

**Using a cross-cultural conception of play
to explore the play perspectives of
children and parents of Somali heritage
and primary school practitioners**

Submitted by Elizabeth May Bishop to the University of Exeter

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Abstract

This two phase study explored perspectives of play according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners, in a city in South West England. In an addition to the considerable research base concerning play, this study investigated the frequently overlooked cultural dimension of play and how this affects the education of Somali heritage children in England. The broader contentious concern of play's role in Early Years and Primary education was also explored.

A mixed methods pragmatic approach was employed in this study. In Phase One, a photograph sorting activity based on the Activity Apperception Story Procedure by Howard (2002), was used to enable the participation of young children and participants for whom English is not their first language. Established via this activity were definitions of play and work according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners. Exploratory Data Analysis was applied to examine this data.

In Phase Two, a focus group design was used, with discussions drawing on cross-cultural conceptions of play (Gaskins, Haight & Lancy, 2007; Göncü, Tuermer, Jain & Johnson, 1999). This enabled the exploration of how parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners perceive play's relationship to children's development and learning, with consideration for their own experiences of childhood. Focus group data was analysed using thematic analysis, supported by the Cultural Historical Activity Theory framework.

The findings of this study highlight shared and individual definitions of play, competing benefits of play and the cross-cultural importance of play being intrinsically motivated. Implications for practice centre on the need to recognise play as part of unique cultural milieus at a practitioner, school, educational psychology service and policy level.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and rationale

In the United Kingdom, play-based learning is encouraged for younger children but replaced by formal learning as children move through the primary years. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was introduced in 2008 and is underpinned by play. However, there continue to be concerns from research and practice communities that play is not given sufficient recognition or implemented effectively and that there has been an increase in restrictions on play. Literature on play and education has for a long time contained debates on the role of play in schools, particularly beyond the early years (Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Wood, 2010), but research has repeatedly found that playful activities improve learning (McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2009). However, recent research has highlighted that in order for play to be beneficial to learning, a necessary factor is that children themselves view the activities as playful. Research has also highlighted that the cues children use to come to conclusions about the playfulness of an activity may differ from those of adults. Therefore, relying solely on adults' perspectives may be insufficient for designing and enabling the most beneficial play activities in schools. Consequently there is an increasing research base concerned with understanding children's perspectives of play and how these compare with adults' perspectives, to which the present study intends to add. The Activity Apperception Story Procedure (Howard, 2002), whereby participants post photographic stimuli into labelled boxes, has been established as a valuable and 'playful' way of exploring children's perceptions of activities. Due to the virtually language-free visual nature of the procedure, it also presents an opportunity for effectively exploring the perceptions

of individuals who speak different languages, a pertinent point to the research undertaken here due to some participants speaking English as an additional language.

A missing element of most research concerning the status of play in education has been the role that culture plays within this. This reflects the largely 'culture-free' approach of most education research and practice based on long-held universal assumptions of 'Western' theoretical perspectives. Therefore, whilst play is widely perceived to be universally beneficial for children's development, there has recently also been increased recognition of the sociocultural aspects of play and the importance of these in forming meaningful interpretations of play behaviour (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014; Göncü, Mistry & Mosier, 2000). Research in this area has found cultural differences in various features of play, e.g. the form, content, structure, frequency and setting of play (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014; Edwards, 2000; Göncü et al., 2000; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Yahya & Wood, 2017). Causes of these differences are numerous and include the economic structure of communities (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014), structure of the physical environment (Kirova, 2010) and broad cultural traditions and values (Carlson & Harwood, 2003). This presents possible challenges when we consider the integration of children from different cultural backgrounds within an education system that involves play, as children may be required to negotiate diverse play perspectives. In areas of significant multiculturalism, it is therefore important that research explores the relationships of play, culture and education in order to determine how culturally appropriate the current application of play theory is within schools.

Somalia is one country where many of the play experiences described in literature and anecdotally appear different to those of children in the U.K. In Somalia, traditional games involving natural objects are still prevalent, there are fewer toys and children play

outside in large groups rarely with adult involvement (Kirova, 2010). Each of these aspects are different to those experienced by the majority of children in the U.K., where children's outdoor play is more restricted and play in general is more structured and supervised. In the city in which this research is taking place, Somali heritage pupils now form the largest black and minority ethnic group and are one of the fastest growing populations in the city's schools, with the increase being greater for primary-aged children than for any other age. However, Somali heritage pupils are among the lowest achieving groups at every Key Stage. Whilst there is a literature base, and focus in practice, on the intellectual and academic context for these children, there has been little consideration of the role of play in these children's school lives. Considering the potential for different cultural perspectives on play and the aforementioned central but contested role of play in U.K. education, there is likely to be value in exploring the experiences of Somali heritage children in this area. Research (e.g. Ali & Jones, 2000) has also highlighted that one of the factors hindering the academic progress of some Somali heritage pupils is the trauma they or their parents have experienced and psychological research has found that for children who have migrated, levels of psychological distress are influenced by post-migration factors such as child-parent and child-teacher relationships. It is subsequently pertinent that as well as the impact of play on learning, a significant research base exists endorsing the therapeutic benefits of play in a wide-range of areas including social adjustment, self-concept and behaviour (Bratton et al, 2005). In addition to the importance of exploring the effects of cultural perspectives, play therefore also has the potential to be particularly beneficial for some children.

In order to appropriately and effectively explore different cultural views of play, a framework is required which is sensitive to potential cultural differences, but not rooted in one theoretical perspective, due to the abovementioned issues of universally applying 'Western' assumptions around play. An example of culturally sensitive research on play can be seen in the approach of Göncü, Tuermer, Jain & Johnson (1999) which posits play as a 'leading cultural activity' and provides five principles to guide research aiming to explore cultural variations in play. The first principle is to consider the economic structure of a community, as this governs the availability of play to children. Second is the value the community assigns to play and third is the implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children. The fourth principle concerns the roles and activities of adults, as children represent this world in play. Lastly is the principle that multiple data-gathering and analysis techniques should be used by researchers. These principles are evidently relevant when considering the potential play and education differences between Somalia and the U.K.

With education in the U.K. being significantly more play oriented than in Somalia, pedagogical differences can present a problem for children or their parents, when trying to negotiate the norms of a different culture. Furthermore, with literature suggesting that play is well placed to benefit children therapeutically as well as academically, it is likely to be beneficial to explore these subjects with schools at which there are concerns in this area. Therefore, in order to address the play experiences of primary-aged children of Somali heritage, this research uses a cross-cultural framework and child-friendly mixed methods approach to explore the perspectives of school practitioners, Somali parents and children.

1.2 Research aims

Overall aim: To explore perspectives of play and play's position in U.K. education, according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners.

Phase one aim: To establish definitions of play and work according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners.

Phase two aim: To explore how parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners perceive play's relationship to children's development and learning, with consideration for their own experiences of childhood.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introducing play and its role in education

The definition of play is complex and the subject of social and academic debate, with different theoretical perspectives resulting in many definitions of play (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Youngquist, & Pataray-Ching, 2004). A more thorough discussion of the literature concerning play definitions occurs in 2.8; in brief the regularly agreed and cited facets of a play definition are that it is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated (Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Ludvigsen, Creegan & Mills, 2005; Youngquist, & Pataray-Ching, 2004). Similarly, over many years there have been numerous play theories proposed, largely by developmental theorists such as Piaget (1951/2013) and Vygotsky (1978). The work of both Piaget and Vygotsky contributed significantly to the way in which children's cognitive development is understood and, in ways that are still visible in early year's settings and schools in the United Kingdom today, this understanding has a comprehensive effect on practice. Early childhood education has for a long time been supported by the widely-held perspective that play is essential for healthy development (Wood, 1999), supported by the work of a number of educators across the last three centuries, such as Friedrich Froebel, Susan Isaacs, Maria Montessori and Margaret McMillan. Most recently, this perspective is visible in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which states that play is essential and that learning should take place through play. However, as stated by Wood and Attfield (2005) "the role, purposes and value of play in the early years curriculum continue to be debated" (p. 1). Similarly, the aforementioned "shared logic" that play is central for learning in early childhood has not been a certain outcome of research. This is due to many factors, including the earlier

outlined complexity of defining play and the debates about how play, learning and teaching interact both inherently and as a result of intervention. This is particularly true of the situation regarding play beyond the early years, where research has highlighted an increase in restrictions on play, with suggested reasons including over-scheduling of children's time; reduction of break and lunch times; and greater focus on academic gains (Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Jachyra & Fusco, 2016; Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; Lester & Russell, 2008; Myck-Wayne, 2010; Nicolopoulou, 2010). In this context, it is also worth noting that the Primary National Curriculum Framework contains no guidance on play and therefore contrasts rather starkly with the EYFS.

2.2 The 'culture-free' approach of education research and practice

Influential play theories have largely developed from 'Western' research and are therefore culturally limited (Fleer, Tonyan, Mantilla, and Rivalland, 2009; Kirova, 2010; Sutton-Smith, 1980). This is despite the fact that these most fundamental theorists posit that children's perceptions of activities are influenced by environmental exploration (Piaget, 1929) and interactions with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the omission of discussions of culture from significant play literature is not compatible with the constructivist foundations of these theories. More recently, however, this issue has been addressed in sociological, anthropological and psychological literature concerned with gaining a more detailed understanding of the implications of cultural differences in play (Levinson, 2005; Yahya & Wood, 2017). Research in this area has found cultural differences in the different features of play, e.g. the form, content, structure, frequency and setting of play (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014; Edwards, 2000; Göncü et al., 2000; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Yahya & Wood, 2017). For example, research has often found that parents' involvement in children's play is less common in rural 'non-Western' communities

(Göncü, Abel & Boshans, 2010, p. 50; Göncü et al., 2000, p. 322) and children from high socioeconomic backgrounds are often cited as engaging in more complex pretend play than children from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991). Research has found that children's play is affected by the economic structure of communities such as material wealth and maternal education (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014, p. 606); competing activities that children are involved in and how adults structure the physical environment (Kirova, 2010); and broad cultural traditions and values (Carlson & Harwood, 2003). However, in her brief review of studies of play in different cultures, Brooker (2011a) argues that whilst the content of children's play may be different according to contextual influences, the features of children's play are comparable. For example, as a contrast to the "educational play in the preschool settings of more affluent societies", Brooker (2011a) describes the play of Sudanese children, where no toys are present but straw, twigs and seeds are used to construct play things such as dolls and pretend fields. Brooker (2011a) then describes how, despite the surface differences between the play in these two cultures, there are comparable features such as motivation, persistence, collaboration and problem-solving, suggesting that differences between the play of children in different cultures is not due to within-child differences but rather adult-controlled external factors, such as the time and value attributed to play.

Whilst research such as that discussed above is shifting away from the 'deficit' view of play in 'non-Western' cultures, this is predominantly evident in the research undertaken by developmental psychologists (Kirova, 2010, p. 78), whilst education research and practice continues to take a "culture-free" approach to play where 'Western' perspectives are assumed to be the ideal (Fleer, 2014, p. 51-52; Kirova, 2010, p. 78;

Kushner, 2007, p. 62). As a result of this assumption that 'Western' research is globally relevant, policies and practice are informed by research from limited cultural and historical contexts.

In practice, researchers posing such arguments therefore suggest that it is necessary, especially in communities containing individuals from a variety of different 'home' cultures, to critically examine 'Western' practices in schools in order to overcome the 'culture-free' approach. Göncü et al. (1999) argued that research exploring the cultural underpinnings of play in diverse communities is therefore important as "an adequate examination of children's play in a given community can be accomplished only by taking into account the unique cultural milieu in which play is embedded" (p. 152). Theoretically, this is possible by considering sociocultural-ecological models of behaviour and development, in order to "preserve cultural group identity and practices while creating a common culture" (Kirova, 2010, p. 88). Without this, it is argued that educational philosophies risk being 'imported' and views of cultural minorities sacrificed for those of already prevailing or majority views (Saracho & Spodek, 1998, p. 195).

One example of a cross-cultural approach to play is that of Göncü et al. (1999). Göncü drew on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)¹, which is explored further in 3.3. CHAT posits play as a 'leading activity' for young children (Leontiev, 1981), meaning that play is conceived to be the activity of most benefit to a child's development. Göncü et al. (1999) have extended this concept to refer to play as a 'leading cultural activity', as they view the skills rehearsed by children during their play to be fundamentally affected

¹ In much of the literature the terms 'activity theory' and 'CHAT' are used interchangeably (Daniels, 2004; Edwards, 2005; Engeström, 1987). Consequently, the same synonymy is used in this thesis.

by the activities of the adults around them, i.e. their 'culture'. In their approach, Göncü et al. (1999) provide five principles that guide their work on cultural variations in children's play. First is the economic structure of a community as this governs the availability of play to children. Second is the value the community assigns to play. Third is the implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children. Fourth are the roles and activities of adults, as children represent this world in play. Fifth is that multiple data-gathering and analysis techniques should be used. This framework has been developed and applied by Göncü et al. (1999) to enable a meaningful understanding of play behaviour in different cultures. For example, in a case study of children's daily lives in a traditional Mayan village in Yucatan (Mexico), Gaskins (2000) used spot observations to record the behaviour of children and interpreted this using the framework in order to provide a cultural interpretation of the data, i.e. by considering the roles and work of adults, the beliefs and values of adults, and the freedom afforded to children.

2.3 Cultural Historical Activity Theory

2.3.1 Three generations of activity theory

As stated above, the cross-cultural approach to play developed by Göncü et al. (1999) was heavily inspired by Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). CHAT as a theory and methodology has taken divergent paths since its origins in the theories of Vygotsky (1978). This has resulted in CHAT being perceived as flexible with regard to epistemological concerns and applicable across various disciplines, mostly in the fields of cultural and critical psychology (Blunden, 2009; Engeström, 2005). CHAT developed from the work of Vygotsky in the 1920s and 1930s, originating in Vygotsky's concept of mediation. Largely in the context of Stalin's Russia, Vygotsky's work was culturally

situated and concerned psychological understandings of how individuals' lives could be transformed through their activities. This first approach, referred to as first generation activity theory, conceptualised Vygotsky's focus on artefacts ('tools') as mediators between a person or people ('subject') and an outcome ('object'). Initial work concerning this generation of activity theory typically focused on individuals rather than groups. Figure 1 shows a visual representation of this first generation activity system. The key premise of Vygotsky's conceptualisation of human activity was that individuals experience change and transformation as a result of their activities being object-oriented and artefact-mediated. This included recognising sign systems (e.g. language) as one of these mediating artefacts. By theorising about human activity in this way, Vygotsky presented a concept which was perceived as more complete than previous behaviourist constructs of activity, as Vygotsky placed actions within social and cultural contexts where the behaviour of individuals is mediated by situational artefacts.

Since Vygotsky introduced his conceptualisation of activity theory, there have been attempts to develop the theory. Engeström (1987) has been a key agent in these developments, broadening the theory so that it refers to the collective activities of groups rather than the singular actions of individuals. Accordingly, Engeström expanded Vygotsky's triangular representation of human activity to enable representations of human activity at the macro level, i.e. amongst a community of subjects. This was done by adding components to the original triangle, namely 'community', 'rules' and 'division of labour', whilst emphasising the significance of interactions between the components. This resulted in what is referred to as second generation activity theory, a visual representation of which is shown in Figure 2. In essence, this representation displays

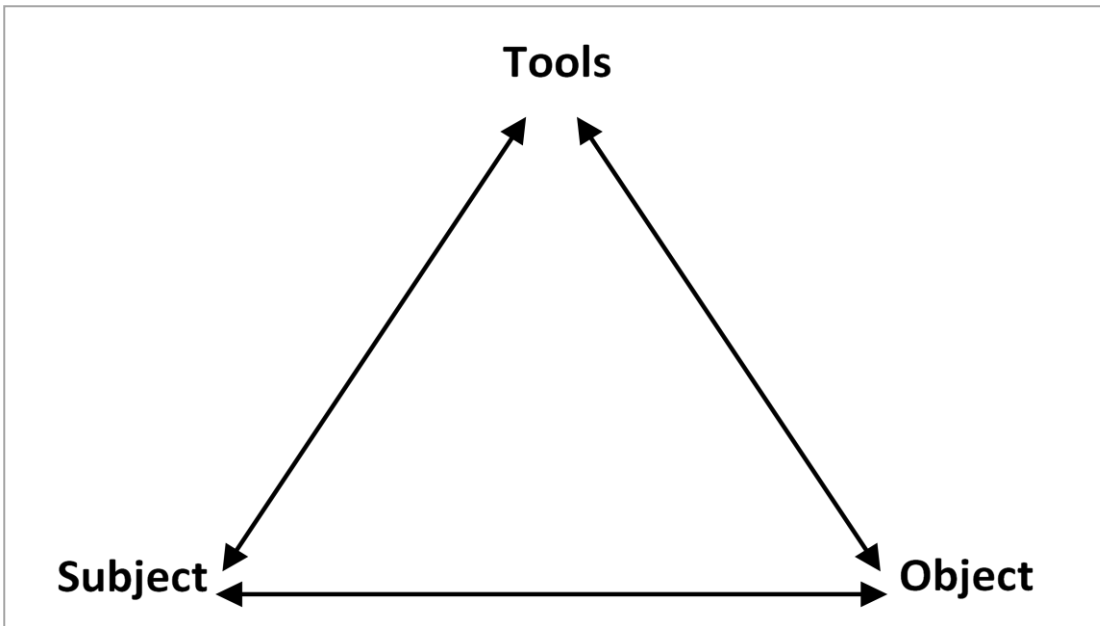


Figure 1. First generation activity theory model. Adapted from *Learning by Expanding: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Developmental Research*, by Y. Engeström, 1987, Retrieved from <http://communication.ucsd.edu/MCA/Paper/Engestrom/expanding/toc.htm>

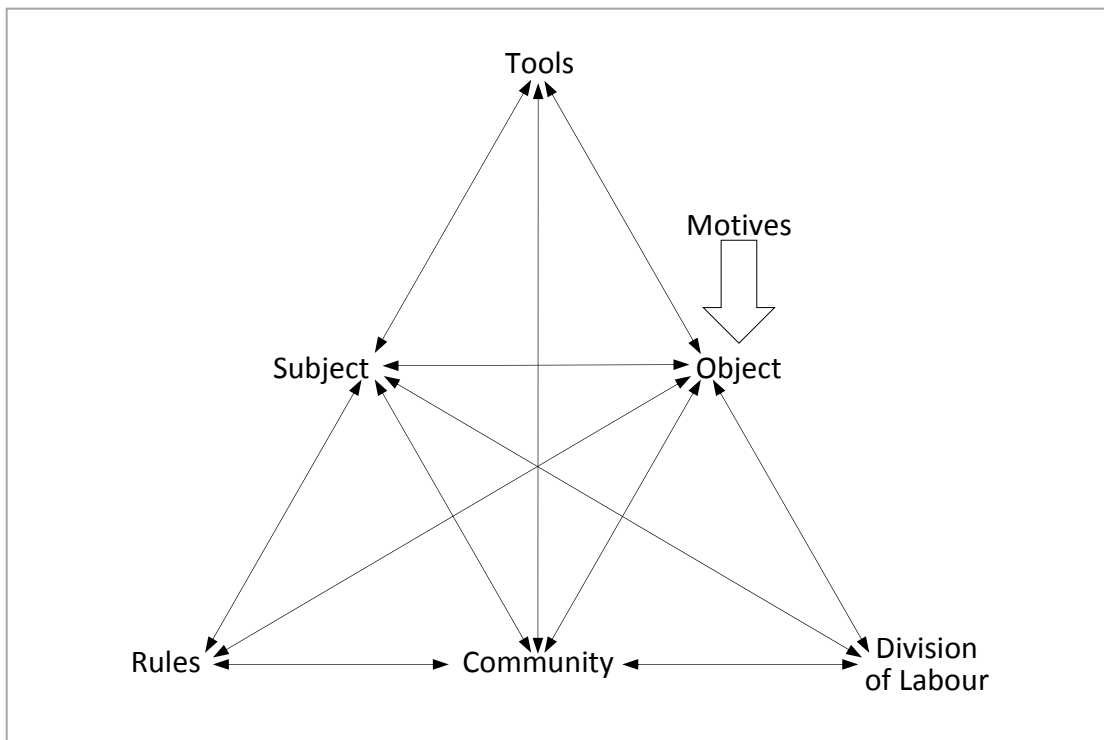


Figure 2. Second generation (CHAT) activity system. Adapted from *Learning by Expanding: An Activity-Theoretical Approach to Developmental Research*, by Y. Engeström, 1987, Retrieved from <http://communication.ucsd.edu/MCA/Paper/Engestrom/expanding/toc.htm>

that an activity system according to Engeström (1987) is comprised of a subject (person or group) who has motives to act, with the support of tools (artefacts, signs, language), in the orientation of an object (product, concern, goal); this occurs in the context of a community with rules and division of labour. In recognition of the centrality of collective activity and interactions, Engeström since developed his conceptualisation, creating third generation activity theory (Engeström, 1999). Instability and contradictions are theorised by Engeström to motivate activity change and development, leading the third generation model to focus not only on interactions between components within activity systems, but also on the ways that networks of activity systems interact with each other and create new activity systems. Figure 3 shows a visual representation of this third generation activity system. The third generation model is relevant to the present study as multiple activity will be compared. However, it is the second generation model that forms the basis of this research as the focus will be on the activity of children's play according to the specific contexts of two participant groups.

