
Education level	Primary school	9	3%
	SRP / PMR	37	12.3%
	SPM	158	52.7%
	STPM / Matriculation / Diploma	34	11.3%
	Bachelor's degree	50	16.7%
	Master's degree	8	2.7%
	Others	4	1.3%

The research instrument used to collect data was the questionnaire related to parental involvement in reading modified from that of Alazri (2019). The questionnaire contained two parts, namely parts A and B. Part A comprised information about the respondent's demographics, such as gender, age, relationship with children, and education level. Meanwhile, part B involved the parental involvement level. The respondents answered the items based on 5-point Likert scale (5 - Strongly agree, 4 - Agree, 3 - Uncertain, 2 - Disagree and 1 - Never).

Data collection is a procedure to obtain important information related to research (Badli & Mohamed, 2021). An application was submitted into the Education Research Application System (Eras 2.0) before obtaining permission from officials at the Sabah State Education Department and Telupid/Tongod District Education Office as well as the administrators of the preschools involved. Then, the Google form link was distributed to the preschools involved through their respective class teachers. The respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire.

After data collection was completed, the data were analyzed. Data analysis is necessary to obtain accurate results and useful information (Edek & Isha, 2020). In this study, data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) software after receiving responses from the questionnaires. The method used for data analysis was descriptive statistics.

In brief, descriptive statistics explain conditions or phenomena, symptoms or questions, and it can be used against one or more independent variables (Nasution, 2020). This analysis was not in the form of comparison or relationship. Descriptive statistical methods were used to obtain mean, percentage, frequency and standard deviation for this study. Based on the statistical results, the data were interpreted based on Table 3.2, attributing to the mean score of the parental involvement level in the communication development among preschool students.

Table 3.2

Interpretation of Mean Score for Parental Involvement Level

Mean score	Interpretation
1.00 to 1.89	Very low
1.90 to 2.69	Low
2.70 to 3.49	Moderate
3.5 to 4.29	High
4.3 to 5.00	Very high

Source: Zulkifli et. al. (2011)

Findings

A total of 300 respondents were involved in this study. Overall, the results of descriptive statistics in Table 4.1 showed that the parental involvement level was at very high level, with a mean value of 4.37 and standard deviation of 0.56. Interpretation of the mean score for parental involvement level was very high.

Table 4.1

Results of Descriptive Statistics for Parental Involvement Level in the Communication Development

Overall mean and standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Score mean interpretation
	4.37	0.560	Very high

Table 4.2 shows the overall results obtained for the parental involvement level in the communication development among preschool students. All the results obtained were presented in table based on the number and percentage of responses from the respondents for each item.

Table 4.2

Number and Percentage of Responses for Parental Involvement Level in Communication Development

No.	Item	n (%)				
		1 (SD)	2 (D)	3 (U)	4 (A)	5 (SA)
B1	I encouraged my children to read religious and social related reading material.	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (3%)	159 (53%)	132 (44%)
B2	I advised my child to read the contents of the product before buying it.	0 (0)	0 (0)	20 (6.7%)	151 (50.3%)	129 (43%)
B3	I involved in reading stories with my family.	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (5%)	157 (52.3%)	128 (42.7%)
B4	I asked my child to read the contents of the medicine.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	17 (5.7%)	153 (51%)	129 (43%)
B5	I discussed with my child what I read.	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (5%)	157 (52.3%)	128 (42.7%)
B6	I prepared an e-book for my child.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	24 (8%)	151 (50.3%)	124 (41.3%)
B7	I was concerned in buying a book.	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (2.7%)	159 (53%)	133 (44.3%)
B8	I encouraged my child to read street signs and notices in stores.	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (5%)	155 (51.7%)	130 (43.3%)
B9	I planned a family reading competition.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	25 (8.3%)	148 (49.3%)	126 (42%)
B10	I gave a book as gift to my child.	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (2.7%)	160 (53.3%)	132 (44%)

