

## **AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF PARENTING KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES**

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### **Abstract**

This paper intended to investigate the parenting knowledge levels of parents, to investigate the perceptions of parents on the importance of parenting practices, to investigate the performance levels of parents on parenting practices, to examine the variations of perceptions and performance on parenting practices by the parents' personal factors, and to identify the predictors of parents' personal factors on their parenting practices. Descriptive research design was used in this study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. By using the stratified random sampling method, 420 parents were selected as sample from three strata in Yangon Region. The questionnaire, interview, and observation were used to collect the required data. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for degree of importance was 0.93 and level of performance was 0.94. Descriptive statistics, One-way ANOVA, Item Percent Correct (IPC), and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyze the quantitative data. According to the overall mean value, the findings of the study revealed that parenting knowledge level of parents regarding three areas of knowledge was satisfactory (Mean=0.81, SD=0.14). All the parents perceived that the parenting practices for child physical, emotional, social and cognitive development were important and they often practiced them. Therefore, parents' perceptions on the importance of parenting practices was satisfactory (Mean=3.23, SD=0.31) and level of performance on parenting practices was also satisfactory (Mean=3.10, SD=0.38). There were significant differences in parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices grouped by level of education, monthly income, strata, and parenting knowledge levels. According to the beta weight of multiple regression analysis, strata was the best predictor for parenting practices ( $R^2=.07$ ,  $F(6,413)=5.874$ ). According to the result of qualitative study, it was found that the parents from inner and outer suburban strata had no complete basic parenting knowledge and they could not perform the parenting practices satisfactorily.

**Keywords:** Parenting Knowledge, Parenting Practices

### **Introduction**

The quality of family life is fundamental to the physical, psychosocial, and cognitive well-being of children. The most important factor to a child's healthy development is to have at least one strong relationship with a caring adult who values and responds to the child's physical, emotional and cognitive needs (Sanders, 1999). Parents are the people who can incorporate all the necessary abilities and competencies of life into their child. The way in which parents bring up their children surely influences their overall development (Durkin, 1995, as cited in George & Rajan, 2012).

Today, attention was focused on the importance of early childhood for the evolution of a person. Most rapid mental growth occurs during infancy and early childhood and thus a child's early years are critical for forming and developing intelligence, personality, and social behaviors (Young, 1997, as cited in Makame, 2001). Parenting during early childhood encompasses adaptation to distinctive transformations in human development that affect not only the current well-being of children, but carry significant implications for later life (Brooks, 2004).

### **Significance of the Study**

Startling transformations have occurred all over the world, particularly on the mode of caring and parenting of children. Parents are the most critical factor for cultivating the children.

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There is a general agreement among experts around the world from developing as well as developed nations that early childhood rearing and training are not only desirable but essential for personality development among the children. Patterns of parenting are significant factors influencing the formation of individual personality (Emmanuel, Akinyemi, & Nimotalai, 2012). Thus there is the need to increase the parenting knowledge and practices among parents in all the societies.

Parents need to be informed and educated in order for all children to benefit in the way of correct care for their health and survival, for a nutrition which is adequate to their physical and psychological development, for the evolution of their intellectual and emotional processes that should lead to the creation of an independent person. If the parents want to be effective caregivers for their children, they should possess certain knowledge, skills, attitudes and interpersonal abilities concerning effective parenting.

More than 200 million children younger than 5 years from developing countries do not achieve their expected level of cognitive development due to poverty, nutritional deficiencies and inadequate early learning opportunities (Bornstein, 2002). More than 32 percent of Myanmar populations live below the poverty line. Rural poverty is twice as high as in urban areas and Myanmar also has the second highest child mortality rate (Khalae, 2018). Therefore, most of the children in Myanmar come from low-income families. The parents cannot spend the engaged time with the children and cannot give adequate care or parenting as they are working parents. Parents today are often uncertain about what is the right thing to do in parenting their children. So, it is clear that large numbers of the children have poor psychosocial and cognitive development in the first few years of life. When they reach schools, they are unable to benefit fully from education. They usually fail to achieve satisfactory levels and subsequently have poor employment opportunities. This has implications for both the individual and national development.

