

Predictors of Emotional Intelligence among Preschool Children in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is emerging as a relatively important and growing area of behavioural investigation in education, psychology, learning and development. Negative effects may arise and affect children's lives when emotional intelligence deficits. Nowadays, electronic devices have become common and hence it is undeniable that screen time of electronic devices among preschool children is gradually increasing because they have more opportunities to use it in anywhere and anytime. Playfulness is an essential element of childhood that could promote children's emotional intelligence and future mental health. Besides, parents play the main roles in monitoring their children's screen time, in forming children's playfulness traits and in promoting their emotional intelligence. Certain previous researches revealed that the frequency of electronic device usage or screen time was higher for children with lower socioeconomic status families (Dashti & Yateem, 2018; Certain & Kahn, 2002). Low socioeconomic status would affect parenting practices like monitoring and also parental investment (Dashti & Yateem, 2018). This could be supported by previous studies which mentioned parents from low SES families would engage in less responsive ways when interacting or playing with their kids (Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Grant et al., 2003). Moreover, financial difficulties would affect children's socio-emotional development and also parenting strategies like monitoring because low-income parents preferred to use restrictive strategies when monitoring their kids (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2017; Nikken & Jansz, 2006; Conger & Conger, 2002). Nevertheless, higher SES families would use more active and involved interaction style with their kids (Fujioka & Austin, 2002; Linver, Brooks-Gunn & Kohen, 2002; Mayer, 1997). This study sought to determine the relationship between mother's characteristics (age, mothers' education level and employment status), child's characteristics (age), family characteristics (family total monthly income and number of children), screen time, playfulness and parental monitoring with emotional intelligence among Chinese preschool children. Next, the research aims to determine the unique predictors of EI.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Parental monitoring, Playfulness, Preschool children, Screen time