

## CHAPTER II :LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Numerous factors contribute to the dynamic of the parent-child relationship, with research highlighting the significance of parent-child playtime in fostering positive interactions for younger children (Ahmadzadeh et al., 2020; Ginsburg et al., 2007; Milteer et al., 2012; Shorer et al., 2019). Notably, the success of bond creation in parent-child relationship is significantly influenced by the parent attitude towards play. However, the advent of digital technology in today's society has introduced new considerations regarding its impact on this relationship (Vaterlaus et al., 2019). Each of these temporal elements has been empirically linked to distinct consequences for the parent-child relationship, which can significantly influence children's later development in life.

Throughout this study, the researcher looked into the influence of parent-child playtime on the parent-child relationship, examining the correlation between the two variables. Previous research on the relationship between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship has predominantly concentrated on either only one parent, where it mostly focuses on mother and its effects on children, with minimal attention given to the potential benefits for the overall parent-child relationship. Although concerns have been raised about changes in children's play trend, robust research into the impact on child development and the role of parents in these changes is limited. Therefore, the primary objective of this study was to develop research that focused on

the impact of parent-child playtime on the parent-child relationship from a holistic perspective.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1 Social Development Theory: Vygotsky's Theory on Play**

A well-known, often-quoted passage from Russian psychiatrist Lev S. Vygotsky (1967) states: "In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior". He emphasized the idea that play is not merely a pastime for children but a dynamic process through which they construct knowledge, develop problem-solving skills and foster social interactions.

Vygotsky's theory (1978) differs from other development theory in a number of important ways:

1. Vygotsky emphasized the profound impact of culture on cognitive development which not categorize into stages.
2. Vygotsky assigned a substantial role to social factors in cognitive development. He contended that cognitive development emerges from social interactions and guided learning within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this view, children and their 'more knowledgeable others' collaboratively construct knowledge. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the influence of the environment on thinking processes.

3. Vygotsky underscored the role of adults as pivotal in cognitive development.

He argued that adults transmit the cultural tools of intellectual adaptation to children, who internalize these tools as part of their cognitive growth.

Vygotsky identified elementary mental functions, which include attention, sensation, perception and memory form the foundation of cognitive processes and are initially limited by biological factors. Cognitive functions, even those carried out alone, are affected by the beliefs, values, and tools of intellectual adaptation of the culture in which a person develops and therefore socio-culturally determined. The tools of intellectual adaptation, such as memory mnemonics and mind maps, therefore vary from culture to culture. Eventually, through interaction within the sociocultural environment, the elementary mental functions are developed into more sophisticated and effective mental processes or strategies which he refers to as Higher Mental Functions.

Play allows children to practice and develop their mental functions in a safe and enjoyable environment. Vygotsky believed that play is a form of self-regulation that helps children to develop their ability to control their own behavior and emotions. Through play, children can also learn to regulate their own thinking and problem-solving strategies, which can then be applied to other contexts.

Play is an important context for cognitive development because it provides a zone of proximal development (ZPD) in which children can try out new skills and ideas. The ZPD represents the gap between what a child can do independently and what they can achieve with the assistance of a more capable peer or adult. Vygotsky argued that play often operates within a child's ZPD, making it a zone where learning is maximized. Play is for instance an important space for optimal acquisition of social skill. This social acquisition is understood through the zone-of-proximal development, where children act and interact in their personal skills level and above it. However, Vygotsky's concept

of a child receiving assistance from either an adult or a more knowledgeable peer has frequently been interpreted quite literally has restricted the broader application of the ZPD to situations involving one-on-one teaching or tutoring (Bodrova et al., 2015.; Nicolopoulou et al., 2010).

Through play, children can engage in activities that are slightly beyond their current level of competence, with guidance and support from others which Vygotsky describe as 'more knowledgeable others' (Elkonin, 2005). These collaborative efforts create and sustain a shared imaginary scenario within an activity that is characterized by voluntariness, spontaneity and adherence to rules. Importantly, these rules are not externally imposed by adults but are rather recognized and embraced as essential by the children themselves (Nicolopoulou et al., 2010).

Scaffolding, a term closely associated with Vygotsky's theory of 'more knowledgeable others', refers to the support provided by adults or peers to help a child accomplish tasks or solve problems within their ZPD. The ZPD coupled with the associated concept of scaffolding, embodies a notion that possesses both explanatory and theoretical significance, not only describes a process of learning and development but also serves as the foundation for precise tutoring strategies that facilitate learning and development (Nordlof, 2014). In play, scaffolding can take various forms, such as asking open-ended questions, providing hints or demonstrating new strategies. This support encourages children to explore, experiment and develop their cognitive skills in a playful context.