It is safe to assume that parents want the best possible quality of life for their children. However, parents today are often uncertain about what is the right thing to do in parenting their children. If parents are provided with knowledge and supports, they can respond more positively and effectively to their children. This research intends to lead to the changing of old mentalities and the development of good parenting practices adequate to the child's development needs. Findings of the research can be used to make a complex analysis of parenting knowledge and practices, to establish the parents' information needs, and offer to decision makers information based on scientific data. The results can also be used for the purpose of developing educational policies and parenting education programs for parents, aimed at developing the potential of children.

## **Aims of the Study**

### ***Main Aim***

The main aim is to study the parenting knowledge and practices of parents.

### ***Specific Aims***

The specific aims are

- To investigate the parenting knowledge levels of parents
- To investigate the perceptions of parents on the importance of parenting practices
- To investigate the performance levels of parents on parenting practices
- To examine the variations of perceptions and performance on parenting practices by the parents' personal factors
- To identify the predictors of parents' personal factors on their parenting practices

## Research Questions

The research questions are:

1. What are the parenting knowledge levels of parents?
2. To what extent do the parents perceive on the importance of parenting practices?
3. What are the performance levels of parents on parenting practices?
4. What are the variations of perceptions and performance on parenting practices by the parents' personal factors?
5. What are the predictors of parents' personal factors on their parenting practices?

## Limitation of the Study

This study was geographically limited to Yangon Region. The subjects of this study were 420 parents from 13 Townships in Yangon Region. Parents who have at least one child between 2 and 8 years old participated in this study.

## Theoretical Framework

Based on the related literature, the theoretical framework for this study is established.

Parenting knowledge in this study based on three areas of knowledge. They are: **Knowledge about child development, Knowledge about health and safety, and Knowledge about strategies to meet the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs of children as they develop** (Bornstein & Ribas, 2005).

Parenting practices in this study cover four areas of child development: physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

In the area of parenting practices for child physical development, four components of parenting practices are emphasized. They are: **Supporting Motor Development, Providing Opportunities for Physical Activities, Providing Good Nutrition, and Safeguarding Health** (Faegre, 1947, Hildebrend, 1985, & Beaty, 2012).

For child emotional development, nine components of parenting practices are emphasized. They are: **Promoting Close Emotional Relationship, Providing Respect and Encouragement, Providing Opportunities for Outlets, Handling Mistakes, Promoting Empathy, Developing Self-concept, Developing Self-esteem, Coaching Children to Manage Emotion and Cope with Stress, and Identifying and Dealing with Negative Feelings** (Brooks, 2004).

For child social development, three components of parenting practices will be mainly focused such as **Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Parents, Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Siblings, and Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Peers** (Brooks, 2004).

For child cognitive development, three components of parenting practices are mainly emphasized. They are **Providing Sensory Experiences, Providing Opportunities to Think and Imagine, and Providing Games for Sorting, Counting, Classifying and Comparing Objects** (Beaty, 2012).

On the basis of this theoretical framework, this study is designed to investigate the parenting knowledge and practices for child physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

## **Definitions of Key Terms**

### ***Parenting***

Parenting is described as a series of actions and interactions on the part of parents to promote the development of children (Brooks, 2004).

### ***Parenting Knowledge***

Parenting knowledge is defined as understanding of “development norms and milestones, process of child development, and familiarity with caregiving skills” (Benasich & Brooks-Gunn, 1996).

### ***Parenting Practices***

Parenting practices are defined as the specific behaviors that parents use to socialize their children (Anderson, 2011).

## **Operational Definitions**

### ***Parent***

A parent in this study is defined as either the biological parent or legal guardian with whom the child lived.

### ***Parenting Knowledge***

In this study, parenting knowledge is defined as knowing basic child development principles, basic information about how to promote children’s health and to prevent home accidents, and strategies for promoting physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children.

### ***Parenting Practices***

In this study, parenting practices are defined as the behaviors the parents use to promote the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of their children.

## **Methodology**

Descriptive research design was used in this study. Both quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (interview and observation) were used. By using the stratified random sampling method, 420 parents were selected as sample from three strata in Yangon Region. The questionnaire was developed based on the theoretical framework of the study. In order to study the parenting knowledge and practices, the questionnaire was composed of three main parts. Demographic data in part I, 30 true-false items in part II, and 60 four-point Likert-type items in part III were developed. The internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha) for degree of importance was 0.93 and level of performance was 0.94. Descriptive statistics, One-way ANOVA, Item Percent Correct (IPC), and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyze the quantitative data.

## **Findings**

### ***Research Question (1): What are the parenting knowledge levels of parents?***

The means and standard deviations of the parenting knowledge levels of parents were presented in Table 1.

