

The Effectiveness of Children-Based Group Games on Development of Communication Aspects and Social Behavior of Children Aged 4-5 Years Old

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ABSTRACT: The present research aimed to examine the effectiveness child-based group games on development of communication aspects and social behavior of children aged 4-5 years old. The research method was quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest design (a test group and a control group). Its population included all children aged 4-5 years old in kindergartens of Tonekabon on 2015. The statistic sample consisted of 38 children aged 4-5 years old. They were selected among children who have gained score 1 of standard deviation below the average in social and general dimensions of general development test. The children were selected using simple random method (draw) and then they were divided into two groups that each group contained 19 children. The experimental group received group games for 10 sessions of one hour, two times weekly; while the control group received no intervention and had their own routine. Finally, there were performed pretest and posttest for both groups. The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA). The results showed that influence of child-based group games on child's communication and social-personal behaviors.

Keywords: Child-Based Games, Public Development, Communication, Social Behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

In each community, health of children and adolescents is important. Paying attention to their mental health helps them to be healthy emotionally and physically and play their social roles. In this regard, proper understanding of various physical and the mental aspects of the age group and attempt to provide suitable material and spiritual conditions for their physical, emotional and intellectual growth is clearer than need to be emphasized (Koosha, 1999).

Public activity and growth depend on each other completely. Play is one of children's basic needs and their most important and basic activities. In addition to entertain children, it has other important functions that each function is related to an aspect of their life. Play prepares children to enter adult life and strengthens their social development (Karami et al., 2015).

Play is one of the most important activities of childhood that can help proper children's development in developmental different aspects. The value and importance of play in child development is very clear. Play is necessary for moving various organs of the body, muscles' training and energy consumption that lack of its consumption leads to the sensitivity and anger. In addition, play helps child to understand and dominate the

environment. On other hand, it helps him to find appropriate positions for measuring his abilities and he learns how to distinguish between reality and imagination (Abolghasemi, 2014). Exploring the world around is another part of play philosophy that child satisfies his curiosity in this way. Play makes safe child's body and mind and teaches him social and economic responsibilities that he should accept in the future. By playing, child acquires a position to find his beliefs, feelings and problems and learn his life skills. Robert Wyatt says: "the spent hours by children for playing cannot be considered as the wasted time in any way; it may be joyful, but it is a serious work in childhood" (Jalali & Karahmadi, 2013).

Learning through playing is considered as one of the most important ways for learning and it teaches children how to prepare themselves to deal with certain situations. It helps them to overcome and solve the future problems. Play is the basic and essential need of children. The more possibility of healthy and constructive games, the better nurture mind and body and improve social properties. Through playing, children interact with the world around and various aspects of their personality are formed. In addition to mental development, play is considered as a suitable tool for children's physical development. Given the importance of playing in children's development, it seems that group games can have a significant impact on children's social and communication skills, due to their circumstances.

For children, group games provide social-psychological process to grow and learn about themselves and others. The combination of group games is a psychological and social process in which children learn items to about themselves in play room through communicating with each other. Play-therapy provides an opportunity for therapist to help children how to learn resolving conflicts (Dayle Jones, 2002). Probably, child's ability to participate in group games is a reflection of his social feelings than anything else. Generally, the group games make regulations agreed by the group and each member interests consider them, at least for that period of the game (Landreth, 2000). The overall objectives of child-based play therapy include helping to participate in learning, self-control, responsibility, express feelings, respect, accepting self and others and improving behaviors such as social skills, self-esteem and decreasing depression (Landreth, 2002). The present research was designed and performed to examine the effect child-based group games on development of communication and social aspects of children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research aimed to examine the effect child-based group games on development of communication aspects and social behavior of children aged 4-5 years old. The research method was quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest design (a test group and a control group). Its population included all children aged 4-5 years old in kindergartens of Tonekabon on 2015 (n= 519). In order to select the sample from kindergartens of the city, there were randomly selected three kindergartens: Aramis, Farzaneh and Nini Saloon. The total children aged 4-5 years old in three kindergartens were 165 children that 48 children have gained score 1 of standard deviation below the average. There were randomly selected 20 children as the research sample. The children were selected using simple random method (draw) and then they were divided into two groups that each group contained 19 children. The experimental group received group games for 10 sessions of one hour, two times weekly; while the control group received no intervention and had their own routine. After ending the intervention, a child was removed from the experimental group because he did not participate in all sessions of training play. Finally, there was considered data of 19 children from the experimental group. To homogenize both groups, there was removed a child from the control group with similar conditions and there was considered data of 19 children from the control group. At the end, there was analyzed data of the two groups (n= 38) as the final sample.

RESULTS

To analyze the data, we used statistics such as mean and standard deviation for descriptive statistics, while in inferential statistics, we used multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate analysis of variance for this purpose. Results are presented in the following Tables.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation in pretest of variables of communications and personal-social.

Variable	Group	N	M	SD
Communications	Experimental	19	34.21	8.37
	Control	19	31.84	8.85
Personal-social	Experimental	19	26.84	14.26
	Control	19	33.68	12.56

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation in posttest of variables of communications and personal-social.

Variable	Group	N	M	SD
Communications	Experimental	19	43.95	8.75
	Control	19	33.68	8.63
Personal-social	Experimental	19	43.16	13.146
	Control	19	35.79	1.045

Table 3. The adjusted mean and standard deviation of variables of communications and personal-social.

