

## CHAPTER V :ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed and described on the findings obtained in Chapter 4. The results are would benefit family institutions by raising awareness among parents about the importance of parent-child playtime and the parent-child relationship. The research defines the level of parent-child playtime and the quality of the parent-child relationship among parents with younger children. This discussion will explore the association between parent-child playtime and the parent-child relationship, measured through levels of closeness and conflict. In addition, this chapter will address general issues concerning whether a parent's attitude towards play, particularly their level of involvement and enjoyment, has a greater impact on the parent-child relationship.

The analysis aimed at addressing the research questions and accomplishing the research objectives is represented by the discussion and content of this chapter. This chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section, the research findings are discussed. The results pertaining to the four objectives are then examined in the subsequent sections. The study's implications are reviewed, and recommendations for future research are made, followed by a conclusion.

### 5.2 Background Context

The literature on parent-child relationships has generally focused on the impact of both strong and poor relationships. Key factors influencing the strength of these relationships include parenting stress and parenting style, both of which significantly

affect children's development. A strong parent-child relationship supports positive development and well-being in later life. In contrast, a poor relationship is often associated with children's behavioral problems, including both externalizing behaviors such as aggression and defiance or internalizing behaviors such as anxiety and depression (Jackson et al., 2018; Mak et al., 2020).

The parent-child relationship is a natural bond formed at birth (Garner et al., 2006; Paschall et al., 2015). Thus, it is crucial to focus on strengthening this bond from an early age. One effective method is through parent-child playtime, which has been shown to positively influence the parent-child relationship. However, this quality playtime has recently been disrupted by parental attitudes, such as less involvement or overemphasis on academic activities and the unlimited use of gadgets by children, reduce opportunities for meaningful playtime. A deficit in children's development and behavioral problems has been linked to a lack of stimulation from parents, partly due to the deprivation of play (Gray, 2017).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the level of parent-child playtime, the level of the parent-child relationship, the relationship between these two variables and the effect of parents' attitudes towards play on the parent-child relationship.

The research included 240 respondents who were working parents of children aged 2-6 years in Klang Valley. A quantitative research method was employed, utilizing a questionnaire designed and modified from two reliable instruments to measure the levels of parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. The questionnaires were distributed virtually via Google Forms. Statistical analysis was conducted using the

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse the sample characteristics. Inferential statistics, such as Pearson correlation, were used to examine the relationship between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. Additionally, regression analysis was applied to examine the effect of parents' play attitudes on the parent-child relationship.

### **5.3 Discussion on Findings**

The aims of this study are:

RO1: To examine the level of parent-child playtime.

RO2: To measure the level of parent-child relationship.

RO3: To identify the correlation between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship.

RO4: To identify the influential contribution of parent play attitude on parent-child relationship.

The construct for the variable was operationalized in a questionnaire that comprised of thirty-seven items related to parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. The questionnaire was distributed to working parents in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The discussion of the result from Chapter 4 is organized into four sections corresponding to the research objectives (RO) developed in Chapter 1.

Next, this study was focusing on parent-child playtime. Parent-child playtime refer to amount of time spent between parents and children to do play activities. The type of play and its frequency, frequency of digital media use and parent play behavior all determined the amount of parent-child play (Ahmadzadeh et al., 2020).

### 5.3.1 To examine the level of parent-child playtime

To address the initial research objective concerning parent-child play, the interpretation mean score developed by Pimentel et al. (2019) was used to measure the frequency of parent-child play and digital media use, as well as parent attitude towards play.

As previously mentioned, 9 respondents reported a very low level of parent-child play, while 35 respondents reported a rather low level, and 48 respondents reported a low frequency level of engagement in parent-child play. In contrast, 53 respondents reported a high level, 65 respondents reported a rather high level, and 30 respondents reported a very high frequency level of parent-child play. Therefore, the study's findings suggest that the majority of respondents engage in a high level of play with their children, indicated by the mean score of 3.8422. The results of this study are consistent with Chang et al. (2015), who reported a high frequency of play in everyday contexts among working parents. Similarly, Ahmadzadeh et al. (2020) observed comparable patterns in their sample of working mothers.

The findings indicate that 71 respondents reported a high level, 67 respondents reported a rather high level, and 37 respondents reported a very high frequency of digital media use with parents. Similarly, the results show that 55 respondents reported a high level, 60 respondents reported a rather high level, and 31 respondents reported a very high level of digital media usage perceived by children. Consequently, the respondents reported a high frequency of digital media use, whether under parental supervision or independently, with a mean score of 4.2083 for parental involvement and 3.7792 for children's independent use. The findings of this study in line with Nahar et al. (2018), who reported that children in Malaysia spend an extended amount of time engaging

with screen-based activities. This is further supported by Kaya (2020), which observed high levels of screen time among preschool children.

Conversely, 11 respondents scored at a very low level, while 50 respondents reported a low level, 145 respondents demonstrated a high level and 34 showed a very high level of involvement during playtime with their children. As a result, the majority of parents demonstrated a high level of involvement in parent-child play, consistent with the mean score of 2.8833. The result in this study is in line with the result of research by (Ahmadzadeh et al., 2020). According to the findings, parent have high involvement while playing with their children claimed that it is a valuable activity.