Vygotsky also highlighted the significance of make-belief play or symbolic play, where children use objects, actions or words symbolically to represent real-life situations (Elkonin, 2005) Symbolic play, often observed in activities like pretend play, enables children to engage in abstract thinking and imaginative problem-solving.

Vygotsky believed that symbolic play fosters the development of higher mental functions. Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach emphasizes the use of mental tools or tools of the mind (e.g., using lists to remember everyday tasks) in the development of higher-level mental functions (e.g., focused attention and use of memory strategies that are learned). These cultural tools assist children in the mastery of skills at the inter-psychological or social level between people and then at the intra-psychological or individual level.

Despite, Elkonin's highlights the significance of imaginative play, which he sees as something that developed later in human history. He suggests that in societies where people did not have writing and lived by hunting and gathering, play was a way for children to get ready for adulthood. They would imitate adults using smaller versions of their tools. But in modern and highly industrialized societies, play may not always adequately prepare children for real-life activities. This is because some grown-up tasks and tools are too complex for young children and they might change a lot by the time the kids grow up, so practicing them may not yield effective results.

### **2.2.2 Attachment Theory**

Bowlby and Ainsworth made separate and joint contributions to attachment theory. Bowlby formulated an initial blueprint of attachment theory, drawing on ethology, control systems theory and psychoanalytic thinking. He proposed that attachment is an innate system that evolved to promote the survival and development of infants. Bowlby's ethological theory of attachment proposes that attachment is an innate system that evolved to promote the survival and development of infants. According to this theory, infants are biologically programmed to seek proximity to their primary caregiver, usually the mother, in order to obtain protection, comfort and

support. Bowlby argued that the attachment system is activated by a set of innate signals or "social releasers" that elicit caregiving responses from the attachment figure. He also proposed that the quality of the attachment relationship is shaped by the caregiver's sensitivity and responsiveness to the infant's signals.

Ainsworth conducted the first empirical study of infant-mother attachment patterns from an ethological perspective, which provided empirical support for Bowlby's theory and helped to refine and expand it. The study took place in Uganda and was the first empirical investigation of attachment from an ethological perspective. Her study involved observing 26 families with unweaned babies every 2 weeks for 2 hours per visit over a period of up to 9 months. Ainsworth was particularly interested in determining the onset of proximity-promoting signals and behaviors, noting carefully when these signals and behaviors became preferentially directed toward the mother. Her findings provided empirical support for Bowlby's ethological theory of attachment and helped to refine and expand the theory.

Ainsworth also developed the 'strange situation' procedure, which is a widely used method for assessing infant attachment patterns. Together, Bowlby and Ainsworth developed the concept of the secure base, which refers to the idea that infants use their primary caregiver as a secure base from which to explore the environment and to which they can return for comfort and support. Once attached, infants are able to use the attachment figure as a secure base for exploration of the environment and as a safe haven to which to return for reassurance. The quality of social interaction between the infant and attachment figure is crucial in determining how effectively the attachment figure can serve in these roles. The attachment figure's sensitivity to the infant's signals is especially important, although child factors also play a role. Bowlby and Ainsworth's

concept of the secure base is a central feature of attachment theory and has been widely studied and applied in research and clinical practice.

This attachment theory founded to be the basis to parent-child relationship which serves as the cornerstone of children's socio-emotional development (Bowlby, 1988). It provides the emotional foundation for children to explore the world, develop self-esteem and form secure attachments (Ainsworth et al., 1978). According to Bowlby, a secure parent-child attachments promote emotional regulation, empathy and resilience throughout a child growth.

### **2.2.3 Child- Centered Play Therapy**

Child-centered play therapy (CCPT) is a form of therapy that allows children to express themselves through play in a safe and accepting environment (Landreth, 2012). The therapist creates a space where the child can explore their thoughts, feelings, and experiences through play, without judgment or direction.

Play serves as a crucial avenue through which children can cultivate various aspects of their psychological development, including but not limited to self-concept, personal responsibility, self-direction, self-acceptance, decision-making skills, sense of control, self-reliance, coping awareness and skills, internal source of evaluation, and trust. CCPT is founded on the fundamental principles of embracing the entirety of the child, valuing their individuality, and demonstrating sensitivity to their subjective experiences, encompassing their desires, necessities, and emotions.

