

**PSYCHOLOGICAL INFLUENCE OF PLAY METHOD ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH AND WITHOUT HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN IKA
SOUTH, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine the psychological influence of play method of teaching on the development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State in Nigeria. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study while four hypotheses were tested. A descriptive survey was adopted in this study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select 90 teachers as sample for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Pre-school Children Development Rating Scale" (PCDRS) for children with and without hearing impairment. Face and content validation were carried out. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha to give a Reliability index of 0.77. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that: play method of teaching has high psychological influence on language skill development of children with and without hearing impairment with higher influence on hearing children and that play method has a high psychological influence on social skill development, creative skill development and problem solving skill development of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment; there is significant psychological influence of play method on language skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment; the use of play method has no significant influence on the social skills, creative skills and problem solving skills development of preschool children with and without hearing impairment. Based on the findings, the study recommends that play method should be employed to teach language to all children, especially those with hearing impairment to aid language, social, creative and problem-solving skills developments at basic levels and that the pre-school classroom teachers should be trained in workshops and seminars on how to use play to teach to achieve skills development. It also recommends that pre-school classrooms should be appropriately arranged with the adequate play toys and materials that facilitates learning processes.

Keywords: Play method of teaching, pre-school children, children with hearing impairment, hearing children.

Discipline: pedagogy

Absztrakt

A JÁTÉKOS MÓDSZEREK HATÁSA A HALLÁSSÉRÜLT ÉS A NEM HALLÁSSÉRÜLT ÓVODÁS GYERMEKEK FEJLŐDÉSÉRE A NIGÉRIAI DELTA ÁLLAMBAN LÉVŐ IKA SOUTHBAN

A tanulmány célja a játékos módszer pszichológiai hatásának vizsgálata a hallássérült és a halló óvodáskorú gyermekek fejlődésére Nigéria, Delta állam, Ika South helyi önkormányzati területén. A leíró kutatás négy kutatási kérdést fogalmazott meg, és négy hipotézist tesztelt. Egyszerű véletlenszerű mintavételi technikával 90 pedagógust választottak ki a mintába. Az adatgyűjtés eszköze a *Pre-school Children Development Rating Scale* (PCDRS) nevű kérdőív volt, amelyet hallássérült és halló gyermekekre egyaránt alkalmaztak. Az eszköz arculati és tartalmi validálása megtörtént, megbízhatóságát Cronbach-alfa módszerrel értékelték, amely 0,77-es megbízhatósági indexet eredményezett. Az adatelemzés során az átlag, a szórás és a t-próba módszereit alkalmazták. A kutatás eredményei szerint a játékos tanítási módszer erőteljes pszichológiai hatást gyakorol a hallássérült és halló gyermekek nyelvi készségeinek fejlődésére, amely a halló gyermekek esetében még kifejezettebb. Emellett a játékos módszer jelentős hatással van a szociális, kreatív és problémamegoldó készségek fejlődésére mindkét csoportban. A statisztikai elemzés kimutatta, hogy a játékos tanítási módszer szignifikáns pszichológiai hatást gyakorol a nyelvi készségek

fejlődésére, azonban a szociális, kreatív és problémamegoldó készségek fejlődésére nincs jelentős hatása az óvodáskorú gyermekek esetében, függetlenül attól, hogy hallássérültek-e vagy sem. Az eredmények alapján a tanulmány azt ajánlja, hogy a játékos módszert alkalmazzák minden gyermek nyelvi nevelésében, különös tekintettel a hallássérült gyermekekre, mivel ez elősegítheti a nyelvi, szociális, kreatív és problémamegoldó készségek fejlődését az alapfokú oktatásban. Emellett javasolja, hogy az óvodapedagógusokat képezzék ki szakmai műhelymunkák és szemináriumok keretében a játékos módszerek hatékony alkalmazására. Végezetül a tanulmány ajánlja, hogy az óvodai tantermeket megfelelően rendezzék be, és lássák el a tanulási folyamatokat elősegítő megfelelő játékeszközökkel és anyagokkal.