Variable	Group	N	M	SD
Communications	Experimental	19	43.493	1.381
	Control	19	34.138	1.381
Personal-social	Experimental	19	43.046	2.046
	Control	19	32.911	2.046

Table 4. ANOVA to examine the hypothesis of homogeneity of the regression line slope.

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Independent variable interaction with communication	961.76	1	480.88	14.969	0.000
Error	835.264	26	32.126		
Independent variable interaction with personal-social	18.083	1	18.083	0.245	0.625
Error	1918.202	26	73.777		

As seen in the above Table, Sig of the interaction between independent variable and personal-social is 0.625 that is larger than the alpha level (0.05). Therefore, with probability of 95%, we suggest that there has been respected the hypothesis of homogeneity of the regression line slope. However, in interaction between independent variable and communication, Sig-value is smaller than the alpha level Therefore, with probability of 95%, we suggest that there has not been respected the hypothesis of homogeneity of the regression line slope.

Table 5. The univariate analysis of variance for each variable.

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.	η^2
Communications	701.903	1	701.903	21.157	0.000	0.406
Error	1028.427	31	33.177			
Personal-social	1381.746	1	1381.746	18.977	0.000	0.38
Error	2257.172	31	72.812			

As seen in the above Table, Sig of the communication variable is 0.0005 that is smaller than the alpha level (0.002). Therefore, with probability of 99%, we suggest that child-based group games affect the effectiveness of communications:

$$F_{(1,31)} = 15.21; P < 0.01; \text{Partial } \eta^2 = 0.406$$

As seen in the above Table, Sig of the personal-social variable is 0.0005 that is smaller than the alpha level (0.002). Therefore, with probability of 99%, we suggest that child-based group games affect the effectiveness of personal-social:

$$F_{(1,31)} = 18.977; P < 0.01; \text{Partial } \eta^2 = 0.406$$

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results showed that child-based group games effect on child's communication and its severity is 0.406. In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that like other phenomena, play includes wide range of aspects and dimensions. Variety of the aspects has caused providing different definitions on play. Given the inherent broad aspects of playing, there is no an accepted simple concept and definition universally. The inherent concepts of children's play are far beyond the terms such as recreation and entertainment; play can teach the basic concepts to a child. It can also save the child from self-determination, teach social life to him, strengthen communication ways and be a matter to forget daily failures. Thus, today, play is considered as a therapeutic method (Hazrati, 2013).

In his book titled "Psychology during Childhood", William Stern writes: "play is an instinct for growth and development of skills or practice preparation for future actions" (Mahjoor, 2001). Play can be used as a desirable tool to foster moral and educate social values. Like therapeutic values, educational and training values of play are important ones. Play and work very seriously, but there is no activity that be game or work absolutely (Ahmadvand, 2001).

The results showed that child-based group games are effective in his individual-social behaviors, which its severity was 0.38.

Baggerly and Parker (2005) stated that play therapy is effective on learning, self-control, responsibility, expressing feelings, respect, acceptance of self and others, improving social skills, self-esteem, decreasing depression and anxiety.

To explain this hypothesis, it can be said that in communicating with peer, social interaction and interest in each other will be gradually grown and changed through group games. Gross notes social role of playing and considers it as child's readiness for activities that he must undertake in the future and of course, he is not aware of this preparation (Mahjoor, 2001). Children play together. For moral education, human qualities and pluralism spirit, we can teach children social compromise, cooperation, play together, altruism, forgiveness, loyalty, patience and tolerance to different beliefs, in addition to encourage them to have close friends. During playing, the child explores his surroundings. He takes the first steps for socialization through playing. He also learns cooperation and social development with group. In fact, it begins with his warm and friendly partnership with playmates and his sweet and fantasy childish world –which imagines a doll as a symbol for his mother and a stick as a phone and he will communicate with them. Play helps the child to be consistent with him and others by accessing to his surrounding facts and realities. If children make more play and participation, they will understand their efficiency level as well as their expectations from their surroundings (Shojaei & Hemmati Alamdarloo, 2006).

In addition, play helps children to practice roles and finding their identification too. The child play as father, mother, doctor, patient, seller, school, teacher, student etc. By the organized games, he learns to consider turn and conduct his activities to follow others' activities. Play makes the child come out from his world and look himself through eyes of others. Thus, he forms his self-concept (Ganji, 2004). The role of peers is not too obvious in early childhood and children pay a little attention to peers; in other words, they play with together individually. The child gradually shifted his attention from toy to his playmates from 14-18 years old (Shojaei & Hemmati Alamdarloo, 2006).

About playing role on child's social growth, Kaplan states: "many interpersonal interactions of preschoolers occur during playing and their relationships with their parents, sisters, brothers and peers will be severely revolutionized in preschool time. Play makes the child to establish a proper relationship with others and balance his behaviors. He communicates with his playmates and experiences how to create relationship. He also learns respect to social rules and regulations, accept criticism and teamwork by observing rules of playing. The child will experience life in his imaginative play by playing different social roles such as custody his dolls, housekeeping and answer the phone. Briefly, he will learn many social behaviors through playing (Shojaei & Hemmati Alamdarloo, 2006).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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