2.3.2 Play as a leading cultural activity

Also important to the present research is the work of Leontiev (1981) concerning activity theory, its implementation and implications. Leontiev (1981) has theorised that activity systems represent units of life that individuals engage in in order to satisfy a key need and move towards other activities. Accordingly, Leontiev (1981) posits play as a 'leading activity' for young children, meaning that play is the unit of life in which children engage in order to support their development, in the context of their community. The significance to the present study of Leontiev's work on activity systems concerns this centrality of play to the activities of children and the recognition of cultural influences. As a consequence of these key features, researchers have utilised CHAT as a both a

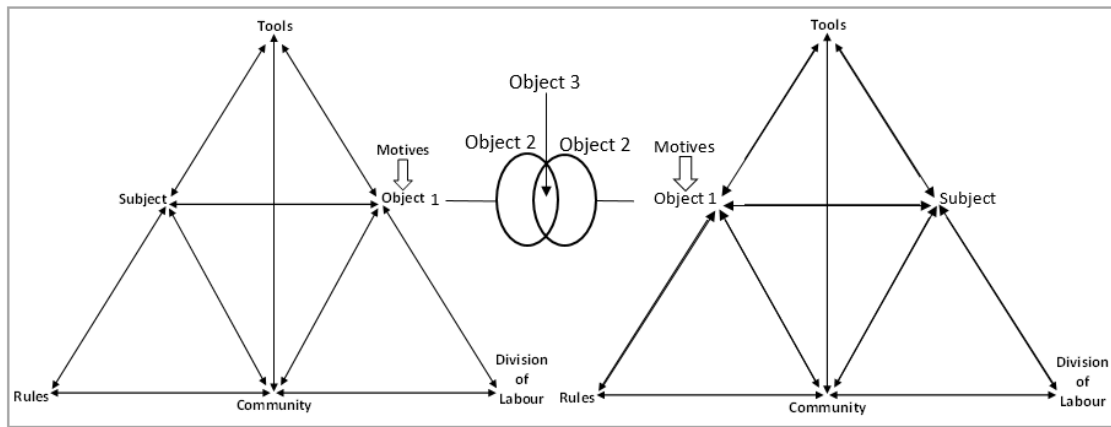


Figure 3. Third generation (CHAT) activity system. Adapted from *Innovative learning in work teams: analysing cycles of knowledge creation in practice*, by Y. Engeström, 1999, In Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen, & R. Punamäki (Eds.), *Perspectives on Activity Theory* (pp. 377-406), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

theoretical and methodological construct during the explorations of children’s activities in sociocultural contexts; for example, Göncü et al. (1999) have extended Leontiev’s concept of play as a ‘leading activity’ to refer to play as a ‘leading cultural activity’, in recognition of the significant ways in which play is both affected by and affects the context in which it takes place. Consequently the focus of the present study is in using second generation CHAT as a methodological framework for analysing focus group data, where the ‘object’ of the focus group discussions is ‘play’ and the ‘subjects’ are the participants engaging in these discussions. The reasoning behind this choice of framework is elaborated on below.

2.3.3 CHAT’s relevance to the present study

The decision to analyse focus group data in a deductive manner, i.e. using CHAT components as predetermined themes, arose due to focus group discussions being structured around the principles of Göncü et al. (1999) and these principles having their foundations in CHAT. Whilst the principles of Göncü et al. (1999) refer to factors that affect current play behaviour, the CHAT framework, as described above, enables a multi-layered analysis of any activity, giving significant consideration to cultural and historical

matters. Therefore, this posits the CHAT framework as beneficial for analysing the different factors affecting children's engagement in activities. Most importantly, the aim of this research is to explore perceptions of play in a way that is culturally relevant and does not assume a particular cultural perspective. The CHAT model is therefore pertinent to this research for the following reasons:

- The use of CHAT in education research is increasing, due to greater recognition of the influence of social factors in education environments (Nussbaumer, 2012).
- It theorises that an individual's engagement in an activity can only be understood by considering the cultural dimensions of tools, rules, community and division of labour.
- It aligns with a focus group method as it recognises the effect of language on activity ("Tools are cultural objects, social forms that develop historically, and language is the overall most important structure of social forms" (Langemeyer and Nissen, 2005, p. 188)).
- It posits play as a 'leading activity' for young children (Leontiev, 1981).
- It has a long and diverse history with origins in the work of Vygotsky (1978); therefore, it allows for epistemological flexibility.
- Activity systems can be viewed as communities that engage in activities that are shared or have shared goals (Venkat & Adler, 2008).
- Despite the previous point, CHAT is dialectical and postulates that activity is driven by contradictions and tensions between elements in a system (Bakhurst,

2009), providing the opportunity to explore such tensions between elements and between systems.

2.4 Somali children in the U.K.

2.4.1 Somali immigration and U.K. population

Whilst the colonial linkage of the U.K. and Somalia means Somalis have been present in the U.K. for over a hundred years, large numbers arrived in the 1980s and 1990s following the outbreak of civil war in Somalia (Demie, Lewis & McLean, 2007, p. 7). Since around 2000, there has been another phase of migration, as Somalis who obtained refugee status in other European countries (e.g. Sweden and the Netherlands) have migrated for a second time to the U.K., often to join family members already living in the U.K. or to avoid unemployment or discrimination in the country they originally migrated to. Therefore, the Somali community in the U.K. is comprised of individuals representing a range of migration experiences, including single male workers, women and children on their own or reuniting with fathers and entire families. Estimates of the number of Somali immigrants in the U.K. are substantially varied due to their regular movement (Sporton, Valentine & Nielsen, 2005), however, the most recent figure from the Office for National Statistics estimated that there were 114,000 Somali-born immigrants living in the UK in 2014 (Office for National Statistics, 2014).

In the city in which this research is based, the number of Somali heritage school pupils has increased in recent years and Somali heritage pupils now form the largest black and minority ethnic group (Bent, Hill, Rose & Tikly, 2012). Furthermore, other than migrants from Eastern Europe, they represent the fastest growing population in the city's schools. Of particular relevance to this review and the ensuing research, this increase has been

greater for primary-aged children than for any other age; this is believed to be due to an increase in the number of young families that have migrated in recent years and higher birth rates for Somali communities (Bent et al., 2012).

2.4.2 Schooling and achievement in the U.K.

There is significant documentation regarding the academic underachievement of U.K. children of Somali heritage (e.g. Demie et al., 2007; Hassan, 2013; Sporton et al., 2006). This is mirrored in the city in which this research project takes place, where Somali heritage pupils are among the lowest achieving groups at every Key Stage (Bent et al., 2012). However, during recent years, the achievement gap between pupils of Somali heritage and other pupils has been narrowing, particularly on measures at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS; Bent et al., 2012, p. 16). The narrowing of the achievement gap at this age is important to highlight as the majority of research found during this review process has focused on the experiences and achievement of Somali heritage adolescents rather than younger children. It is possible that one explanation for this is that, as children in Somalia do not attend school until six or seven years old, early years provisions in the U.K. are often not significantly accessed by the Somali community (Robertson, 2002). Therefore, research has perhaps somewhat overlooked the experiences of this age group. However, the increase in attainment on measures at the end of the EYFS suggests there may be value in carrying out research with this age group in order to explore how this might relate to the experiences and achievement of older children and adolescents.

2.4.3 Trauma

One of the factors that research (e.g. Ali & Jones, 2000) has highlighted as hindering the progress of Somali pupils, particularly refugee children, is the trauma experienced. This factor in particular is discussed in more detail here due to its significance during later discussions about the awareness of practitioners, the importance of home-school relationships and the value of play. As a sub-group of the immigrant population from various countries, refugee children in particular have often had traumatic past experiences before or during their displacement (Sporton et al., 2006) and a large amount of research, including research in the United Kingdom, has found that these children experience higher levels of psychological distress (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011; Fazel & Stein, 2003; Sack, Clarke & Seeley, 1996). As previously outlined, Somalia has for a long time been in a state of violence due to civil war and there continue to be significant numbers of newly arriving Somali immigrants that are refugees or asylum seekers. Therefore, it is important to consider the incidence and effects of trauma in children of Somali heritage.

Ellis, MacDonald, Lincoln & Cabral (2008) provide an examination of the relationship between trauma exposure, post-resettlement stressors, perceived discrimination, and mental health symptoms in Somali adolescent refugees in the U.S. Their findings indicate that these young people experience increased post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depressive symptoms, as a result not only of pre-migration experiences but also of post-migration and acculturative factors. This reflects wider research concerning child refugees displaced from and living in various countries, which has found that levels of psychological distress are not just influenced by pre-migration experiences such as parent separation and injury, but also post-migration factors such as language

development and levels of personal and structural support (Bronstein & Montgomery, 2011). In fact, some research has found post-migration factors (compared with pre-migration factors) to be stronger risk factors for mental health symptoms (Durakovic-Belko, Kulenovic & Dapic, 2003; Sundquist, Bayard-Burfield, Johansson, & Johansson, 2000). As the present literature review serves to establish a base for research into children's experiences in the country they have migrated to, the next section explores post-migration with regards to acculturation and resilience, from a psychological and ecological perspective.

Acculturation is described as a dynamic process whereby cultural and psychological change is experienced by individuals or groups (Berry, 2005). These processes relate to factors such as learning a new language and becoming familiar with new norms and customs. Acculturation is therefore central to discussions of post-migration factors such as those explored by Ellis et al. (2008) and Bronstein & Montgomery (2011) as outlined above. A widely referenced conceptual understanding of acculturation is that of Berry (2005), who considers there to be four acculturation styles describing the ways in which an individual relates to their heritage culture and their host culture. The first of these styles is integration, whereby an individual identifies highly with both their heritage and host culture. The second style is assimilation, whereby an individual has low levels of identification with their heritage culture but high identification with their host culture. The third style is separation, whereby an individual has high levels of identification with their heritage culture but low identification with their host culture. Finally, the fourth style is marginalisation, whereby an individual has low levels of identification with both their heritage and host culture.

The notion of resilience was for many years conceptualised in literature as a within-person trait or quality, helping an individual function well despite experiencing adversity (e.g. Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1991; Rutter, 1985). However, more recent thinking and approaches have moved away from this individualistic focus towards a more dynamic understanding of resilience that also encompasses contextual factors. Betancourt & Khan (2008) present a thorough examination of how this concept of resilience relates to children who have experienced war, by exploring key literature concerning risk and protective factors. To facilitate and represent this exploration, Betancourt & Khan (2008) mapped the factors affecting resilience for these children onto a social ecological model, mirroring Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of child development. This model can be seen in Appendix 1. Whilst it may appear a somewhat simplistic representation of complex processes, Betancourt & Khan's model is the result of a comprehensive evaluation of key research and is important to this literature review for three reasons. Firstly, this model of resilience appears pertinent in the way that it overlaps with Berry's model of acculturation, as the factors relating to resilience also represent the experiences of acculturation. For example, child-family relationships (at the microsystem in the resilience model) are also significant during acculturation, as children's well-being has been found to be related to the degree of similarity between their own and their parents' acculturation (Lincoln, Lazarevic, White & Ellis, 2015). Secondly, the majority of research concerning children who have been displaced due to conflict has focused on factors relating to their experiences of conflict and their resulting trauma and psychopathology, as opposed to factors resulting in resilience (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). Due to the post-migration focus of the present review, this dynamic current context for resilience is appropriate. Thirdly, this model highlights the importance of child-school relationships and parent-school relationships, pertinent to

the direction of the present literature review and discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.4.4 Teacher awareness and parent-school relationships

A range of academic and local authority literature has outlined the factors facilitating and hindering the achievement of Somali heritage pupils (e.g. Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie et al., 2007; Hassan, 2013). Two recurring factors concern teachers' cultural awareness and parent-school relationships. Under a wider heading, these factors are concerned with individuals' perceptions and how the communication of these impacts on children's school experiences. In their paper, Bent et al. (2012) highlight that Somali pupils are at particular risk of underachieving in the local area focused on in the paper (p. 5) and the authors present a framework for developing effective practice concerning the attainment of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) learners. The key areas in this framework refer specifically to examples of effective practice in local schools; however, they also draw on wider literature (p. 41). The three key areas particularly relevant to the current discussion are ethos and values; an inclusive and relevant curriculum; and engaging parents. Each of these areas is presented as important for Somali pupils' attainment and can be related to acculturation and resilience theories, in order to see the wider relevance. Ethos and values refers to the need for high expectations and awareness of, and positive responses to, diversity (p. 43). An inclusive and relevant curriculum refers to the importance of curriculum approaches and methods that meet the needs of pupils from different backgrounds (p. 47). Engaging parents refers to the importance of proactive reciprocal communication between schools and parents in order to share knowledge and expertise (p. 48). Brent et al. (2012) highlight specific examples of good practice in each of these areas and in a variety of settings. For example, the authors

discuss instances of continuing professional development amongst staff in order to develop cultural awareness, induction programmes for parents, and community involvement in developing a culturally relevant curriculum. Referring back to the concept of acculturation, it is evident that in order for a child to experience integration (whereby they identify highly with both their heritage and host culture) there needs to be thought and planning around the child being presented with elements of both cultures in an inclusive manner. With regard to resilience, as previously discussed, children's well-being has been found to be related to the degree of similarity between their own and their parents' acculturation (Lincoln, Lazarevic, White & Ellis, 2015) and it therefore seems appropriate that the inclusion of parents would have a positive effect on children.

However, there is a recurring gap in the literature discussed and in the examples of local practice in Brent et al. (2012). Whilst there is relevant concern for the cultural awareness of teachers and the engagement of parents, in order to facilitate an inclusive experience for children, there appears to be little engagement of children other than during the implementation of practices or when challenges occur. This seems particularly true of the literature concerned with younger children. Where children or young people are involved in practices aiming to support pupils of Somali heritage, this predominantly involves mentoring for adolescents or the application of research methods whereby adolescents discuss their experiences. Where curriculum development for younger children is considered, for example in the workshops described by Brent et al. (2012, p. 47), this predominantly involves parent input to account for the concern that "for many BME families from countries such as Somalia the English educational system with scaffolded learning, multi-agency approaches, and belief in play as a learning

opportunity is unfamiliar.” (Bent et al., 2012, p. 47). However, children’s experiences are different to their parents’ and acculturation is not a uniform process; ‘acculturation gaps’ often occur, whereby children engage with a new culture quicker and more profoundly than their parents (e.g. Atzaba-Poria, Pike, 2007; Birman, 2006; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Ho, 2010). Therefore, it is important that the perspectives of younger children are considered, as well as adolescents, and there is a need to adopt child-friendly research methods to gather these perspectives, rather than basing ideas about curriculum development largely on the views of adolescents and parents.

2.5 Play in Somalia

In Somalia, traditional games are still prevalent, e.g. playing outside with marbles and natural objects and playing name games (Kirova, 2010, p. 82). One particular game popular amongst Somali children is ‘gris’, a version of ‘jacks’ whereby children throw and catch marbles, stones or beads in a particular order. There are fewer toys and children play freely outside in large groups without necessarily being overseen by an adult; it is not typical for adults to play with children (Kirova, 2010, p. 86). Immediately, contrasts can be made with play in the U.K. where children do not necessarily have large groups or outside space to play in and play is integrated into education rather than always being ‘free’ (e.g. Nilsson, Barazanji, Heintzelman, Siddiqi & Shilla, 2012, p. 244). There is some evidence that early years educators in the U.K. are trying to emulate the play typical in Somalia (Robertson, 2002, p. 25), however, it is not clear if this continues into primary school settings, where play is often more structured. Research in Somalia also documents that children have many obligations and duties from a young age, particularly those in agricultural settings, where girls help mothers with domestic chores

and looking after younger siblings whilst boys help fathers on the farm (e.g. Degni, Pöntinen & Mölsä, 2006, p. 4).

2.6 Education in Somalia

Education in Somalia has been severely affected by the civil war and the fact that there has been no stable central government since 1991. As a result of the civil war, many schools and learning materials were destroyed and the majority of teachers left the profession. In a number of regions, there have been attempts to restore education, particularly in the autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland. However, school places are still lacking, the majority of teachers are unqualified and the availability of buildings and resources is low. As this situation has persisted for nearly 30 years, there are many Somali adults who have either entirely missed out on formal education or whose education has been severely disrupted. Therefore, a large amount of Somalis who have migrated to the U.K. have little education experience and this may be the case across an age span that includes children and their parents. One significant effect of this is that many Somali immigrants are barely literate in Somali. Some will have attended Koranic schools and may be able to read or recite the Koran; however, this often does not extend to a wider reading or writing ability. Nevertheless, there also many Somali immigrants who are highly educated and in fact it is often the case that those who are able to leave war-torn countries are those who are better-educated, due to the money needed to escape (Harris, 2004).

For individuals who have been able to access education in Somalia, the structure of this education is likely to have been very different to what is typically seen in the U.K. In Somalia, children do not start school until six or seven years old, spending time before this with family members and neighbours of various ages. Once children are in school,

they are then typically assigned to classes according to educational ability rather than age, so classes often consist of children from a large age range. Furthermore, as there is no standardised curriculum, there can be disparity between what children learn in different classes and schools. Historically, education for boys has also been prioritised and many Somali girls would not have stayed in school beyond 12 years old, therefore potentially experiencing just five years of education.

2.6.1 Play's role in Somali education

Education in Somalia is not play oriented as it is in the U.K. and it is typically teacher- rather than child-centred (Robertson, 2002, p. 19-20). In a study exploring the home and school numeracy experiences of Somali pupils in the U.K., Jones (1998) found that reception-aged children's maths experiences were more formal at home and more playful in school. This reflects the fact that parents in Somalia often have little concept of play's role in education and view learning as a more formal experience (Harris, 2004, p. 47). However, there is little research in this area and that referenced here is now over a decade old, in which time there may have been changes in concepts and norms, particularly amongst parents from Somalia who have been settled in the U.K. for a number of years.

For Somali children in the U.K., particularly refugees, research suggests that 'Western' early years practices "with focus on play, the development of language and social skills" is suited to their needs (Robertson, 2002, p. 5). Furthermore, there are arguments that quality early years play provisions can reduce adverse factors that may exist in Somali children's lives (discussed in more detail in the next section), build upon protective factors and provide interaction and language development opportunities, time, space, and a safe and predictable environment (Robertson, p. 22-23). There is also evidence

that Somali children in the U.K. enjoy learning through practical and playful activities; for example, Demie et al. (2007) found that children particularly enjoyed taking part in extra-curriculum clubs and expressed that they would like to play more games in the classroom.

However, as previously stated, research appears confused and divided on how to fit U.K. theory and practice on 'learning through play' with children of multiple cultures. An example of this confusion occurs in Robertson's (2002) report on Somali children's engagement in early years provision, where Robertson suggests that 'Western' theory should now be applied to the Somali community in a culturally appropriate way (p. 20) but later refers to the inappropriateness of applying 'Western' theory to 'non-Western' context (p. 26). In fact, in a review of the literature concerning ethnic education policy-making in the U.K., Race (2001) argued that "it seems that assimilation, integrationist and the national curriculum have attempted to preserve white notions of nation and identity which alienate ethnic minority urban communities." (p. 13). Therefore, further research is required, using culturally sensitive frameworks as earlier described, to explore the play perceptions of children from their own perspectives.

2.7 Play's therapeutic relationship with acculturation and resilience

Of particular relevance to this review, as earlier described, is the way in which post-migration factors affect acculturation and resilience; therefore, it is also pertinent to consider the therapeutic role of play in the post-migration context rather than only with regard to specific pre-migration traumatic experiences. For example, using Berry's (2005) conceptualisation of acculturation and Betancourt & Khan's (2008) resilience model, the parent-child relationship can be seen to be important for developing a beneficial acculturation style and resilience, as this relationship provides a way for a

child to identify with their heritage culture and exposes them to views on their host culture. Research suggests that play therapy, even when undertaken with no involvement of parents, has a positive effect on child-parent relationships (e.g. Ray, 2008; Ray & Edwards, 2010). It therefore appears likely that the therapeutic effects of play could facilitate positive acculturation and resilience for immigrant children due to the indirect impact on the child-parent relationship. Betancourt & Khan's (2008) resilience model also highlights child-school relationships as being influential in the child's development of resilience and it is easy to conceive that positive child-school relationships benefit acculturation by enabling the child to identify with their host culture. Research suggests that as well as child-parent relationships, play therapy can have a positive effect on child-teacher relationships (Muro, Ray, Schottelkorb, Smith & Blanco, 2006; Ray, 2007; Ray, Henson, Schottelkorb, Brown & Muro, 2008). Therefore, in a similar manner to that described for child-parent relationships, the therapeutic effects of play may also be important for the development of positive child-teacher relationships, which is significant for the acculturation and resilience of immigrant children.

The therapeutic benefits of play for migrant children are understandable considering play's long-standing position as a means for children to communicate, act out and develop an understanding of experiences that they are not able to effectively work through verbally (Axline, 1947; Bratton, Ray, Rhine & Jones, 2005; Landreth, 2002). As previously outlined, the effects of trauma can hinder the progress of Somali children, particularly refugee children, in the U.K. education system (Ali & Jones, 2000; Ayoub, 2014) and play is a significant tool for addressing this trauma. However, in addition to the consideration of children who have migrated following potentially traumatic

experiences, the earlier discussed acculturation process (Berry, 2005) applies also to children who are second-generation migrants (those born in the country of settlement to immigrant parents) (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). These children are often navigating differences between their home and school cultures and research has found that acculturation issues continue to be particularly relevant for “visible-minority individuals”, i.e. those whose skin colour or dress is noticeably different to the majority of individuals in the country of settlement (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010). This is a pertinent factor due to the research presented here being concerned with children of Somali heritage in the U.K., as these children are likely to be darker in skin tone than many of their peers and they may also be visibly different in some of their dress as a result of the Islamic faith practised by most Somalis. Therefore, there is potential for Somali heritage children in the U.K. representing the range of first- and second-generation migrant backgrounds to experience cultural and psychological change during their early development. Whilst play is readily considered as a targeted therapeutic intervention for migrant children, particularly refugees, the aforementioned intrinsic therapeutic effects of play and the acculturation experiences of second generation immigrants mean that there are likely to be benefits to exploring general play provisions in settings with significant numbers of Somali heritage children. Such research has the potential to provide insight into how this population of children experience play and how adults around these children perceive play in terms of benefits, concerns and relationship to children’s needs.