Kulcsszavak: játékos tanítási módszer, óvodáskorú gyermekek, hallássérült gyermekek, halló gyermekek

Diszciplína: neveléstudomány

Introduction

Play is children's natural activity which they enjoy to participate in at all times except when they are ill or sleeping. All children play in every part of the world where children are found. They are fond of playing most of their time and this has been adopted as the best method of teaching them in school. For quality delivery of Early Child Care Development and Education in Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) stipulated that government will 'ensure that the curriculum of teacher education is oriented towards play-way method of teaching pre-school children in the crèche and nursery schools. In other words, play method of teaching is the method of teaching pre-school children from ages 0-4 years in Nigeria. Play provides an opportunity for children to develop and refine their skills while allowing them to experiment, solve problems, cooperate with others and try out different behaviours (Bento & Dias, 2017).

During children's early years play should be used to foster and develop their curiosity through a wide variety of play experiences guided by the teacher. Play is a universally known concept that is believed to be a fundamental requirement for children's development (Adeniyi & Lawal, 2021; Bento & Dias, 2017). Many young children see play as a

recognizable activity that extends over their lifespan, from early childhood experiences into adulthood and across a variety of cultures (Theobald, 2015).

Play method of teaching according to Kanal (2018) is also known as a learning method that employ playing as the means of learning that involves different play activities that encourages expression and creative skills acquisition in children. Kanal (2018) observed that as play method is used to teach children, it develops their imaginative abilities in addition to motor, creative, aesthetic, cognitive, language and social skills. Play method of teaching can be individualized in the classroom, hence, teachers can plan different plays to meet the individual learning needs of diverse children in the classroom. In an inclusive classroom, the hearing children and children with hearing impairment get to play together during music, art, language and mathematics classes. It gives the children the opportunity to bond, assist each other, lend a helping hand, touch one another and learn together. These play activities ensure physical, emotional or psychological, cognitive, social and moral development in all the children, impairment notwithstanding. Play aids emission of psychological influences between and among the children.

Play method of teaching is teacher guided and planned. However, free play is also beneficial to child development. Play is an important part of childhood development in all forms (Heang, Shah, Hashim & Mustafa, 2021) as it creates many opportunities for children to learn about shapes, colours, cause and effect and more of the world. Play is characterized by the process rather than the product, being flexible cognitively, allowing children to explore their interests, express their joys and process their fears, disappointments and sorrows (Edwards, 2017). When engaging in play, children become immersed in the moment, they develop skills unconsciously and learn more than teachers can imagine. Allowing children time to play during the day in school is a fundamental part of creating lasting bonds and relationships between the children and at the same time ensuring children's cognitive and social emotional development and preparing them for high academic achievement and lifelong success. Through play children observe, regulate and restrain themselves, thereby mastering various skills and acquiring an awareness of limits. Within the educational field, the value of play has been increasingly recognized by academics, educational practitioners, and policymakers worldwide.

There are many theories that support the use of play method for teaching children. These theories have defined play and have explained different procedures used as play method of teaching. Earlier theories include that of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, although they described play in different ways, each is useful for understanding play method of teaching children and its positive outcomes in the classroom. Jean Piaget (1962) did a systematic study of children's cognitive development and viewed play as an integral part of development of intelligence. He explained that as children mature, they explore their environment through play which should be encourage for cognitive and language development. Piaget theory stated that children are

active learners, what is to be learned should be matched with the child's stage of development, play in form of exploration, experiment and stimulation should be used by the teacher (Heang, Shah, Hashim & Mustafa, 2021).

On the other hand, Vygotsky's view of play is guided play by an adult and collaboration play with other children. This view pictures what takes place in the classroom where the teacher plans a structured play with behavioural objectives to be achieved by the children learning together using play. He recommended imitation as one play way method which is not a process of mechanically copying of actions but of any sociocultural activity a child can do with other children depending on the children's abilities (Van Oers & Duijkers, 2013). Hence, play method of teaching is based on these theories.