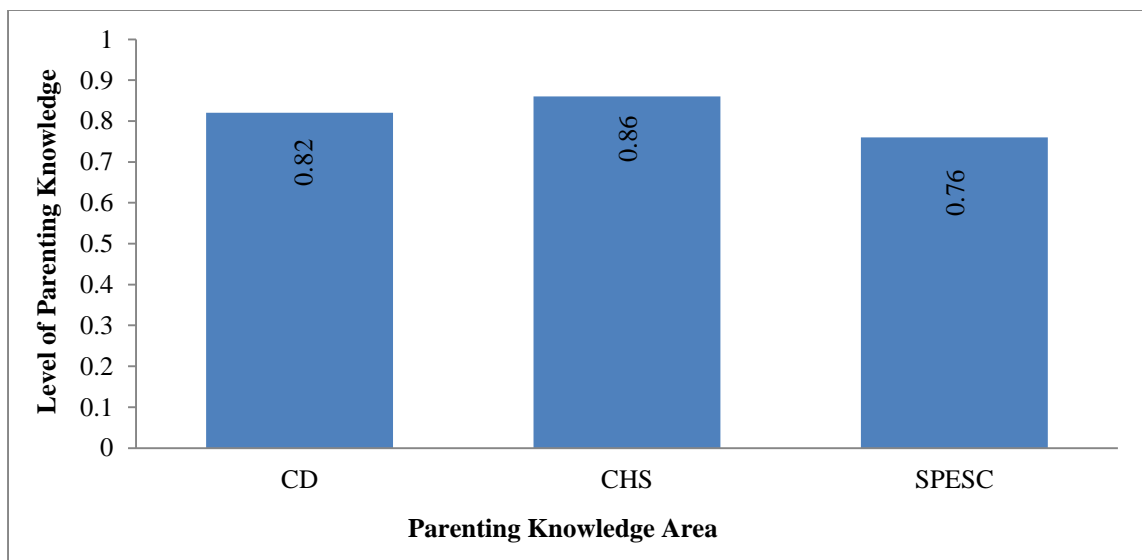
**Table 1 Means and Standard Deviations of the Parenting Knowledge Levels of Parents (N=420)**

Parenting Knowledge Area	Mean	SD	Remark
Child Development	0.82	0.14	Satisfactory Level
Child’s Health and Safety	0.86	0.13	Satisfactory Level
Strategies to meet the Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive needs of Children	0.76	0.16	Satisfactory Level
Overall	0.81	0.14	Satisfactory Level

**Scoring Direction:** above 0.95 =above satisfactory level, between 0.67 and 0.95= satisfactory level  
below 0.67= below satisfactory level

According to Table 1, the parenting knowledge levels of parents were satisfactory levels in all three areas of parenting knowledge.

The mean values of parenting knowledge levels of parents were shown in Figure 1.



**Note:** CD = Child Development                      CHS= Child’s Health and Safety  
SPESC= Strategies to meet the Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Needs of Children

**Figure 1** Mean Values Showing the Parenting Knowledge Levels of Parents

And then, the number and percentages of parents according to the parenting knowledge levels concerning child development, child’s health and safety and strategies to meet the physical, emotional, social and cognitive needs of children were described in Table 2.

**Table 2** Number and Percentages of Parents According to Parenting Knowledge Levels (N=420)

Parenting Knowledge Area	Number and Percentages of Parents		
	Below Satisfactory Level	Satisfactory Level	Above Satisfactory Level
Child Development	62 (14.8%)	270 (64.3%)	88 (21%)
Child's Health and Safety	31 (7.4%)	255 (60.7%)	134 (31.9%)
Strategies to meet the Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Needs of Children	128 (30.5%)	231 (55%)	61 (14.5%)
Overall Parenting Knowledge	44 (10.5%)	326 (77.6%)	50 (11.9%)

As indicated in the Table 2, 44 (10.5%) of parents was below satisfactory level, 326 (77.6%) of parents was satisfactory level and 50 (11.9%) of parents was above satisfactory level concerning overall parenting knowledge.

**Research Question (2):** *To what extent do the parents perceive on the importance of parenting practices?*

**Research Question (3):** *What are the performance levels of parents on parenting practices?*

The means and standard deviations of parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices for child physical development were described in Table 3.

