



Title: A Mixed Methods Study on Infants' Experiences of Involvement in Infant Care Centres in Singapore

Authors: Cynthia Tan

Reference: Tan, C. (2022). *A Mixed Methods Study on Infants' Experiences of Involvement in Infant Care Centres in Singapore*. 22nd PECERA Conference, Hong Kong SAR, China.

The following study was presented by our colleague Ms Cynthia Tan for Deakin University at the 22nd PECERA Conference in July, 2022

Summary

The number of infant care centres (ICCs) and enrolled infants in Singapore has increased over the past 5 years, leading to a greater emphasis on learning quality in ICCs. One important indicator of learning is children's involvement, which refers to the activation of their exploratory drive. This activation is reflected in characteristics such as concentration, energy, and persistence. In Singapore, the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) recognises the significance of children being "involved, engaged, and enquiring" as a component of quality in centre-based education. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on the involvement of preschoolers, overlooking infants and toddlers. Hence, this study aims to investigate the experiences of infants' involvement in ICCs in Singapore.

This study employed a mixed methods approach. Observations were conducted on 36 infants from 6 ICCs in Singapore using the Leuven Involvement Scale. A total of 216 observations, each lasting 2 minutes, were collected. The infants' active involvement levels were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest level of involvement. Additionally, 56 video recordings were gathered for qualitative analysis using reflexive thematic analysis, aiming to identify the specific ways in which the infants demonstrated active involvement.

The quantitative data demonstrated that 50% of the centres achieved a score of at least 3.5 out of 5 on the involvement scale, indicating a supportive environment. This score was calculated by averaging the scores of the six infants from each centre. However, some centres scored below 3.5, suggesting that there is potential for improvement in those cases.



The qualitative thematic analysis revealed that infants experience involvement through interactions within the infant's physical environment (infant-space interactions) and interactions with their educators (infant-educator interactions). Regarding infant-space interactions, three subtypes were identified: unrestrained movement on the floor, movement between physical locations, and restricted or limited movement when infants were confined or held by adults. As for infant-educator interactions, three subtypes were identified: sporadic and brief interactions, directive interactions where educators provided instructions and guided infants' attention, and reciprocal interactions involving back-and-forth communication. By integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, it was observed that infants who exhibited high and very high levels of involvement typically engaged in free, unrestrained movement and experienced more frequent reciprocal interactions with their educators.

In conclusion, the findings highlight the importance of providing favourable conditions such as free movement and reciprocal interactions to promote active involvement among infants. It is essential to prioritise these conditions in infants' curriculum experiences in order to enhance their overall engagement and learning.

To find out more, you may email [us](#).