There are strong and consistent research evidence that play influences children's learning and development (Adeniyi & Lawal, 2021; Heang, Shah, Hashim & Mustafa, 2021; Bento & Dias, 2017). Adeniyi and Lawal (2021) did a study on the effect of play-based intervention and direct instruction strategy on the vocabulary mastery of pupils with hearing impairment in English language in Lagos State of Nigeria and found that the two instructional strategies were efficacious in teaching vocabulary to pupils with hearing impairment. However, play-based strategy was more effective. Similarly, Andreeva, Pietro and Vian (2017) reviewed the study of Qayyum, Khan, and Rais (2015) on play behaviour during leisure time of pupils with hearing impairment in special schools and found that the most frequent play behaviour was social play (group play) that aimed to develop their social skills followed by non-play behaviour (active conversation) and the last was cognitive play (games with rules). They found that the cognitive functional play was the least play pupils participated in because these games require better understanding of rules through listening, this is

basically due to their impaired hearing. Findings revealed that games play, which require listening to rules before start of play, were not understood well by the pupils with hearing impairment and that pupils played better games that only require visual cues.

Review of research studies on the influence of play method of teaching on children was reported by Adeniyi and Lawal (2021) as having positive outcome on children learning and development. Such studies include the study of Nasir, Yousof & Arumugam, (2014) cited in Adeniyi and Lawal (2021) which found that play-based strategy significantly enhanced the mastery of vocabulary and interest in learning the Malay language among pre-school children. Also, the study of Hall and O'Donnell (2011) showed that play method have positive influence on young children's learning and observed that the children learn best through play, game, game stories, art, and puppetry which can aid social interaction.

Pre-school is a school for children usually between infancy and three- or four-year-olds that takes place in crèche or nursery classes depending on a country's education policy. In the Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013), pre-school refers to Early Child Care Development and Education (ECCDE) which it seen as "the care, protection, stimulation and learning promoted in children from age 0-4 years in a crèche or nursery". All children with or without hearing impairment of 0-4 years are found in pre-school in Nigeria, hence, they constitute the population of this study. In providing pre-school children with necessary support, one of the most effective learning ways is play in which children's participation is guided by the teacher (Pyle, Pyle, Priolleta & Alaca (2020).

Therefore, play is used as a method of facilitating the development and learning of children, hence, play activities are planned accordingly by teachers (Kocyigit, 2015). However, hearing is the sense used to perceive sound and speech in humans but

if there is any form of damage to the ear that makes it lose its ability to hear well, it becomes impaired. Hearing impairment is a broad term that refers to hearing losses of varying degrees, ranging from hard-of-hearing to total deafness (Shemesh, 2010 cited in Onwubolu, 2017). Children with hearing impairment in this study comprises children that are hard-of hearing and deaf. These children have special learning needs because their hearing is impaired partially or totally, however, as children, they participate in play in and outside the classroom like other children of their age. Teachers are aware that all children enjoy playing, hence they utilize play method in teaching as stipulated by the Nigeria National Policy (FRN, 2013), in addition to using play to teach, teachers support children with hearing impairment to learn and develop psychological skills that are necessary for human survival using play ways.

Statement of the Problem

One of the purposes of the early child care development and education in the federal government of Nigeria document, the National Policy on Education 6th Edition (FRN, 2013) is to "inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and the use of toys". For this purpose to be achieved, pre-school teachers use mainly play way method to teach children. In pre-school, the children at this stage of development are growing and need to acquire language, social skills, creative and problem-solving skills which are key areas of adequate development in children. It has been observed by many researchers that play helps children to learn and achieve optimal development. It is therefore on this basis that the problem of the study is to determine the psychological influence of play method of teaching on the development of skills by pre-school children with and without hearing

impairment in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the psychological influence of play method on the development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were asked to guide the study.