**Table 3** Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices for Child Physical Development (N=420)

No.	Parenting Practices for Child Physical Development	Degree of Importance			Level of Performance		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Supporting Motor Development	2.94	0.50	Important	2.60	0.67	Often
2	Providing Opportunities for Physical Activities	3.09	0.44	Important	2.76	0.53	Often
3	Providing Good Nutrition	3.50	0.46	Very Important	3.41	0.55	Often
4	Safeguarding Health	3.58	0.41	Very Important	3.61	0.44	Always
5	overall	3.34	0.35	Important	3.19	0.40	Often

#### Scoring Directions

**Degree of Importance:** 1.00-1.49=very unimportant    1.50-2.49=unimportant    2.50-3.49= important

3.50-4.00=very important

**Level of Performance:** 1.00-1.49=never    1.50-2.49=sometimes    2.50-3.49=often    3.50-4.00=always

According to the Table 3, all the parents perceived that the parenting practices for *Child Physical Development* were *important* and they *often practiced* them because the overall mean values were fallen between 2.50 and 3.49.

Table 4 described the means and standard deviations of parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices for child emotional development.

**Table 4 Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices for Child Emotional Development (N=420)**

No.	Parenting Practices for Child Emotional Development	Degree of Importance			Level of Performance		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Promoting Close Emotional Relationship	3.35	0.51	Important	3.34	0.61	Often
2	Providing Respect and Encouragement	3.37	0.52	Important	3.24	0.70	Often
3	Providing Opportunities for Outlets	3.19	0.58	Important	2.87	0.87	Often
4	Handling Mistakes	2.99	0.54	Important	3.15	0.60	Often
5	Promoting Empathy	3.32	0.54	Important	3.05	0.78	Often
6	Developing Self-concept	2.52	0.84	Important	2.95	0.92	Often
7	Developing Self-esteem	3.35	0.58	Important	3.32	0.72	Often
8	Coaching Children to Manage Emotion and Cope with Stress	3.14	0.60	Important	3.45	0.60	Often
9	Identifying and Dealing with Negative Feelings	3.26	0.58	Important	3.08	0.77	Often
	Overall	3.20	0.33	Important	3.19	0.41	Often

**Scoring Directions**

**Degree of Importance:** 1.00-1.49=very unimportant    1.50-2.49=unimportant    2.50-3.49= important  
 3.50-4.00=very important

**Level of Performance:** 1.00-1.49=never    1.50-2.49=sometimes    2.50-3.49=often    3.50-4.00=always

According to the Table 4, all the parents perceived that the parenting practices for *Child Emotional Development* were *important* and they *often practiced* them because the overall mean values were fallen between 2.50 and 3.49.

Table 5 described the means and standard deviations of parents’ perceptions and performance on parenting practices for child social development.

**Table 5 Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices for Child Social Development (N=420)**

No.	Parenting Practices for Child Social Development	Degree of Importance			Level of Performance		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Parents	3.36	0.45	Important	3.37	0.51	Often
2	Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Siblings	3.34	0.52	Important	3.39	0.59	Often
3	Promoting Positive Social Relationships with Peers	3.18	0.45	Important	3.00	0.57	Often
	Overall	3.27	0.40	Important	3.20	0.48	Often

**Scoring Directions**

**Degree of Importance:** 1.00-1.49=very unimportant    1.50-2.49=unimportant    2.50-3.49= important  
 3.50-4.00=very important

**Level of Performance:** 1.00-1.49=never    1.50-2.49=sometimes    2.50-3.49=often    3.50-4.00=always

As indicated in Table 5, all the parents perceived that the parenting practices for *Child Social Development* were *important* and they *often practiced* them because the overall mean values were fallen between 2.50 and 3.49.

Table 6 described the means and standard deviations of parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices for child cognitive development.

**Table 6 Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices for Child Cognitive Development (N=420)**

No.	Parenting Practices for Child Cognitive Development	Degree of Importance			Level of Performance		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Providing Sensory Experiences	3.08	0.45	Important	2.77	0.60	Often
2	Providing Opportunities to Think and Imagine	3.10	0.43	Important	2.75	0.60	Often
3	Providing Games for Sorting, Counting, Classifying and Comparing Objects	3.10	0.41	Important	2.86	0.59	Often
	Overall	3.10	0.39	Important	2.80	0.53	Often

**Scoring Directions**

**Degree of Importance:** 1.00-1.49=very unimportant    1.50-2.49=unimportant    2.50-3.49= important  
3.50-4.00=very important

**Level of Performance:** 1.00-1.49=never    1.50-2.49=sometimes    2.50-3.49=often    3.50-4.00=always

According to the Table 6, all the parents perceived that the parenting practices for *Child Cognitive Development* were *important* and they *often practiced* them because the overall mean values were fallen between 2.50 and 3.49.

