

Play Needs of Children: Knowledge among Mothers

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Abstract

Background: Play is vital for every child as it is considered as the way of expression. The play helps child to develop their social, cognitive, and physical skills and strengthen the emotional bond that's growing between the parents. Parents are children's best playmates especially mothers are often their first play partners. Studies have suggested knowledge of mother regarding play needs, selection of toys, and facilitation of environment can affect the developmental outcomes of children. The study was conducted to determine the knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of the under five children. **Objectives:** To assess the knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of under-five year children. To find the association of knowledge scores of mothers with selected demographic variables. **Methods and Materials:** A quantitative research approach with descriptive design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in the rural areas of Ropar district of Punjab. The study was conducted on 100 mothers of under five children who were selected using convenience sampling technique. The structured interview schedule was used to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of under-five children. **Result:** The study revealed that 65% subjects had moderate knowledge related to play needs of under-five children, whereas 32 % subjects had poor knowledge and only 3% subjects had good knowledge. The study found that the knowledge scores of the mothers are significantly associated with the education status of the mothers. **Conclusion:** Mothers knowledge regarding play needs is inadequate. There is a strong need creating awareness and providing knowledge related to play needs under-five children.

Keywords: Play Needs; Knowledge; Mothers; Under-Five Children.

Introduction

Play and toys are important for the growth and development of children. They foster learning, accelerate maturation, helps in instillation of moral values, and develop creativity.¹ The play helps child to develop their social, cognitive, and physical skills and strengthen the emotional bond that's growing between the parents.^{2,3} Play is considered as a natural language where children can express themselves.⁴ Children at an early stage starts engaging and interacting with the world around and play helps them to create and explore the world which they can master over.^{5,6}

A comparative study conducted among Asian and Euro-American parents of preschool-aged children revealed that Euro-American parents believed play as an important vehicle for early development while Asian parents did not value play as a need for preschool children.⁷ Parents, especially mothers, are often children's first play partners.⁸ The mother's role is to design the environment and select materials, activities, and routines that will promote children's opportunities to perform specific skills.

When the opportunity arises, mother provides the instructional support necessary to assist the child to participate successfully in the activity or routine and complete the skill.⁹ Mother knowledge can be conceptualized as indirectly affecting developmental outcomes in children.¹⁰ Hence the researcher felt need to assess the knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of under five children.

Materials & Methods

A quantitative research approach with descriptive design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in the selected rural villages of Ropar district. The rural villages were selected on the basis of feasibility and good connectivity from institute. 100 mothers of under five children were selected using convenience sampling technique. The biological mothers who were able to understand and communicate in Punjabi were included in the study. While the mothers having disabilities like hearing or speech disability and mental disabilities were excluded

from the study. A structured interview schedule consisted of 34 items for gathering information on knowledge of mother regarding play needs of the children. The questions were in the form of multiple-choice questions which were asked through verbal enquiry. Content validity was determined by the expert's opinion on the relevance of the items and reliability. Internal consistency of the tool was determined by using split half method. Tool was found to be reliable ($r = 0.67$).

Interpretation of the tool was done as Good knowledge (>75%), Moderate Knowledge (50%-75%) and Poor knowledge (<50%). Before the data collection an informed consent was taken from the subjects. The confidentiality and privacy of the subjects was maintained throughout the study. The time taken by each respondent for the interview was 20-25 minutes. After the data analysis a structured teaching program was developed using the findings of the data. The STP was administered to the mothers at the end of the study. The focus of the program was on selection of play material, role of play in growth and development of child, types of plays for different age-groups and role of parents in plays. The data was analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The study was conducted on 100 mothers of under-five children residing in selected rural villages of Punjab. The study data revealed that majority i.e. 61% of the mothers were in age group of 26-30 years. In terms of education, the majority subjects i.e. 36% had completed their secondary education while 9% never attended formal education. 44% of the subjects had their family income between Rs.5,000-10,000/- Majority of the subjects (47%) had two children. 12% subjects had more than four children. 79% of the subjects belonged to Sikh religion while 18% belonged to Hindu religion. 80% subjects lived in nuclear family while 20% lived in joint family.

The data gathered on knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of children revealed that majority of the mothers had moderate knowledge (65%). While 32% of the subjects had poor knowledge and only 3% of the subjects had good knowledge regarding the play needs of the children. The Table No.1 reveals the mean and standard deviation of the knowledge scores of mothers regarding play needs of under-five children. The mean score of 19.05 ± 3.56 reveals that the mothers had moderate knowledge regarding the play needs of under-five children.

Table no.1: Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Knowledge Scores of mothers on Play needs.

