

A Study on Behavioral Problems Among Preschool Children

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Abstract: The present research paper is aimed to study the behavioural problems among preschool children. The study has adopted exploratory research design in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Telangana State. The sample includes 120 preschool children belong to 3 to 5 years age group selected from private preschools. 'Preschool and Kindergarten Behaviour Scales (PKBS2)' developed by Merrel was used to obtain the data. This scale includes five dimensions of behaviour problems – self centred / explosive, attention problems / overactive, antisocial / aggressive, social withdrawal and anxiety / somatic problems. The findings are evident that there was a significant mean difference in behavioural problems between boys and girls. Girls scored higher on self-centered/explosive dimension whereas boys scored higher on antisocial/aggressive dimension. The younger age group (3-4 years) had high mean score as compared to elder age group (5-6 years) on the dimensions of antisocial/aggressive, social withdrawal and anxiety/somatic problems.

Key words: Preschool children, behaviour problems, aggression, anxiety, attention problems, social withdrawal

I. Introduction

Preschool children are of paramount importance in determining the future behaviors of children. Preschool behavior problems are now being recognized as clear indicator of difficulties that may persist into later childhood. Young children frequently engage in naughty or disrespectful behaviour of some form. However, some children display incredibly problematic behaviours that are difficult for parents and teachers to manage.

Temper tantrums, nail biting, thumb sucking, destructiveness, bedtime issues, injuring others, enuresis, encopresis, refusal to eat, disobedience, anxiety problems, delayed speech, and attention deficit disorder are common behavioural problems in preschoolers. Several factors contribute to behavior problems in preschool age children, including parent negligence, inadequate supervision, family conflicts etc. A preschooler's behavior is the strongest predictor of more serious problems later on, including delinquency, substance abuse, antisocial behavior, academic failure, conduct problems, and depression [1]. Controlling such troublesome behaviour requires early identification and intervention.

II. Objectives

1. To study the relationship between behavioral problems of preschool children with selected demographic variables.
2. To study the gender differences in behavioral problems of preschool children.
3. To study the differences in behavioral problems based on age of the preschool children

III. Methodology

Sample

The study was conducted in twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, Telangana State. The sample includes 120 preschool children belong to 3 to 5 years age group selected from private preschools. Table 1 shows the background information of the sample as per their age and gender.

Table 1. Distribution of Children as per their Age and Gender (N=120)

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
3-4 years	48	35	83
4-5 years	21	16	37
Total	69	51	120

Table 1 shows that there are 48 boys and 35 girls, total 83 number of children belong to 3 to 4 years age group. Among 4 to 5 year old children, 21 are boys and 16 are girls. All together, the sample consists of 69 boys and 51 girls.

Tool

Preschool and Kindergarten Behaviour Scales (PKBS2) tool was used for collecting the data. The scale is a norm referenced, standardized instrument developed by Merrell (2002). The PKBS2 consists of two major scales: *Social skills* (34 items) and *Problem behaviour* (42 items). For the present study, problem behaviour scale was used. This scale contains five subscales – self centred / explosive, attention problems / overactive, antisocial / aggressive, social withdrawal and anxiety / somatic problems. Preschool teachers were primary respondents. The internal consistency coefficients of problem behaviour scale are 0.92.

IV. Results and discussion

The relationship between behavioral problems of preschool children with selected demographic variables

It is essential to analyze the demographic data to describe the composition and distribution of the sample which influences the inferential statistics. Demographic variable include age, gender, occupation, educational background, socioeconomic indicators etc. The table presented below shows the correlation of behaviour problems with selected demographic variables.

Table 2. Correlation of behavioral problems with demographic variables

Variables	correlation coefficient
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Gender	0.250*
Age	0.128*
Education	0.149*
Occupation	0.111*
No. of children	0.056NS
Type of Family	0.063NS
Type of House	0.143*
Play area	0.012NS

Note: Significance codes: ‘*’, 0.001, ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05**

Table 2 represents the pearson correlation shown that age was statistically non significant relationship ($r=0.043NS$) with behavioral problems among preschool children.

The results were evident that there was a significant correlation between age and behavioral problems among preschool children. Boys were shown behavioral problems when compare to girls like difficulty to concentrate on academic task, hitting, pushing other children, and avoiding to play with other children etc. The current study is in congruence with [2] one study and their results revealed that there was a significant association between behavioral problems of preschool children and their gender.

Results of the correlation suggested that parents' education was negatively associated with behavioral problems among preschool children, which means most parents had high academic status but did not know how to solve such problems, even after becoming aware of their children's behavior problems. These results are consistent with the findings of a recent study. Their results revealed that parental educational behaviour and attitude variables were significantly correlated with behavioural problem scores in preschool children [3].