Table 7 described the means and standard deviations of parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices.

**Table 7 Means and Standard Deviations of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices (N=420)**

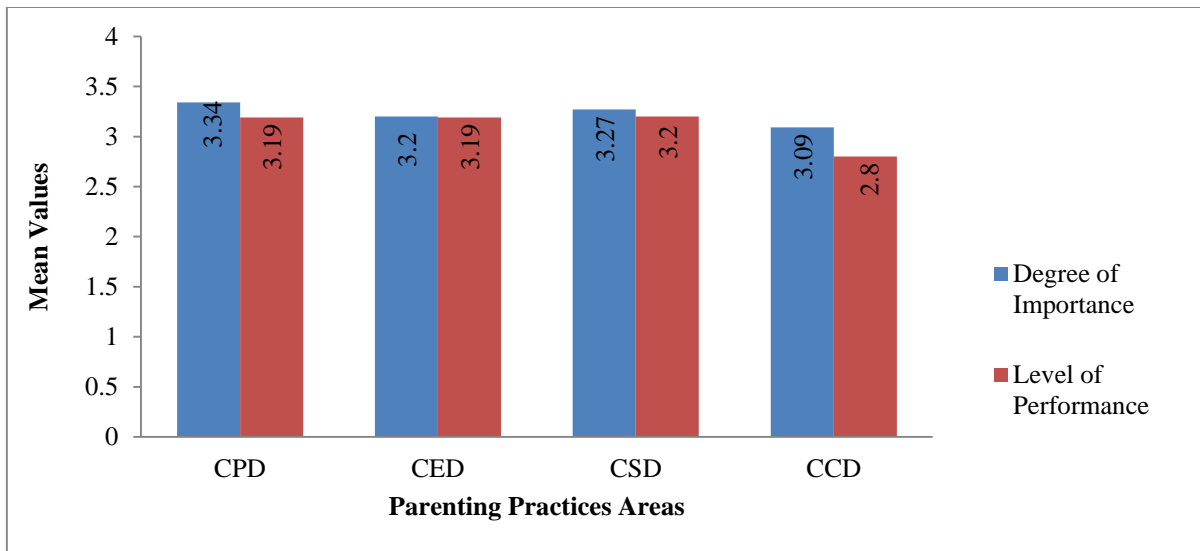
No.	Parenting Practices Area	Degree of Importance			Level of Performance		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Child Physical Development	3.34	0.35	Above Satisfactory	3.19	0.40	Satisfactory
2	Child Emotional Development	3.20	0.33	Satisfactory	3.19	0.41	Satisfactory
3	Child Social Development	3.27	0.40	Above Satisfactory	3.20	0.48	Satisfactory
4	Child Cognitive Development	3.10	0.39	Satisfactory	2.80	0.53	Satisfactory
	Overall	3.23	0.31	Satisfactory	3.10	0.38	Satisfactory

**Scoring Direction** 1.00-1.75= below satisfactory level    1.76-2.50= moderately satisfactory level  
2.51-3.25= satisfactory level    3.26-4.00= above satisfactory level

As indicated in Table 7, parents' perception on the importance of parenting practices was *satisfactory* level and performance level of parents was also *satisfactory* level because the overall mean values were 3.23 and 3.10 respectively.

Figure 2 showed the mean values of perceptions and performance of parents on parenting practices.





**Note:** CPD = Parenting Practices for Child Physical Development  
 CED = Parenting Practices for Child Emotional Development  
 CSD = Parenting Practices for Child Social Development  
 CCD = Parenting Practices for Child Cognitive Development

**Figure 2** Mean Values Showing Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices

**Research Question (4):** *What are the variations of perceptions and performance on parenting practices by the parents' personal factors?*

Table 8 showed the One-Way ANOVA result of perceptions and performance of parents on parenting practices grouped by level of education: no schooling, primary, secondary, upper secondary and diploma or degree.