2.8 Perceptions and definitions of play

Research has shown that many teachers and early years educators have difficulty forming, or do not agree on, definitions of play (Sherwood & Reifel, 2010; Vu, Han &

Buell, 2015). In many ways this is understandable as play is regularly discussed in children's settings and viewed as something that can be pointed out when it occurs, but rarely explicitly defined. Whilst research has regularly discussed explicit definitions of play, the same difficulties have arisen. Historically, some theorists attempted to define play according to type. For example, Piaget (1951/2013) theorised that there were three categories of play; practise play, symbolic play and rule-based play. Shortly after, Smilansky (1968) challenged Piaget's categorisations due to the absence of a place for creative play, resulting in a fourth category called 'constructive play'. This demonstrates the problems of defining play according to a categorical approach as the categorisations are dependent on the individual involved. Other theorists (e.g. Krasnor & Pepler, 1980) have since suggested defining play using criteria rather than categorical approaches, proposing that the presence of a number of characteristics (e.g. intrinsic motivation, positive affect, choice) should decide whether an activity is defined as play. Similarly, theorists such as Pellegrini (1991) have suggested defining activities in terms of 'playfulness' rather than simply as play or not play, by using continuum approaches to scale activities according to the presence of characteristics. Regardless of the approach, it is clear from decades of research that defining play is a complex issue and universal definitions are often ineffectual on a practical level (Wood & Attfield, 2005).

2.8.1 Intrinsic motivation

Despite the complexities of defining play, one key component that is consistently expressed as necessary for an activity to be considered play is that the activity is freely chosen and self-directed, i.e. intrinsically motivated. The existing literature base highlights the importance of choice and intrinsic motivation in the definitions and perceptions of play according to researchers and practitioners (e.g. Gleave and Cole-

Hamilton, 2012; Ludvigsen, Creegan & Mills, 2005; Youngquist, & Pataray-Ching, 2004). In 'Western' contexts, the intrinsic motivation of children towards play is perceived to indicate its innate benefits, resulting in play activities predominantly being seen as something to be encouraged and supported (Whitebread, Basilio, Kovalja & Verma, 2012).

2.8.2 Positive affect

Another factor often required for an activity to be defined as play is that a child experiences positive emotions during and as a result of the activity. Research has repeatedly highlighted the importance of positive emotions for practitioners' and parents' definitions of play and it is regularly recognised that play has positive emotional outcomes (e.g. Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; Parmar, Harkness & Super, 2004). However, whilst researchers also highlight the typicality of positive affect during play, the literature base contains important discussions around the potential for play to be difficult and involve peer tensions (Grieshaber & McArdle 2010; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Wood, 2008).

2.8.3 Social skills

Researchers and theorists have long discussed the social aspects of play. There is a large research base discussing the interplay of play and social skills (e.g. Martlew, Stephen & Ellis, 2011; Sutton-Smith, 1997; O'Connor & Stagnitti, 2011; Sawyer, 1997), including recognition of the way in which children's social skills develop through their playful interactions, e.g. during pretend, rule-based play and the need to consider peers' thoughts and feelings. This is reflected in research exploring parents' and practitioners' perceptions of play-based education in various countries and the importance placed on

play's benefits for social development (e.g. Einarsdóttir, 2006; Forskot, 1998; Graue, 1993).

2.8.4 Cognitive development

The effects of play on cognitive development have also been significantly explored in research, with evidence of the effects of play on children's understanding of rules and processes (e.g. Martlew, Stephen & Ellis, 2011; Sutton-Smith, 1997; Whitebread, 2010).

The growing complexity of children's play, for example, play's increasingly organised and structured nature, has been identified by theorists as being evidence of the important connection between play and metacognition (Broadhead, 2004). Vygotsky (1978) theorised that one function of play was the development of self-regulation, as children respond to rules and emotions during play and self-restraint becomes increasingly important (Martlew, Stephen & Ellis, 2011). Whilst these concepts are less frequently connected with definitions of play according to parents and practitioners, the metacognitive effects of play are recognised in more specific references to the interconnectivity between play and the development of academic skills, as discussed in the following section.

2.8.5 Work and learning

A range of research has identified the links made by adults in a variety of positions, i.e. parents and practitioners, between play and the development of academic skills (e.g. Hyson, 1991; Lewit & Baker, 1995; Perry, Dockett, & Tracey, 1998). Despite this, research has continued to find a polarisation between work and play, particularly from the perspective of parents and to a lesser extent from the perspective of practitioners (e.g. Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; Wood, 1999; Wood & Bennett, 1997).

As a consequence of this increasing consideration of specific learning outcomes and play, discussions of play by practitioners and researchers have become characterised by a dilemma focused on which is more valuable: enabling play to occur freely or 'using' play to teach specific academic skills (Bodrova & Leong, 2015). Therefore, whilst play is promoted as the vehicle for learning in the early years, research consistently finds that practitioners feel unsure of how best to approach this. Often, practitioners have received a significant amount of pre-service or in-service training in learning and theories of learning, but have rarely received the same level of training in play (Lobman, 2005; Vu, Han & Buell, 2012). The resulting situation, as regularly pointed out in research in this area, is that practitioners are instructed that play is important and this aligns with their beliefs, but they have difficulties understanding how this should occur in practice. This is particularly true as children progress through the early years and towards the Primary curriculum. For example, Bodrova (2008) and Walsh, McGuinness, Sproule & Trew (2010) found that whilst primary teachers believe that play is important, they feel tensions with other priorities and are unsure when it comes to implementing play in a way that they perceive to be of value to children and their academic experience. More specifically, a series of studies in Northern Ireland (Walsh et al., 2010; McGuinness, Sproule, Bojke, Trew and Walsh, 2014; Walsh et al., 2011) explored the implementation of a play-based curriculum and found that whilst this curriculum eased transitions and positively affected reading skills, teachers beyond year 1 were unsure how to implement play so that it was valuable and they were concerned about children's readiness for formalised learning.

2.8.6 Adult involvement

Existing research shows that school practitioners, parents and researchers have diverse views on whether activities that are defined as play can involve adults and if so, the type and level of adult involvement that can occur before an activity can no longer be defined as play (Einarsdóttir, 2006; Howard, 2010; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011). Of all the discussions concerning play definitions, the role of the adult in children's play is particularly prone to nuances as practitioners often express that their role is to present meaningful opportunities for play and to support play so that it is purposeful, but not to join in unless requested (Howard, 2010; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011). However, there are different ways that adult presence affects definitions of play depending on the age of the child. Consistent with perspectives on the relationship between play and work, it is typically viewed that play for younger children can involve adults to a greater extent than play for older children (due to play being perceived as the main medium through which younger children learn) as long as the activity remains child-led and motivated, whilst play for older children can be more directed but still with minimal adult involvement (Graue, 1993; Wood & Attfield, 2005).

2.8.7 Children's perspectives

Within the field of literature concerning play perspectives, a factor that has only been addressed relatively recently concerns the matter of whether children's perceptions of play correspond to those of adults. A number of researchers have argued that this issue should be afforded the same attention as definitions or approaches to play (Göncü & Gaskins, 2007; Howard, 2002). As stated by Takhvar (1988), there are limitations to the inferences that can be made from adult discussions about play unless one also considers "what children themselves feel about the orientation of their play activities" (p. 238).

From the research that has explored this areas, it has often been concluded that play perceptions and definitions from the perspectives of children and adults do not always correspond. One consistent difference that has been reported is that whilst adults often view play and learning as intertwined, children view play and work as separate undertakings (e.g. Howard, 2002; Karrby, 1989; Robson, 1993; Rothlein & Brett, 1987). Perhaps this reflects Wood's (2012) statement in her introduction to the first edition of the *International Journal of Play*; "Other benefits (such as academic development, socialisation and civilisation) may be the longer-term outcomes, but are not the over-riding concerns of the players" (p. 5). There are apparent implications, therefore, concerning adult intentions to meet learning objectives through 'playful' approaches, as the outcome of these approaches may depend not only on the effect of the 'playful' characteristics but on the potentially different perception of the child.

According to previous research, children identify whether an activity is play or not according to various emotional and environmental cues (Howard, 2002; Howard, Jenvey & Hill, 2006; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2009; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011). Cues that most consistently prompt play conclusions are that an activity is self-directed, voluntary, enjoyed, pretend, not too difficult, not involving an adult and not at a table. The type of activity also affects children's judgements, for example whether a number book or building blocks are being used (the former being "not play" and the latter play). Research has also found that children often associate play with not learning and work with learning and they frequently dichotomise play and work (Howard, 2002).

2.8.8 Why children's perspectives matter

Following the identification of cues that children use to define play, some researchers have subsequently explored whether the presence or absence of these cues has an effect on learning. For example, Thomas, Howard and Miles (2006) presented children with a puzzle activity in a "playful" condition (children were *invited* to do the puzzle, on the carpet, with no adult present) or "formal" condition (children were *instructed* to do the puzzle, at a table, with an adult). The main finding of this study was that both immediately and after a one week delay, children in the "playful" condition completed the puzzle quicker. These findings were replicated by Radcliffe (2007), who used the same procedure with a bead-threading activity. Furthermore, research has also used this design alongside a behavioural measurement tool to observe that children in a "playful" condition are more likely to exhibit on-task behaviour, deeper involvement in an activity and a greater range of purposeful behaviours (rather than repeating previously unsuccessful behaviours) (McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2009). Results such as these suggest that not only do children use cues to determine whether activities are play or not but that if these cues are manipulated on presentation of an activity, this can have an impact on the behaviour and learning that takes place. It is therefore possible to consider that deliberately manipulating activities to be more aligned with what children perceive as "play" may be of benefit to education. Alternatively, research suggests that manipulating what children perceive as "play" and "not play" is also possible (Howard, 2002). For example, in environments where adults do not perceive themselves to be participators in children's play, research suggests that this is likely to perpetuate children's perceptions that play occurs largely in the absence of adults (Robson, 1993). Considering the presence of adults in classrooms and the potential for

playful activities to improve learning, this presents a challenge for early years educators but demonstrates how children's perceptions affected and the importance of understanding them. As stated by Howard (2002, p. 500) "Knowledge of what constitutes playfulness from the perspective of children may be used to maximise learning...providing practitioners with increased power to provide both developmentally and educationally appropriate experiences".

2.8.9 Cultural perspectives

Research on the cues children use to define play, as described above, has also highlighted that there can be unanticipated cues that children attend to, indicating that perceptions can differ and be unpredictable. As acknowledged by Howard (2002), this demonstrates that perceptions of play "are also based on experience and are modified or elaborated over time" (p. 499). This indicates the role that culture has in affecting play perceptions. However, in much of the early research on play in different cultures, it appears that the observance of differences often resulted in assumptions of deficit according to 'Western' expectations. Recently, it is increasingly argued that differences in play should not be problematised and that it is important to consider that parents may have alternative, rather than inferior, motives for play (DiBianca Fasoli, 2014; Nourot & Van Hoorn, 1991; Yahya & Wood, 2017). As theorised by Sutton-Smith (1997), play is "part of the multiple broad symbolic systems – political, religious, social and educational – through which we construct the meaning of the cultures in which we live" (p. 9); therefore, "the definition of play becomes very problematic...when non-western societies are compared with western ones and when generalizations are made about the absence or presence of play behaviour" (Sutton-Smith, 1980). One must consider

alternative political, religious, social and educational motives that are specific and potentially beneficial to that culture.

2.9 Somali children in education research

The majority of research found during this review process has focused on the experiences and achievement of Somali heritage adolescents rather than younger children. It is possible that one explanation for this is that, as children in Somalia do not attend school until six or seven years old, early years provisions in the U.K. are often not significantly accessed by the Somali community (Robertson, 2002). Therefore, research has perhaps somewhat overlooked the experiences of this age group. However, the increase in attainment on measures at the end of the EYFS suggests there may be value in carrying out research with this age group in order to explore how this might relate to the experiences and achievement of older children and adolescents. There appears to be little engagement of children other than during the implementation of practices or when challenges occur. This seems particularly true of the literature concerned with younger children. Where children or young people are involved in practices aiming to support pupils of Somali heritage, this predominantly involves mentoring for adolescents or the application of research methods whereby adolescents discuss their experiences. Where curriculum development for younger children is considered, for example in the workshops described by Bent et al. (2012, p. 47), this predominantly involves parent input to account for the concern that “for many BME families from countries such as Somalia the English educational system with scaffolded learning, multi-agency approaches, and belief in play as a learning opportunity is unfamiliar.” (Bent et al., 2012, p. 47). However, children’s experiences are different to their parents’ and acculturation is not a uniform process; ‘acculturation gaps’ often occur, whereby

children engage with a new culture quicker and more profoundly than their parents (e.g. Atzaba-Poria, Pike, 2007; Birman, 2006; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Ho, 2010). Therefore, it is important that the perspectives of younger children are considered, as well as adolescents, and there is a need to adopt child-friendly research methods to gather these perspectives, rather than basing ideas about curriculum development largely on the views of adolescents and parents. There is also evidence that Somali children in the U.K. enjoy learning through practical and playful activities; for example, Demie et al. (2007) found that children particularly enjoyed taking part in extra-curriculum clubs and expressed that they would like to play more games in the classroom. However, it appears that most of the available research in this area gathers information either by engaging the adults around young children, or by engaging adolescents and exploring 'playfulness' in terms of activities and clubs. Therefore, it is not clear from the research how children in between, i.e. primary-aged, perceive play and its place in education.

2.10 Research methods for gathering children's perspectives

Historically, the majority of studies concerning children's perceptions of play have used either observation or interview methods (e.g. Kärrby, 1989; Keating et al, 2000; Robson, 1993; Rothlein & Brett, 1987). However, these methods present problems in gaining the perspectives of children. Observations can involve a significant amount of interpretation, there is potential for the researcher to influence the situation they are observing and the information being recorded may be biased by the type of observation schedule used. Interviewing is a particularly challenging method with children due to the language, understanding and concentration required. The cognitive ability required to think about activities not currently being undertaken also presents a difficulty for discussions with particularly young children. However, discussions taking place during

play can also be difficult because, as reported by Howard (2002), “some children were so engrossed in their activity they were reluctant to discuss anything with the researcher unless it was part of the ‘game’” (p. 493). Some researchers have used group interviews to overcome issues of power, but this presents alternative issues concerning the potential for some children to dominate the group and influence the information recorded (McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2009). More recently, studies with children have increasingly used visual methods, so a discussion of literature in this area is included next.

2.10.1 Visual methods

The use of photography and other visual methods in wider research, i.e. not just research with children, has increased in recent years, including studies that have employed narrative photography, participatory photo interviews and photovoice (e.g. Catalani & Minkler, 2010; Kaplan, 2008; Kaplan, Lewis & Mumba, 2007). It has been progressively argued that the use of pictures and photographs in research gives greater voice to participants and creates more comfortable research environments (Böök & Mykkänen, 2014; Collier, 1987). An examination of visual research trends and concerns over a number of years (such as that provided by Ruby, 2005, or Emmison, Smith, Smith & Mayall, 2012) highlights the particular centrality that visual methods have played in research concerning culture, for example, in anthropological and sociological research. It has been argued that everyday life has become increasingly visual, particularly due to technology and advertising, and this is mirrored in the use of visual materials for research purposes. Furthermore, for the inclusion of participants without a shared verbal language (or with a different verbal language to the researcher), visual methods provide a way of capturing a greater diversity of “voices”. Even where language is not

an evident concern, Emmison et al. (2012) highlight the potential for visual materials to structure conversations and overcome the verbosity and fatigue of traditional interviews. Literature on the use of visual methodology has also highlighted key considerations and ethical concerns. Due to the contribution of this area of the literature to the design of the research reported here, the main points collated early on in the research can be seen in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The increasing use of visual methods in research can also be seen in studies with child participants (e.g. Cook & Hess, 2007; Einarsdottir, 2005; Punch, 2002; Spyrou, 2011). As stated by Einarsdottir (2005), "Photography is an expanding method in research with children and is regarded as having many advantages as a method to use with children." (p. 527). The use of visual prompts has been found to produce different outcomes compared with more traditional methods, in terms of both content of responses and level of engagement (Böök & Mykkänen, 2014). Pictures or photographs can act as a buffer in conversation, particularly when the researcher and participant have just met, creating a less intense interaction, which consequently encourages children to talk more openly (Epstein, Stevens, McKeever & Baruchel, 2006). The use of visual materials also presents opportunities for increasing the engagement of children who would find it difficult to rely on verbal language. This is therefore particularly relevant for research with young children and children who speak different languages (Böök & Mykkänen, 2014; Cook & Hess, 2003; Einarsdottir, 2005).

There are many ways in which visual methodology is applied to research with children (Thomson, 2009); including giving children the opportunity to take their own photographs, talking with children about images and using images to explore responses or reactions. With regard to the latter of these methods, there are broadly two purposes

that pictures or photographs serve when they are presented to children during research; projective and non-projective (Jones, 2001). When functioning as projective tools, pictures or photographs are used psychometrically to explore children's views and tendencies. This is most apparent in Thematic Apperception Tests, whereby a child looks at various pictures of human figures in different situations and makes up stories about the pictures. When functioning in a non-projective way, pictures or photographs are used as a communication tool, to support a child's understanding and expression so that they are not relying on verbal language. This non-projective use of pictures or photographs with children still aims to reveal their views; however, the intention is for these views to be expressed by the participant rather than interpreted by the researcher (Jones, 2001). Non-projective methodology is the focus of the present study and, in particular, the combination of apperception and picture sorting methods to gain participants' perspectives. The literature drawn on for this focus is described by Howard (2002), adapting earlier research by Jones (1996; 2001). Due to its direct impact on the aims and methods employed in the present study, this research is elaborated on below.

2.10.2 The research of Howard (2002)

Howard (2002) aimed to provide insight into children's perceptions of play, in order to add to the literature base, which had focused predominantly on adult perceptions. The research carried out by Howard (2002) took place in South Wales, in six provisions which comprised pre-school and primary classes across urban and rural, private and public sector provisions. 111 children participated in the research, with a mean age of 4 years 11 months. Originally, Howard (2002) intended to elicit children's perceptions of play, work and learning by having discussions with children whilst they undertook various activities. However, during a pilot using this procedure, Howard (2002) found that there

were limitations with gaining children's perceptions in this way due to the difficulties children had dividing their attention between their activities and discussions. Therefore, Howard (2002) developed a standardised procedure, called the Activity Apperception Story Procedure (AASP), which enabled researchers to collect data concerning children's definitions of play, work and learning.

The AASP is a two-part procedure adapted from the School Apperception Story Procedure (Jones, 1995). Part one of the AASP requires children to choose between two letterboxes into which they 'post' photographic stimuli. One pair of letterboxes involves a choice between the labels of 'play' and 'work' and the other between 'learning' and 'not learning'. This part of the AASP is based on literature that suggests children respond well to game-like procedures (Royeen, 1985; Sturges, Rodger & Ozanne, 2002) and is therefore posited as more engaging and child-friendly than traditional discussion procedures. Part two of the AASP requires children to repeat the above process for a smaller selection of photographic stimuli, whilst verbally justifying their choices. The aim of this second part is to provide validity and reliability by checking the consistency between the letterboxes chosen in part one and part two, as well as providing insight into the reasons for these choices by eliciting verbal justifications.

The photographs used for the AASP were devised by Howard (2002) using information gained during the pilot referred to above, whereby researchers held discussions with children during various activities. These discussions suggested that children distinguished between play and work using the cues of activity type, adult presence, space/constraint and positive affect; i.e. children more often perceived some activities (such as building) as play and others (such as number books) as work, but were also more likely to perceive an activity as play and less likely to see it as work if it did not

involve an adult, was not at a table and was enjoyed by the child. The researchers also found that children appeared to perceive a relationship between play and not learning and work and learning. As a result of this qualitative information, the researchers created photographs which depicted a variety of classroom scenarios and were paired according to the presence or absence of a pictorial cue (the cues being activity type, adult presence, space and constraint and positive affect).

Using the AASP, Howard found that children distinguished between play and work for 92% of the photographic stimuli and between learning and not learning for 73% of the photographic stimuli. This suggests that from a young age, children are forming distinct perceptions of what is meant by play, work and learning. The researchers also found that there was a positive correlation between play and not learning and between work and learning. As suggested by the pilot study, the pictorial cues of activity type, adult presence, space and constraint and positive affect reliably predicted children's play, work and learning choices. This corroborates the notion that children form perceptions of their activities using environmental and emotional cues. Significantly, though, Howard (2002) reports that part two of the AASP enabled researchers to establish that there were some unanticipated cues that were also used to inform the children's choices between play and work and learning and not learning. These cues related to whether an activity involved 'pretend' elements, toys, choice, a level of difficulty, skill development and the apparent background context (e.g. being in school). However, these cues were used differently depending on whether the children attended a provision on a primary school site or a nursery site. For example, children from the primary school group used the cues of toys, choice, skill development and background context significantly more than children from the nursery group. Therefore, it is highlighted that the way in which

play is presented in different environments (i.e. as a more regular activity in a nursery setting or as a more structured reward following 'work' in a school setting) affects children's perceptions of play and work. Furthermore, Howard (2002) discusses that these unanticipated cues and the individuality of children's perceptions highlight that play is so complex that there may be little value in pursuing a universal definition. As stated by Howard (2002) "Perceptions of play are not only specific to situations and contexts (Spodek and Saracho, 1987) but are also based on experience and are modified or elaborated over time." (p.499). This premise is central to the present study. Elements of culture relating to different countries have been discussed earlier in this review with regard to influences on play perspectives and parallels can evidently be drawn with the environmental influences highlighted by Howard (2002). As the present study concerns Somali heritage participants within the U.K. education system, this range of influences is necessarily central. The present study therefore aims to build upon Howard's (2002) findings by exploring more overtly the influence of culture. This aim combined with a focus on the efficacy of visual methods approaches results in Howard's (2002) methodology, in particular the Activity Apperception Story Procedure, underpinning the present study.

2.11 Gaps in existing research

This literature review has highlighted a number of gaps in existing research. These are summarised below.

Teachers' perspectives and the EYFS context

Since the introduction of the EYFS and the more recent national curriculum changes, there is a need for continued research exploring teachers' perspectives of play and

learning, as these perspectives may change in the context of a changing education system.

