



Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi
The Journal of International Social Research
Volume: 3 Issue: 13 Year: 2010
WOMAN STUDIES (Special Issue)

WOMEN AS A MOTHER AND HER PLAY RELATION WITH THE CHILD
ANNE ROLÜNDE KADIN VE ANNE-ÇOCUK OYUN İLİŞKİSİ

Özlem DOĞAN-TEMUR*
Hatice Zeynep İNAN**

Abstract

Mothers are expected to take the responsibility of childrearing and childbearing of their children. Although “motherhood” in terms of women taking care of their own children has always been present in our lives, the level and nature of mothers’ interaction with their children shows varieties in different cultures. For example, variations of mother-child interaction in “play” and the structure of that play has become of interest to many educators and researchers. However, there is a gap in the literature about the nature and level of mother-child play. The current research aimed to interpret the mother-child play in-depth by examining how particular mothers perceive their children’s play by utilizing a qualitative research method, namely phenomenography. Some of the most important results of the study are as follows: there was the low level of awareness of mothers about what is play and what is not; mothers stated that they usually played with their children when they were available from their duties at home and set aside about 1 hour each day for play; mothers stated that they had a wide variety of objectives and aims for their play with their children, but homemaker mothers had more objectives for play than do employed mothers; mothers believed in the benefits of play for their children, mostly psycho-motor and cognitive developmental benefits; and both employed and homemaker mothers considered some other people responsible for playing with their children.

Key Words: Women, Mother, Child, Play.

Özet

Çocukların yetiştirilmesine ilişkin sorumluluğu annelerin alması beklenir. Kendi çocuklarına bakan bireyler olarak “anneler” her zaman hayatımızda var olmasına rağmen, annelerin çocuklarıyla olan ilişkisinin seviyesi ve yapısı toplumdaki topluma değişkenlik gösterir. Örneğin, “oyun” esnasındaki anne-çocuk ilişkisindeki çeşitlilik ve bu oyun sürecinin yapısı, eğitimcilerin ve araştırmacıların ilgi odağı olmuştur. Fakat anne-çocuk oyun ilişkisi yapısı ve seviyesi konusunda araştırmalar çok azdır. Bu araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden fenomenografi metodunu kullanarak, annelerin çocuklarının oyununu nasıl gördüğünü irdeleyerek, anne-çocuk oyun ilişkisi derinlemesine yorumlamayı hedeflemiştir. Çalışmanın önemli sonuçlarında bazıları şöyledir: annelerin, neyin oyun olduğu, neyin olmadığı konusunda farkındalıkları zayıftır; anneler çoğunlukla günde yaklaşık 1 saat, ev işlerinden vakit bulduklarında çocuklarıyla oyun oynadıklarını söylemişlerdir; tüm anneler çocuklarıyla oynadıkları oyunlar için çeşitli hedefler ve amaçlar edindiklerini belirtmişlerdir fakat ev hanımı olan annelerin, çalışan annelerden daha fazla amaç edindiği ortaya çıkmıştır; anneler oyunun çocuklar için yararlı olduğuna inanmaktadırlar, özellikle de psiko-motor ve bilişsel gelişimlerine olan yararlarına inanmaktadırlar; hem ev hanımı hem de çalışan anneler çocuklarıyla oyun oynama konusunda başkalarını sorumlu görmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, Anne, Çocuk, Oyun.

* Assist. Prof. Dr., Dumlupınar University, Early Childhood Education Department, Kütahya, Turkey (First author)

** Assist. Prof. Dr., Dumlupınar University, Early Childhood Education Department, (Corresponding author),
haticezeynep@hotmail.com, Dumlupınar University, Kütahya, Turkey

Introduction

Women have always kept many identities and played a wide range of roles in societies. Motherhood is one of the most important roles women carry from ancient times to present. Mother is defined as an adult female who raise children; accordingly, mothers are expected to take such responsibility of childrearing and childbearing of their children (Russo, 1976). Although motherhood in terms of women taking care of their own children has always been present in our lives, the level and nature of mothers' interaction with their children changes from culture to culture, from mother to mother. For example, variations of mother-child interaction in play and the structure of that play has become of interest to many educators and researchers (e.g., DeMeis & Perkins, 1996; Ivrendi & Işıkoğlu, 2008; Lindsey & Mize, 2001; Tuğrul, 2002). Different perspectives about mothers' play with their children have been discussed for years, such as the interactions between parenting styles and play (Lagacé-Séguin & d'Entremont, 2006).

Erden and Alisinanoğlu (2002) state that there is a gender differentiated pattern on children's choice of toy and play. Parallel to this, in their quantitative research on parent-child play behavior, Lindsey and Mize (2001) found that mother-daughter play tended to take the form of pretense play while father-son play tended to take the form of physical play. Based on the categories of play created by Stevenson et al. in 1988, Lindsey and Mize (2001) define pretense play as pretending roles and using objects to represent other objects and physical play as playful contact or motor activity. The study also showed that pretense play involved more polite and less assertive initiation strategies whereas physical play involved more assertive forceful initiations, in the form of imperatives. More importantly, this study stresses the fact of gender differentiated patterns of behavior between parent and child and cautions other researchers to consider this fact, when positioning their findings.