The dynamic process involves the therapist provides the child with the three attitudinal conditions of genuineness, non-possessive warmth and empathic understanding, which help to build a strong therapeutic relationship (Rogers, 1986). According to Landreth, the unique relationship in child-centered play therapy (CCPT)

is characterized by expectancy rather than expectation. While expectation centres on predetermined behaviors and outcomes, expectancy embodies a dynamic anticipation of being together, characterized by an attitude of eagerness that encompasses both vitality and potential. This relationship is not reliant on past experiences or preconceived notions about the child.

In CCPT, the therapist focuses entirely on the child rather than solely on the child's issues. Consequently, the content and direction of the child's play are dictated by the child, rather than by any predefined problem. Central to this approach is the understanding that behavior is influenced by the child's perception of their world and self-concept. Therefore, the therapist endeavors to comprehend the child's unique perspective, interpreting their behavior through the child's eyes.

Through play, children can develop self-concept, personal responsibility, self-direction, self-acceptance, decision-making skills, sense of control, self-reliance, coping awareness and skills, internal source of evaluation, and trust. CCPT is predicated on acceptance of the whole child, prizing of uniqueness, and sensitivity to the child's world, with understanding of the child's wants, needs, and feelings.

Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) has laid the groundwork for another intervention model known as filial therapy. In filial therapy, parents are trained to engage with their children emotionally and apply basic child-centered play therapy techniques during structured play sessions using a special set of toys. The goal is to empower parents to become therapeutic agents for their children, leveraging the natural parent-child bond to facilitate the child's development and play. Unlike problem-focused strategies, filial therapy aims to bring about positive behavioural and symptomatic changes through an improved parent-child relationship (Garza et al.,

2010). Another model developed by Landreth (2012), known as Child-Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT), involves a series of ten sessions of filial therapy has been found to be beneficial across various settings in addressing a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Numerous studies were conducted to measure the effectiveness of these play therapy intervention. Child-centered play therapy (CCPT) has been found effective in addressing various issues, such as behavioral problems associated with ADHD (Robinson et al., 2017), internalizing behaviors like depression (Burgin et al., 2022; Ritzi et al., 2016) and even in enhancing academic achievement for normal functioning children (Blanco & Ray, 2011). A comparative study has demonstrated that child-parent relationship therapy (CPRT) shows better outcomes than child-centered play therapy (CCPT) in reducing behavioral problems in children with ADHD (Hosseini et al., 2022).

## **2.3 Past Research**

### **2.3.1 Parent-Child Playtime**

Play is widely acknowledged as the primary means of communication for children (Landreth, 2012). Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. It serves as a platform through which young children engage and interact with their surrounding world. Above all, play is a simple joy that holds a cherished place in childhood (Ginsburg et al., 2007). Gray (2013) identified five characteristics of play, which he summarized from the work of other researchers known

1. Play is self-chosen and self-directed
2. The process is more important than the outcomes
3. Guided by mental rules that leave room for creativity

4. Play is imaginative
5. Involves an active but non-stressed frame of mind

Play can take various forms, each contributing to a unique developmental sequence based on whether it is unstructured or structured. Unstructured play, defined as free play, undirected, or self-directed play (Ginsburg et al., 2007, Milteer et al., 2012), includes adventurous play (Dodd et al., 2022). In contrast, structured play, typically adult-directed or instructor-led, encompasses physical or mental activities with specific learning objectives, forming the basis for playful learning (Kangas & Harju-Luukkainen, 2022)

In contemporary psychological literature, different types of play are generally classified into five broad categories based on their developmental purposes and how they support children's learning. These types are physical play, play with objects, symbolic play, pretend/socio-dramatic play, and games with rules (Gray, 2013; Whitebread et al., 2012) with some been supported by Vygotsky's social development theory. An additional type is social play, which can occur across all other categories when two or more children engage together.

Parent-child playtime, also known as parent-child interaction through play, is a critical aspect of child development and family dynamics. Parents play a critical role in influencing their children's play, particularly during early development when children rely on their parents and utilize play as means to explore their environment (Garner et al., 2006). Hence, parental involvement in play holds significant importance for child development. Numerous studies have demonstrated the significant impact of parent-child playtime on children development.