N=100			
	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Knowledge Scores	19.05	19	3.56

Maximum Score= 34

Table no. 2 reveals the mean score of the respondents on different aspects of knowledge regarding play needs of the children. The finding showed that there was 66% knowledge of respondent about type of play. Mean score of selection of play material was 5.68 ± 1.51 with maximum score was ten. The finding represented that there was 56.8% knowledge about selection of play materials. Mean score of role of play in growth and development of child was $4.81 \pm$

1.93 with maximum score was ten. The finding revealed that there was 48.10% knowledge about role of play in growth and development of child. Mean score of role of parents in play was 2.55 ± 1.04 with maximum score was four. The finding showed that there was 63.12% knowledge of respondents about role of parents in play.

Table no.2: Mother's knowledge score on different aspects of knowledge regarding play needs.

N=100				
Components of Tool	Mean Score $\pm$ Standard Deviation	Maximum Score	Mean score Percentage	Rank
Type of play	5.28 ± 1.57	8	66	1
Selection of Play material	5.68 ± 1.51	10	56.8	3
Role of Play in growth and development of child	4.81 ± 1.93	10	48.1	4
Role of parents/ mothers	2.55 ± 1.04	4	63.75	2

Table no. 3 reveals the association of knowledge scores of mothers of under-five children regarding play needs of the children. The study reveals that the knowledge scores of the mothers were found to be significantly associated with the education status of the mother ($p < 0.01$). This means that the educational status of the mothers can affect the knowledge of mothers regarding play needs of the under-five children. The knowledge scores were found to be statistically non-significant with other selected demographic variables under the study.

Table no.3: Association between knowledge score with selected demographic variables.

Demographic variable	Knowledge score		χ^2 value	p value
	>mean	<mean		
Age of mother				
<20 years	1	6	2.72	0.435
21-25 years	8	15		
26-30 years	27	34		
>30 years	4	5		
Educational Status				
No formal education	2	7	14.71	.00532*
Primary schooling	5	17		
Secondary schooling	14	22		
Higher secondary schooling	8	15		
Graduation	9	1		
Family income				
<Rs5000	7	19	6.32	0.0968
Rs.5000-Rs.10000	16	28		
Rs.10000-Rs20000	16	11		
>Rs.20000	1	2		
Religion				
Hindu	7	11	0.125	0.939
Sikh	33	46		
Others	1	2		
Children under-five year				
Age				
1	10	17	1.7005	0.636
2	21	26		
3	6	8		
≥4	3	9		

Discussion

The finding shows that maximum 65% women had moderate knowledge related to play needs of under five year children, 32% subjects had poor knowledge whereas only 3% subjects had good knowledge. According to the knowledge related to the components of the structured interview schedule, the study revealed that the mothers had highest knowledge about the type of play for children and had least knowledge about the role of play in growth and development of the child. The study also revealed that mothers had 66% knowledge regarding type of play, 56.8% knowledge regarding selection of play. The mean knowledge score for mothers was 19.05 ± 3.56 revealing that the mothers had moderate knowledge according to the pre-set criteria for interpretation of knowledge level of mothers.

A similar study conducted on caregivers revealed that 40.8% caregivers think that toys are important for under-five children. While it also revealed that 18.4% caregivers indicated that toys were not important for children.¹¹ A descriptive study done on 60 mothers in Calicut revealed that 58% of the subjects had average knowledge, 42% had good knowledge and none had poor knowledge regarding the selection of play materials. The study concluded that most of the mothers had average knowledge regarding the selection of play materials for children.¹²

In a survey conducted in Dholpur Rajasthan, 90 parents of under-five children were interviewed to assess their knowledge on play needs. The study revealed that 52% parents did not have adequate knowledge regarding the play needs of under-five children.¹³ In another study conducted among parents of toddlers revealed that 52% of the parents of toddlers had good knowledge while 48% had an average knowledge regarding the play needs of toddlers.¹⁴ A study conducted in Nepal revealed that the mothers of under-five children had highest knowledge (91.2%) regarding the type of play material to be used for play for under-five children. However the study also reveals that mothers had less knowledge regarding hazards related to the play.¹⁵

The current study revealed that there is a significant statistical association of knowledge scores with the education status of mothers ($p < 0.01$). While all other selected demographic variables like age of mother, family income, religion and number of children were found to not associate significantly with the knowledge scores. The finding in another study revealed that there was no significant association found between the knowledge level of samples and demographic variables at $p < 0.05$ level.¹³ However a study has revealed that the knowledge scores were found to be associated with the education status of the mothers, ethnicity, place of residence and number of children. The study did not find any association with the demographic variables like: age, religion, occupation and type of family, which is consistent with the study findings.¹⁵ In a similar study there was significant association between knowledge of mothers regarding importance of play and educational level of mothers.¹⁶

Conclusion

The present study concludes that mothers of under five children have moderate level of knowledge regarding the play needs. Mothers have good knowledge regarding type of play and their role in play, while lesser knowledge on role of play in growth and development of child and selection of play material. The knowledge of mothers can also get affected by their educational status. Age, religion, number of children and family income has no effect on the

knowledge of mothers regarding the play needs of the under-five children. The study recommends preparation of educative material for mothers and dissemination of the same at all the health care facilities providing services under well-baby clinics.

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