Research conducted on fathers' role in their children's education and development suggests that although mothers still carry the traditional role of taking care of their children, fathers' involvement has increased in the current century in USA (Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hoffferth, 2001). Although there is an increase on fathers' involvement in play with their children, according to Yeung et al. "household activities, caring for infants, studying, and reading remain domains in which fathers have a very low relative contribution" (p.153).

In the research of DeMeis and Perkins (1996), homemaker mothers are more likely than employed mothers to rate the following activities as typical characteristics of mothers: "playing a sport or physical game with a child, making or buying a toy to promote child's physical development, watching educational TV, stopping own activity to play with child" (p.785). It is essential to examine if Turkish homemaker mothers are more likely than employed mothers to perceive those recreational activities as typical of mothers.

An important finding stated by Ivrendi and Işıkoğlu (2008) shows that Turkish parents with low income or basic level of education (i.e., elementary school) value play less than parents with high income or high level of education. They believed that play does not much contribute their children's development or education. On the other hand, this quantitative research shows that parents with high income and higher education have positive beliefs about play.

The research conducted in different countries stated above gives important information about parents' perspectives of play, and displays different facets of mother-child play and provides educators and other decision makers with important information on how to contribute to children's positive development and education. However, it is seen that there is a gap in the literature about the nature and level of mother-child play.

Not much research has been conducted to interpret the level and nature of play specifically between Turkish mothers and their children. Moreover, the previous research conducted by Inan (in press) found out that mothers in Kutahya frequently complain that their children get bored easily or ask to play the same game over and over again. They also wanted to be instructed on how to have a quality time with their children. Accordingly, it was essential to examine the mothers' play relation with their children to gain more in-depth information about their attitude toward play as well as their own experiences with their children, so that more concrete help could be provided to mothers on their play relations with their children.

The current research aims to interpret the mother-child play in-depth by examining how particular mothers perceive their children's play. It defines mother-child play by utilizing a qualitative

research method, namely phenomenography. Before stating the methodology used in research of this mother-child play, it is essential to define play, which is one of the important fundamental activities of children. In his book *“Play,”* Garvey (1990) states that although it is a fuzzy concept, play can be defined as a pleasurable, spontaneous, choiceful and voluntary activity. On the other hand, the concept of play shows varieties. For example, in their research, Yeung et al (2001) include sports and outdoor activity as active play and computer/electronic and non-computer/electronic games as passive play in play and differentiate play from leisure activities, such as watching TV/video and doing hobbies. This shows that they use the term “play” and “game” interchangeably, because some of the characteristics of games are not included in the definitions play, such as rules in computer games. More specifically, three definitions of “game” are stated as follows: 1) “activity engaged in for diversion or amusement” 2) “a procedure or strategy for gaining an end” and 3) “a physical or mental competition conducted according to rules with the participants in direct opposition to each other” (Merriam-Webster, 2009). More importantly, the terms “play” and “game” have exactly the same translation in Turkish, namely “oyun.” Accordingly, in the current study, the terms “game” and “play” are used interchangeably, because during interviews with Turkish mothers, the term “oyun” is used, so their answers were based on the joint concept of “game” and “play.”

Methodology

Participants

The current study involved fourteen mothers, seven homemaker mothers and seven employed mothers in Kütahya, Turkey. Nine of the mothers have sons, whereas five of them have daughters. Two of the employed mothers are teachers and one of them is a medical staff, whereas the rest are employed in private sector. The ages range from 40 to 60. Grand mothers are looking after the children of the four employed mothers, while babysitters are looking after the children of the three employed mothers. All of the homemaker mothers are themselves looking after their children.

Data Collection

The study contributes to the literature by examining the structure of mother-child play experiences utilizing a qualitative research method, phenomenography. Marton (1994) summarizes the role of the phenomenographer as follows: “As phenomenography is empirical research, the researcher (interviewer) is not studying his or her own awareness and reflection, but that of their subjects.” so that phenomenography is more appropriate to carry out this study since it aims to examine perspectives of mothers (p.2). Marton continues, “The interview has to be carried out as a dialogue; it should facilitate the thematization of aspects of the subject's experience not previously thematized. The experiences, understandings, are jointly constituted by interviewer and interviewee” (p.2). Phenomenography enables researchers to focus on the experiences of the participants, which is the basic focus of this research. More specifically this research aimed to examine the perspectives of employed and homemaker mothers on mother-child play in general and their own experiences of play with their children.

Moreover, Marton (1994) advises researchers to conduct half-structured interviews. Thus he added that, “This type of interview should not have too many questions made up in advance, and nor should there be too many details determined in advance. Most questions follow from what the subject says” (p.2). Consistent with the methodology of the study, a few basic questions were determined first although during the interview, questions were shaped spontaneously.