Play offers a unique opportunity to develop the executive functioning skills that support adaptive behaviours at home. Children solve problems and learn to focus their attention while playing, whereas in turn fosters the development of executive functioning skills. These skills are required to improve school readiness especially in maths and language ability (Yogman et al., 2018).

Play with objects not only enhances children's creativity, imagination and problem-solving skills, thus contributes to their cognitive development (Ginsburg et al., 2007; Whitebread et al., 2012). Additionally, preschool children showed improvements in language acquisition when they were given blocks to play with at home with minimal adult direction (Christakis et al., 2007). Hence, children who engage in frequent play with their parents demonstrate higher levels academic achievement and of social competence (Whitebread et al., 2012).

Play facilitates the transition from dependence to independence and from parental regulation to self-regulation. It promotes a sense of agency in the child, helping them learn to resolve conflicts and develop self-advocacy skills. (Yogman et al., 2018). For children who may have difficulty expressing themselves verbally, play becomes a valuable avenue through which they can communicate their thoughts, experiences and frustrations, allowing parents to gain deeper insights into their perspectives (Ginsburg et al., 2007).

Moreover, parent-child playtime has been found to promote healthy psychosocial development and improve emotional regulation in children (Shorer et al., 2019), contributes significantly to children's socio-emotional (Whitebread et al., 2012) and empathy (Flanders et al., 2020). Children at early age possible to experience several opportunities for unstructured play, in which the child can decide what to do, with whom

and how, promotes positive self-esteem, autonomy, and confidence (Bento & Dias, 2017).

Play can be an exceptional way to increase physical activity levels in children, promoting active and healthy bodies and preventing sedentary behavior, a key strategy in addressing the obesity epidemic (Ginsburg et al., 2007; Lindsay et al., 2017). Physical play, such as running, jumping, and climbing, helps improve children's gross motor skills, enhancing their strength and body confidence. In contrast, solitary activities like sewing and cutting develop fine motor skills, which are associated with finger coordination and help children build concentration and perseverance. Additionally, play with objects often supports sensory development, aiding children in navigating the world (Whitebread et al., 2012).

Additionally, parent-child playtime fosters reciprocal interaction between parents and children. It not only boosts parents' confidence and sense of competence, reducing their need for control over their child and enhancing their ability to shoulder the responsibilities of caregiving, but also heightens their awareness of their child's needs (R. M. Milteer et al., 2012). This, in turn, promotes parent-child communication and enhances communication between spouses (Chang et al., 2015). In essence, play also facilitates effective communication among family members particularly involving parent and child.

Play and stress are closely connected as high levels of play are associated with low levels of cortisol, indicating that play may help reduce stress. Particularly with parent's involvement, play can indirectly influence reducing toxic stress to levels that support coping and resilience (Yogman et al., 2018). Play helps children develop new competencies, which in turn enhances their confidence and resilience, enabling them to face future challenges (Miltier et al., 2012). Engaging in adventurous play defined as

child-led play, is likely an effective way to support children's mental health (Dodd et al., 2022).

Radesky, Schumacher and Zuckerman (2015) indicates that opportunities for child play are displaced by rapidly increasing access to digital media, with fewer unstructured and creative parent-child interactions, particularly those involving sensorimotor and social play. However, the emergence of screens has introduced both opportunities and challenges to parent-child interactions, significantly influencing this vital relationship. The COVID-19 pandemic has played a significant role in these changes as students across all educational levels, from primary to tertiary education transitioned to online learning, and parents began working from home, relying heavily on devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, and personal computers to fulfil their tasks (Rosman et al., 2022). In addition, the study also show that children use gadgets as their main tools not only for studying but also for leisure.

According to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), there has been a gradual rise in the percentage of children aged 5 to 17 who utilize the internet in their daily lives, reaching 47% in 2020 compared to 28.5% in 2018. In response to this trend, 53.3% of parents reported being aware of parental control measures, indicating their understanding of the importance of limiting screen use. This has led to many children spend less time engaged in free play and increasing time indoors engaging with digital media (Ginsburg et al., 2007; Whitebread et al., 2012).

Another contribution to this behavior can also be explained by children being passively entertained through television, computer or video games. This passive entertainment is not protective and in fact has some harmful effects. It means that the

greater parents give freedom on screentime to children associate with high risk of detrimental outcomes (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

### **2.3.2 Parent-Child Relationship**

The parent-child relationship is a fundamental component of family dynamics and child development. The importance of parent-child relationship has long been recognized in child development and contemporary neuroscience findings further underscore the significance of the child's relational environment in shaping the brain's architecture. Each interaction serves as a building block in this process, with the quality of interpersonal connections influencing the development of brain circuits and laying the groundwork for various developmental outcomes, including academic performance, mental health, and interpersonal skills (Cozolino, 2017).