1. What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on language skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?
2. What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on the social skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?
3. What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on the creative skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?
4. What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on problem-solving skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis below was formulated to guide the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: The use of play method of teaching has no significant psychological influence on language skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

H₀₂: The use of play method of teaching has no significant psychological influence on the social skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

H₀₃: The use of play method of teaching has no significant psychological influence on the creative skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

H₀₄: The use of play method of teaching has no significant psychological influence on problem-solving skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Methods

The research adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises of all pre-school teachers in 57 public schools in Ika South Local Government Area of Delta State including one (1) special school. A simple random sampling was used to select 9 regular pre-schools while purposive sampling technique was used to select the only one pre-school for pupils with hearing impairment. In each school, there are three (3) pre-school classes with three teachers each. Hence, for the 9 regular pre-schools there are 81 teachers and 9 teachers in the special pre-school which give the sample for the study as 90 teachers. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire titled "Pre-school Children Development Rating Scale" (PCDRS). A four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) with values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively was adopted. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation. The reliability of the instrument was calculated using Cronbach Alpha to give a reliability index of 0.77. Direct method was used to administer the instrument and was collected immediately by the researcher. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the four research questions posted for the study. The mean range which determined the acceptance level is 2.50 and above. T-test statistics was used in testing the null hypothesis formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Language Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

S/N	ITEMS	PUPILS	N	x	SD
1.	Problems with pronouncing words correctly	Hearing	81	2.44	0.84
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.56	1.33
2.	Delayed language and vocabulary development	Hearing	81	2.89	0.88
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.33	1.22
3.	Difficulty reciting the alphabets (A-Z)	Hearing	81	2.67	1.16
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.32
4.	Enjoys looking at books and listening to stories from books.	Hearing	81	3.33	0.67
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.22
5.	Difficulty with quickly naming things (colours, shapes, familiar objects) when shown pictures of objects.	Hearing	81	2.33	1.25
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.00	0.87
Grand Mean		Hearing	81	2.73	0.96
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.45	1.19

Results

Research Question 1: What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on language skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?

Table 1 reveals that the mean score for hearing children from item 1 to 5 are 2.44, 2.89, 2.67, 3.33, and 2.33 with a grand mean of 2.73. While children with hearing impairment are given as 2.56, 2.33, 2.67, 2.67, 2.00 respectively with grand mean of 2.45. The higher mean for hearing children implies that play method has a higher psychological influence on language skill development of hearing children than that of children with hearing impairment.

Research Question 2: What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on social skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?

Table 2 reveals that the mean score for hearing children from items 1 to 5 are 2.56, 3.11, 3.67, 3.78,

2.44 with a grand mean of 3.11, while children with hearing impairment are given as 2.78, 2.89, 3.00, 2.67 and 2.67 respectively with a grand mean of 2.80. The high means implies that play method has a high psychological influence on social skill development of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment. Although, the higher mean shows a higher influence for hearing children.

Research Question 3: What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on the creative skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?

Table 3 reveals that the mean score for hearing children from items 1 to 5 are 3.89, 2.89, 3.44, 3.78, and 3.11 respectively with a grand mean of 3.42 while that of children with hearing impairment are 2.67, 2.89, 2.67, 2.89, 2.56 with a grand mean of 2.74. This implies that play method has a high psychological influence on creative skill development of both hearing children and children

with hearing impairment. Although, the higher mean shows a higher influence for hearing children.

Research Question 4: What is the psychological influence of play method of teaching on problem-solving skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment?

Table 4 reveals that the mean score for hearing children from item one to five are 3.11, 2.89, 3.78,

2.22, 2.89 respectively with a grand mean of 2.98 while children with hearing impairment are given as 3.00, 2.44, 3.00, 2.11, 3.00 respectively with a grand mean of 2.71.