Data Analysis

As Marton (1994) explained, “One of the contexts is ‘the pool of meanings’ that derives from what all the participants have said about the same thing.” (p.2). The current study derived the common points occurred among mothers. Marton makes further remarks by adding these statements: “The other context is - and here we have to reintroduce the individual boundaries again- what the same person has said about other things. We have thus to make sense of particular expressions in terms of the collective as well as of the individual context. This is the hermeneutic element of the phenomenographic analysis.”

(p.2). In this study, the emerged units from mothers' experiences for each question of the theme are grouped and frequency is stated. Then examples for individual's expressions are stated.

Findings

Table 1: Play with your child

1. Do you spare your time to play with your child? If yes, how much time do you spare? 1.1. If not, what are the reasons for it?	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>Yes, I do, but I don't just play. I mean, I spend my time with him/her not only for fun but also for education. We watch cartoons together. It is as if we spend time together while I prepare activities for school. If you are asking the time allocated just for fun, it is, I can say, half an hour. (1)</i>
<i>Yes (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)*</i>	<i>I do. I read him/her a story for an hour every night. If not everyday, we generally do paper activities, watch cartoons or play computer games. (4)</i>
<i>While watching cartoons (1)</i>	<i>Yes, I do. I generally come home directly after I leave work, and I spend with him/her one and half hours right after we eat dinner. (7)</i>
<i>While doing house chores (1)</i>	<i>I do. I work during the day and I spend my time with him/her between 19:00-22:00. We eat together, but playing time doesn't exceed one hour. I can't spend more time with him/her. (6)</i>
<i>When I finish my chores (7)</i>	
<i>Half an hour (1)</i>	
<i>While going to bed or when I get up (2)</i>	
<i>More than one hour (2,7)</i>	
<i>Less than one hour (6)</i>	
<i>In the evenings (6,7)</i>	
<i>Whenever I'm available (5)</i>	
Non-Employed	<i>Yes, I do. I can spare abundant time with my children since I don't have another thing to do. They are at school all day, but in the evenings I spend at least one hour with them. (1)</i>
<i>Yes (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)</i>	<i>I do. 5 or 6 hours a day. (4)</i>
<i>Abundantly (1,3)</i>	<i>I can't spend much time with them. They generally spend time together playing. I sometimes try to join them in the mornings. (6)</i>
<i>At least one hour (1,2,6)</i>	<i>Yes, I do. We eat together when they come home after school. Then we watch TV and do their homework. We spend most of the day together. (7)</i>
<i>When I finish my chores (2)</i>	
<i>More than an hour (3,4)</i>	
<i>In the afternoons (6)</i>	
<i>During daily activities (7)</i>	

*Note. Numbers from 1 to 7 are assigned for each mother.

As seen in Table 1, all the mothers, employed or non-employed, spare time to play with their children. The responses of the employed mothers to this question are grouped in 9 categories as *yes, while watching cartoons, while doing chores, when I finish my chores, half an hour, while going to bed, when I get up, more than an hour, less than an hour, in the evenings, whenever I am available*, whereas the responses of the non-employed mothers to this question are grouped in 8 categories as *yes, abundantly, at least one hour, when I finish my house chores, more than an hour, in the afternoons, during daily activities*. The mother number four said that she tries to allocate time for her child as daily as possible, and added by saying "between half an hour and one hour" that they don't have a certain time set for playing with her child so they play whenever possible. Analyzing what the mothers said, it is remarkable that employed and non-employed mothers can play with their children generally when they are free and that almost all the time allocated for their children is spent for playing games. Such expressions as during daily activities, while watching cartoons, while doing chores, etc show that mother perceive these activities as games.

Table 2: Games with your child

2. Why do you play games with your child?	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>We play games to reinforce his/her development. I play with them because they are interested in me too much. (1)</i>
<i>To have quality time (1,2)</i>	<i>What matter is not to spend much time with them but to spend high quality time both monitoring their development and for their education because education starts with mother. I follow the development of mental, cognitive skills, etc. through games. (2)</i>
<i>To foster holistic development (1,2)</i>	<i>In order to spend time with my child. Because I enjoyed seeing his/her first walking, playing games. (3)</i>
<i>To make happy (1,4,6)</i>	<i>Because he/she needs it, becomes happy when we play and spend time together. (4)</i>
<i>To monitor (2)</i>	<i>In order to show my love, to give self-confidence, to help him/her learn, not to leave him/her alone, to help him/her enjoy him/herself and help him/her learn to share. (7)</i>
<i>To mother (2)</i>	
<i>To spend time(3,4)</i>	
<i>To see the initials (3)</i>	
<i>To educate (2,5,6)</i>	
<i>To satisfy the need of playing (4)</i>	
<i>To show how much he/she means to me (6,7)</i>	
<i>To entertain (7)</i>	
<i>To give self-confidence (7)</i>	
Non-Employed	<i>In order to train my child, to strengthen the bond between us, to help him/her socialize and adapt to his/her educational life in the future,</i>
<i>To foster holistic development (1,4)</i>	