**Table 8 One-Way ANOVA Result of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices Grouped by Level of Education (N=420)**

Parenting Practices Area		Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Degree of Importance	Between Groups	3.214	4	.803	8.897	.000***
		Within Groups	37.476	415	.090		
		Total	40.689	419			
	Level of performance	Between Groups	3.441	4	.860	6.300	.000***
		Within Groups	56.668	415	.137		
		Total	60.108	419			

\*\*\* $p < .001$

As shown in Table 8, there were statistically significant differences in parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices among five groups of parents because overall degree of importance was ( $F(4,415)=8.897, p<.001$ ) and overall level of performance was ( $F(4,415)=6.300, p<.001$ ).

Table 9 showed the One-Way ANOVA result of perceptions and performance of parents on parenting practices grouped by monthly income: below 200 thousand kyats, 200 thousand to 500 thousand kyats, and above 500 thousand kyats.

**Table 9 One-Way ANOVA Result of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices Grouped by Monthly Income (N=420)**

Parenting Practices Area		Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Degree of Importance	Between Groups	.975	2	.186	5.116	.006**
		Within Groups	39.715	417	.154		
		Total	40.689	419			
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Level of Performance	Between Groups	2.004	2	1.002	7.193	.001**
		Within Groups	58.104	417	.139		
		Total	60.108	419			

\*\**p*<.01

According to Table 9, there were statistically significant differences in perceptions and performance on parenting practices among three groups of parents because overall degree of importance was ( $F(4,415)=5.116, p<.01$ ) and overall level of performance was ( $F(4,415)=7.193, p<.01$ ).

Table 10 showed the One-Way ANOVA result of perceptions and performance of parents on parenting practices grouped by strata: downtown, inner suburban and outer suburban.

**Table 10 One-Way ANOVA Result of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices Grouped by Strata (N=420)**

Parenting Practices Area		Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Degree of Importance	Between Groups	.633	2	.317	3.296	.038*
		Within Groups	40.056	417	.096		
		Total	40.689	419			
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Level of Performance	Between Groups	2.316	2	1.158	8.36	.000***
		Within Groups	57.792	417	.139		
		Total	60.108	419			

\**p*<.05, \*\*\**p*<.001

As shown in Table 10, there were statistically significant differences in perceptions and performance on parenting practices among three groups of parents from three strata because overall degree of importance was ( $F(4,415)=3.296, p<.05$ ) and overall level of performance was ( $F(4,415)=8.357, p<.001$ ).

Table 11 described the One-Way ANOVA result of perceptions and performance of parents on parenting practices grouped by the levels of parenting knowledge: Group A (with below satisfactory level), Group B (with satisfactory level) and group C (with above satisfactory level).

**Table 11 One-Way ANOVA Result of Perceptions and Performance of Parents on Parenting Practices Grouped by Parenting Knowledge Levels (N=420)**

Parenting Practices Area		Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Overall (Physical, Emotional, Social and Cognitive Development)	Degree of Importance	Between Groups	3.392	2	1.696 .089	18.96	.000***
		Within Groups	37.298	417			
		Total	40.689	419			
	Level of Performance	Between Groups	1.406	2	.703 .141	4.995	.007**
		Within Groups	58.702	417			
		Total	60.108	419			

\*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

As indicated in Table 11, there were statistically significant differences in perceptions and performance on parenting practices among three groups of parents according to their parenting knowledge levels because overall degree of importance was ( $F(4,415)=18.96, p<.001$ ) and overall level of performance was ( $F(4,415)=4.995, p<.01$ ).

**Research Question (5):** *What are the predictors of parents’ personal factors on their parenting practices?*

**Table 12 Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis for Parents’ Personal Factors Predicting Parenting Practices (N=420)**

Variables	B	SEB	Beta
Level of Education	.01	.02	.04
Monthly Income	.04	.04	.06
Number of family members	.09	.04	.10*
Number of Children	.24	.12	.10*
Parenting Knowledge	.08	.04	.10
Strata	.06	.03	.12*
Constant	1.97	.25	

R=.28, R<sup>2</sup>=.07, F(6,413)=5.874, \*p<.05

The beta coefficients were described in Table 12. According to the beta weights, strata variable was the best predictor of parenting practices. And number of family member variable and number of children variable were the second best predictors of parenting practices.

### Summary

Based on the research questions, the findings of this study could be summarized as follows.