Unlike the marital relationship, the parent-child relationship naturally progresses towards separation as children grow and become independent. However, the bond remains lifelong and indefinite (Altalib et al., 2024). This enduring relationship aligns with Bowlby's concept of providing a safe haven for children, ensuring they always have a source of security and support.

The healthy parent-child relationship, similar to a therapeutic alliance that draws its healing efficacy from an attuned and symbiotic engagement characterized by positive affective connections (Schaefer, 2011). Moreover, parent-child relationships shape children's social skills, communication patterns and relationship-building abilities. Children who experience warmth, support, and consistent discipline from their parents demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem and fewer behavioral problems (Suldo et al., 2015). Hence, a strong parent-child relationship has significant impact to children academic achievement (Rathee & Kumari, 2022).

Various factors influence the quality and dynamics of the parent-child relationship, with a primary focus on parenting style. (Baumrind, 1967) identified three fundamental parenting styles based on how parents' responsiveness influenced children's socialization. However, Maccoby and Martin (1983) added a fourth category, emphasizing the role of parental demandingness. These four parenting styles are: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful.

The authoritative parenting style, often referred to as democratic parenting, is recognized for achieving the most positive developmental outcomes for children (Jabaghourian et al., 2014; Jungert et al., 2015). Parents who practice this style maintain an ideal balance of demandingness and responsiveness. Research has shown that children raised by authoritative parents develop many positive qualities, including self-esteem, problem-solving skills, empathy, trust and self-control.

The authoritarian parents tend to be extremely rigid, directive, and demanding. These parents have a significant need for control and are disinterested in children's involvement. Children exposed to authoritarian parenting often struggle with impulse control and self-regulation, leading to high rates of anxiety, fear, and depression when faced with new or challenging tasks (Asselmann et al., 2015)

The permissive parenting style demonstrated nurturing, caring and exceedingly tolerant but place few demands on their children, including assigning responsibilities or exerting control. Essentially, children are relatively free to do as they please and are left to self-regulate their own behavior. Consequently, they do not learn how to control their behavior or conform to social expectations. Because they have enjoyed unrestrained freedom during their childhood, they tend to act impulsively, make poor decisions that

may place them at risk, and make demands without regard to others' feelings (Hartman et al., 2015; Paschall et al., 2015).

Neglectful parents make few, if any, demands on their children and show minimal interest in their welfare beyond meeting basic needs for food and shelter. This lack of concern and emotional connection results in a poor-quality parent-child attachment relationship. Consequently, children raised by neglectful parents are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviours, including alcohol and drug use, risky driving, and unprotected sex, due to a lack of impulse control (Hoskins & Simons, 2015; Seibert & Kerns, 2014).

Parenting young children can be stressful and this stress can impact parenting styles and lead to child behavior problems, potentially causing difficulties later in life. Children exposed to dysfunctional parent-child relationships are at higher risk of developing behavioral problems, both externalizing and internalizing. Increased parenting stress is associated with the adoption of more negative parenting styles such as authoritarian and permissive styles, which in turn are positively related to child behavior problems (Mak et al., 2020). Children who frequently experience conflict or lack of emotional support from stressful parents are more likely to develop internalizing behavioral problems, including mental health issues like anxiety and depression (Jackson et al., 2018).

### **2.3.3 Parent Attitude Towards Play**

Parental behaviours during playtime significantly impact the parent-child relationship. The parents' behaviours and attitude towards play vary widely across cultures lead to different ways of encouraging, accepting or limiting play for their children (Ahmadzadeh et al., 2020; Lin & Li, 2018) in everyday context. There are two

contrasting patterns of beliefs and practices between Euro-American and Asian parents. The Euro-American parents believed play to be an important vehicle for the early development and growth of the preschool children, whereas the Asian parents believe getting a head start in early academics is more important than play (Parmar et al., 2004).

For instance, a study on Chinese parents found that those who viewed play as important for academic learning actively participated in enhancing their children's play engagement. Conversely, parents who saw play as primarily for fun will only facilitate their children's play according to their needs including providing spaces, toys and materials, as well as organizing play dates, rather than directly engaging in the play themselves. Thus, these parents acted more as teachers than playmates (Lin & Li, 2018).