<i>To entertain (2,4,5,7)</i>	<i>to improve his/her imagination, and to enable him/her to be an active, adaptive and sharing child. (3)</i>
<i>To make happy (2,7)</i>	<i>I play to entertain him/her. (5)</i>
<i>To educate (2,3,6)</i>	<i>I play to entertain my child, to teach him/her to share, help others. In order to adapt him/her to the objects around and to train him/her, we play with special toys. For example, we buy building bricks (legos) to teach him/her shapes and figures. (6)</i>
<i>To foster development of intelligence (2)</i>	<i>In order to entertain, to make happy, to share, to understand his/her problems, to give him/her the feelings of peace and confidence and to make him/her see me as a friend. (7)</i>
<i>To support mother-child bond (3)</i>	
<i>To socialize (3)</i>	
<i>To develop his/her imagination (3)</i>	
<i>To activate child (3)</i>	
<i>To have a compatible child (3)</i>	
<i>To have participative child (3,6,7)</i>	
<i>To be aware of child's wish (4)</i>	
<i>To spend time (4,5,6)</i>	
<i>To show how much he/she means to me (4)</i>	
<i>To teach the environment (6)</i>	
<i>To understand the child (7)</i>	
<i>To relax the child (7)</i>	

As seen in Table 2, the aims of employed mothers are categorized in twelve groups, while the aims of non-employed mothers are categorized in seventeen groups. The common points of employed and non-employed mothers are such categories as to foster holistic development, to educate, to make happy, to entertain the child and to show that the child is precious for her. The difference seen in the answers of non-employed are such categories as to understand the child, to ease him/her, to form a bond between mother and child, to have active child, to improve his/her imagination, to help the child socialize, and to be aware of the wishes of the child. While employed mothers generally see games as a tool for education of the child and spending time together, non-employed mothers tend to play and spend time with their children for different reasons.

Table 3: 0-2 year-old period

3. What kind of games did you play with your child during his/her 0-2 year-old period? Give examples.	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
<i>Employed</i>	<i>We played voice games to enable him/her distinguish sounds e.g. animal sound, crying sound. Of course, we did this by using toys. We rolled a ball to one another. (1)</i>
<i>Voice imitation (1)</i>	
<i>Ball games (1)</i>	
<i>Toys (1,2,6)</i>	<i>We played playhouse with such materials as plates, pans, etc. We cooked together and ate, danced to music together and we started educational games after he/she was one year old. We played putting shapes into the right place. I once bought a book with animal pictures and I used to tell him/her about those animals. I used to talk to him/her continuously trying to form long sentences. We exercised to gymnastics for body development. (4)</i>
<i>Action games (2)</i>	
<i>Daily activities through games (2,6)</i>	
<i>Ball (3,6)</i>	
<i>Toys (3)</i>	
<i>Household furniture (3,4)</i>	
<i>Playhouse (4)</i>	
<i>Dance (4)</i>	<i>Even to teach toilet habit, we bought a toilet cap with sound. As it beeped, he/she played and learned the toilet habit. I used to take him/her to the toilet by games.</i>
<i>Language games (4)</i>	
<i>Legos (5,7)</i>	
<i>Matching (5)</i>	
<i>Musical games (5)</i>	
<i>Puzzle (6)</i>	
<i>Learning body (7)</i>	
<i>Non-employed</i>	<i>We have been playing with toy cars since he/she was 0-2 years old. He/she used to play with their wheels. He used to play with toy cars since he/she was a baby. He/she didn't have bath. I used to fill the bathtub and put his/her toy cars in it. (2)</i>
<i>Ball games (1)</i>	
<i>Imitation games (7)</i>	<i>Puzzles, storytelling and playing in the park with other kids. He/she used to hide under the quilt and try to scare me. We used to playhouse without speaking because he/she started to speak late and I used to make puppets talk. We used to dance to music. (3)</i>
<i>Body exercises (1,6)</i>	
<i>Games with siblings (1)</i>	
<i>Toys (2)</i>	
<i>Daily activities through games (2,6)</i>	
<i>Puzzle (3)</i>	<i>We used to play with legos a lot. I used to draw pictures, show them to my children and ask what they were. (4)</i>
<i>Story (3)</i>	
<i>Park (3)</i>	<i>I used to do things like shaking the rattle over him/her. (5)</i>
<i>Playhouse (3)</i>	<i>Also I used to do sport activities with his/her limbs. He/she liked playing during bathing. We taught him/her walking with games. We used to open our arms and told him/her to run.</i>
<i>Puppets (3)</i>	
<i>Dance (3)</i>	
<i>Legos (4,7)</i>	
<i>Action games (4,6)</i>	
<i>Painting (4)</i>	
<i>Intelligence games (4)</i>	

As seen in Table 3, mothers generally mention about such games during 0-2 age period as ball games, toys, daily activities, imitation games, action games and legos. Analyzing the categories, it can be seen that only one mother took her child to a different environment through her remark “we used to play in the park with other kids” and the number two non-employed mother remarked “He/she didn’t want to have bath as a baby and we used to put toy cars into the bathtub. While he/she was washing the toy cars I used to wash him/her.” This shows mothers used to do difficult things through games.

