

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PARENTING PRACTICES AMONG PRESCHOOLERS' PARENTS IN AMPANG AND SERDANG, SELANGOR, 2016

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ABSTRACT

Parenting practices is an important factor that determines child's behaviour. In the past 40 years, research proves that child's development are affected by parenting. Hence, it is also important to know that there are factors that are associated with the parenting practice because that factors can determine whether the parenting being used is good or bad. To determine the factors (parents' attitude, parental knowledge) associated with parenting practices among preschoolers' parents in Ampang and Serdang, Selangor. This was a cross-sectional study. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data from 252 preschoolers' parents from 14 Tabika KEMAS in Ampang and Serdang, Selangor. The data collected were analysed by using SPSS version 21.0. Parental knowledge (source) and parents' attitude (overprotective, interest in knowledge) were the most common factors affecting parenting practices of preschoolers' parents from 14 Tabika KEMAS in Ampang and Serdang, Selangor . Overall, parents play an important role in developing skills of good parenting practices to be applied on their children later on .

Keywords: knowledge, attitude, parenting practices, preschoolers' parent

Introduction

Parenting practices can be defined as actions utilised by parents to communicate with their kids. In order to ensure their kids can be excellent in school by interacting with them, parents would take several practices to make it happens (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). This study was conducted to provide a relevant data to the nation as there is limited research related has been done in the Malaysian population. There is still a lack of research in Malaysia that is related to factors that are associated with parenting practices.

A study conducted in Ireland with 1353 respondents showed that parents' age 45 and above were related with parenting attitude and less harsh parenting compared to younger parents (below 35 years old) (Halpenny et al., 2010) . Next, a study was conducted in United States by Allen and Huff (2014) among 180 national university alumni who were parents. This study found out that 85 % of the respondents that had the behavior of interest in knowledge used emotion coaching parenting practice in the family . This was supported by a study conducted by Johnson and Lieberman (2007) in United States . This study found out that parents who perceived danger of the surroundings had the overprotective attitude and had association with emotion coaching parenting practice with $p < 0.05$.

This correlated with a research conducted in 2006 by Kliewer et al. in United States on 101 African American parents. Overprotective and interest in knowledge had significant association with emotion coaching parenting practice with respect due to community violence. Ulutas and Omeroglu, conducted a study in 2012 on 144 6 years old preschool children with their mothers and teachers participated with the research. Overprotective mothering had negative effect on emotion intelligence parenting practice. Di Maggio, Zappulla, Pace and Izard (2016) had a case control study done by them in Italy. It had been found out that by enhancing knowledge of emotion intelligence parenting practices through intervention by joining classes , this could improve the person's emotion intelligence skills.

Materials & Methods

Study Design, Setting and Sample

This was a cross-sectional study. Respondents were parents or foster parents of preschool children in Tabika Kemas in Ampang and Serdang, Selangor. The sample size used was 252 based on the mean of social support parenting for family (mean = 24.4 ± SD 5.02) and friends (mean = 23.4 ± SD 5.15) (Respler-Herman, Mowder, Yasik, & Shamah, 2012). The period for data collection was from 13th June to 2nd July 2016 with a response rate of 100%. For this research, the sampling method consisted of two stages. For stage one, we used cluster sampling to choose which region in Selangor that represented the population in Selangor. The regions that we chose were Ampang and Serdang, Selangor. In Ampang, there were 20 tabika kemas whereas, in Serdang, there were 26 tabika kemas. The estimation of preschool children per one tadika kemas was between 30 to 50 that represented also 30 to 50 parents. Hence, 7 tabika kemas from Ampang and also 7 tabika kemas from Serdang were chosen to fulfil the number of respondents. In stage two, we used computer-generated simple random sampling to choose our respondents from lists of preschool's parents from the 14 tabika kemas we had chosen.

Instruments

A self-administered questionnaires was used and distributed to pre-schoolers' parents in Tabika Kemas in Ampang and Serdang, Selangor. The distribution of the questionnaires to the preschoolers' parents was with the help of teachers in Tabika Kemas. Three days were given to the preschoolers' parents to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were pretested prior to the conduct of the study. The questionnaires consist of three sections. Likert scale was used in all of the sections. The 3 sections were:

- i. Parental knowledge factor
This section consisted of two components which were training and source
- ii. Parents' attitude
This section consisted of two components too which were overprotective and interest in knowledge
- iii. Parenting practices
This section consists of questions regarding the practice of parenting practices .

Methodology

For each sections in questionnaire (parental knowledge which were sources and training, parents' attitude which were overprotective and interest in knowledge, parenting practices) were divided into good or bad groups by using median from the total score of Likert scale used. For example, parental knowledge (sources) median was calculated from the total of Likert scale and grouping of the variable into good sources or bad sources was using median as the indicator. Then, the association between each of the independent variables was found by using Chi-square test.

Ethics approval

Approval from Ethics Committees of Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia and State Department of KEMAS had already been obtained when this study was conducted.