Different cultural perspectives

Research on perspectives of play in education has primarily compared child and adult perceptions of play with an assumption that all children and adults in the research possess homogenous cultural experiences and perspectives. In areas of significant multiculturalism, there is potential for existing research findings to be applied despite the issues with this generalisation; it is therefore important that research critically examines practices in schools from a sociocultural perspective in order to overcome the 'culture-free' approach of most education research and practice.

Achievement of UK Somali children

Whilst the achievement gap between pupils of Somali heritage and other pupils has been narrowing most significantly on measures at the end of the EYFS, research has largely overlooked the experiences of this age group. Understanding the catalysts for these changes may be valuable in terms of expanding effective practice and exploring how this relates to the experiences and achievement of older children and adolescents.

Somali parents' views of play-based education in the U.K.

Whilst research has highlighted stark differences between play and education in Somalia and the U.K., there is little research regarding Somali parents' views of play-based education in the U.K. Similarly, it is not clear from existing research how Somali heritage children in the U.K. perceive play and its place in education. Therefore, further research is required, using culturally sensitive frameworks, to explore these perceptions and the

differences experienced by Somali heritage children when it comes to home and school learning.

Inclusion of children in research

There is a paucity of literature eliciting children's perceptions of their activities. In particular, younger children are not often engaged in research which concerns the experiences of children in multicultural environments. However, children's experiences are different to adults and research has overwhelmingly found that processes of acculturation are affected by age. Therefore, there remains a need for research to explore the perspectives of younger children, which requires wider implementation of child-friendly research methods.

3. Specific Aims, Research Questions and Design

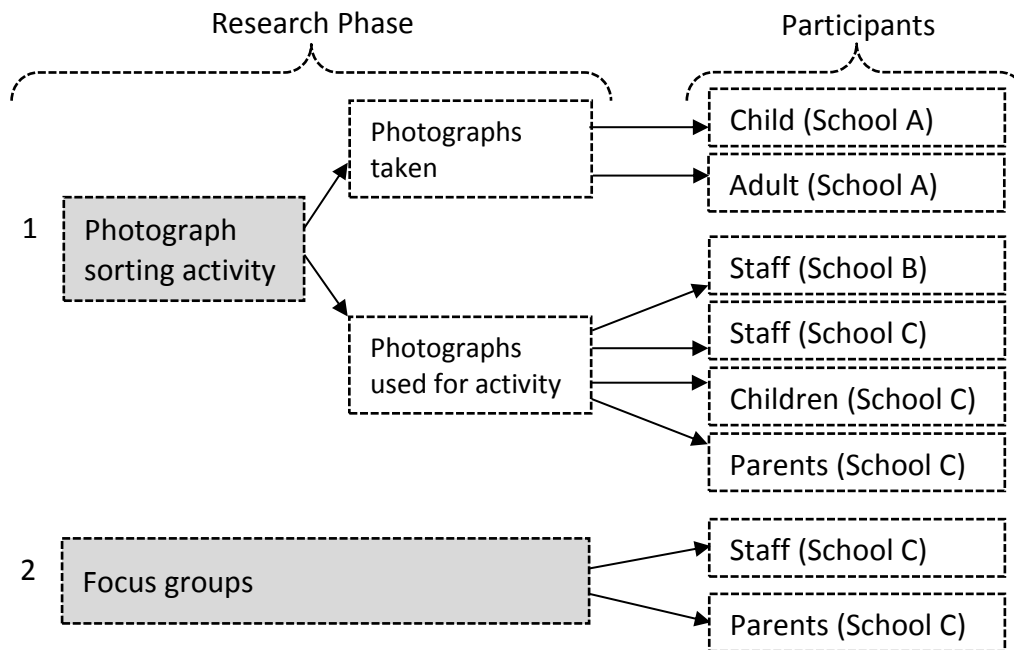


Figure 4. Research phases and participants

3.1 Phase one

Aim: To establish definitions of play and work according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners.²

Research Questions:

- 1) What cues are used to define play by:
 - a) Children of Somali heritage?
 - b) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - c) Primary school practitioners?

² The terms 'staff' and 'practitioners' are used interchangeably within this paper. During the data collection and analysis phase, the term 'staff' was used; however, the term 'practitioner' later became more representative of the participant sample and a more appropriate word to use during discussion, to avoid the verbosity of 'staff members' when the plural was required. These terms can therefore be read as referring to the same group of individuals: teaching and non-teaching individuals working in schools.

- 2) What cues are used to define work by:
 - a) Children of Somali heritage?
 - b) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - c) Primary school practitioners?
- 3) How are the above definitions justified by those participants?

Design:

Photograph sorting activity to establish participants' play and work definitions, which can:

- a) be directly compared between the three groups of participants due to the standardised design of the activity, and
- b) provide a prompt for discussions, by asking participants about the photographs and their judgements in the sorting activity.

3.2 Phase two

Aim: To explore how parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners perceive play's relationship to children's development and learning, with consideration for their own experiences of childhood.

Research Questions:

- 1) What childhood experiences of play are recalled by:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?
- 2) How is children's play perceived across the primary school years by:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?

- 3) How does play relate to work and learning, according to:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?
- 4) What influences or pressures affect the play of primary aged children, according to:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?
- 5) In what ways can play be beneficial to children of different ages and with different needs, according to:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?
- 6) What concerns are held about children's play, from the perspectives of:
 - a) Parents of Somali heritage?
 - b) Primary school practitioners?

Design:

1. Staff focus group to discuss phase one findings and explore the above RQs.
2. Parent focus group to discuss phase one findings and explore the above RQs.

Focus group questions will also be based on the principles of Göncü et al. (1999) regarding 'factors that affect play' in different cultures, in order to prompt discussions about the range of influences.

4. Theoretical Assumptions/Methodology

A mixed-methods design was used in this research, adopting largely quantitative measures in phase one and qualitative measures in phase two. This approach is aligned with my philosophical perspective that whilst knowledge is socially constructed, there can also be an amount of objectivity. This acknowledges that my own experiences and ontological perspective may be different to others, something that is particularly important to recognise in research exploring different cultural perceptions, but that discussions can also be validated by the existence of shared understandings and perspectives. My epistemological perspective is consistent with a pragmatic approach, where results do not have to be viewed as either entirely bound by context or entirely generalisable (Morgan, 2007), due to the assumption that there is a shared 'reality' as well as a unique researcher background. Pragmatism therefore provides an alternative to positivism and interpretivism by asserting that the methods chosen are those best able to answer the research questions, rather than being driven by ontological or epistemological preoccupations (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Consequently, a card sorting task was employed during phase one to provide comparable quantitative information about different participant groups' definitions of play. For phase two, research questions were concerned with a deeper exploration of play perceptions, therefore qualitative data was obtained using a focus group design.

4.1 Participant inclusion

A major part of the decision-making process regarding research design concerned participant groups and the criteria for including both Somali and non-Somali heritage participants. For both child and adult participants, there needed to be considerations about the advantages and disadvantages of including Somali and non-Somali heritage

individuals. Instead of involving direct comparison groups of Somali and non-Somali heritage participants, three main participant groups were arrived at: Somali heritage children, Somali heritage parents and non-Somali heritage school staff. The reasoning behind this decision is elaborated on here.

Regarding child participants, the main purpose of including Somali heritage children was to build on previous research exploring children's perspectives, in particular Howard (2002). Therefore, to a certain extent, the intention was to compare findings pertaining to Somali heritage children with findings in the existing literature. However, for research that has not explicitly stated the cultural heritages of child participants, one cannot make assumptions about the presence or absence of children of different heritages in those studies. Therefore, rather than aiming to provide absolute comparisons between groups, the wider purpose of including Somali heritage children in the present research was to ensure explicit representation and consideration in literature and practice that affects them. Similarly, the main purpose of including Somali heritage parents in the present research was to enable comparison of their perspectives with those of their children, as well as comparison with staff in their children's schools. The exploration of staff perspectives would enable comparison with the existing literature concerning the play perspectives of school practitioners (and of U.K. adults in general) and it would be possible to consider where Somali heritage parents' perspectives fit amongst this. This process of designing the research methods fits with the pragmatic approach of this research, which states that the methods chosen are those best able to answer the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). As the research questions set out in section 3 do not state a need for direct comparisons between Somali and non-Somali individuals, the methods chosen reflect this.

An important factor in the above considerations is that for participant groups to be representative of the school populations from which they were derived, the nuances of 'heritage' in these populations would likely have made it invalid to compare a Somali group with a non-Somali group, as this would require an assumption of a significant amount of homogeneity within the groups. The schools in which this research was to take place were comprised of Somali families representing a range of backgrounds in terms of how long families had been in the U.K., whether children had been born in Somalia or the U.K., whether children or parents had attended school in Somalia, whether they had lived in other countries, etc. Consequently, treating Somali and non-Somali individuals as distinct groups would likely be practically and ethically invalid, particularly considering the small scale of this research.

As well as this theoretical and ethical perspective, there is also recognition that the scale of this research made it necessary to use resources in a useful way, i.e. to have spent time including non-Somali comparison groups would have taken from time that could be spent with previously marginalised populations and the school communities that had identified a problem or need. Considering schools had spoken about Somali families often being "hard to reach", there is an apparent responsibility to delegate research resources to these individuals. This is reflective of the earlier discussed criticisms regarding the 'culture-free' approach of a significant amount of research and the need, therefore, to focus on potentially marginalised populations by applying socially just research practices (Fassinger & Morrow, 2013).

In summary, the aim of this research was not to make straight forward comparisons between Somali and non-Somali children and parents, but to make the literature more representative of a diverse population and to explore how participants' perspectives fit

within the existing education system. The direct comparison of Somali and non-Somali individuals was therefore not considered theoretically or ethically relevant or appropriate.

5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was gained from the University of Exeter's SSIS Ethics Committee in April 2016 (see Appendix 4).

Letters initially emailed to the SENCOs of all three schools (see Appendix 5-7) outlined key information about the research, including the potential benefits and risks of taking part and confidentiality and anonymity procedures. This information was repeated in the letters sent to potential participants (see Appendix 8-13). Before signing the consent forms, participants were specifically made aware that:

- They (or their child in the case of parent consent) could withdraw at any time;
- They could refuse for information about them to be published;
- All information would be treated confidentially and every effort made to protect participants' identity;
- Information may be used in publications or presentations.

Two areas needed particular consideration with regard to ethics: the participation of children and the use of photography.

The participation of children

As well as obtaining written consent from the parents of child participants, verbal consent was also gained from each child after I had described the activity to them using

a script. This can be seen in Appendix 14. During this process, children were introduced to me with a familiar member of staff present. This helped to reassure children in what would likely seem a strange situation to them and it also meant that the member of staff could use their existing knowledge of the child's cognitive and language ability to support the process.

The use of photography

Specific information was provided to the parent of the child who was photographed. This parent was informed of the sorting activity that the photographs would be used for, so that they were aware the photographs would be seen by children, parents and practitioners in another school. Separate consent was required for the photographs to be used outside of the sorting activity (i.e. to be printed in this thesis, other publications or shown at conferences). The parent of the photographed child was also made aware that photographs would be taken using a digital camera, immediately transferred to the University's U-drive and deleted from the camera. As well as obtaining written consent from the parent of this child, verbal consent from the child was also gained. This can be seen in Appendix 15. The child was described by his teacher as a "super bright 8 year old" and his English language was very good. After I had read out the information contained in Appendix 15 to this child, he said that he wanted to take part. Furthermore, he was very interested in the research and asked questions about my "job", the university I attend (as he had a family member at university so had a concept of this) and he asked whether he could direct some of the photographs (which I agreed to). It was clear from my interactions with this child and interactions with his teacher that he understood what was being asked of him and he was happy to take part. Photographs

were taken in an empty classroom and on the playground, with no other children present in either location.

6. Phase One

6.1 Methods

6.1.1 Participants

Identification of schools

A minimum of two schools were required so that the photographed child would be unknown to participants (from a second school) viewing the photographs for the sorting activity. Initially, I asked colleagues within the Educational Psychology Service in which I was training to identify interest in the research during their annual planning meetings with Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs). The areas of interest were:

- The presence or application of play within school,
- The education of children of Somali heritage.

At this point, the only required criterion was that schools were state-funded primary schools within the city in South West England in which the research took place.

Through this process, three schools were brought to my attention, which met these expressions of interest and criteria and were located in sufficiently different areas of the city (considering the need to ensure the photographed child was unknown to other participants).

Participating schools:

- School A is an academy community primary based on two sites in the inner city.

At the time of the research, School A had approximately 60 members of

classroom-based staff. There were over 700 pupils on roll. Approximately 40% had English as an additional language and the most common heritage of these pupils was Somali. School A were interested in research activities that involved the participation of Somali heritage pupils.

- School B is a Catholic academy primary school in the inner city. At the time of the research, School B had approximately 25 members of classroom-based staff. There were approximately 210 pupils on roll. Over 50% had English as an additional language. Although this included very few Somali heritage pupils, there was interest in research activities that involved the participation of staff members, to explore their perceptions of play.
- School C is a community primary school in the inner city. At the time of the research, School C had approximately 30 members of classroom-based staff. There were approximately 350 pupils on roll. Over 50% were Somali heritage pupils. School C were interested in research activities across the study: the participation of staff members, Somali heritage pupils and Somali heritage parents, to explore perceptions of play and the education of children of Somali heritage.

The specific interests and characteristics of each school were aligned with the existing research plan to arrive at the design shown in Figure 4 (see section 3). The SENCo at each school was then sent a letter outlining the whole research project and their specific involvement (Appendix 5-7).

Creation of photographic stimuli

School A

In order to create photographic stimuli for the photograph sorting activity, children of Somali heritage and one adult were required to be photographed undertaking different activities, as described in section 7.1.2. To engage the parents of potential children for this stage, the parents were also invited to take part in the focus groups for phase two of the research. Therefore, the SENCo at School A was sent two letters to distribute to parents of Somali heritage, outlining both stages of the research and inviting parents to express interest in taking part and consent to their child taking part (see Appendix 8 and 9). Translated letters were also offered in consideration of the level of English required to read the detail of the letters; however, it was reported that the reading ability of the majority of parents of Somali heritage was comparable for their first spoken language and English. Following numerous prompts by the SENCo and my own visit to the school, only one parent consented to their child participating; therefore, photographs were designed to depict just one child undertaking different activities. This child, who was 8 years old, gave his own verbal consent, as described in section 6. The teacher of this child was invited to be present in two of the 19 photographs and she consented to this.

Identification of participants for photograph sorting activity

A total of 52 participants carried out the photograph sorting activity. A breakdown of all participants for this stage can be seen in Table 1. Described below are the different processes undertaken to obtain these participants from School B and School C.

Table 1. Photograph sorting activity participants

Participant Group	Number of Participants	Male or Female	School Year (pupil or staff member)
Children	9	3 male, 6 female	Reception: 1 Year 1: 1 Year 2: 2 Year 3: 0 Year 4: 1 Year 5: 2 Year 6: 2
Staff / Practitioners	34	3 male, 31 female	<u>Non-teaching staff</u> Learning Support Staff (across all school years): 15 SENCo: 2 Head Teacher: 1 Assistant Head Teacher: 1 School counsellor: 1
			<u>Teaching staff</u> PPA Teacher: 1 Reception: 3 Year 1: 2 Year 2: 3 Year 3: 1 Year 4: 1 Year 5: 1 Year 5/6: 2
Parents	9	0 male, 9 female	N/A
Total	52	6 male, 46 female	N/A

School B

As school B were interested in exploring staff members' perceptions of play, the SENCo was sent letters to distribute to staff (see Appendix 10). Nineteen members of staff expressed interest in participating in this stage of the research.

School C

As School C were interested in all areas of the research, the SENCo was sent letters about the photograph sorting activity and the focus groups, to distribute to parents of Somali heritage (regarding their own participation and participation of their children) and staff in the school (see Appendix 11-13).

Parents

As above, translated letters were also offered; but, it was reported that the reading ability of the majority of parents of Somali heritage was comparable for their first spoken language and English. However, the amount of information required in the initial letters (for ethical reasons) raised concerns that it would be challenging to engage parents through only distributing the letters, as the amount of text may immediately deter those parents with less developed English language skills and result in the participant cohort not being diverse. To address this issue, I arranged to visit the school and meet with the Somali parents, who would all be invited to attend this meeting. A member of the administration team at School C was of Somali heritage and could therefore verbally ask all parents to attend. Twelve parents attended this meeting, as well as the administrator who provided translation, and the following points were discussed:

- Who I am
- Background to and purpose of the research
- Breakdown of what the two phases would involve (including visual representation as shown in Figure 4)
- How the research will be presented to their children

- Timescales
- That they and their child can withdraw from the research at any time
- Confidentiality and anonymity

At this meeting, nine parents consented to their child and themselves taking part in the photograph activity. All participants were female. Important information about these participants is listed below.

1. One of the parents who consented to taking part was not originally from Somalia, but Yemen. I decided to include this participant in the research. Justification for this can be seen in Appendix 16.
2. All other parents were from Somalia and had all lived in the U.K. for between six and 20 years.
3. One participant had left Somalia with her family when she was approximately eight years old, moving to (and attending school) in Italy before moving to the U.K. as an adult.
4. Two participants had spent their childhoods in Somalia before moving to the U.K., but had not attended school in Somalia due to the civil war.
5. The remaining five participants had attended school in Somalia before moving to the U.K. as adults (as stated above, arriving in the past six to 20 years).

Children

As stated above, there were nine children whose parents gave written consent for them to take part in the photograph sorting activity. All nine children gave their own verbal consent, as described in section 6. These children were from across Reception,

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. All were the children of the eight Somali heritage parents described above, i.e. none were children of the parent from Yemen and two children were siblings. As displayed in Table 1, these children included three boys (each belonging to Years 1, 2 or 6) and six girls (each belonging to Years Reception, 2, 4 or 6 and two girls belonging to Year 5). All children had only attended school in the U.K. and had not lived in Somalia or spent an extended period in any other countries.

School staff

During my visit to explain the research to parent participants, I also obtained consent forms from fifteen members of staff for the photograph sorting activity.

6.1.2 Materials

Photograph Sorting Activity

A basic description of the photograph sorting activity is that it requires participants to post photographs into “letterboxes” labelled as play/not play or work/not work, depending on condition. The design for the photograph sorting activity was based on the Activity Apperception Story Procedure (AASP) described by Howard (2002) and discussed in more detail in 3.9.2. The AASP was developed in order to establish a standardised procedure that would enable children to describe play and work in their own terms. This design also draws on literature that suggests children engage positively in game-like procedures (Royeen, 1985; Sturges, Rodger & Ozanne, 2002). Furthermore, minimal language is required, making this a valuable procedure for research that involves young children or participants for whom English is not their first language.

Whilst the original AASP used by Howard (2002) asked participants to label photographs by choosing between 'play' and 'work', this was adapted in the present study to include two stages, the first involving a choice between 'play' and 'not play' and the second (using the same photographs) involving a choice between 'work' and 'not work'. The aim of this adaptation was to enable the identification of photographs that participants viewed as both play and work, rather than forcing participants to indicate a dichotomous view. This would mean that greater nuances in perspectives could be identified and also that the research would not imply or promote the perspective that play and work are necessarily opposites.

Use of Photographic Stimuli

For similar reasons to Howard (2002), I decided to use photographic stimuli rather than drawings in this research. For children as young as those participating in the research (the youngest participant being four years old), photographs are more appropriate, as they are less abstract. In fact, some research suggests that children aged three to six years old are unable to discriminate between photographic representation and reality (Beilin, 1982; Kose, Beilin & O'Connor, 1983). Due to some of the cues intended to be present in the photographs, such as facial expressions or background details, it was also necessary to use photographs as it would not have been possible to convey these cues sufficiently through line drawings.

Scene Depiction

The photographs used for the sorting activity are included in Appendix 17. The design of the photographs is based significantly on the design used by Howard (2002) and their findings having implemented this design. The photographs depict a child (and in two

photographs, also an adult) carrying out various activities. Photographs are grouped according to the presence of a visual cue. The seven cues were arrived at following the literature review earlier described regarding children's definitions of play. In particular, the findings of Howard (2002) were used to include cues that were found to influence play and work decisions. Table 2 lists the 19 photographs used for the sorting activity and Table 3 shows how these photographs correspond to the seven cues. To maintain consistency between the photographs and vary only the intended cue, the same activity was depicted in all photographs that were to be compared with each other. That is, for photographs where the activity was not itself the cue, the activity needed to be constant so that the only variable was the cue. Plastic building blocks were chosen as this constant activity, due to their widespread presence in schools and homes for a variety of play- or work-oriented tasks. Following consideration of the required photographs across all the cues, there were two photographs that were present in more than one cue group. These were photographs of the child with building blocks outside (photograph 13) and of the child with building blocks at a table (photograph 16). Otherwise, all other photographs were only present in one cue group.

Table 2. Required photographs and their corresponding label.

Scene depicted	Photo label
Child is doing a difficult puzzle	Photo 1
Child is doing easy puzzle	Photo 2
Child has building blocks surrounded by 'work' displays (e.g. numeracy/literacy posters)	Photo 3
Child is sat at a table with real food	Photo 4
Child is sat at a table with pretend/plastic food	Photo 5
Child has building blocks surrounded by 'play' displays (e.g. sports posters or posters of toys)	Photo 6
Child is writing sums on paper	Photo 7
Child is running outside with no materials	Photo 8
Child has a blank piece of paper and pencils	Photo 9
Child is drawing	Photo 10
Child has building blocks at a table and is laughing	Photo 11
Child has building blocks at a table and has an expression of concentration	Photo 12
Child has building blocks outside	Photo 13
Child is looking at building blocks on a laptop screen	Photo 14
Child is looking at building blocks in a book	Photo 15
Child has building blocks at table, on their own, with blank walls	Photo 16
Child has building blocks at a table with an adult	Photo 17
Child has building blocks at a table with adult nearby	Photo 18
Child has building blocks on the floor inside	Photo 19

Table 3. Visual cues and corresponding photographs.

