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Parent-Child Play within Information Technology: A Quest for Quality Family Atmosphere

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Abstract

Due to the advanced information technology applications are broadly used in the human beings life, the impact of Information Technology on education system affects young children's family education. From the multi-media exercise in worldwide web to the intelligent application of ipad and iphone, young children's learning is increasingly developing with the innovations of Information Technology. With the parents' pressures in work worries, the impact of Information Technology on parenting style and family atmosphere is a worthwhile topic for the purpose of meeting young children's learning and development. This paper intends to emphasize the preschool children parents' parent-child playing within the usage of Information Technology and its impact on family atmosphere. The study first collects the data from some relative questionnaires with randomly sampling to distribute 450 preschool children's parents in Southern Taiwan. The data are then analyzed by using SPSS statistical tool with Factor Analysis, Regression Analysis, and also Hierarchical Regression. The results of analysis are concluded as follows: 1. Parent-child play within information technology presents partially significantly positive correlations with parenting style. 2. Parent-child play within information technology appears partially remarkably positive correlations with family atmosphere. 3. Parenting style reveals partially notably positive correlations with family atmosphere. 4. Parent-child play within information technology shows partially significantly moderating effects between parenting style and family atmosphere. Based on the research outcomes, it is expected that some suggestions would be useful for young children's parents to pursue quality family atmosphere with the application of playing with information technology.

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1. Introduction

Many studies have shown that children tend to be more willing to communicate with parents if their parents engage in make-believe play in their early ages. However, with the trend that children of today belong to the 'Technology Generation' (Jukes & Dosaj, 2006; Robinson & Stubberud, 2012). Information technology becomes a part of their life even when they are very young and has a deep influence during the growth years (Chou, 2012b; Wood, 2005; Yeh et al., 2011; Yu, 2009). Parents are easy to place undue emphasis on the "results" of play and often give commands and directions to children to make it perfect. By imposing structure on children play not only makes the childhood experience unrewarding for both child and parents but also hamper family atmosphere. Some scholars suggest parents "to follow the child's ideas and imagination;" however, in parents' reality life, for attaining academic achievements, parents always impose their own values in organizing children's activities. In

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children's play, studies have shown that parents' involvement with children's play help children in building solving problems ability, testing out ideas, exploring experiences, communication ability, emotional expression, eye contact, taking turns, sportsmanship. This study tends to explore with the parent-child playing within information technology application, to what extent does it co-relate with parents' parenting style and family atmosphere.

2. Literature review

Integrated Information Technology with Family Education

With advancements in information technology, modern day children's family environments are equipped with devices such as computers, cameras, multimedia equipment, voice recorders, conferencing instruments, Internet connection, cell phone, ipad, iphone and so on. Information Technology Integrated Into Family brings so much convenience in modern life. An important aspect to understand while using integrated information technology for early childhood learning is to ensuring that it gets carried out with a "developmentally appropriate practice" (Dina, 2009; Kneas & Perry, 2011; Howard, Amanda, & Craig, 2010). Therefore, it allows parents to adjust the orientation and teaching theories and further, to stress on children' learning, rather than on the applications of information technology itself (Ou, 2009). As per the research done by Snider and Hirschy (2009) human beings have a genetic disposition, which indicate the preference towards information that is presented them in a visually stimulating or interactive manner. This genetic disposition is present right from the birth and hence, it is noticed that children learn more effectively through these mediums (Snider & Hirschy, 2009). During early childhood, children are curious and they are receptive to the interactive information given to them.

In the traditional world, television is considered to be a passive medium where there is no interaction. However, with the help of integrated information technology, mediums such as computers, television and multimedia tools become interactive for the children and thus they learn more (Gutnick et al., 2011). To cite a scenario, touch screen monitors can be synced up with interactive learning games, where children can identify particular objects. For example, if the learning is on animals, the children can go and touch the animals and once they touch it, the animals would make sounds. This way, children can identify animal and associate it with the sounds. Similar interactive tools are available for learning the alphabets, numbers, colors and so forth. Another popular way in which technology is used for learning in children is through simple things such as the use of a digital pro-scope to closely look at objects like the wings of a butterfly, petals of a flower and so on, making use of a digital camera to take pictures of what they created using the building blocks, making use of the sing-along and dance-along applications. (Höysniemi et al., 2005; Gutnick et al., 2011).

In this study, the dimensions for Parent-Child play within Information Technology were referred from Lee (2009) and Yeh, Chang, & Chang (2011). 1. Environment Setting. To prepare an appropriate learning situation for young children and parents interacting at the same time could assist children to find the solutions to the challenges they encounter to complete the objective of active-learning through the designed instructional environment. 2. Materials Selection. Before the instructional interaction with children, parents have to collect sufficient information to plan appropriate play for children. From activity design to select suitable hardware and software, the children's age, interests, operation ability, and emotional instructions should be taken into account. Moreover, the application or software should be designed interesting and full of educational meaning for young children and parents to experiment and explore together. 3. Parents Scaffolding. In integrating Information Technology with parent-child play, parents should act as planner and assistance who actively arranged appropriate time and methods, such as how to precede the Information Technology activities and selecting suitable materials or software for the operations of young children. And sometimes, parents serve as younger learners to make children as leaders are necessary as well.

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