

ABSTRACT

This study explored the play activities of primary school children in their leisure time in Hong Kong. A total of 614 primary school children, aged 6 to 16 years old from 4 primary schools in urban and sub-urban areas, successfully completed a questionnaire which asked what, where and with whom they actually played and liked to play.

The results showed that electronic games, ball games and practice play were the most frequent activities children actually engaged in. The findings also showed that children spent more time on doing homework and watching television than on playing on a school day. Moreover, more children regardless of age or gender mentioned television watching as a favourite activity than any other activities.

With increase in age, toy and play preferences changed from socially oriented to electronic game play. Girls, in general, preferred more socially oriented play than boys who tended more to engage in skill oriented play activities. It is also suggested in this study that there is a lack of imagination or creativity related play activities with the exception of pretend play in younger age groups.

Furthermore, most children played at home although playground was a more preferable choice of play place. Similarly, most children indicated actually playing with siblings on a weekend although friends were the preferred choice. Finally, the direct and indirect influences of parents on play opportunities, preferences and environment were highlighted.

This study raised concerns on the relatively limited scope of Hong Kong children's play activities which in turn may affect their development. Recommendations are made on how parents and educators could help to encourage play for the benefit of a balanced development of Hong Kong Primary School children.