Cue	Corresponding photographs
A. Difficulty level	Photo 1: Child is doing a <i>difficult</i> puzzle Photo 2: Child is doing an <i>easy</i> puzzle
B. Context/background	Photo 3: Child has building blocks surrounded by ' <i>work</i> ' displays (e.g. numeracy/literacy posters) Photo 6: Child has building blocks surrounded by ' <i>play</i> ' displays (e.g. sports posters or posters of toys) Photo 13: Child has building blocks <i>outside</i> Photo 16: Child has building blocks surrounded by <i>blank walls</i> .
C. Pretend	Photo 4: Child has some <i>real food/drink</i> Photo 5: Child has some <i>plastic food/drink</i>
D. Activity/material/toy/technology	Photo 7: Child is <i>writing sums</i> on paper Photo 8: Child is outside with <i>no materials</i> Photo 9: Child has a <i>blank piece of paper and pencils</i> Photo 10: Child is <i>drawing</i> Photo 14: Child is looking at building blocks on a <i>laptop screen</i> Photo 15: Child is looking at building blocks in a <i>book</i> Photo 16: Child has <i>building blocks</i> at a table
E. Positive affect	Photo 11: Child has building blocks and is <i>laughing</i> Photo 12: Child's has building blocks and their expression suggests they're <i>concentrating</i>
F. Space and constraint	Photo 13: Child has building blocks <i>outside</i> Photo 16: Child has building blocks at a <i>table</i> Photo 19: Child has building blocks on the <i>floor</i>
G. Adult presence	Photo 16: Child is <i>alone</i> at table with building blocks Photo 17: Child has building blocks and is <i>with an adult</i> Photo 18: Child has building blocks and there is an <i>adult nearby</i>

Letterbox Design

When participants made a play/not play or work/not work categorisation, they posted the photograph into the corresponding side of a box labelled with these categories. Figure 5 shows this box for the play/not play activity. The box for the work/not work activity looked exactly the same, except it displayed the work/not work labels. There were four boxes in total; two with play/not play labels and two with work/not work labels. This enabled me to counterbalance which side of the box represented which category, so that half of the participants were presented with play and work on the left, as seen in Figure 5, and half of the participants were presented with play and work on the right. There was a partition in the centre of each box to keep the photographs separated once they had been posted.



Figure 5. The photograph sorting box. Top – view from the front, bottom – view if posting in the play “letterbox”.

6.1.3 Procedure

There were four stages to the photograph sorting activity.

1. Each participant was first given one set of photographs. The photographs were in a different, randomised order for each participant. The participant was then asked to put each photograph into the “letterbox” according to whether they thought the scene depicted play/not play or work/not work, depending which condition they were carrying out first. Participants were allocated to the play/not play or work/not work box in alternate orders, i.e. participant 1 completed the play/not play condition first; participant 2 completed the work/not work condition first; participant 3 completed the play/not play condition first, etc. Participants were told that they could change their mind about any photographs they had already posted; the lid of the box was easy to lift up to enable this.
2. Once all photographs had been posted, the participant’s decisions were recorded. A selection of six photographs were then shown to the participant for a second time and they were asked to choose again between play/not play or work/not work and to give reasons for their decision. The photographs used for this second stage were pre-decided by randomly generating six numbers from the number list 1-19. These six numbers corresponded to photographs (as displayed in Table 2). These photographs were then used with participants so that each participant repeated the sorting activity for a different random selection of photographs. When participants sorted each photograph for a second time, they were asked a selection of the following questions: “Why is that play/not play/work/not work?”, “How do you know that one is play/not play/work/not work?”, “What makes it play/not play/work/not work?” and

“What is happening in the photograph?”. This stage provided an opportunity to check the consistency of the decisions they had made on the first occasion and to collect qualitative information about their decisions that would contribute to focus groups discussions for phase two of the research.

3. Depending on the condition the participant had completed first (play/not or work/not work), they were then shown the alternate box. The participant was given a second set of photographs and asked to put each photograph into the “letterbox” of their choice, as described in stage 1.
4. Stage 2 was then repeated for this second condition; decisions were recorded and a selection of photographs were repeated with verbal justifications.

6.1.4 Analysis

Data from the photograph sorting activity was first analysed using Exploratory Data Analysis.

Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA)

EDA is an approach to data analysis that, in its most rudimentary sense, concerns the detection of patterns in data. EDA includes a variety of methods (predominantly graphical) that provide insight into messy data, revealing variables, outliers and overall structure that contribute to hypotheses about the data. At the core of EDA is the graphical presentation of data. This is based on the premise that visual displays of data

show characteristics and shape that are at least as important for data exploration as summary statistics (Frank, 2000).

Whilst EDA is acknowledged as appearing simplistic (e.g. Ellison, 1993), it is not just a set of techniques, but an attitude to data analysis based on the assumption that even when one has an idea about what patterns might be expected, the data needs to be approached as if engaging in “detective work” (Tukey, 1977, p. 1) in order to gain the greatest insight into the data, rather than seeking to confirm existing expectations. EDA was therefore a suitable approach for this research, as it was difficult and inappropriate to make immediate predictions about the data due to the combination of specific participant demographics and the novel research method applied with these participants. Furthermore, it was intended that the patterns found in the data from phase one would contribute to the design of focus group questions for phase two. Whilst some focus group question areas were predetermined as they emerged from the literature review, an EDA approach was necessary so that it was not only these areas that would be explored in the data, but areas that may be unexpected but important for later discussion.

Four guidelines were adhered to during EDA:

1. Patterns in the data will be sought, but overall data integrity will be preserved.
2. The larger data structure will be maintained so that this is clear to the reader.
3. Visual displays of the data will not misrepresent or embellish the data.
4. Visual presentations of the data will aim to display the largest amount of information using the least amount of graphical detail, i.e. avoiding unnecessary visual effects.

Photograph Cue Comparisons

Following the use of EDA to reveal patterns in the overall data, statistical tests were carried out on frequency data pertaining each cue group, in order to explore the specific effect of the cues on play/not play or work/ not work judgements. Statistical tests were carried out using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences v23 (SPSS). Fisher's exact test was used due to the small sample sizes in some groups.

Consistency and Justifications of Decisions

In stage two of the photograph sorting activity, participants were asked to repeat the sorting task for a random selection of photographs. The decisions in stage one and stage two were compared to check for consistency.

Qualitative data that was attained during the second stage of the photograph sorting activity (when participants were asked to justify a small number of sorting decisions) was analysed using the six-phase thematic analysis approach of Braun & Clarke (2006) (see Appendix 18).

6.2 Findings

6.2.1 Exploratory Data Analysis

The methods chosen to analyse and display the results of the photograph sorting activity are best referred to as matrix visualisation (MV). Other related terms that have been used in statistical literature are reorderable matrix, heatmap, colour histogram and data image (Wu, Tzeng & Chen, 2008). This method was chosen due to the possibilities for exploring and presenting a large amount of information about the data in one display, particularly with regard to the binary variables present in Appendix 19 and 20. As

described by Tzeng, Wu & Chen (2009, p. 2), “Because of the two-state nature in each variable an MV display is the only statistical graph that can meaningfully display all three important pieces of information in a high dimensional binary data set: subject-clusters, variable-groups, with their interactions.”

A binary matrix was created to display the play and not play decisions of all participants for all photographs. This can be seen in Appendix 19. Each cell represents one participant’s play/not play decision for one photograph during the sorting activity.

A second binary matrix was created to display the work and not work decisions of all participants for all photographs. This can be seen in Appendix 20. Each cell represents one participant’s work/not work decision for one photograph during the sorting activity.

A third coloured matrix was created to combine all decisions into one map, displaying play + work vs play + not work vs not play + work vs not play + not work decisions. This can be seen in Figure 6. Each cell represents one participant’s decisions for both sorting activities.

These matrices were studied, with the aims of:

- Discriminating clusters (areas of colour encompassing a number of participants or a number of photographs).
- Checking distribution (looking for rows or columns of the same colour for consistency between or within participants).
- Checking how play and work judgements relate to each other (using the coloured matrix in Figure 6).

Clusters and distribution within participant groups

Children made the most 'play' judgements and parents made the least (Figure 7). A closer look at the distribution of the data suggests that this was not due to a specific group of child or parent participants affecting the overall percentages of their group, but because of a greater number of play judgements across the whole group of children and a smaller number of play judgements across the whole group of parents. However, for staff, distribution appeared less even, with more "not play" judgements amongst the non-teaching staff. In other words, non-teaching staff made fewer 'play' judgements than teaching staff (Figure 8). A closer look at the distribution of the data suggests that this was not due to a specific group of non-teaching staff making a large number of 'not play' judgements and therefore offsetting the 'play' judgements of other non-teaching staff, but because a larger number of non-teaching staff were divided within their own set of judgements compared with the more absolute 'play' judgements of teaching staff.

Parents made the most 'work' judgements and children made the least (Figure 9). A closer look at the distribution of the data shows that for parents, there was a greater number of work judgements across the whole group (the distribution was even). However, the distribution was more uneven for staff and children, suggesting some participants in these groups affected the overall percentages of their group. A closer look at the distribution of the data shows that the staff who made fewer 'work' judgements were Reception and Year 1 teachers and the children who made fewer 'work' judgements were children in Reception and Key Stage 1. The overall effect of this, as shown in Figure 6, is that there appears to be more frequent dichotomy in children's judgements of activities, i.e. children are more likely to hold play + not work views.

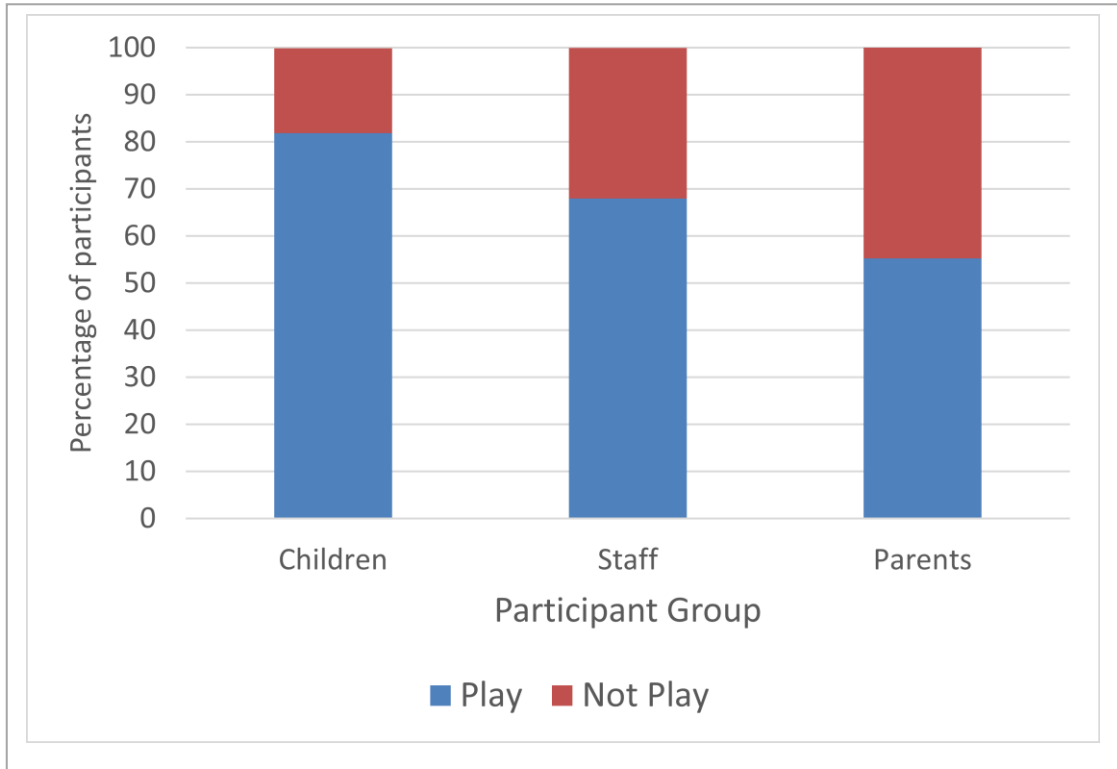


Figure 7. Total play and not play responses by children, staff and parents

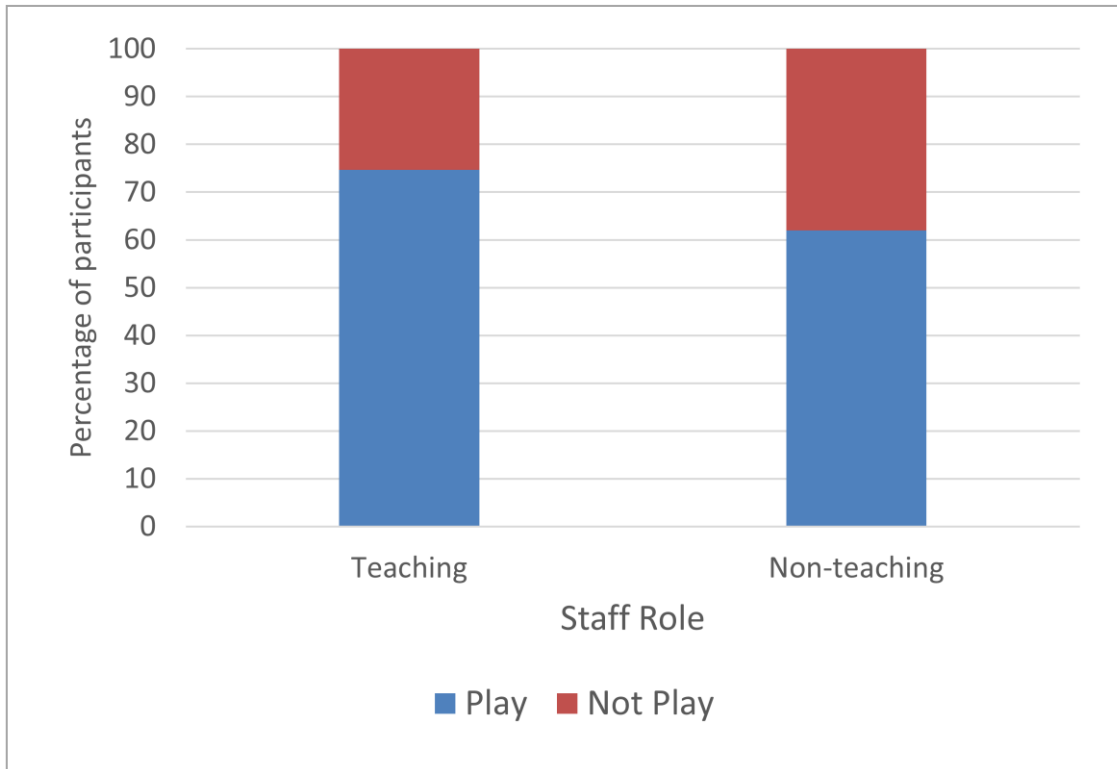


Figure 8. Total play and not play responses by teaching and non-teaching staff

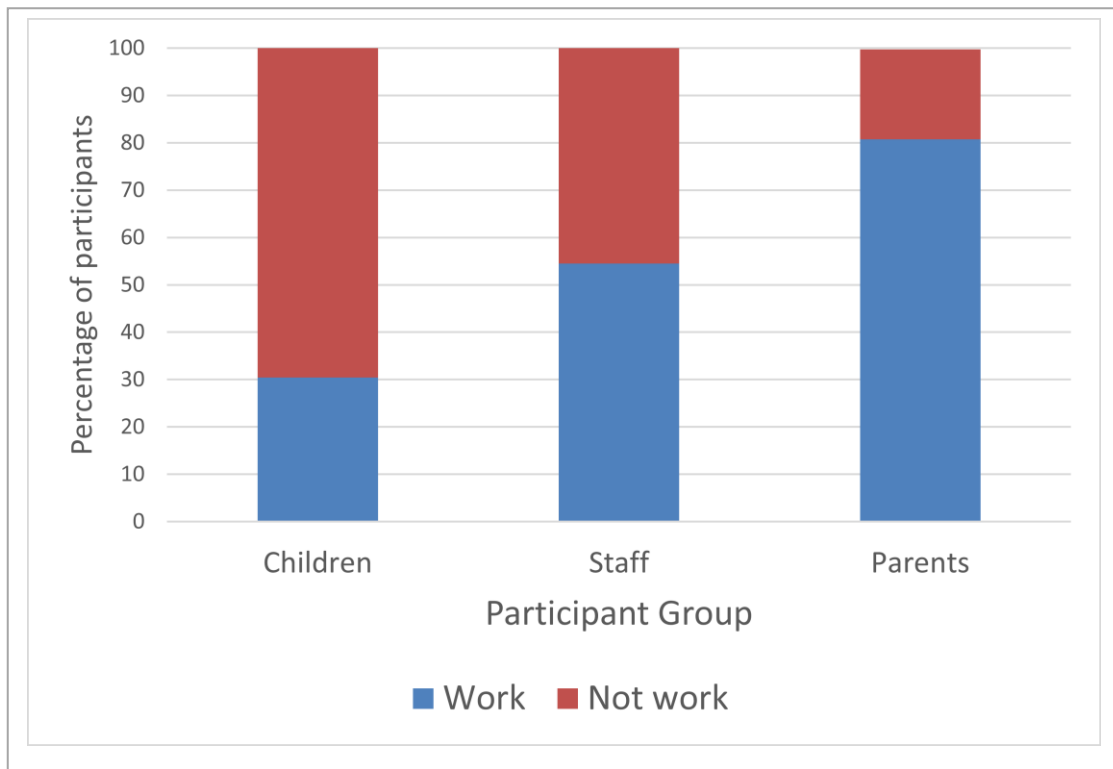


Figure 9. Total work and not work responses by children, staff and parents

6.2.2 Frequency tables for cue groups

Frequency tables below display total numbers of ‘play/not play’ and ‘work/not work’ categorisations made by each participant group for each photograph, arranged according to cue groups.

Table 4. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Difficulty Level'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	1		2	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	29	5	23	11
Children	9	0	9	0
Parents	5	1	5	1

Table 5. Work/Not Work frequency table for 'Cue: Difficulty Level'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	1		2	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	15	19	17	17
Children	3	6	1	8
Parents	6	0	5	1

Table 6. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Context/Background'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)							
	3		6		13		16	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	29	5	30	4	33	1	31	3
Children	9	0	9	0	9	0	9	0
Parents	4	2	5	1	3	3	5	1

Table 7. Work/Not Work frequency table for 'Cue: Context/Background'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)							
	3		6		13		16	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	21	13	18	16	19	15	17	17
Children	1	8	3	6	2	7	2	7
Parents	6	0	5	1	5	1	5	1

Table 8. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Pretend'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	4		5	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	2	32	34	0
Children	2	7	9	0
Parents	1	5	3	3

Table 9. Work/Not Work frequency table for 'Cue: Pretend'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	4		5	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	4	30	7	27
Children	0	9	1	8
Parents	2	4	3	3

Table 10. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Activity/Material/Toy/Technology'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)													
	7		8		9		10		14		15		16	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	1	33	26	8	17	17	16	18	18	16	9	25	31	3
Children	1	8	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	3	9	0
Parents	0	6	3	3	0	6	0	6	2	4	2	4	5	1

Table 11. Work/Not Work (W/NW) frequency table for ‘Cue: Activity/Material/Toy/Technology’

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)													
	7		8		9		10		14		15		16	
	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW	W	NW
Staff	32	2	7	27	24	10	24	10	24	10	27	7	17	17
Children	9	0	0	9	5	4	6	3	4	5	5	4	2	7
Parents	6	0	1	5	6	0	6	0	5	1	6	0	5	1

Table 12. Play/Not Play frequency table for ‘Cue: Positive Affect’

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	11		12	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	32	2	28	6
Children	9	0	9	0
Parents	6	0	6	0

Table 13. Work/Not Work frequency table for ‘Cue: Positive Affect’

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)			
	11		12	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	16	18	20	14
Children	2	7	2	7
Parents	5	1	4	2

Table 14. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Space and Constraint'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)					
	13		16		19	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	33	1	31	3	34	0
Children	9	0	9	0	9	0
Parents	3	3	5	1	5	1

Table 15. Work/Not Work frequency table for 'Cue: Space and Constraint'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)					
	13		16		19	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	19	15	17	17	17	17
Children	2	7	2	7	3	6
Parents	5	1	5	1	4	2

Table 16. Play/Not Play frequency table for 'Cue: Adult Presence'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)					
	16		17		18	
	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play	Play	Not Play
Staff	31	3	23	11	24	10
Children	9	0	8	1	9	0
Parents	5	1	4	2	4	2

Table 17. Work/Not Work frequency table for 'Cue: Adult Presence'

	Photograph (see Appendix 17)					
	16		17		18	
	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work	Work	Not Work
Staff	17	17	22	12	21	13
Children	2	7	1	8	2	7
Parents	5	1	6	0	6	0

6.2.3 Cue group comparisons, including levels of statistical significance

Frequency data contained in the tables above (6.2.2) was analysed using the appropriate statistical tests as earlier outlined (6.1.4), in order to compare how the different participant groups responded to each cue. Significant results are displayed below.

Categorisation of pictures with location cue as play (Figure 10)

Being on the floor or outside increased staff “play” categorisation, but decreased parents’ “play” categorisation.

There was a significant difference between groups’ “floor” categorisations ($p < 0.008$, Fisher’s exact test). Standardised residuals showed parents were significantly more likely to categorise “floor” as “not play”.

There was a significant difference between groups’ “outside” categorisations ($p < 0.007$, Fisher’s exact test). Standardised residuals showed parents were significantly more likely to categorise “outside” as “not play”.

Categorisation of pictures with background cue as play (Figure 11)

There was a significant difference between groups’ “work posters” categorisations ($p < 0.046$, Fisher’s exact test). Standardised residuals showed parents were significantly more likely to categorise the “playground” as “not play”.