This implies that play method has a high psychological influence on problem-solving skill development of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment. Although, the higher mean shows the higher influence for hearing children.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Social Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

S/N	ITEMS	PUPILS	N	x	SD
1.	Engages in group pretend play	Hearing	81	2.56	0.69
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.78	1.09
2.	Shares and take turns, learning concept of fair play	Hearing	81	3.11	0.57
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.89	1.05
3.	Enjoys cooperative, practical, conforming play	Hearing	81	3.67	0.67
		Hearing Impaired	9	3.00	0.87
4.	Sings and dramatizes with body parts (legs, hands and head)	Hearing	81	3.78	0.42
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.32
5.	Difficulty reading and playing with friends	Hearing	81	2.44	0.69
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.41
Grand Mean		Hearing		3.11	0.61
		Hearing Impaired		2.80	1.15

Table 3: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Creative Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

S/N	ITEMS	PUPILS	N	x	SD
1.	Matches toys by colours, shapes, numbers, pictures, concepts of letters (ABC).	Hearing	81	3.89	0.32
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.22
2.	Complete a six-piece puzzle.	Hearing	81	2.89	0.74
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.89	1.05
3.	Curious and excited when manipulating complex toys alongside different sex.	Hearing	81	3.44	0.69
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.67	1.22
4.	Counts, adds and subtracts 10 or more objects.	Hearing	81	3.78	0.42
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.89	1.05
5.	Dismantles and assembles toys with ease.	Hearing	81	3.11	0.88
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.56	1.24
Grand Mean		Hearing		3.42	0.61
		Hearing Impaired		2.74	1.16

Table 4: Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Influence of Play Methods on Problem-Solving Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

S/N	ITEMS	PUPILS	N	x	SD
1.	Manipulates and explores toys in a variety of styles.	Hearing	81	3.11	0.57
		Hearing Impaired	9	3.00	0.87
2.	Frustration with colouring, pasting and cutting with scissors.	Hearing	81	2.89	1.00
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.44	1.24
3.	Exhibits interests in drawing and painting.	Hearing	81	3.78	0.63
		Hearing Impaired	9	3.00	0.87
4.	Difficulty with letter recognition.	Hearing	81	2.22	0.63
		Hearing Impaired	9	2.11	1.05
5.	Exhibits interest in art products, colouring and moulding clay.	Hearing	81	2.89	0.88
		Hearing Impaired	9	3.00	0.87
Grand Mean		Hearing		2.98	0.74
		Hearing Impaired		2.71	0.98

Hypothesis 1 (H₀₁): The use of play method of teaching has no significant influence on language skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Table 5 indicates that the calculated t-test value is 3.169 and a p-value of 0.002 with degree of freedom (df) 88. Testing at alpha level 5% (0.5), the p-value of 0.002 is less than the alpha level .05 ($p > .05$), hence, the tested null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the influence of play method of teaching on language skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment. This revealed that play method of teaching influenced language development of hearing children that children with hearing impairment.

Hypothesis (H₀₂): The use of play method of teaching has no significant difference on social skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

The result on Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-test value is 1.086 and a p-value of 0.280 with

degree of freedom (df) 88. Testing at alpha level 5% (.05), the p-value of 0.280 is greater than the alpha level .05 ($p > .05$), hence, the tested null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the influence of play method of teaching on social skill development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Hypothesis (H₀₃): The use of play method of teaching has no significant difference on the creative skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-test value is 1.476 and a p-value of 0.144 with degree of freedom (df) 88. Testing at alpha level 5% (.05), the p-value of 0.144 is greater than the alpha level .05 ($p > .05$), hence, the tested null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the influence of play method of teaching on the creative skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Hypothesis (H0₄): The use of play method of teaching has no significance influence on problem-solving skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Table 8 indicates that the calculated t-test value is 0.886 and a p-value of 3.78 with degree of freedom

(df) 88. Testing at alpha level 5% (.05), the p-value of .378 is greater than the alpha level .05 ($p > .05$), the tested null hypothesis is retained. Hence, there is no significant difference in the influence of play method of teaching on problem-solving skills development of pre-school children with and without hearing impairment.