Similarly, Greek/Cypriot parents valued play for its developmental benefits over academic focus. However, this emphasis was not reflected in their children's daily after-school routines, which were dominated by academic activities and organized lessons, leaving little time for play. These findings indicated that Greek/Cypriot parents held inconsistent attitudes about play and learning, aligning more with the academically oriented side of the education spectrum (Shiakou & Belsky, 2013)

Consistently, parents can become more effectively involved in play for learning when it is initiated by the school as part of a play-based learning approach. In Hong Kong, parents participated in play activities at schools, enhancing the children's play experiences through reciprocal parent-child interactions. Consequently, parental involvement promotes quality play experiences for children and is seen as an essential component of implementing play-based learning programs (Keung et al., 2019). In other contexts, parents in Malaysia hold strong beliefs about the importance of play but show

moderate involvement, despite facing minimal challenges in engaging in play activities at home with their preschoolers for early mathematics literacy (Mohd Alim et al., 2021).

In contrast, there some Asian parents that fully support the idea of play for fun. In a study on Taiwanese parents revealed that even fifteen minutes of play with their children could result in a high level of attachment (Chang et al., 2015). Despite the limited time available for dual-earner families, these parents still made time to play with their children. In Malaysia, parental involvement in block play with hearing-impaired children improved the quality of the parent-child relationship and interaction (Hassim et al., 2012). The development is primarily due to parents staying seated with their children, observing, conversing, and responding to them. Similarly, parents expressed positive attitudes towards play, describing it as both enjoyable and valuable rated playtime highly and worthwhile activity (Ahmadzadeh et al., 2020).

Parental playfulness refers to a parent's ability to engage in spontaneous, amusing, flexible and creative behaviours during various parent-child interactions. Research indicates that parental playfulness in everyday interactions contributes significantly to a child's emotional regulation (Shorer et al., 2019). Parents who are more playful tend to have children with lower levels of oppositional behaviour like disobedience and negative affect such as anger, sadness or fear (Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017).

While fathers and mothers may differ in the type of play they engage in, for instance rough-and-tumble play for fathers, they do not differ in the extent of playfulness during play interactions with their children. However, low paternal playfulness cannot be compensated by high levels of positive paternal behaviour in the

father-child relationship, unlike with mothers. Thus, having a highly sensitive and structured father does not necessarily reduce child negativity if the father does not engage in playful interactions (Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017).

#### **2.3.4 Interaction between Playtime and Parent-Child Relationship**

Play offers valuable opportunities for both children and parents to cultivate a nurturing and affectionate relationship (Ginsburg et al., 2007; Landreth, 2012). Furthermore, it facilitates meaningful interactions between parents and children, enabling parents to establish strong emotional bonds with their children and gain insights into their unique perspectives (Milteer et al., 2012). Consequently, the more time parents spend engaging in play with their children, the stronger their bond becomes.

Play also plays a crucial role in forming healthy attachments between infants and parents. Play enhances parent-child attachment, promoting feelings of security and trust (Runcan et al., 2012). Both infants and parents are biologically predisposed to socially connect and build attachment bonds through playful emotional communication (Schaefer, 2011). Infants' first social smiles increase their attractiveness to parents, triggering activation in the reward center of the brain for both parties and facilitating bonding (Garner et al., 2006)

Through play and rereading their favorite childhood books, are likely to communicate more effectively with their children, appreciating and sharing their children's sense of humor and individuality. The mutual joy, shared communication and attunement referring to harmonious serve-and-return interactions that parents and children experience during play help regulate the body's stress response. These dyadic

reciprocal interactions are a crucial element of healthy relationships (Yogman et al., 2018).

In a study, adults acknowledged that they felt more available to support children outdoors, where they felt relaxed and calm. This observation suggests that the outdoor environment is beneficial not only for children but also for adults, as it appears to reduce levels of stress and anxiety (Bento & Dias, 2017).

Despite all the benefits, parents nowadays often allow children to play on their own or hand them gadgets for entertainment rather than actively engaging in play with them. Excessive screen time has been found to have various negative outcomes including reduced cognitive abilities, health, social life and speech development (Rosman et al., 2022). This has led to the urgency for parents and caregivers to replace child-alone screen time with parent-child play time (Wong et al., 2021).