Categorisation of pictures with background cue as work (Figure 12)

There was a significant difference between groups’ “work posters” categorisations ($p < 0.000$, Fisher’s exact test). Standardised residuals showed that children were significantly more likely to categorise “work posters” as “not work” and parents were significantly less likely to categorise “work posters” as “not work”.

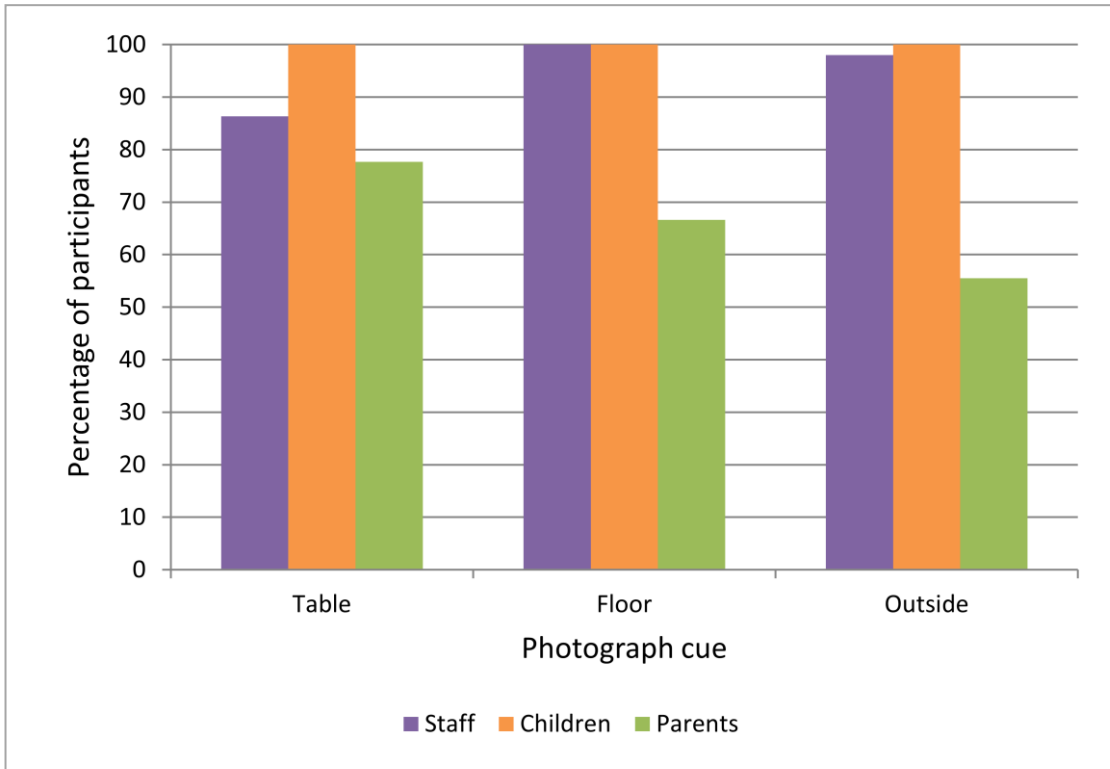


Figure 10. Categorisation of pictures with location cue as play

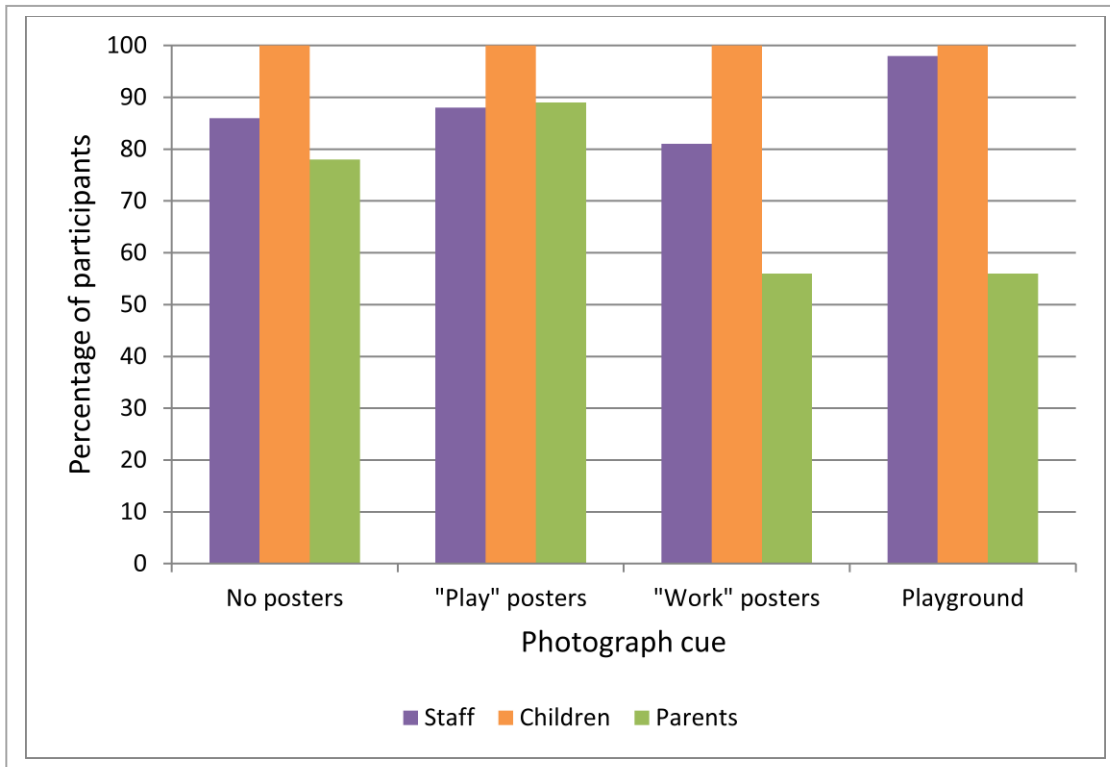


Figure 11. Categorisation of pictures with background cue as play

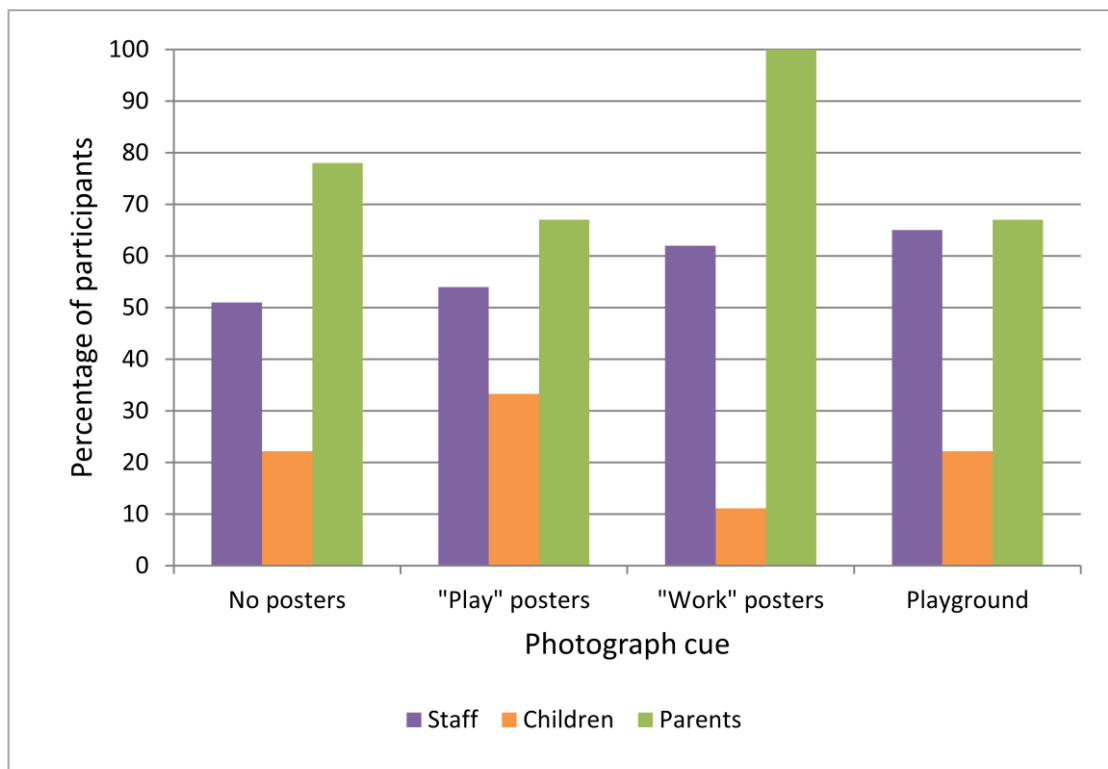


Figure 12. Categorisation of pictures with background cue as work

Categorisation of different activities as play (Figure 13)

There was a significant difference between groups' categorisations of the paper-based activities, i.e. the "blank paper" photograph ($p < 0.005$, Fisher's exact test) and the "drawing" photograph ($p < 0.009$, Fisher's exact test). Standardised residuals showed that parents were significantly less likely to categorise "blank paper" and "drawing" as "play".

Categorisation of pictures with "adult presence" as work (Figure 14)

There was a significant difference between groups' categorisations of the "adult nearby" photograph ($p < 0.002$, Fisher's exact test) and "with adult" photograph ($p < 0.001$, Fisher's exact test). Standardised residuals showed that children were more likely to categorise "adult nearby" and "with adult" as "not work" and parents less likely to do

so.

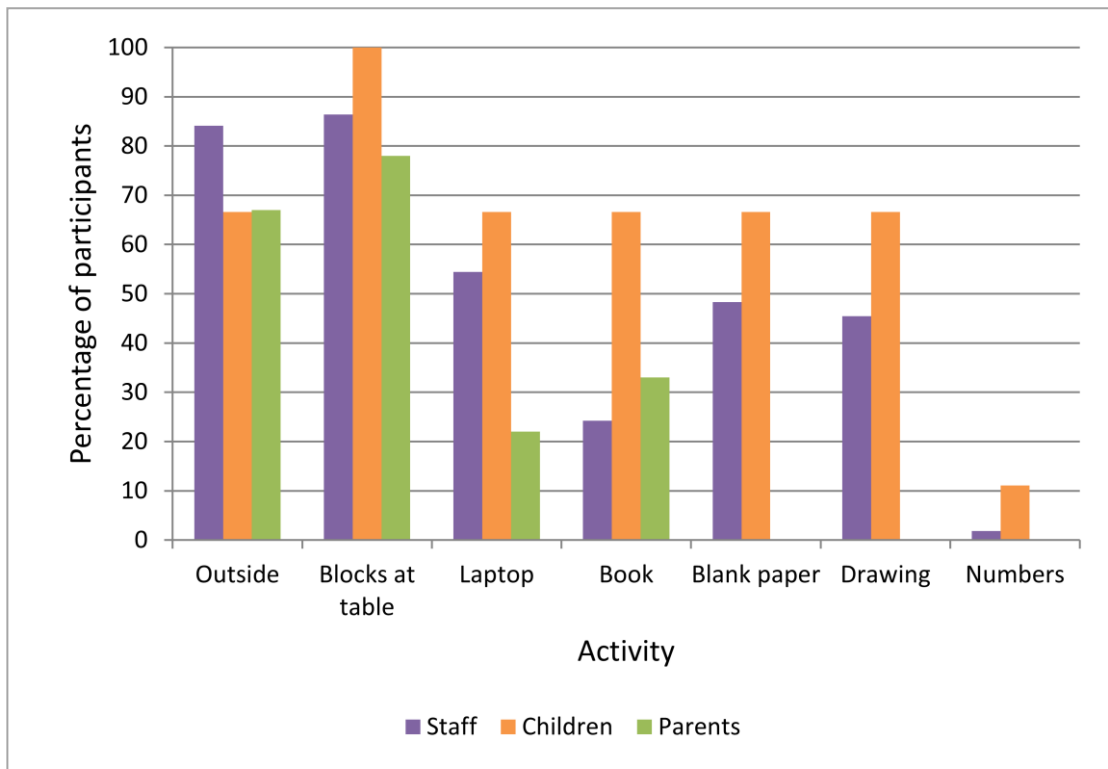


Figure 13. Categorisation of different activities as play

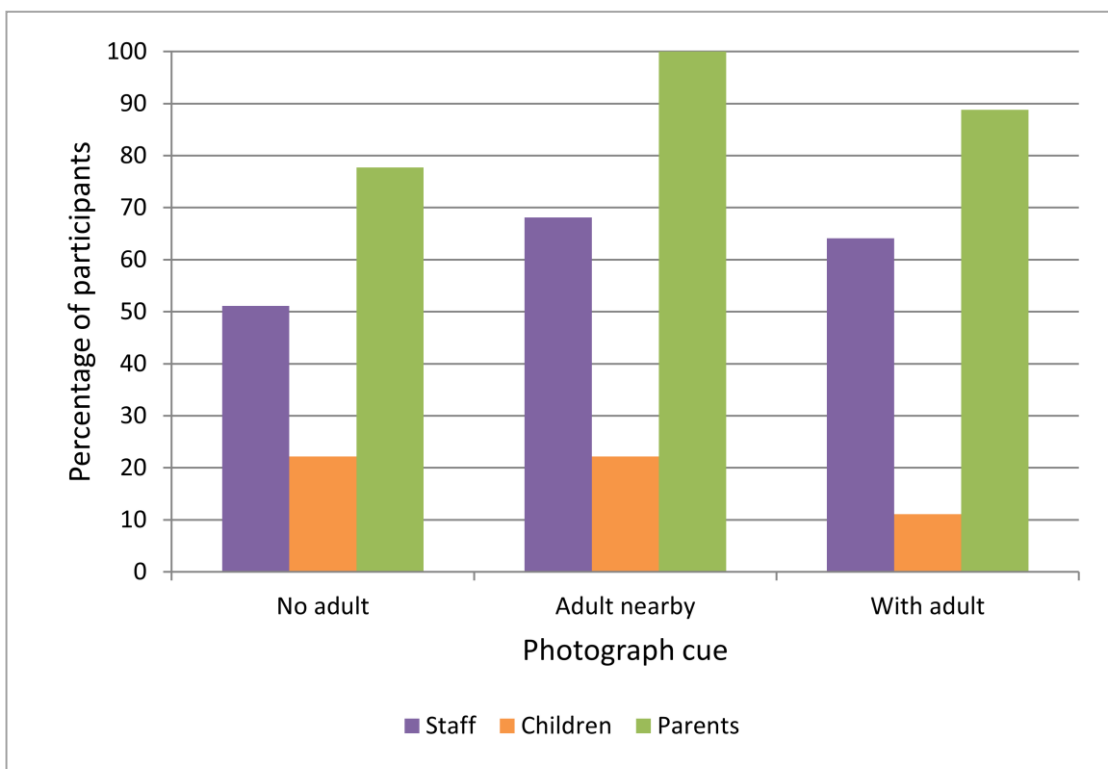


Figure 14. Categorisation of pictures with “adult presence” as work

Categorisation of a real or pretend activity as play (Figure 15)

There was a significant difference between groups' categorisations of the "pretend" photograph ($p < 0.008$, Fisher's exact test). Standardised residuals showed that parents were more likely to categorise "pretend" as "not play".

Categorisation of an easy or difficult activity as work (Figure 16)

There was a significant difference between groups' categorisations of the "easy" photograph ($p < 0.005$, Fisher's exact test) and the "difficult" photograph ($p < 0.003$, Fisher's exact test). Standardised residuals showed that children were less likely to categorise "easy" as "work", parents were more likely to do so and parents were also more likely to categorise "difficult" as "work".

Categorisation of outside activities as play (Figure 17)

There was a significant difference between groups' categorisations of the "with blocks" photograph ($p < 0.007$, Fisher's exact test). Standardised residuals showed that parents were more likely to categorise "with blocks" as "not play".

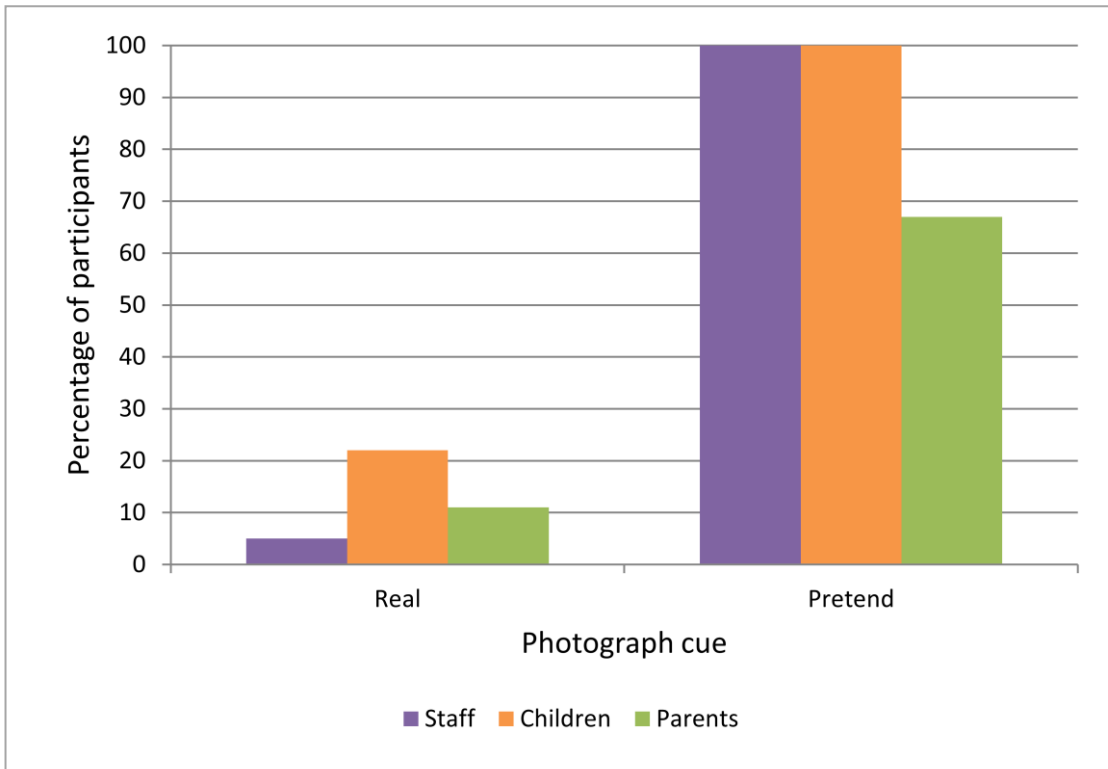


Figure 15. Categorisation of a real or pretend activity as play

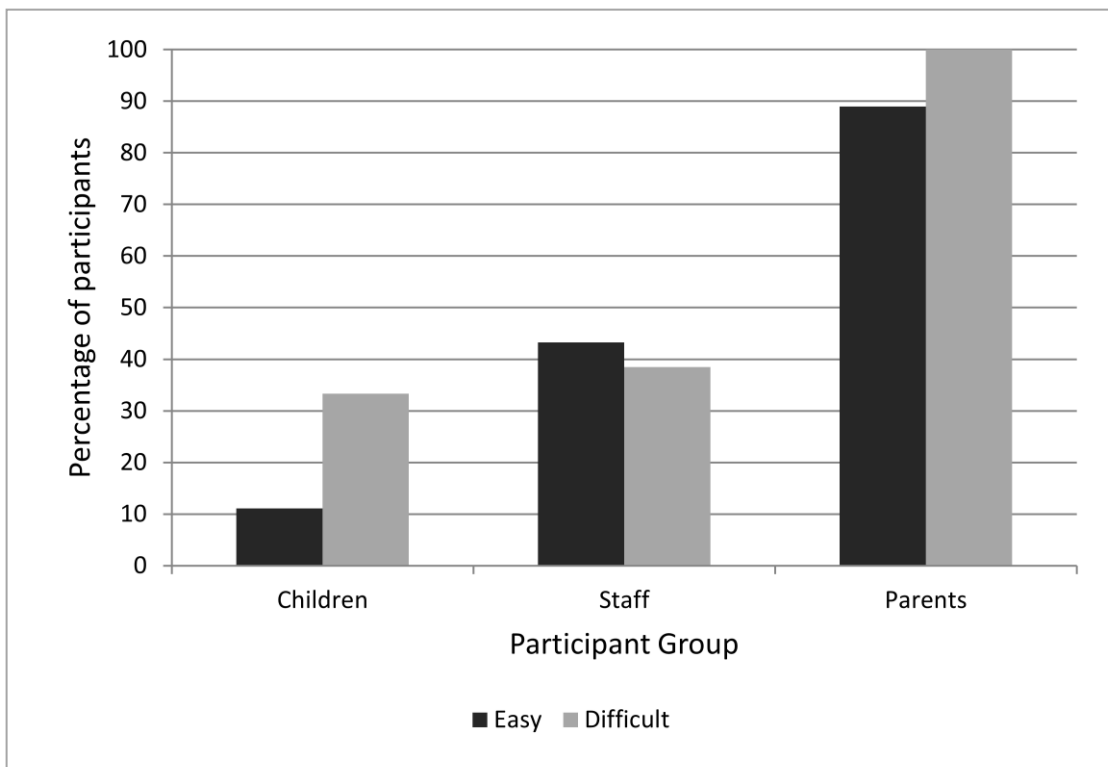


Figure 16. Categorisation of an easy or difficult activity as work

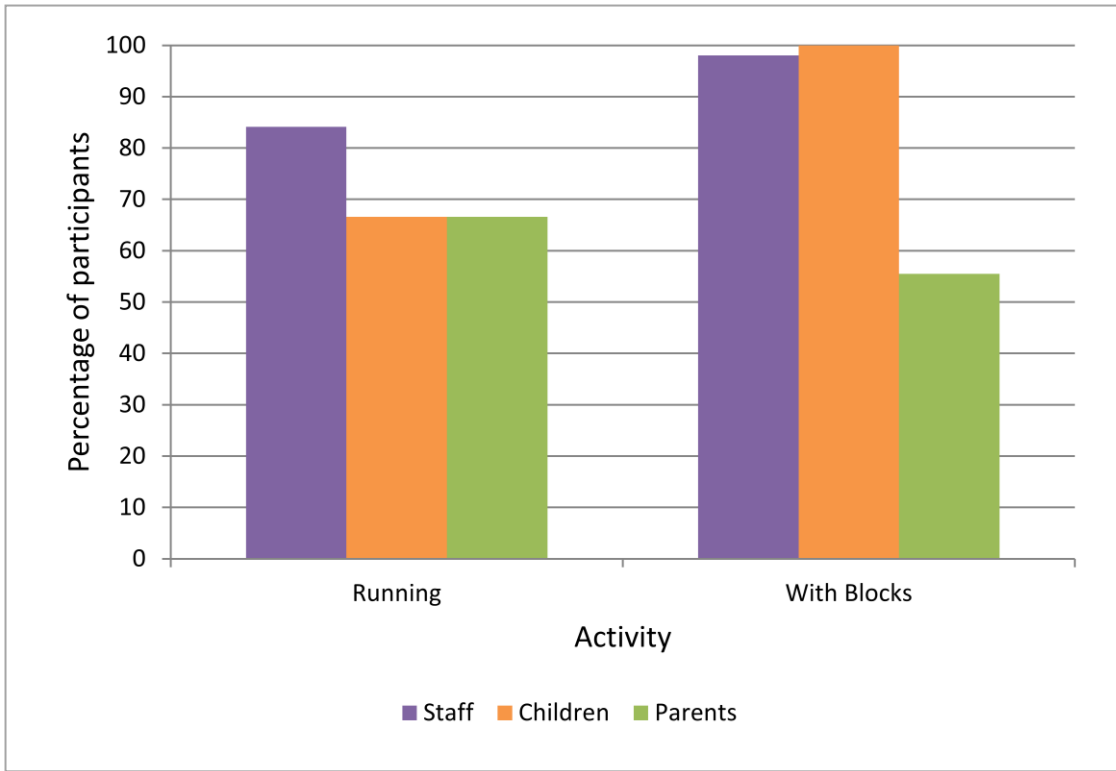


Figure 17. Categorisation of outside activities as play

6.2.4 Consistency of categorisations

In stage two of the photograph sorting activity, participants were asked to repeat the sorting task for a random selection of photographs (see 6.1.3). The decisions in stage one and stage two were compared to check for consistency. Of the 312 categorisations made in stage two, 24 were inconsistent with those made in stage one. This level of consistency is similar to that found by Howard (2002) when using the same procedure and is considered an acceptable level of consistency. Participants' categorisations were therefore considered to be reliable.