With regard to the occupation, there was a significant correlation relationship with behavioral problems among preschool children. The majority of parents belonged to the software industry and business and this could be the reason that they had less time to spend with their children causing more behavioural problems in children.

With regard to No. of children and No. of family members there was no significant relationship between behavioral problems among preschool children.

The results revealed that type of house was positively correlated with behavioral problems among preschool children. Children who were staying in the independent house had shown more behaviour problems as compared to children who are staying in the apartment. There was no significant relationship between play area and behavioral problems among preschool children.

Table 3. Gender differences in behavioral problems of preschool children

A child's gender may have a significant impact on their behavior. Gender differences in behavioural problems of preschool children is presented in the below table.

S.No	Dimensions	BOYS		GIRLS		t value	p value
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
1	Self-Centered/Explosive	4.983	4.45	7.261	5.41	-2.25	0.02*
2	Attention Problems/Overactive	5.163	5.22	6.714	5.93	-1.36	0.17 NS
3	Antisocial/Aggressive	3.672	4.09	2.238	2.89	2.08	0.03*
4	Social Withdrawal	2.049	3.14	1.857	2.34	0.35	0.72 NS
5	Anxiety/Somatic Problems	3.393	3.39	3.809	3.64	-0.58	0.55 NS

From the table 3 it was evident that mean scores of behavioral problems with respect to gender showed significant differences in preschool children. The results revealed that there was a significant mean difference among boys and girls. The mean differences at 5% level in four aspects of behavioral problems among preschool children; self-centered/explosive and antisocial/aggressive ($t=-2.25, 2.08$). There was a significant mean difference between boys and girls on the dimension of self-centered/explosive, which may mean that girls needed more attention, were jealous of other children, were moody, and complained about unimportant things. In addition, there was a significant difference between boys and girls with regard to antisocial/aggressive dimension, which means boys were more physically aggressive than girls, hitting and kicking other children, damaging their belongings, teasing or making fun of them. The present study results are in line with a research and their results revealed that behavior problems were higher among boys (63.1%) as compared to girls(36.9%) [4].

Table 4. Mean differences in dimensions of behavioral problems among preschool children based on age groups

It is assumed that age is an obvious predictor when assessing the influence of preschool on problem behavior. The table presented below shows the mean differences in the dimensions of behaviour problems among preschool children based on their age groups.

S.No	Dimension- Rural	Age Group	Means	S.D	F value	Pr>F
1	Self-Centered/Explosive	3-4 years	5.394	4.420	0.612 NS	0.435
		4.1 to 5 years	4.639	4.762		
2	Attention Problems/Overactive	3-4 years	5.005	5.005	2.526 NS	0.115
		4.1 to 5 years	4.676	4.676		
3	Antisocial/Aggressive	3-4 years	1.289	1.915	4.310*	0.040
		4.1 to 5 years	2.630	3.697		
4	Social Withdrawal	3-4 years	1.552	1.766	4.032*	0.047

		4.1 to 5 years	2.861	3.778		
5	Anxiety/Somatic Problems	3-4 years	3.710	3.416	7.370**	0.007
		4.1 to 5 years	2.061	2.686		
	Total	3-4 years	18.473	14.967	1.525 NS	0.219
		4.1 to 5 years	14.646	15.296		

Table 4 gives the details of differences in mean scores of behavioral problems among preschool children based on their age groups. The results revealed that there were age wise significant differences observed in mean scores of antisocial, social withdrawal and anxiety problems among preschool children. In contrast, there was no significant mean difference found in self-centered and attention dimensions.

On the dimension of antisocial/aggressive and social withdrawal, 3 to 4 years age group had high mean score followed by 4-5 years age group. The reason could be younger children typically exhibit weak social skills, such as low self-esteem and poor peer interactions, as compared to older kids. Children who experience negative adjustments may develop socio-emotional problems and aggressive behaviour.

With regard to Anxiety/Somatic Problems (3.710 and 2.061) there was significant mean difference between two ages of preschool children. 3 to 4 years age group children were shown more anxiety problems when compared with 4 to 5 years. These findings are consistent with a study [5] that discovered older children have more anxiety issues than lower age group children.

V. Conclusion

The findings of present study revealed that there was a significant correlation between demographic variables - age, gender, education, occupation, type of house and behavioral problems among preschool children. The results found that there was a significant mean difference between boys and girls on the dimension of self-centered/explosive. Girls scored higher on self-centered/explosive dimension when compared with boys. In contrast, boys scored higher on antisocial/aggressive dimension as compared to girls.

The study found that younger age group (3-4 years) had high mean score as compared to elder age group (5-6 years) on the dimension of antisocial/aggressive and social withdrawal. Similarly, on the dimension of anxiety/somatic problems (3.710 and 2.061) 3 to 4 years age group children were shown more anxiety problems when compared with 4 to 5 years age group.

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