Table 5: T-test of independence sample on the Mean Difference in the Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Language Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	DF	Alpha level	p-value	Decision
Hearing pupils	81	17.11	2.70	3.169	88	0.05	0.002	Significant
Hearing impaired pupils	9	13.67	5.68					

Table 6: T-test of independence sample on the Mean Difference in the Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Social Skill Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	DF	Alpha level	p-value	Decision
Hearing pupils	81	14.88	3.34	1.086	88	0.05	0.280	Not sign.
Hearing impaired pupils	9	13.55	4.80					

Table 7: T-test of independent sample on the Mean Difference in the Influence Play Method of Teaching on Creative Skills Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	DF	Alpha level	p-value	Decision
Hearing pupils	81	15.56	2.60	1.476	88	0.05	0.144	Not sign.
Hearing impaired pupils	9	14.00	5.59					

Table 8: t-test of independent sample on the Mean Difference in the Influence of Play Method of Teaching on Problem-Solving Skills Development of Pre-school Children with and without Hearing Impairment. Source: Authors.

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-cal.	DF	Alpha level	p-value	Decision
Hearing pupils	81	15.56	2.60	0.886	88	0.05	0.378	Not sign.
Hearing impaired pupils	9	14.00	5.59					

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the data analyzed revealed that play method of teaching has high psychological influence on language skill development of hearing children and children with hearing impairment with higher influence on hearing children. This finding is in agreement with study of Nasir, Yousof and Arumugam, (2014) cited in Adeniyi and Lawal (2021) whose study focused on play method of teaching to enhance the mastery ability of vocabulary among pre-school children in Malaysia and found that play-based strategy significantly enhanced the mastery of vocabulary and interest in learning the Malay language among pre-school children. The higher influence of play on hearing children language skill could be due to their ability to hear and understand the rules of the play better than children with hearing impairment. In support of the finding of this study, Adeniyi and Lawal (2021) found play-based strategy more effective when they did a study on the effect of play-based intervention and direct instruction strategy on the vocabulary mastery of pupils with hearing impairment in English language. Therefore, play method of teaching influenced the psychological development of all children.

Findings also showed that play method has a high psychological influence on social skill development, creative skill development and problem solving skill developments of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment. These findings agree with the findings of Qayyum, Khan, and Rais (2015) cited in Andreeva, Pietro and Vian (2017) who studied play behaviour during leisure time of pupils with hearing impairment in special schools and found that the most frequent play behaviour was social play (group play) that helped to develop their social skills. Although, it was observed that research study on play-based method of teaching is more on the effect on vocabulary and literacy, there are also evidence (Heang, Shah, Hashim & Mustafa, 2021;

Bento & Dias, 2017) that play method of teaching enhances general development in children which include social skill development, creative skill development and problem solving skill developments of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment.

Conclusion

The study found that play method of teaching has high psychological influence on language skill development of hearing children and children with hearing impairment with higher influence on hearing children. It also showed that play method has a high psychological influence on social skill development, creative skill development and problem solving skill developments of both hearing children and children with hearing impairment. Having found that play method is a way of developing psychological skills in children with and without hearing impairment, it implies that teachers should be more intentional in the use of play method in teaching all pre-school children, impairment not-withstanding.

Recommendations

1. Play method should be employed to teach language to all children, especially those with hearing impairment to aid language, social, creative and problem-solving skill developments at basic levels.
2. Classroom teacher, special and regular pre-school teachers should be trained in workshops and seminars to learn useful strategies in using play method of teaching in the classroom.
3. It also recommends that pre-school classrooms should be appropriately arranged with the adequate play toys and materials that facilitates learning processes.

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