Table 4: 2-4 year-period

4. What kind of games did you play with your child during his/her 2-4 year-period? Give examples.	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>The toys have changed depending on the age. We focused on colours, shapes, numbers and animals. At this age his/her language development was promising (2)</i>
<i>Games with father (1)</i>	<i>We used to play occupations like being a cop, bookseller or doctor. We used to play imaginary games (he/she used to have an imaginary car and rode me in it.) we used to play fighting games like boxing. He/she used to role-play some actors/actresses. (3)</i>
<i>Language games (1,2,3)</i>	<i>We switched to paper puzzles from wooden ones. We started to play with paper puzzles.</i>
<i>With toys (1,2,4,6)</i>	<i>We were playing with legos. We used to play with toy cars. He loved ball games especially basketball. We used to play with robot, horse and other animal figures. Not on weekdays, but at the weekend we used to play in the park 3-4 hours. (6)</i>
<i>Concept (2)</i>	<i>Playhouse, drawing pictures, plasticine, scissors works and water paint works. (7)</i>
<i>Imaginary games (3)</i>	
<i>Imitation games (3)</i>	
<i>Legos (4,5,6)</i>	
<i>Television (4)</i>	
<i>Puzzle (6)</i>	
<i>Park (6)</i>	
<i>Imaginary games (6)</i>	
<i>Playhouse (7)</i>	
<i>Plasticine, silly putty (7)</i>	
<i>Activities (7)</i>	
Non-employed	<i>We generally played games which could be played with toys. I used to take him/her to the park with his/her brother for interaction with others. We also played playhouse with toys. (1)</i>
<i>Toys (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)</i>	<i>We were playing with toys and legos. He/she used to play computer with his/her father and play with cars with his/her grandpa. He like playing on the sand. We used to go to the park together. (3)</i>
<i>Household furniture (1)</i>	<i>I used to ask him/her to take the water glass which he drank in to the kitchen. My intention was to teach him/her some rules and to show him/her what and where were the things in the house. (4)</i>
<i>Park (1,3,4)</i>	<i>He used to have a toy zoo, houses, buses and cars. He used to locate wild animals in a place and pets in another; buses and cars of the same kind in certain places. (6)</i>
<i>Legos (3,6)</i>	<i>He used to play with silly putty, we did drawing works, played with puzzles and balls. I showed him/her throwing, catching, hitting and kicking and he/she was also interested in cars. (7)</i>
<i>Games with father (3)</i>	
<i>Games with others (3)</i>	
<i>Playhouse (4)</i>	
<i>Activities (4,7)</i>	
<i>Puzzle (4)</i>	
<i>Those that teach rules (4)</i>	
<i>Concept (5)</i>	
<i>Action games (6,7)</i>	
<i>Plasticine, silly putty (7)</i>	

As seen in Table 4 about the games, mothers played with their kids during 2-4 age period, the “father” category in number one employed mother and number three non-employed mother catches our attention. In this age group, while one employed mother has park category, three non-employed mothers stated that they used to play in the park. Compared to 0-2 age group, in this one, mothers stated that the children played more with toys. The number four non-employed mother, with her answer ‘we used to do painting, cutting and pasting’, they revealed that they considered painting, cutting and pasting as games. Employed and non-employed mothers both used similar materials for games in this period. In this period, games are also considered as a tool to adapt children to daily life.

Table 5: 4-6 year-period

5. What kind of games did you play with your child during his/her 4-6 year-period? Give examples.	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>In this period we didn’t have a garden so he/she mostly played at home with neighbour kids. We used to play touch, roll on the ground and tickle one another. (3)</i>
<i>Street games (2)</i>	<i>I started to make him/her count at 4. We drew picture. We played games from magazines. (5)</i>
<i>Concepts games</i>	<i>Now he/she is fond of cartoons. He/she loves heroes. He/she has spiderman and batman toys. He/she loves computer games. He/she generally wants to play alone. (6)</i>
<i>Social games (3)</i>	<i>Puzzles, toy bricks, matching, painting, hide and seek. (7)</i>
<i>Action games (3)</i>	
<i>Games for cognitive development (5,7)</i>	
<i>Drawing (5)</i>	
<i>Television (6)</i>	
<i>Computer (6)</i>	
<i>Individual games (6)</i>	
<i>Puzzles (7)</i>	
<i>Games with rules (7)</i>	