1. Regarding *parenting knowledge*, 44 (10.5%) parents possessed below satisfactory level, 326 (77.6%) parents possessed satisfactory level and 50 (11.9%) of parents possessed above satisfactory level.
2. Regarding the *parents’ perceptions*, the parents perceived that the parenting practices for child physical, emotional, social and cognitive development were *important*. It was also found that the parents’ perceptions on the importance of parenting practices for *Child Physical Development* and *Child Social Development* were *above satisfactory levels* and another two areas such as parenting practices for *Child Emotional Development* and *Child Cognitive Development* were *satisfactory levels*.

3. Regarding the *parents' performance*, the parents *often practiced* on the parenting practices for child physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. It was also found that the parents' performance levels on parenting practices were *satisfactory levels* in all four areas.
4. There were significant differences in parents' perceptions and performance on parenting practices grouped by level of education, monthly income, strata and parenting knowledge levels.
5. The parents' parenting practices were significantly predicted by number of family members, number of children and strata when all six variables were included. According to the beta weights, strata variable was the most striking or potential predictor of parenting practices.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

Parenting knowledge and practices are vital to the overall well-being of the children, parents and society. It is more difficult to be a parent today than in the past and express a pressing need to know more about the effective parenting knowledge and practices.

Because parents are the main caregivers of young children, the extent and quality of their parenting knowledge is often considered vital to improve children's all-round development and parenting knowledge may inform parenting practices (Donahue et al., 1997, as cited in Bornstein et al., 2012). The quantitative findings of this study revealed that parenting knowledge levels of parents were satisfactory in all three areas: knowledge about child development, child's health and safety, and strategies to meet the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children. Specifically, among three areas, the knowledge level on the area of child's health and safety was the highest. But, according to the results of interview, the parents from group B did not fully inoculate their children according to the immunization schedule. They failed to inoculate their children with a reason of being busy at the week of inoculation. This finding pointed out that the parents did not know inoculation as an essential thing for children's health. And, the results of interview described that almost all the parents had a little knowledge concerning how to protect their children against sexual abuse. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parents under this study had a fair but less than complete basic parenting knowledge.

In this study, the parenting practices were analyzed based on four main areas of parenting practices for physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children. According to the quantitative study, all the parents' perceptions on parenting practices for child physical development was above satisfactory level and the highest category. However, the qualitative findings of this study showed that the parents from group B could not provide their children adequate toys that support motor development. The parents did not surely know the benefits of playing. Almost all children were not provided with the adequate places to play together because parents lived in apartments and terraced houses. It can be concluded that the parents were still weak in implementing them in the real situations.

The strongest potentially factor contributing to the development of behavioral and emotional development of children is the quality of parenting a child receives (Sanders & Morawska, 2014). However, the results of interview described that group B parents neither knew nor practiced the parenting practices for promoting emotional development of children. They did not show love, affection and respect to their children as they believed that children became spoilt through when they were loved. They misunderstood that the children would pay attention to their instruction only when they were afraid to them. These findings did not follow the conceptualization of Utting (2007) that warm, authoritative, and responsive parenting practices are usually crucial in

developing the emotion of the children. Therefore, it can be interpreted that parents did not aware that showing affection to the child was an important factor for emotional development of the child.

The process of comparison leads children to feel that they are not as good as others and undermine self-confidence (Williamson, 2011). However, the parents from group B under the study compared their children with other children as they believed that comparing was the best way to emulate and imitate the good behaviors of others. Kindlon (2001, as cited in Alegre & Benson, 2012) found that the time mothers spend with their children is a significant influence in their emotional development. But, according to the results of interview, almost all parents under the study did not specially create a family time with their children. This finding pointed out that they did not understand it makes the children emotionally safe and happy. And, they could not devote time for their children as they were working parents. Therefore, it can be interpreted that new economic pressures that increase they work outside the home, often for long hours limit their availability and the quality time they can devote to child care.

According to Utting (2007), the quality of parent-child relationship appears to remain influential into adulthood for social and behavioral outcomes. Although quantitative study described promoting positive social relationship with siblings as an important component, the result of interview pointed out that most of the parents under the study favored the youngest child and they believed that parents should favor the younger child more in any way. The parents did not emphasize the importance of positive social relationship among siblings described by Bryant (1980, as cited in Bornstein, 2002) that parents' treating siblings differently has also been linked to negative relationship among the siblings.

In this study, most of the parents from group B did not understand the importance of cooperative play and they even had the negative attitudes on cooperative play. They believed that children could imitate the bad behaviors of others and they were likely to be rude when they were allowed to participate in group play or activities. This finding opposed the notion of Suryana (2017) that through cooperative play, children show a better ability in activities of cooperation, healthier psychological development, being able to accept the differences that exist between friends of the group.