6.2.5 Answers to Research Questions

Research Question 1 asked "What cues are used to define play by the three participant groups?" Table 18 displays the cues used to define play by children of Somali heritage, parents of Somali heritage and primary school staff.

Research Question 2 asked "What cues are used to define work by the three participant groups?" Table 19 displays the cues used to define work by children of Somali heritage, parents of Somali heritage and primary school staff.

Table 18. Cues used to define play by each participant group

Cue	Children	Parents	Staff
Positive affect	No	Yes	Yes
Location (space and constraint)	No	Yes	Yes
Activity/material	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adult presence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pretend	Yes	Yes	Yes
Difficulty level	No	No	Yes
Context/background	No	Yes	Yes

Table 19. Cues used to define work by each participant group

Cue	Children	Parents	Staff
Positive affect	No	Yes	Yes
Location (space and constraint)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Activity/material	Yes	Yes	Yes
Adult presence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pretend	No	Yes	No
Difficulty level	Yes	Yes	No
Context/background	Yes	Yes	Yes

Research Question 3 asked “How are the play and work definitions justified by participants?” Qualitative data that was attained during the second stage of the photograph sorting activity (when participants were asked to justify a small number of sorting decisions) were used to answer this question, as described below.

The qualitative data which comprised participants' verbal contributions during the sorting activity was analysed as follows, using the six-phase thematic analysis approach of Braun & Clarke (2006) (see Appendix 18). Written accounts were made at the time of the activity and these were then typed and saved under the three headings of 'Children's comments', 'Staff comments' and 'Parents' comments', retaining information about the participant and the photograph being referred to, for example:

'Child participant 27 – "Is he moving or standing?...I think he's standing so it's not play" – photo 8 (Child is running outside)'.

Following this phase of familiarisation with the data, initial codes were generated pertaining to the comments. For example, the code 'Play involves movement' was ascribed to the quotation above. By re-reading the transcription and codes, initial themes were identified. For example, the coded quotation above was assigned to the theme 'Children see play as active'. A process of reviewing and refining then took place before defining and naming the final overarching themes. For example, the above initial theme of 'Children see play as active' became a subtheme of the final theme 'Play means doing something'. There were seven overarching themes that characterised the qualitative information obtained in phase one of the research and therefore represent how participants justified their definitions of play and work. The result of this process was that these themes could be compared with the quantitative findings found through EDA and statistical tests, in order to make sense of patterns of decisions within and between participant groups. These themes therefore provide answers to Research Question 3, "How are the play and work definitions justified by participants?" The seven themes were:

1. Differences in decision making

2. Different perspectives on play and learning
3. Play means doing something
4. Play is self-directed
5. Work has a specific purpose
6. Work is undesirable
7. Play and work can be opposites or the same

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Consistency and dichotomy in children's perceptions

Overall, the large number of 'play' categorisations and small number of 'work' categorisations made by the Somali heritage children in this research means that they appear often to dichotomise activities, i.e. they are more likely than adult participants to view activities that are play as not being work. One explanation for the large number of 'play' categorisations by children is that many of the cues appeared to have a minimal effect on the child participants, potentially indicating a design flaw resulting in children not detecting the cues in the photographs. This is reflected in the comments made during the justification stage; for example, within the subtheme of 'Adults see play as frivolous' (part of the larger theme of 'Different perspectives on play and learning'), adult participants made comments such as "If it looks like concentration then it's not play" and "The blocks might be playing but they might not be because they are thinking" in reference to photographs with the cue of 'positive affect'. In comparison, when prompted to comment on these photographs, child participants did not make reference to the facial expression of the child in the photograph, suggesting this cue may have been too subtle to have affected children's judgements. As children did at various times

comment on their enjoyment of play and that play makes them happy, the subtlety of the affect cue in the photographs appears the most likely explanation for children's judgements being unaffected, rather than concluding that children do not associate play with positive feelings.

However, the finding that these Somali heritage children dichotomised play and work activities so consistently is also in agreement with previous research with non-Somali children (e.g. Howard, 2002; Karrby, 1989; Robson, 1993; Rothlein & Brett, 1987), research which has found that children typically view play and work as separate undertakings and their categorisations are more conclusive. This also contrasts with earlier suggestions that young children are unable to separate play from work (e.g. Issaacs, 1932; Manning and Sharp, 1977). For example, using the photograph sorting activity also used in the present study, Howard (2002) found that children distinguished between play and work (i.e. they made consistent play *or* work decisions) for 92% of the photographs they were shown. Therefore, another explanation that captures the larger number of 'play' categorisations that children made altogether (and consequently the reduced cue effects) is that there is a real difference in these children's perceptions; i.e. not just a difference due to photograph cue subtleties; meaning that these children are less affected by, and reflective about, factors beyond the basic type of activity being engaged in. Themes identified from participants' comments during the justification stage reflect the dichotomy and underlying consistency in children's decisions. For example, two subthemes within the larger theme of 'Differences in decision making' were 'More indecisive with age' and 'More nuances in definition with age'. Comments within these subthemes included:

P25 (Child) – "It's easy to decide because you know what's play and what's not".

P29 (Child) – “If you play it’s not work”.

P2 (Teacher): “I’m overthinking this”.

P10 (TA): “I want to analyse and know the situation, like, the reason for the activity”.

Therefore, children appeared less conflicted in their decisions compared with adults, particularly staff, and they appeared to base their play/not play judgements more rigidly on the activity being undertaken in the photograph, regardless of other factors. This hypothesis is also supported by the subthemes of ‘Equipment is key to definition’ and ‘Children see play as active’ within the larger theme of ‘Play means doing something’. Children’s comments relating to these subthemes included the following, in response to the photograph depicting a child in the playground running with no materials:

P28 (Child): “He’s near the football net so it’s play”.

P30 (Child): “It’s not play because he’s not doing anything”

These comments highlight the central role that the specific materials play in affecting children’s judgements about whether an activity is play, compared with other contextual factors that are more readily taken into consideration by adults.

6.3.2 The effect of culturally cultivating play

Children perceived more photographs to be depicting play and parents perceived fewer photographs to be depicting play. Non-teaching staff perceived fewer photographs to be depicting play compared with teaching staff. A larger number of non-teaching staff were divided with in their own set of judgements compared with the more absolute ‘play’ judgements of teaching staff. Considering the comments made by non-teaching staff during the activity, it appears that this could be a result of teaching assistants feeling more indecisive about whether or not an activity is play. This is reflected in the

subtheme 'Non-teaching staff more indecisive', part of the larger theme of 'Differences in decision making'. This subtheme included comments such as

P7 (TA): "It's hard to pick, I want to put them in both".

P6 (TA): "It was hard to decide because some pictures look similar so I had to look closely to see if anything would make a difference".

One hypothesis for this finding is that non-teaching staff are more familiar with undertaking a variety of activities that appear like trivial play but have wider purposes. This is reflected in the subtheme of 'Non-teaching staff want play to be seen as purposeful', part of the larger theme of 'Different perspectives on play and learning', which included the following comment from a Teaching Assistant

P12 (TA): "Because I work with emotional and behavioural difficulties pupils, we do activities that are play but for them there's a purpose so it's like work too".

This is consistent with existing literature referencing and discussing the range of ways in which playful practices are particularly prevalent and promoted in the teaching of children with Special Educational Needs (e.g. Corke, 2012; Daniel, 2008; Nind & Hewett, 2012). Consequently, it is apparent than non-teaching staff in the present study may be less likely to perceive play so often in the photographs they were presented with as they more frequently experience playful approaches being used as purposeful teaching methods.

An initial brief consideration of these comments and themes in the context of cultural perspectives of play suggests that many of the school practitioners in this study hold views reflective of what Gaskins, Haight and Lancy (2007) call 'culturally cultivated' play. This refers to communities in which play is viewed as inherently beneficial and a process

for learning and adults consequently create structured play opportunities. Culturally cultivated play is the dominant perspective within 21st century 'Western' societies (Whitebread, Basilio, Kvalja & Verma, 2012); therefore it is unsurprising that the views of many of the school practitioners in the present study would correspond with this perspective. As discussed above, non-teaching staff appear to hold this perspective most strongly and this formalising of playful activities, i.e. the promotion of them as intrinsic to learning, seems to result not in more frequent observations of play but in a smaller number of play categorisations. The subtheme of 'Non-teaching staff want play to be seen as purposeful' highlights that this counterintuitive outcome is potentially due to these practitioners not only holding individual views aligned with the culturally cultivated play perspective but having a desire to defend playful activities as purposeful past-times and therefore not have them relegated to the category of 'play' if this might be interpreted to mean they are unimportant. This is reflected in the following comment

P2 (TA) – "I don't like myself for choosing play because it's like 'just playing'".

6.3.3 The cultural relevance of materials

Despite staff being more likely to categorise an activity as play when it takes place on the floor or outside (compared with a table), parents categorised floor- and outside-based activities as play significantly less often than other participants, as shown in Figure 10. In order to consider this effect of the 'outside' cue (where the child was shown sitting in the playground with plastic blocks), it is useful to consider it alongside the other photograph taken outside (where the child was shown running in the playground). Responses to these photographs (seen in Figure 17) show that whilst there was greater agreement across the participant groups regarding the play status of the 'running' photograph, the presence of plastic blocks increased staff and children's play

categorisations, but decreased parents'. This suggests that it is not the activity (plastic blocks) or the location (playground) that parents view as less like play, but the combination of these. This provides an interesting discussion point for the focus groups; do different activities "belong" in different locations and what is the outcome of manipulating these?

Another hypothesis may also be that staff and children more regularly see apparatus such as plastic blocks in use in the school environment, whereas these apparatus are less familiar to parents from their own childhoods in Somalia and less like the play that they see their own children engaging in at home. This photograph may therefore imply to parents an adult directed task, whilst the photograph of the child running contains a less-directed outside activity that parents more readily view as play. Comments made by parents during the justification stage support this hypothesis; for example:

P29 (Parent): "We did not play with things like this in Somalia, when I was a child".

P24 (Parent): "In our culture the blocks are play but in school they could be learning".

This area will be significant to discussions in phase two of the research, when there will be further exploration of the effect of culture and the implications of this for perspectives of children's play within school.

6.3.4 Work perceptions as variable as play

EDA revealed that parents perceived more photographs to be depicting work than not work and the opposite was true for children. The distribution across school staff was uneven, with some teachers (of Reception and Year 1 classes) making fewer 'work' judgements. This initial insight suggests that adults who work with younger children have different perceptions of work to adults working with older children, in particular

that work is less apparent in children's activities. Comparison with the data for children's judgements shows that a similar pattern is evident, with an uneven distribution amongst these participants also caused by children in Reception and Key Stage 1 making fewer 'work' judgements. This suggests a level of agreement between adults and children with regards to the regularity of children undertaking 'work' activities.

The above findings can be considered in the context of those of Howard (2002) with regard to the effects of age and setting on play and work judgements. Howard (2002) found that age affected the use and impact of certain cues during decision making. For example, when deciding whether an image depicted play or work, children in primary school were found to use the cues of 'pretend elements', toys, choice, level of difficulty, skill development and apparent background context significantly more than children in a nursery. These findings support the notion that children's definitions of play and work are influenced by the way that they experience activities in different environments (i.e. playful activities existing as the norm in a nursery setting or as a more structured reward following 'work' in a school setting). The findings of the present study are therefore consistent with this with regard to children's perspectives of work and they add evidence that adults' perceptions are similarly affected; children and adults who spend the majority of their time in environments where playful activities are the norm are less likely to perceive 'work' within children's activities, even when this is pertaining to older children. Furthermore, this builds on the findings of Howard (2002) by separating decision making around play and decision making around work. Whilst Howard (2002) found that children in primary school used more environmental cues to make a decision between whether an activity looked like play *or* work, the current study's design considered play *or* not play and work *or* not work. This avoided inferring a play-work

dichotomy and assumptions that 'play' equals 'not work' and 'work' equals 'not play'. Whilst the current study, consistent with previous research, did find evidence of a play-work dichotomy being present in many participants' perspectives, it also found that many people (especially adults) do perceive a range of activities as both play and work. This is important as the discussed effect of setting and age on the cues used by participants in Howard (2002) could not be linked specifically to decisions about play or decisions about work due to these two words being presented together in opposition. By separating play and work in the current study, it appears that the varied effect of cues on different age groups (or practitioners working with different age groups) relates more to work than to play, suggesting that children and practitioners may have perspectives on work that are more variable than those on play.

6.3.5 Contributions to focus group discussions

Based on the above findings, analysis and discussion, the following questions were added to the focus group schedules:

- Do different activities "belong" in different locations?
- Why did staff categorise the difficult activity as play more often than the easy activity and as work less often?
- Why did the 'outside' cue (where the child was shown sitting in the playground with plastic blocks) increase both the 'play' and 'work' categorisation for staff?
- What role does technology have in play? Parents' and staff members' comments during the justification stage suggested they were particularly indecisive about the effect of technology on play, for example

P12 (Teacher): "With the computer it's hard to decide because it could be that they're playing on it but they could be doing work too"

P27 (Parent): "We go on the computer to work and play".

- What affect does adult direction have on children's play? Is this different for staff and parents, considering their different roles and in the context of the hypothesis about parents of Somali heritage having experienced less directed play activities as children?

7. Phase Two

7.1 Methods

7.1.1 Participants

The process of participant recruitment is outlined in 6.1.1. All focus group participants were from School C and they formed two focus groups, one with Somali heritage parents and one with school staff.

Parents

At the meeting with parents described in 6.1.1, eight parents consented to taking part in the focus group. All participants were female and they had one or more children currently attending School C. As described in 6.1.1:

1. One of the parents taking part in both phases of the research was not originally from Somalia, but Yemen. I decided to include this participant in the research. Justification for this can be seen in Appendix 16.
2. All other parents were from Somalia and had all lived in the U.K. for between six and 20 years.
3. One participant had left Somalia with her family when she was approximately eight years old, moving to (and attending school) in Italy before moving to the U.K. as an adult.
4. Two participants had spent their childhoods in Somalia before moving to the U.K., but had not attended school in Somalia due to the civil war.
5. The remaining participants had attended school in Somalia before moving to the U.K. as adults (as stated above, arriving in the past six to 20 years).

All participants could understand and speak English, although there was variation in proficiency and at times participants also spoke in Somali or Arabic to each other.

Staff

Whilst carrying out the photograph sorting activity in School C, five members of staff consented to taking part in the focus group. All were female. These participants were:

- The school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo)
- A PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) teacher with experience teaching children in EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
- A Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) teaching children across different Key Stages
- A Teaching Assistant currently working in the EYFS
- The school counsellor

7.1.2 Procedure

Data for phase two was collected using focus groups. A focus group design was chosen for a number of reasons:

- They enable the collection of views on precise areas of interest in a relatively short amount of time
- They allow the researcher to clarify comments during discussions
- Interactions between participants reduce the pressure that can be felt during individual researcher-participant interactions

- The group environment also reduces the power difference that can occur between individual participants and the researcher
- They are a particularly good method for gaining the views of marginalised groups, when compared with individual interviews, as the presence of peers provides reassurance and encouragement.

(Hollander, 2004; Morgan, 1997; Vaughn, Schumm & Sinagub, 1996)

Recognising the important role the focus group facilitator plays in ensuring the focus group is effective, I spent time reading literature on this topic and rehearsing skills during my practicum work as Trainee Educational Psychologist, e.g. during consultation meetings with staff and parents. A summary of these skills can be seen in Table 20 (Vaughn et al., 1996, p. 87).

Both focus groups took place on the school premises during the school day, lasted just over one hour and were audio-recorded. All parents had attended the meeting described in 6.1.1 and were involved in phase one of the research; therefore, the background and purpose of the research had been outlined to them previously. However, once the focus group had assembled and introductions had taken place, participants were reminded that discussions would be exploring their views on play, work and learning, reflections on their childhood and on their children's experiences. For staff, information from the consent forms was stated aloud so that these participants were reminded of the intentions to discuss their views on play, work and learning, their own experiences of play, opportunities and barriers to play in school, play and children with additional needs and play and children from different ethnic backgrounds.

Table 20. Focus group facilitator characteristics and skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knows about the topic but does not appear to be so all-knowing that the participants are intimidated.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates genuine incomplete understanding of the perceptions and attitudes of participants so that more elaborate, in-depth responses can be elicited.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Controls the group and is clearly the leader but remains approachable and friendly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leads rather than guides.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Functions as a facilitator, not a performer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possesses a good memory so that he or she can remember what the participants said and can connect it with future responses and probes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listens actively and willingly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is responsive to participants and does not follow preconceived ideas or adhere rigidly to the moderator's guide.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reacts with concern to the feelings and issues that each member states.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not alienate any member of the group.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draws out shy or less participating members and does not allow members to dominate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becomes totally involved in the interview and encourages others to remain interested, active participants.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possesses strong writing skills to record key insights and to write summaries, reports, and interpretations.

Note. Reprinted from “Focus group interviews in education and psychology”, by Vaughn, S., Schumm, J. S., & Sinagub, J. M., 1996, p. 87 London: Sage.

During this phase of the research, the terms 'work' and 'learning' were both used by myself and participants, rather than discussions focusing only on 'play' and 'work'. Justification for this echoes that outlined in 6.1.2; the use of a range of terms would reduce the likelihood of participants assuming a perspective whereby play and work are necessarily opposites and it would enable participants' perspectives to be represented with greater specificity. For both focus groups, participants were also introduced to guidelines that would be followed during the meeting. The purpose of these guidelines was to remind participants of important information relating to the process and to help participants feel as comfortable as possible. These guidelines were then displayed throughout the meeting:

- The meeting will be audio-recorded.
- Participation is voluntary.
- Aside from anonymous comments in the written report, what's said in the room stays in the room.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- There are no right or wrong answers.

In order to put participants at ease and open up discussion about play, participants were first asked to discuss their favourite play activities from their childhoods. Following this, a schedule of discussion topics was followed, as described in the next section.

7.1.3 Materials

The literature review carried out for this research highlighted that a significant amount of research concerned with children's play takes a 'culture-free' approach, focusing on one theoretical perspective or not explicitly stating a perspective due to an assumption that 'Western' theoretical perspectives are universal. As described earlier in the

literature review for this research, Göncü et al. (1999) developed a framework specifically for the study of play in different cultures, based on observed cultural variations and the within-culture causes and effects of these variations. This provides researchers with a cross-cultural framework that facilitates an exploration of play from a perspective not bound by one theoretical outlook, but that supports a meaningful understanding of cultural variations in children's play. This framework comprises five principles, which encompass the main factors found to affect play behaviour:

- The economic structure of a community;
- The value the community assigns to play;
- The implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children;
- The roles and activities of adults.

The fifth principle provided by Göncü et al. (1999) is that multiple data-gathering and analysis techniques should be used. The inclusion of this principle is therefore evident in the mixed-methods approach used across the two research phases.

These principles were therefore used in the construction of the focus group schedules (see Appendix 21), ensuring discussion areas were organised in a way that they would include prompts relating to the main principles found to affect play behaviour across different cultures. Each principle was considered in turn, alongside existing research pertaining to that principle, as summarised below.

The economic structure of a community

The economic structure of a community determines the availability of different activities, including play. This reflects the theories of Leontiev, who focused attention on how economic and social circumstances affect children's activities. For example, in

urban middle-income families, a large variety of provisions (including objects and locations) are made available to children by adults (e.g. Farver, Kim & Lee, 1995; Haight & Miller, 1993). This contrasts with children living in communities with subsistence economy, where children are often required to contribute to non-play activities alongside adults and when they are not doing so, specific materials for play are not made available (e.g. Göncü et al., 1999; Gaskins, 1999). The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions:

Parents

- What is the physical environment like where your children play?
- What other activities do your children do that are not play?
- What about the 'things' your children play with, i.e. materials, objects, toys?