Non-employed	
<i>Pencil-paper activities (1,3,4)</i>	<i>He/she plays running, pistol-gun games. We play hide and seek. I take my time and don't rush to find him. (2)</i>
<i>Storytelling (1)</i>	<i>We put objects in front of us and play simple adding games. My daughter can also do subtracting. I roll out dough and my children do such figures as apple and orange from dough. They make shapes by using moulds. I show my daughter pictures from story books and she makes up stories out of them. (4)</i>
<i>Park (2,6,7)</i>	
<i>Toys (2)</i>	
<i>Action games (2,5)</i>	
<i>Games with rules (2)</i>	
<i>Computer (3)</i>	<i>They were very active at those ages. They were jumping around. My son used to like playing with his plastic repairing tools and my daughter used to play with her dolls. (5)</i>
<i>Imitation (3)</i>	
<i>Activity (4)</i>	
<i>Games for cognitive development (4)</i>	<i>He/she started to play harder legos. At those ages, he/she used to play more with his/her peers. (6)</i>
<i>Story activities (4)</i>	
<i>Drawing (4,7)</i>	
<i>Games for non-strenuous muscular development (4)</i>	
<i>Toys (5)</i>	
<i>Street games (6)</i>	
<i>Lego (6)</i>	
<i>Social games (6,7)</i>	

As seen in Table 5, especially non-employed mothers try to create opportunities to play with other kids in this period and they are aware that games with rules have started to appear. In both employed and non-employed mothers, computer category can be seen and in this period mothers see that their children want to play alone and therefore, the place of computer and TV becomes important. It can be said from the number four non-employed mother's remark "We put the objects in front of us and do simple adding activities and my daughter can do subtracting on her own: for example, we are four, but when dad goes we'll be three and when I go we'll be two. When my sister/brother and mum come to school to pick me up, nobody will exist at home" that during this period some of the learning activities can be perceived as games.

Table 6: Materials

6. While you're playing with your child, what kind of materials do you use?	
Intended	Expressed
Employed	
<i>Toys (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)</i>	<i>His/her toys are puzzles, wood, blocks, etc. He/she uses household furniture especially kitchen tools like pans, spoons and he/she cooks for me. (1)</i>
<i>Puzzle (1,4,6,7)</i>	<i>Silly putty, toy kitchen tools, pictured toy materials, etc. are mostly used. I prefer toy kitchen tools because real tools might give harm to my child. (5)</i>
<i>Board (1)</i>	
<i>Household furniture (1,3,5,6,7)</i>	<i>They have toys. We use legos, puzzles. He/she uses my dipper which I use in the kitchen in every game. He/she plays war games. He/she says he is playing baseball by using my dipper as a bat. He/she shoots. He/she plays with pencils a lot. (6)</i>
<i>Stationary (2,3,4,5,6,7)</i>	
<i>Silly putty (2,4,5,7)</i>	
<i>Computer (2)</i>	
<i>Lego (1, 3,6,7),</i>	<i>He/she uses such things as silly putty, puzzles, legos, dyes, painting tools, playhouse toys, costumes and many different types of furniture at home as toys. (7)</i>
Non-employed	
<i>Silly putty (1,4,7)</i>	<i>He/she comes near me while I am working with dough in the kitchen and I give him/her some for him/her to play. He/she also likes to play with silly putty. (1)</i>
<i>House chores (1)</i>	
<i>Toys (2,3,5,7,6)</i>	<i>Dipper, spoons, kitchen tools, fruits and vegetables, toy car, bike, old cell phones, pencil, notebook, toy guns, cannons and tablecloth. (3)</i>
<i>Household furniture (2,3,4,5,6)</i>	
<i>Stationary (3,7,6)</i>	<i>We play such games as cooking, baking cakes, finding the right place of a figure. (4)</i>
<i>Computer (4)</i>	
<i>Directive games (4)</i>	<i>Toy cars, planes, models, legos, dyes, dough and puzzles. (7)</i>
<i>Lego (3,4,7)</i>	
<i>Puzzle (7)</i>	

It can be seen in Table 6 that employed and non-employed mothers chose similar materials for games and these materials are mostly toys, household tools, stationary and silly putty. Analyzing the mothers' choices, it is seen that especially the employed mothers prefer stationary and toys, whereas non-employed mothers turn their daily chores into games to give their children a chance to play by using real objects. Legos are one of the common tools for games for both groups of mothers. Number three employed mother and number four non-employed mother are seen to use computer as a tool for games. We can deduce from number four non-employed mother's expression 'we play puzzle games, baking

cakes and finding the right place of a figure on the computer.’ that she plays with her children on the computer.

Table 7: Others who play with your child

7. Who are others who play with your child?	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>His/her grandmother used to take him/her out, play archery with him/her and take care of him/her. His/her father cannot spare time for him/her and they are only together during meals. Sometimes he takes him/her to the park at the weekends. (2)</i>
<i>Father (1,3,4,6,7)</i>	
<i>Friends (1,3,4,6)</i>	
<i>Relatives (1,2,3,4,5,7)</i>	
<i>Teacher (6)</i>	<i>His/her father, neighbour kids, aunt, grandmother, grandfather. Since he/she goes to kindergarten, he/she plays with his/her teacher and his/her friends. (6)</i>
<i>Sibling (6)</i>	
Non-employed	<i>Their father, friends, neighbour kids, grandfather and grandmother. (4)</i>
<i>Father (1,2,4,7)</i>	<i>Nobody was there except me. My husband was working. When he came in the evenings, he didn't use to spare time for him/her. I used to take him to the park every now and then where he/she used to play with his/her peers. (5)</i>
<i>Friends (1,3,4,5)</i>	
<i>Relatives (1,2,3,4,7)</i>	
<i>Sibling (1,3,6)</i>	

As seen in Table 7, to the question “Is there anyone else playing with your child except you?”, similar categories of both employed and non-employed mothers appeared, namely relatives, father, friends and siblings. By saying “*His father plays with him, even not sufficiently. He can come down to my son's level and my son becomes happy playing with his father*”, number seven employed mother reveals that even not sufficiently, the father plays with his child. The category “teacher” also takes attention in employed mothers.