B11	I encouraged my child to read the verses in the Qur'an or Bible every day.	1 (0.3%)	0 (0)	10 (3.3%)	160 (53.3%)	129 (43%)
B12	I took my child to the library or bookstore.	0 (0)	0 (0)	26 (8.7%)	151 (50.3%)	123 (41%)
B13	I shared my love of reading with my family members.	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (6.3%)	156 (52%)	125 (41.7%)
B14	I read stories together with my child at home.	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (5%)	156 (52%)	129 (43%)
B15	I prepared the story books my child needed.	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (2.7%)	161 (53.7%)	131 (43.7%)
B16	I liked to read from the internet.	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (6.3%)	154 (51.3%)	127 (42.3%)
B17	I shared reading materials with my friends.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	23 (7.7%)	159 (53%)	117 (39%)
B18	I saved money to buy books.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	18 (6%)	154 (51.3%)	127 (42.3%)
B19	I allowed my children to choose the books they want to read.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	11 (3.7%)	158 (52.7%)	130 (43.3%)
B20	I liked to read.	0 (0)	1 (0.3%)	16 (5.3%)	153 (51%)	130 (43.3%)
B21	I spend some time reading at home with my child every day.	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (6%)	154 (51.3%)	128 (42.7%)
B22	I follow my child's reading progress at school.	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (5%)	155 (51.7%)	130 (43.3%)

**Frequency and percentage value, SD: Strongly disagree, D: Disagree, U: Uncertain, A: Agree, SA: Strongly agree*

Based on the results of the analysis, one respondent (0.3%) strongly disagreed with item B11, namely "I encouraged my child to read verses in the Qur'an or Bible every day". Meanwhile, 10 people (3.3%) were uncertain, 160 people (53.3%) agreed and 129 people (43%) strongly agreed with the item.

Discussion

Overall, it can be concluded that the parental involvement in the development of communication among preschool students was at very high level. This implied the awareness of responsibility among parents to be involved in their children's development, especially communication development. This is in line with a previous study, which reported that parental involvement at home is more on the development of language communication, followed by social, emotional and cognitive (Badli & Mohamed, 2021).

It has been revealed that parents are not only involved with children's learning activities but they also actively involve by communicating with children (Ismail et. al, 2020). Parents have high knowledge level about their children's social and communication development.

However, the findings above contradict that reported by Abd Raof et al. (2020) that the parental involvement was at a moderate level. It may be influenced by various factors including time constraints due to busy work which is an obstacle for parents to be with their children.

Based on demographic analysis, most respondents have an education level up to SPM, which may contribute to their involvement in children's development. The education level of parents can be associated with their involvement in children's development (Ismail et. al., 2020). The higher the level of education, the higher the involvement of parents in their children's development, and vice versa (Handayani et al., 2020). However, this is slightly different from that reported by Kalayci and Öz (2018), where respondent demographics, such as education level, did not influence parental involvement in their children's language development, including communication.

The preparation and purchase of story books by parents can be regarded as high parental involvement. It reflected the awareness of parents regarding their responsibility to provide needs that are appropriate for their children's development. Parents emphasize their responsibility in providing learning materials that can support their children's development, especially learning at home (Edek & Isha, 2020). To support children's development, parents not only provide an effective learning environment at home, but they also often communicate with their children to assist children in completing tasks or exercises given by teachers at school (Şad & Gürbüztürk, 2013).

In addition, parents are also involved in reading activities with their children at home. Reading and storytelling activities which are executed routinely and continuously are believed to help develop children's communication, especially in speech (Brodin & Renblad, 2019) as well as increase vocabulary and allow children to express their opinions or ideas (Mohamed Isa et. al, 2021).

Pancsofar and Vernon-Feagans (2010) found that interaction through picture story books between fathers and children is closely related to children's early language and communication development. Therefore, parents need to provide better and meaningful interactions so that children can be proficient in communication skills. It was also suggested that parents get involved as early as possible, that is, from infancy, for optimal development.

Conclusion

Parents are fully responsible for the life and development of children. Thus, they should often involve in every activity to encourage the proficiency of their children's communication skills. Apart from that, communication that often occurs between children and parents can also strengthen family relationships. Through this study, it is expected that parents will assist children in improving their proficiency in communication skills to adapt themselves to real situations.

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