Nevertheless, 3 respondents reported a very low level of enjoyment, while 38 respondents reported a low level, 139 respondents demonstrated a high level and 60 showed a very high level of enjoyment during playtime with their children. Hence, the respondents showed a high level of enjoyment during playtime, as indicated by the mean score of 2.8702. Our results replicated previous research indicating that mother and father do not differ in the extent of playfulness during play interactions with their children (Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017).

Several factors contribute to parent-child playtime, including the frequency of digital media usage and parental play attitudes. Contrary to Gray (2017), who suggests that gadgets can lead to a deficiency in play, this study found that screen time is not a significant barrier to maintaining high-frequency play between parents and their children. This finding challenges recommendations for replacing child-alone screen time with parent-child playtime (Wong et al., 2021). Instead, modern parents are increasingly integrating gadgets into playtime to enhance the quality of interactions (Elias & Sulkin, 2019; Rasmussen et al., 2016). In accordance with these findings, it is

supported that children's behavioral problems, whether externalizing or more concerning internalizing issues, can be effectively treated using play method which is the child-centered play therapy approach (Burgin et al., 2022; Ritzi et al., 2016; Robinson et al., 2017).

Despite the presence of digital media, parents continue to exhibit strong involvement and enjoyment in play activities with their children. These findings heavily rely on parents' beliefs about play, which are influenced by cultural and sociodemographic factors (Lin & Li, 2018; Whitebread et al., 2012).

### **5.3.2 To measure the level of parent-child relationship**

The second objective was to measure the level of parent-child relationship by identifying the level of conflict and closeness. The descriptive statistical analysis shows that respondents have low level of conflict indicated by 2.3714 mean score and high level of closeness with a 4.6054 mean score value. The findings align with Driscoll's (2011) study, which also demonstrated similar levels of conflict and closeness in parent-child relationships. According to the study, both mothers and fathers exhibit a high degree of closeness with their children, with mothers demonstrating even greater closeness than fathers for both genders. Fathers, however, show more closeness to their daughters.

This high degree of closeness from mothers is particularly evident during the preschool age of the children. This may be attributed to maternal behaviors such as sensitivity, structuring, and non-intrusiveness, as well as the mother's role in caregiving activities, which typically results in better interactions with the children (Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017). Despite these variations in closeness, both mothers and fathers report low degrees of conflict with their children.

According to Attachment Theory, interactions with a parent who is accessible, responsive and engaged are internalized as positive models of the self and others, influencing future relationships and self-perception (Bretherton, 1992). A healthy interaction between parents and their children reflects a positive family environment, characterized by a nurturing affective dimension and the presence of emotional support (Popov & Ilesanmi, 2015). Consistent with Al-Ghazali model which emphasis on demonstrating consistent affection towards children to foster a strong parent-child bond (Manap et al., 2016).

### **5.3.3 To identify the correlation between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship**

The third objective was to identify the correlation between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. The results show that parent-child playtime as the independent variable have influences on the parent-child relationship which is the dependent variable. A coefficient value  $r = 0.426$  was determined on the association between the variable which are parent-child playtime and parent-child closeness at a p-value less than 0.01. The coefficient value  $r = 0.426$  indicates a positive relationship between the two variables, parent-child playtime and parent-child closeness.

A coefficient value  $r = -0.172$  was determined on the association between the variable which are parent-child playtime and parent-child conflict at a p-value less than 0.01. The coefficient value  $r = -0.172$  indicates a negative relationship between the two variables, parent-child playtime and parent-child conflict.

The result does support the hypothesis, that there is a correlation between parent-child playtime and parent-child relationship. The result in this study is in line with the

result of research by Shorer et al. (2019). According to the findings, Parents who engage in play with their children, as measured by 'parental playfulness,' show a positive correlation with parent-child closeness and a negative correlation with parent-child conflicts.

Runcan (2012) emphasizes that the amount of time parents spend with their children positively impacts the parent-child relationship, particularly when parents allocate sufficient time for their child, including playtime (Chang et al., 2015). Moreover, it is a most suitable approach in order to improve children's behavioural problem with child-parent relationship therapy intervention (Hosseini et al., 2022). This underscores the importance of investing quality time with children, especially in play activities, which is crucial for younger children. Furthermore, child-parent relationship therapy (CPRT) intervention has been found to be a highly suitable approach for improving children's overall well-being (Hosseini et al., 2022). Similarly, Islam advocates for treating children according to their developmental stage to strengthen the parent-child bond (Alimohammadi et al., 2017).

#### **5.3.4 To identify the influential contribution of parent play attitude on parent-child relationship**

This study also aimed to identify the influential contribution of parent play attitude on parent-child relationship measured by closeness factor. The result of the study shows parent play attitude slightly give effect on parent-child relationship. The parent play attitude comprises of two indicators which is involvement and enjoyment contributes 12.2% and 21.2% respectively, towards parent-child relationship. When comparing which factors contribute the most, parent enjoyment shows a greater effect.