Table 8: Benefits of the games

8. Do you ever consider the benefits of the games you play with your child on his/her development? If yes, give examples.	
<i>Intended</i>	<i>Expressed</i>
Employed	<i>I certainly think so. For example, the educational games I we play improves his/her classifying, matching, uniting, splitting, distinguishing skills and etc. They also contribute to his/her language development, social development, cognitive and psychomotor development. (1)</i>
<i>Basic skills (1,7)</i>	
<i>Language development (1)</i>	
<i>Social development (1)</i>	
<i>Cognitive development (1,2,4,5,7)</i>	<i>We aimed to improve his/her imagination by buying his/her different toys. We tried to abstain from such toys as swords, guns. We let him/her strengthen his/her hand muscles by doing cutting and pasting with papers. (3)</i>
<i>Psychomotor (1,2,3,4,5,6,7)</i>	
<i>Visual (2)</i>	<i>His/her finger muscles develop when he/she plays with dough, he/she not only role-plays parents during playhouse, but also behaves as the roles require him/her to learn various social rules, gets relaxed emotionally, expresses him/herself, learns to share, develops his/her imagination. His/her mental development benefits from such games as sequencing and matching. (7)</i>
<i>Social rules (4,7)</i>	
<i>Self-care skills (4)</i>	
<i>Imagination (3,6)</i>	
<i>Creativity (6,7)</i>	
<i>Expression skills (7)</i>	
<i>Sharing (7)</i>	
<i>Relaxation (7)</i>	
Non-employed	<i>I play sometimes to spend time with him/her and sometimes to help him/her. We have figure toys to help his/her mental development. He/she places figures into the right place. For his/her social development, we talk with his/her dad but he isn't very interested because of his works. (2)</i>
<i>Psychomotor (1,4,5,6,7)</i>	
<i>Social development (1,2,6)</i>	
<i>Cognitive development (1,2,3,4,5,6)</i>	<i>In fact, some games are harmful; especially games with guns. We don't prefer them very much. We do writing drills and so his/her vocabulary increases. He/she gets rid of his/her introvert attitude and becomes more active and sharing. His/her communication with people increases and imagination improves. Our bonds get stronger. (3)</i>
<i>Imagination (4)</i>	
<i>Self-confidence (4)</i>	
<i>Responsibility (4)</i>	
<i>Directions (4)</i>	<i>Yes, playing puzzles for cognitive development, hand works to improve his/her hand skills and imagination, doing house chores to make them see how much I care for them, to make them feel that they are getting older, to make them think that they can achieve something and to enable them to realize I trust them. Playhouse to have fun and to teach etiquette. (4)</i>
<i>Entertainment (4)</i>	
<i>Sharing (4,7)</i>	
<i>Language development (7)</i>	
<i>Trust (7)</i>	<i>He/she became happy. It allowed him/her to release his/her energy and relax. During games he/she play with his/her friends, he/she learned to share and to obey the rules. (7)</i>
<i>Curiosity (7)</i>	
<i>Relaxation (7)</i>	
<i>Social rules (7)</i>	

Such categories as psychomotor, social, cognitive developments, sharing, social rules, language development, imagination, learning social rules are all seen in both employed and non-employed mother's answers. However, mothers emphasize that they generally focus on cognitive and psychomotor development. For example, the number five non-employed mother expresses that she aims cognitive development through games when she say "*I encourage them to do activities that will develop them mentally.*" Only the number four non-employed mother expresses that entertainment is an aim for games and the number seven non-employed mother expresses that games are very important for relaxation with her sentence "*He/she became happy. He/she released his/her energy and relaxed. Through his/her games with his/her friends, he/she learned how to share and to obey the rules.*"

Discussion

One of the most important results of the study is the low level of awareness of mothers about what is play and what is not. For example, the study shows that mothers considered their daily activities as play, such as watching cartoons, working on homework, eating dinner, coloring-cutting-pasting activities, and reading a book together. Parallel with the literature, this study shows that mothers did not only state their play activities but also "companionship" or leisure activities (Yeung, et al, 2001), such as watching TV together, as an example of play activities with their children. Moreover, this study shows that mothers usually played with their children when they were available from their duties at home and set aside about one hour each day for play.