In addition, among the three components of parenting practices for child cognitive development, providing sensory experiences was the lowest component in perceptions and providing opportunities to think and imagine was the lowest component in performance. The quantitative findings were congruent with the results of qualitative findings. Although parents from group A often took their children on field trips, parents from group B seldom took their children field trips to provide sensory experiences. They could not provide their children such activities because of low socio-economic status. The results of interview and observation pointed out that the parents from group B could not provide their children adequate stories and pictures books that support the child's thinking and imagination. Besides, parents had no ability to read and write as they were illiterate. They could not tell the stories to their children and they did not understand the benefits of storytelling. All these findings described that the parents were unaware of the importance of the concept of Hildebrand (1985) that children continue to use all five senses to experience the world around them during the pre-operational stage and thought provoking games, language and exploration are necessary to provide the brain with stimulation for development.

Also as expected, there were significant differences in parenting practices and perceptions by the parents' educational level, socio-economic status and the location where they lived. These findings were identical the findings of Gross (1993, as cited in Bornstein et al., 2012) that parents higher in socio-economic status and those with more education may possess more knowledge of parenting and more practice them at hand. Poverty causes some parents to be more stressed, depressed or irritable, and this in turn disrupts their parenting practices and styles and produce

poorer long-term outcomes for children (Utting, 2007). This may be one possible explanation for these findings in this study.

Moreover, the findings of the current study were congruent the findings of Williams (2000, as cited in Bornstein & Ribas, 2005) that urban fathers and mothers with more education had higher developmental expectations and could implement earlier the specific parenting practices than the rural mothers and fathers. In this study, the parents from downtown had the highest perceptions and performance on parenting practices and the parents from inner and outer suburban had the lowest perceptions and performance on parenting practices. It could be that the parents from downtown had higher socio-economic status and higher educational level than the parents from inner suburban and outer suburban areas. In addition, residential area was the most potential predictor on parenting practices in this study.

In the study of Sanders and Morawska (2014), when mothers have higher knowledge of child development, they show higher levels of parenting skills and practices. The current study validated the findings of Sanders and Morawska (2014) that there were significant differences in perceptions and performance of parenting practices among the parents groups with regard to their levels of parenting knowledge. It was also discovered that the parents group who had the highest levels of parenting knowledge can perform the parenting practices at hand more than any other groups. Thus, imparting parenting knowledge to parents may be the first priority service needed to be given by the professionals.

This study highlighted the parenting knowledge and practices of parents that were being used in the current society and the most influential factors on parenting practices. Based on the interpretations of this study, it can be concluded that parenting knowledge of parents were not enough to have a complete basic parenting knowledge and they could not fully implement the parenting practices at hand. The data and outcomes in this study pointed out that there is a pressing need to make a cooperation among parents, public authorities, policy makers, professionals in education and health sector, and media partners for implementing appropriate evidence-based interventions, effective early childhood education programs, and parenting education programs aimed at enhancing the parenting knowledge, skills, practices of parents and their life competencies.

## **Recommendations**

### ***Public authorities should***

- open evening classes, holiday programs of parenting education for working parents especially in rural and migrant areas in order to increase their parenting abilities.
- establish better correlation and mutual collaboration between Ministries and Departments involved in child health and education, and child protection.

### ***Professionals in Education Sector should***

- develop a mini and simple child development guide manual that will describe clearly child development requirements and milestones that can be easily used and interpreted by parents and community facilitator.
- do research, projects, and workshops that will facilitate the development of parenting knowledge, strategies and practices for effective parenting.

### ***Professionals in Health Sector should***

- educate the importance of inoculation and encourage the parents to inoculate their children fully according to the immunization schedule.

- inform the parents all hygiene aspects such as food hygiene practices, self-hygiene and environmental hygiene practices.
- establish parents' information centers and health care centers to provide services for children's health.

### ***Media Partners should***

- use mass media, especially of radios, television channels, and social media effectively as the mediators to educate the parents about effective parenting.
- use pictures and cartoons effectively to communicate information as the effectiveness of print is limited where illiteracy is high.

### ***Parents should***

- study the effective parenting strategies and practices for promoting child physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of children.
- participate actively in meetings, parenting talk, workshops, and debates developed by professionals in community.

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