Several studies highlight the impact of parental attitudes towards play on the parent-child relationship. For instance, Hassim (2012) found that parents of children with hearing impairments who actively participated in block play reported an improvement in the quality of their relationship and interactions with their children. Other research suggests that parental enjoyment and playfulness positively influence parent-child relationships (Shorer et al., 2019), with significant benefits noted especially for fathers (Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017). These findings underscore the importance of parental play attitudes and behaviors in fostering a safe and trusting environment for children, consistent with the Islamic principles of *tarbiyatul aulad*, which emphasize nurturing and guiding children (Ulwan et al., 2007).

#### **5.4 Implication of the Study**

The study has implications for improving societal understanding and awareness of the importance of parent-child playtime on parent-child relationship. Based on findings, the implications of the research can be divided into multiple perspectives in terms of theoretical, practical and methodological.

##### **5.4.1 Theoretical Perspective**

This study focuses on Vygotsky's social development theory and child-centered play therapy (CCPT) as tools for enhancing parent-child playtime. Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the role of social interaction, particularly play, in children's development, highlighting how parents' social connections influence their children's growth. The study also explores various types of play and how scaffolding techniques demonstrated by parents can positively impact children's inter-psychological development. CCPT on the other hands highlights on the therapeutic and developmental benefits of play. By engaging in play, children express their emotions, work through conflicts, and develop

coping mechanism. Parent should know and understand the impact that play can give to children development, not only to improve their relationship but also promotes children's physical and psychological well-being. However, there is few other interventions that leveraging the natural parent-child bond to facilitate the child's development and play like filial therapy (Garza et al., 2010) and child-parent relationship therapy (CPRT) which does not include in this study.

The parent-child relationship in this study is measured through levels of closeness and conflict. Various instruments measure the parent-child relationship, such as those used by Chang et al. (2015) and Walsh & Zadurian (2022), each assessing different subscales not covered in this study.

The level of the parent-child relationship is categorized into five levels: very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. Monitoring these levels is crucial, as they serve as indicators of a strong bond. Parents can take preventive actions if necessary to avoid deteriorating conditions that could negatively affect children's development.

#### **5.4.2 Practical Perspective**

The findings of this research can be leveraged to advocate awareness programs, including manuals, interventions, modules and other resources focused on enhancing parent-child playtime and relationships, particularly among parents with young children. Policymakers, government authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and educators can organize seminars and workshops to encourage more parent-child play activities.

The study highlights that parent-child playtime significantly influences the parent-child relationship. Counsellors should be proficient in play therapy approaches in championing children's play deprivation issues. Collaborating with organizations

specializing in children's play, such as childcare centres or children's libraries, can enhance the effectiveness of these programs.

In the technological era, parent-child playtime often appears neglected. It is crucial for parents to actively involve in play activities at home and support intervention programs organized by local authorities. Therefore, programs addressing this issue are essential for parents as an early intervention strategy to overcome children's behavioural problems.

#### **5.4.3 Methodological Perspective**

This study employs quantitative methods designed to yield specific outcomes and measure the effects of the variables. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Previous research related to this study; Driscoll et al., 2011, Menashe-Grinberg & Atzaba-Poria, 2017, and Shorer et al., 2019 also utilized quantitative methods. The levels of parent-child playtime and parent-child relationships were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The relationship between these variables was examined using inferential statistics, specifically Pearson correlation, while regression analysis was applied to ascertain the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This study utilized SPSS version 25.0 for all statistical analyses due to its reputation as one of the best statistical software packages available, enables effective frequency analysis, ensuring that the study's findings are accurate and precise, presented in numerical form.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

This research investigates the levels of parent-child playtime and parent-child relationships. For future studies, it is recommended to examine the impact of maternal

and paternal attitudes toward play to understand differences in their levels of involvement and enjoyment. This approach acknowledges the distinct roles that mothers and fathers play in parenting. Additionally, future research could employ longer study periods to assess the effects on parent-child relationships over time. Replicating this study with a longitudinal design could provide deeper insights into the direction of the relationships identified in this research.

Another suggestion is to sample different groups of children, such as primary school students, who still require active play for their development. Future research could also focus on parents outside the labour force, such as studying parents, housewives or househusbands, to explore different dynamics in parent-child playtime. To obtain more comprehensive and nuanced results, it may be beneficial to conduct the research as a mixed-methods study.

Government and non-government organizations should spread knowledge and awareness to promote effective play parenting approaches. Collaboration among family institution experts is essential to achieve better outcomes. These efforts are crucial for fostering a peaceful and harmonious society.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The research findings demonstrated a high level of parent-child playtime and a strong parent-child relationship. Furthermore, parent-child playtime showed a significant positive correlation with and influence on the parent-child relationship. Although numerous other factors may affect the parent-child relationship, engaging in parent-child playtime is one of the most effective methods to strengthen this bond. A

lack of such engagement could harm children's development and well-being. Therefore, it is essential to take effective steps to raise parents' awareness about this critical issue.

Additionally, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other groups. Family institutions, in collaboration with various experts in this field, play a crucial role in providing information, knowledge, and awareness to the community about this issue, ensuring that future generations receive a better upbringing.