This research shows that mothers had a wide variety of objectives and aims for their play with their children, but homemaker mothers had more objectives for play than do employed mothers. Stated objectives include gaining a better understanding their children and teaching sharing. On the other hand, common objectives for both mothers covered mostly education, development and entertainment of children. It is interesting that only four mothers from each group stated that entertainment and happiness are the basic aims of play, even though pleasure is one of the criteria used to identify an activity as play (Garvey, 1990). Moreover, common materials used by both employed and homemaker mothers during play include toys, house equipment, and stationary materials. Along with identifying their objectives, mothers named various kinds of play for the ages 0-2, 2-4, and 4-6, from playing hide-and-seek to playing with Legos. It is interesting that some important forms of play were not mentioned by any mother, such as finger-play, for any of the three age groups.

The results also show that mothers believed in the benefits of play for their children, mostly psycho-motor and cognitive developmental benefits. Only a few mothers mentioned benefits related to the social, language and emotional development of children. This might show that mothers were not really as cognizant of the benefits of play for their children's whole development. In terms of the educational side of play, one thing became clear: The interviewed mothers saw play as a tool for their children's education. For example, they stated that they play with their children in order to teach them "sharing" or "rules." Also noteworthy is that mothers also did not mention much about outdoor play at parks or on the patio. This might be indicative of how Turkish children in cities are stuck in 5-10 level apartments and do not have much opportunity for outdoor play.

Both employed and homemaker mothers considered some other people responsible for playing with their children, such as fathers, relatives, and friends. This might reflect how mothers' traditional role of being the main caregiver of their children (Russo, 1976) is changing. Mothers and fathers share their responsibility of playing with the child in the current century rather than the burden falling only on the mother. This finding is consistent with propositions that fathers' involvement has increased in the current century, although mothers still carry the traditional role of taking care of their children (Yeung et al., 2001). A few also stated that siblings are playmates for their child. It is interesting that only one mother mentioned that her child's teacher also plays with the child. As she stated, "*her teacher in the preschool helped me so much. For example, we draw figures. We cut a circle into half and painted each half with a different color.*" It is essential to examine such a response in future studies to find out whether mothers have a misconception that play is not one of preschool teachers' responsibilities. Perhaps some believe that preschool teachers do not play with children at school at all. If this is true, it is a drastic misconception because play is considered one of the most important educational tools and a requirement of children's education and development (Garvey, 1990). Early childhood education teachers most definitely should support and encourage play in early childhood education centers.

The current study is expected to provides us an important information about Turkish mother-child play from mothers' perspectives on related experiences as well as -to contributes to the literature by filling the gap to a little extent by examining the structure of mother-child play experiences through utilizing a qualitative research method, mainly phenomenography. In general, the study points out the need of educational activities for mothers to raise their low level of awareness on the importance of and different forms of play. Mother-child education courses could be planned to train both employed and homemaker mothers on children's play and mother-child play relations. The future research could also focus on what types of activities mothers actually engage in when they spend high-quality play time with their children.

REFERENCES

- DEMEIS, Debra K., & PERKINS, H. Wesley (1996). "Supermoms" of the Nineties. *Journal of Family Issues*, 17(6): 776-792.
- ERDEN, Şule, & ALİSİNANOĞLU, Fatma (2002). Anaokullarına devam eden çocukların ebeveynlerinin çocuk oyun ve oyuncakları hakkındaki görüşlerinin incelenmesi. *Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 2(2): 42-49.
- GARVEY, Catherine (1990). *Play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- İNAN, Hatice Zeynep (in press). Anaokulu çağı çocukları olan anne-babaların karşılaştıkları problemler [The problems faced by parents of preschoolers]. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*.
- IVRENDİ, Asiye Bora, & ISIKOĞLU, Nesrin (2008). Erken çocukluk döneminde çocuğu olan anne ve babaların oyuna yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesi [Mothers and fathers' beliefs about play in early childhood period]. *Çağdaş Eğitim Dergisi*, 355: 4-12.
- LAGACÉ-SÉGUIN, Daniel G., & d'ENTREMONT, Marc-Robert L (2006). The role of child negative affect in the relations between parenting styles and play. *Early Child Development & Care*, 176(5): 461-477.
- LINDSEY, Eric W. & MIZE, Jacquelyn (2001). Contextual differences in parent-child play: Implications for children's gender role development. *Sex Roles*, 44(3/4): 155-176.
- MARTON, Ference (1994). Phenomonography. In T. Husén, & T. Neville (Eds.), *The International Encyclopedia of Education* (2nd ed., Vol. 8, pp. 4424 – 4429). Postlethwaite, Pergamon.
- MERRIAM-WEBSTER (2009). *The word "game" in the Merriam-Webster dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> on Octpober 15, 2009.
- RUSSO, Nancy Felipe (1976). The motherhood mandate. *Journal of Social Issues*, 32(3); 143-153.
- TUGRUL, Belma (2002). The impact of different activity programmes on children's play behavior and their interactions. *Defectologia*, 4: 81-91.
- YEUNG, W. Jean, SANDBERG, John F., DAVIS-KEAN, Pamela E., & HOFFFERTH, Sandra L. (2001). Children's time with fathers in intact families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63: 136-154.