Although, screen time could offer opportunity for parents to have time to play with the children. To achieve maximum benefits, parents should allocate dedicated time for play and establish screen time limits or establish parent-child screen time. Parent-child screen time refers to the collaborative engagement and interaction between parents and children as they utilize digital screens, which include smartphones, tablets, computers, and television. It involves the joint participation of parents and children in various screen-related activities, such as watching movies or TV shows, playing video games, exploring educational apps, or browsing the internet as a shared experience. This shared involvement encompasses activities where parents and children use screen-based devices together, either simultaneously or through co-viewing practices (Elias & Sulkin, 2019).

Although television is still popular among young children (Elias & Sulkin, 2019), the results of a survey conducted in the United States stated that television is no

longer the main choice for young children to watch because it is defeated by various online viewing platforms such as Netflix and YouTube. It provides an opportunity for shared enjoyment, discussion and commentary on the content being viewed. Co-viewing can facilitate bonding, conversation and the exchange of ideas between parents and children (Rasmussen et al., 2016). Hence, it is important to integrate powerful protective measures in co-viewing, paired with active mediation, restricting amount and contents among children (Gentile et al., 2014). Parents who engage in co-playing video games with their children are reported to experience highly active, mentally stimulating, and cooperative interactions (Whitebread et al., 2012).

Contrary to popular belief, co-viewing can have negative consequences for children by exposing them to inappropriate content (Elias & Sulkin, 2019). It is important to note that co-viewing without active mediation has been identified as a risk factor, as it may unintentionally convey parental approval of the content being viewed (Gentile et al., 2014). Therefore, a more advanced approach is necessary to differentiate between adult-oriented and child-directed content when considering viewing habits.

Other than that, mediated screen use involves parents guiding and regulating their child's screen use. It has been found that managed screen use can control the negative impacts. Parents serve as mediators by selecting appropriate media content, setting limits on screen time and facilitating discussions about the content being consumed (Gentile et al., 2014). Mediated screen use allows parents to promote responsible and beneficial screen habits while actively engaging with their child. Therefore, finding a balance is crucial for fostering positive interactions between playtime and the parent-child relationship.

## 2.4 Parent-Child Playtime and Parent-Child Relationship on Islamic Perspective

Islam places great emphasis on the parent-child relationship, considering it as one of the fundamental components of a harmonious and righteous society right before the creation of the child itself (Alimohammadi et al., 2017; Islam, 2015). The Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities of parents and children, as well as the significance of fostering a healthy and respectful relationship between them.

The absence of a cohesive methodological framework and the fragmented nature of knowledge contribute to the distortion of Muslim culture and intellectual discourse (Altalib et al., 2024). Additionally, insufficient emphasis on effective parenting practices leads to significant emotional and psychological challenges for young children. Muslims nowadays currently approach parenting without fully integrating the Qur'anic principles of *'imrān* (nurturing a civilization), *itqān* (perfection), and *tafakkur* (exploration). Instead, their approach tends to be rigid, overly traditional, and lacking in innovation.

In Islam, parents are accorded a high status and are considered to be divinely appointed guardians and caretakers of their children. The parent-child relationship, referred to as *birr al-walidain* in Islamic teachings, emphasizes a bidirectional dynamic where mutual respect, care, and support are paramount. This reciprocal and complementary relationship nurtures intimacy and significantly enhances the psychological health of both parents and children. *Birr al-walidain* entails showing kindness, respect, and dutiful behavior towards parents, while also recognizing the importance of parents providing affection, guidance, and support to their children. This

balanced relationship fosters a harmonious and supportive family environment, promoting emotional well-being and a sense of security for all members (T'annah, 2017).

Al-Ghazali's model on parenting skills emphasizes the importance of demonstrating consistent affection towards children to foster a strong parent-child bond. This attachment is crucial for healthy emotional development. In early childhood, children particularly benefit from parental kindness, physical affection such as kisses and hugs, moral support, and undivided attention. These elements are essential for children to develop high self-esteem and emotional maturity (Manap et al., 2016).