Statistical Analysis

Using SPSS version 21.0, the median, interquartile range, frequency and percentage were calculated for the descriptive analysis. The parenting practice score was then being categorised into good and bad parenting and was analysed using Chi-square. P=value less than 0.05 is considered significant.

RESULTS

Table 1 showed the distribution of respondents based on parental knowledge and parents' attitude factors. Hence, the median was used as the cutoff point to categorise the variables to good or bad variables. Out all of the respondents, most of them had good parental knowledge which was 52.5% (n=124) and good parents' attitude which was 50.4%

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents based on parental knowledge and parents' attitude factor

Distribution of respondents based on parental knowledge factor			
Variable		N	(%)
i. Parental knowledge			
Good		124	52.5
Bad		112	47.5
ii. Parents' attitude			
Good		119	50.4
Bad		117	49.6

Table 2 showed that parental knowledge (source) had significant association with parenting practices with $p = 0.002$, $\chi^2 = 10.003$. Other than that, parents' attitude which were overprotective and interest in knowledge both showed significant with parenting practices (with $p = <0.001$, $\chi^2 = 27.817$; $p = 0.008$, $\chi^2 = 7.047$)

Table 2: Association between sociodemographic factor and parenting practices

		Parenting practices: Good and bad parenting practices		Chi-Square value, χ^2	p-value
	Variable	Good n(%)	Bad n(%)		
A. Parental knowledge					
ai. training	Good	59(54.6)	49(45.4)	2.176	0.140
	Bad	35(43.8)	45(56.3)		
a.ii. source	Good	60(61.2)	38(38.8)	10.003	0.002*
	Bad	33(37.9)	54(62.1)		
B. Parents' attitude					
bi. overprotective	Good	73(65.2)	39(34.8)	27.817	<0.001*
	Bad	19(25.7)	55(74.3)		
b.ii. interest in knowledge	Good	65(58)	47(42)	7.047	0.008*
	Bad	30(38.5)	48(61.5)		

Discussion

This research found an association between parental knowledge (source) with parenting practices with $p < 0.05$. Ampang and Serdang are the places where access to the internet was good. So, it was convenient and suitable for the respondents who were busy with their works to gain knowledge about parenting practices through online sources. According to a cross-sectional study conducted in Queensland Australia, a significant association was found between source which consisted of access to books and other written materials with good parenting practices ($p < 0.05$) (Winter et al., 2012). However, a research by (Wartella, Rideout, Lauricella, & Connell, 2014) found out that sources did not have a very significant association with parenting practice since most of the parents for about (62%) rely on people for the advice rather than reading books or magazines.

Parental knowledge (training) showed no significant association with parenting practices. This might be because of awareness regarding skill of parenting was low in the Ampang and Serdang districts that made of inaccessible or lack of access towards classes that taught and trained parents regarding parenting in the neighbourhood. Contradicted with a previous study by Orawska (2005), it has been proven that the broader parent training literature, the better cognitive and affective elements of the parenting role. By joining parent education program, it will enhance parents' knowledge. Parents will improve their new experiences that could lead to an increase in knowledge and positive parenting practices. Subsequently, it will give advantages to children by changing or improvement in their parents' attitude. A study showed that mothers who had a higher knowledge of infant and child development showed higher levels of parenting capabilities, cognitive capabilities and fewer child behaviour problems (Orawska, 2005). According to a research that had been done in Bangladesh, it stated that by implementing education programme, the mothers had higher knowledge about the strategies to change the behaviour in parenting practice compared to the control group (Aboud, 2007). This was supported by a research done by (Li, Chan, Mak, & Lam, 2013) in Hong Kong.

Parents' attitude which was overprotective and interest in knowledge both showed significant with parenting practice ($p = <0.001$; $p = 0.008$). This might be due to parents who were eager in seeking knowledge about parenting practices tends to have a lot of information and knowledge about raising their children. Consistent with our findings was a study conducted in the small rural state in Northern New England with 120 respondents showed a significant association between complex epistemological perspective (belief about knowledge) and good parenting practices ($p < 0.05$) (Bond & Burns, 2006). This was supported by a study conducted by Hurley, Huscroft-D'Angelo, Trout, Griffith, and Epstein in 2014. Other than that, there was a significant association between overprotective and parenting practices in a study conducted by Root, Hastings and Rubin (2015). The same findings was found in a research conducted by Ulutas and Omeroglu in 2012 that overprotective parents had significant association with emotion intelligence parenting practices. This might be because when the parents felt threaten regarding the danger of the surrounding, they had the instinct of wanting to protect their child from the danger. Hence, parents will usually restrict and disciplinized their child in order to control their child's daily activity in ensuring their safety.

Conclusion

The findings showed that parents needed to obtain good sources of knowledge on parenting in order to develop the skills. In addition, being overprotective in a correct manner and having interest in enhancing parenting skills knowledge on their parenting would make them to become good parents.

This research did not find an association of parental knowledge (training) with parenting practices. This might be due to small sample size. Hence, future research with bigger sample size is indicated to detect a significant difference between parental knowledge (training) and parenting practices.

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