Additionally, families must also embody mutual "affection" and "protection" to achieve harmony. When a family functions harmoniously as a cohesive unit, it effectively fulfils the following seven essential roles:

- a. Biological Function - Families provide the primary environment for the birth and upbringing of children, stemming from the parental relationship.
- b. Recreational Function - Families offer a space for entertainment, joy, and tranquillity, acting as a source of leisure and mental relaxation.
- c. Affection Function - Families serve as the initial setting for social relationships, ensuring children experience security, love and intimacy.
- d. Socialization Function - Families are the primary context for children to learn societal values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, shaping their personality and social identity.
- e. Protection Function: Families create a safe place, offering physical, psychological, spiritual, and social protection, as well as care for children.

f. Educational Function: Families are the first and most influential educators, significantly impacting children's future through continuous guidance and teaching.

g. Religious Function: Families act as the spiritual and moral centre, embedding religious rituals and values deeply within children, fostering their spiritual growth (Nurhuda, 2023).

One of the prominent approaches to form good family bonding is through early childhood education or *tarbiyatul aulad*. Providing a solid foundation of good education enables children to thrive and develop according to Islamic teachings, ultimately leading to happiness in both this world and the hereafter. When a child is nurtured and educated from an early age with positive values and kindness, they are more likely to grow and flourish. This early foundation helps them achieve well-being and avoid hardship in their worldly life and the hereafter (Ulwan et al., 2007).

According to Abdullah Nasih Ulwan (2007), the role modelling method is the most effective approach in comprehensively preparing and shaping children, encompassing moral, social, and spiritual aspects. It is crucial for educators to understand this, as younger children are highly impressionable and tend to imitate everything they observe. Consequently, incorporating play into education serves as an optimal method to instil values and nurture positive traits from a young age.

In order to build a good bonding, Islam encourage treat kids according to their maturity (Alimohammadi et al., 2017). In other words, Islam put a clear guideline as to how to do that according to their age. One of the teachings is that play with younger children so that they feel safe and trust. Playing is a fundamental component of

enjoyment and recreation, especially for children, as it is closely linked with their developmental activities (Islam, 2015).

The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide good exemplary on how to enriching play with children. Here are some examples narrated from the hadith:

*In one hadith Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: I went along with Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) at a time during the day but he did not talk to me and I did not talk to him until he reached the market of Banu Qainuqa'. He came back to the tent of Fatimah and said, "Is the little chap (meaning Al-Hasan) there?" We were under the impression that his mother had detained him in order to bathe him and dress him and garland him with sweet garland. Not much time had passed that he (Al-Hasan) came running until both of them embraced each other, thereupon Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "O Allah, I love him; love him and love one who loves him." (Muslim) (Islam, 2015).*

*From Abdullah bin al Harith said; The Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, lined up Abdullah, Ubaidullah and many other companions from Bani Al Abbas, while saying: "Whoever reaches me first, he will get this and that." Abdullah said; Then they raced each other to reach the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him, until some of them touched his chest and some touched his back. Then he kissed them and embraced them." (Ahmad, hassan) (Ulwan et al., 2007)*

*"The Prophet had been invited to lunch. We were with him, when all of a sudden, we saw Hasan playing in the alley. The Prophet saw him and ran towards him with arms outstretched to catch him. However, the child ran this way and that, escaping from the*

*Prophet and making him laugh. Then the Prophet caught Hasan. He put one hand under his chin and the other on his head. He brought his face close to the child's and kissed him, saying, 'Hasan is a part of me and I am a part of him. God will love those who love him.'"* (Thabrani) (Ulwan et al., 2007).

*Jabir, a companion of the Prophet, said, "I came to the Prophet while Hasan and Husayn were on his back. The Prophet was walking on hands and feet and saying, 'You are having a good ride and you are good riders!'"* (Thabrani) (Ulwan et al., 2007).

*Anas ibn Malik said, "The Prophet had the best manners among the people. I had a little brother who had just been weaned and of whom I took care. His nickname was Abu 'Umayr. When the Prophet saw him, he would say, 'See what weaning has done to you!' and he would begin playing with him."* (Bukhari & Muslim) (Ulwan et al., 2007).

Parents can exercise play with the children in the various form of play. One of the ways is educating through games, songs and stories that are interesting to them. This an effective method to apply in early childhood education that supports their growth. Undoubtedly, fond of games is a positive installation that can help develop children's intellectual and creativity (Ramli, 2022). Stories, on the other hand has an influence on the soul and mind of the children as they learn exemplary behaviour. Playing with mother for children under five certainly have positive impacts as it facilitates communication and build bonding between them(Setiadi, 2020).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of past research studies and models conducted by researchers in the domains of parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. The primary objective of the study is to examine the relationships

among the variables and determine the most suitable research design for investigating these connections.