Staff

- What is the physical environment like where children play?
- What other activities do children do that are not play?
- What about the 'things' children play with, i.e. materials, objects, toys?

The value the community assigns to play

Beliefs about the value of play differ across communities and this has an effect on children's play experiences. This reflects the wider context of differing values about children's activities in general and the inevitable effect this has on the activities children undertake (e.g. Harkness & Super, 1996). Comparable to the literature cited above, in urban middle-income families, parents who are more familiar with literature and discussions about developmental benefits of play are more likely to assign greater value

to play as one activity that children can undertake. For those living in communities with subsistence economy, parents may be less formally educated on child development and they may assign greater value to activities children can undertake that benefit the family economically (e.g. Gaskins, 1999). The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions:

Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How important do you think play is?
Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How important do you think play is?

The implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children

In addition to the importance of play's value within in a community, is the way this value is communicated to children. There are two main ways that this communication can take place. Firstly, children may overtly be made aware of adults' opinions about play and the importance adults assign to it through the involvement (or not) of adults in children's activities and through the way that adults talk about different activities. Secondly, there are implicit ways that values about play are communicated, e.g. through the availability of different activities in different settings and the time that children are allowed to engage in different activities (e.g. Fitzgerald & Göncü, 1993). The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions:

The roles and activities of adults.

In order to make sense of children’s play from a culturally sensitive perspective, it is necessary to explore adult roles in different environments and the way that children represent their environments in play. This principle is based on the notion that when children play they replicate their environments and in particular, they imitate adult

Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there ways that your children know how you feel about play?
Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are there ways that children know how you feel about play?

behaviours and roles). This can take various forms including the copying of specific adult behaviours in order to become more skilful (e.g. by copying an action carried out by a parent as part of a household ‘chore’), the copying of behaviour that a parent demonstrates during shared play activities, and the more symbolic imitation that might take place when a child represents their parents’ mannerisms, attitudes or career-related behaviour in their play (e.g. Gaskins, 1999; Nielsen, 2012; Punch, 2003; Saracho & Spodek, 1998). The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions:

Parents

- What activities do you and/or your partner do around the house or for a job?
 - Do these have an effect on your children's play?
- How much are adults involved in your children's play?

Staff

- What activities do adults do?
 - Do these have an effect on children's play?
- How much are adults involved in children's play?

Due to the specific intentions to discuss play and work within school and play's relationship to learning, further discussion prompts were included relating to these specific areas. These prompts also arose from the wider literature review and concerned concepts relevant to the presence of play in the education system. In particular, prompts were created based on the two dominant areas of literature concerning play and learning: what (and whether) children learn through play and the role of play in school. For these two areas, both broad and specific prompts were included in order to gain general perspectives which could then be followed up with more specific prompts based on the key literature in the area. The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions with parents and staff:

- Do children learn when they play?
 - Is this the same for all children? (*Piaget – universal stages of development*)
 - What about social play (*Vygotsky – development through social interaction*)
 - What about playing alone (*Piaget – knowledge construction via independent explorations*)
- What role should play have in school?
 - Play freely during the school day (*Froebel, Isaacs*)
 - Play used as a way of teaching (*Montessori*)

Also included in the focus group schedules were more specific questions resulting from the analysis of phase one data (as outlined in 6.1.4). These questions were included to enable a meaningful understanding and overall analysis of phase one findings and to prompt discussion in areas of ambiguity or interest. The following questions were therefore included as prompts for focus group discussions:

Parents

- Do different activities “belong” in different locations?
- What role does technology have in play?
- What affect does adult direction have on children’s play?

Staff

- Why did staff categorise the difficult activity as play more often than the easy activity and as work less often?
- Why did the ‘outside’ cue increase both the ‘play’ and ‘work’ categorisation for staff?
- What role does technology have in play?
- What affect does adult direction have on children’s play?

To facilitate and stimulate focus group discussions and provide visual reference points, a range of pictures depicting different ‘play’ activities were displayed on the tables around which participants sat. These photographs can be seen in Appendix 22.

7.1.4 Analysis

Data collected from the focus groups was analysed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This six-phase approach is shown in Appendix 18. Thematic analysis was chosen mainly as it allowed focus group data to be analysed both inductively and deductively, making it possible to explore predetermined themes (described further below) as well as enabling the identification of inductive themes. As stated by Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is also a flexible method that can

be used within different methodologies; therefore, this was consistent with the pragmatic approach of this research project.

Analysis using Cultural Historical Activity Theory

As a result of the literature review carried out for this research, I decided to analyse the focus group data according to a number of existing themes. These themes stemmed from the components of an activity system, according to Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) (Engeström, 1987); an activity system is comprised of a subject (person or group) who has motives to act, with the support of tools (artefacts, signs, language), in the orientation of an object (product, concern, goal) and in the context of a community with rules and division of labour. Further discussion of the factors contributing to the decision to analyse focus group data in a deductive manner, i.e. using CHAT components as predetermined themes, can be found in 2.3.

The use of Cultural Historical Activity Theory within the thematic analysis process resulted in the stages of analysis shown in Table 21.

Table 21. Thematic analysis approach and corresponding tasks

Braun & Clarke (2006) Phase	Analysis Carried Out
1. Familiarisation with the data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcribing data from audio-recordings • Re-listening to the recordings • Re-reading the transcriptions • Noting initial ideas
2. Generating initial codes	Coding using NVivo v11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coding whole transcription • Noting where a code relates to an activity system component
3. Searching for themes	Creation of potential themes using NVivo v11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-reading transcription and codes • Using the triangular activity system framework to group codes onto the relevant component sections • Identifying themes within the component sections • Also keeping all codes in NVivo list and identifying inductive themes
4. Reviewing themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking all themes against coded extracts • Refining themes in NVivo and on activity system framework • Re-reading entire transcription
5. Defining and naming themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing themes within the activity system framework • Reading coded extracts in context of themes and each other • Making notes about the meaning of each theme
6. Producing the report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of themes within and between activity system components and frameworks • Exploration of inductive themes and relation to activity systems • Comparison of themes with phase one findings and research questions • Write-up

7.2 Findings

7.2.1 Focus group themes

This section presents findings of the focus group meetings with parents and staff, following the thematic analysis process described above.

As described in phase one of the analysis process (Familiarisation with the data), audio-recordings were repeatedly listened to and all audio data was transcribed and then re-read. Appendix 23 and 24 include examples of these transcriptions.

In accordance with phase two of the analysis process (Generating initial codes), coding of all transcribed data was undertaken using NVivo 11. This resulted in initial nodes which represented the coded data. These nodes were kept in an initial unrefined list (in order for inductive themes to later be identified) as well as becoming nodes assigned to the deductive labels representing each activity system component (i.e. 'tools', 'rules', 'community', 'division of labour' and 'motives'). An example of a section of data coded in this way is included in Appendix 25, which shows that data has been coded to two activity system components of 'tools' and 'motives'.

Phases three, four and five of the analysis process (Searching for themes, Reviewing themes and Defining and naming themes) involved the following analysis. Visual representations of the activity system framework were used to display the activity system nodes which had been identified during coding. These activity systems are included in Appendix 26 and 27. Nodes within each activity system were compared, creating larger 'parent' nodes and themes that describe the data within each activity system. Appendix 28 lists the 'parent' nodes identified for each activity system framework. Appendix 29 shows an example of one of these 'parent' nodes ('play was

away from adults') with the contributing 'child' nodes from different component sections (including 'outside play' which was shown in the example of coded data in Appendix 25). Appendix 30 lists the final themes for each activity system framework. Appendix 31 shows an example of one of these themes ('play was a young child's domain') with the contributing 'parent' nodes (which consequently became subthemes), including the 'parent' node 'play was away from adults' which was shown in Appendix 29. Appendix 32 shows the inductive themes identified during coding (i.e. the themes not related to specific activity system components but identified as representing important aspects of the data). The themes identified within each participant group's two activity systems were compared, resulting in the identification of overarching themes representing each groups' overall discussions. For parents' discussions these overarching themes were:

- Outside play
- Unclear adult role
- Physical benefits

For practitioners' discussions these overarching themes were:

- Variety of play
- Learning through play
- Importance of adults
- Reduction in play

Figure 18 and Figure 19 shows the final thematic maps displaying these overarching themes and their corresponding subthemes.

Lastly, to show the meaningful exploration and comparison of themes within and between activity systems, I have organised the themes together under the research questions that they answer (phases five and six of the analysis process).

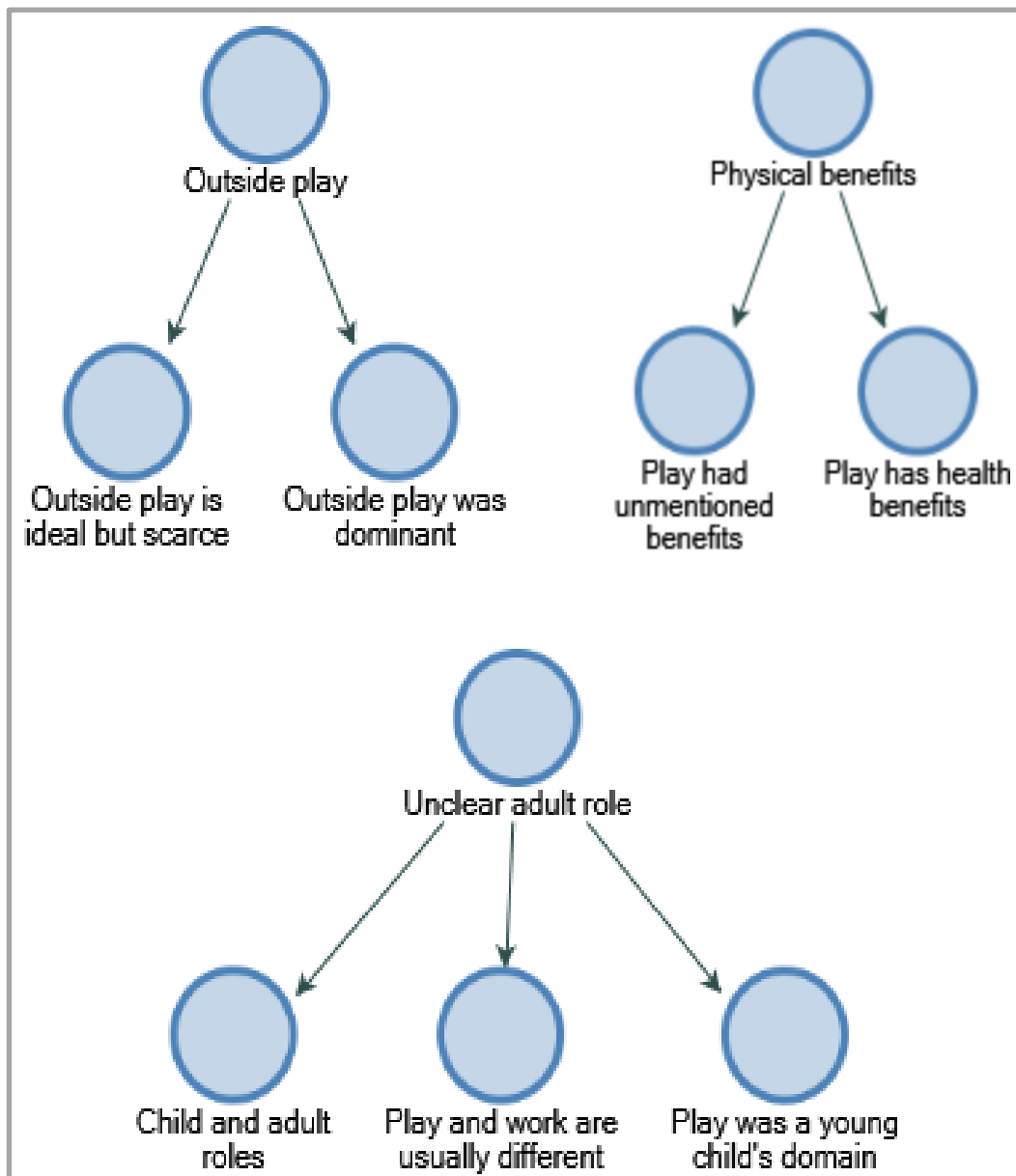


Figure 18. Overarching themes and corresponding subthemes for parents' discussions

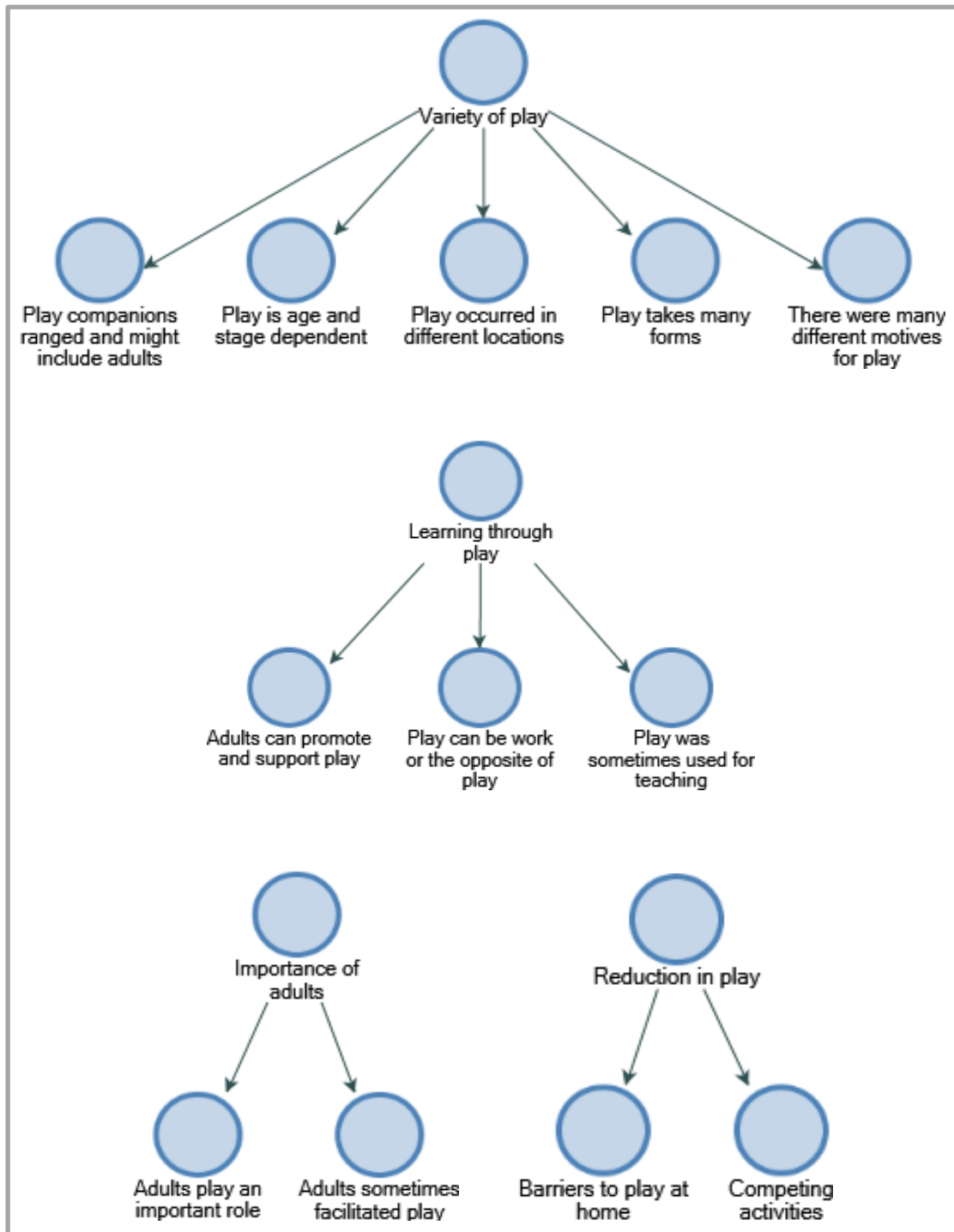


Figure 19. Overarching themes and corresponding subthemes for staff discussions

7.2.2 Answers to Research Questions

1a. What childhood experiences of play are recalled by parents of Somali heritage?

Appendix 26 shows the initial nodes identified from parents' discussions about their experiences of play as children, in the different activity system component areas. The thematic analysis process resulted in the identification of three themes which described this activity system and encompassed the codes within each component. These were:

- Outside play was dominant
- Play was a young child's domain
- Play had unmentioned benefits

These themes reflected discussions that largely referred to play occurring outside amongst groups of children without adult supervision or involvement. There were benefits of this play that parents briefly referred to (e.g. happiness from being with peers, feeling free from adult control, keeping busy and being energetic) but these benefits were perceived to have been unmentioned at the time.

1b. What childhood experiences of play are recalled by primary school practitioners?

Appendix 27 shows the initial nodes identified from practitioners' discussions about their experiences of play as children, in the different activity system component areas. The thematic analysis process resulted in the identification of three themes which

described this activity system and encompassed the codes within each component.

These were:

- Play occurred in different locations
- Play companions ranged and might include adults
- There were many different motives for play

These themes reflected practitioners' discussions about the large variety of play they experienced in different locations (e.g. home and school), with various numbers and types of companions (e.g. lone play, play with siblings or peers, play with adults) and for various reasons, some of which were explicitly stated by adults (e.g. when children were directed to play in school as part of a learning task or as a break from a task).

2a. How is children's play perceived across the primary school years by parents of Somali heritage?

With regard to the effect of age on play, parents perceived play to be an activity for younger children and distinguished between the amount of play engaged in by young children ("A lot of time is all about playing"), the reduction of play as children get older and the typical absence of adults from children's play ("It's not that much because adults...they...very tired"). This is represented in the theme of 'Child and adults roles', including the subtheme of 'Young children play a lot'.

Also prevalent in parents' descriptions of their children's play was the dominance of technology. Parents often displayed negative attitudes towards technology and a concern that from a young age their children wanted to engage with technology and this increased as they got older. Parents perceived technology as addictive and something

that they often would have to intervene in so that children would engage in other activities and not become increasingly 'addicted' or suffer physical effects, e.g. to their weight or eyesight. Consequently, parents thought that technology was a barrier to other activities, particularly more active outside activities. This was reflected in the theme 'Outside play is ideal but scarce', as contributing to this theme were the subthemes 'children like technology', 'children want technology' and 'too much technology', which contained the following comments

"He want a games. And he's addict, you know, the phones, tablets and wherever he sit, he want."

"He loves so much, you know, the watching. I just now refuse to give my phone. When he come to me I am going to hide my phone, I said I lost my phone."

2b. How is children's play perceived across the primary school years by primary school practitioners?

With regard to the effect of age on play, practitioners discussed that play is age and stage dependent, as is reflected in the theme of the same name. Practitioners viewed younger children as engaging in more independent pretend play, whilst older children play in groups. There were discussions about play affecting a child's identity and being an important part of overall development, by preparing children for the 'next' stage'.

This is evident in the comments below.

"When we got our sort of PlayPod and Scrapstore... the younger ones would really be being creative, creating dens or making things go, or dressing up or pulling stuff around. Umm, and the older ones tended to use the scrap for, they might use scrap on scrap, quite a lot of fighting."

"What I tended to see them doing was, almost playing with each other, with groups. They were really developing that. I'm thinking of Year 6s. It's almost like that getting ready for secondary. Identifying with a big gang. It was that, almost that teenage thing. Your identity. And they would

be playing, sort of big groups of, it could be like a British Bulldog thing and that was their play.

Which was more like a readiness for that next stage of socialisation. Your group identity.”

Also part of the overall theme ‘Play is age and stage dependent’ was the subtheme ‘Play reduces with age’, which reflected discussions about play being a less frequent part of children’s lives as they get older. Central in these discussions was the perception by most staff that this reduction in play might not always be ‘right’ or really what a child wants.

For example

“If you get older children, Year 1 or Year 2 or could be even Year 6, who come down to nurse, they all want to play with the Play-Doh. They all want to paint. “Oh, we never do this.””

“They probably do have less but I’m not sure whether that makes it right.”

A related theme, therefore, was that ‘Adults play an important role’ as practitioners talked about the responsibility of adults to provide appropriate play materials for children of different ages and to continue playing with children as they got older.

“I know certainly when I’ve talked to parents, you know, children, quite young really, I would say quite young, like Year 3, Year 4, umm, who, “oh they’ve thrown all their toys away because all they are interested in is their tablets.” So, you know...“what’s the point in them having toys if they don’t play with them?” So that kind of, you know, removal as they get older.”

“I think we could do loads more playing with the children. So that adult involvement is something that could do with increasing...as they go up the school because it decreases as you go up, doesn’t it?”

3a. How does play relate to work and learning, according to parents of Somali heritage?

The parents typically perceived that ‘Play and work are usually different’, as is reflected in the comments below.

“Sometimes they play and sometimes they do work.”

“...we are thinking they are playing outside on a playtime and also...the class, we thinking they just doing work.”

Most parents thought that learning that was something that happened through work and that when children played they were not really learning. However, one of the subthemes of the larger theme ‘Play and work are usually different’ was ‘Different opinions on learning through play’, which reflected the variation in perspectives that was evident from a minority of parents recognising the learning that might take place during playful activities. This variation is apparent in the following comments

“They have to use maths to play...They have something to count and building is you know, like counting.”

“Is playing and also there is a bit of learning as well inside. It is through play. They are learning, nursery, the way they are learning is though play.”

“He’s just playing, he is not learning anything.”

“A lot of time is all about playing, she’s thinking they need more learning as well.”

3b. How does play relate to work and learning, according to primary school practitioners?

For practitioners, there was also a variation in the perceived relationship between play, work and learning, however, this was apparent not in differences between the participants but that each participant viewed play from multiple perspectives. The prevalence of this was reflected in the overarching theme ‘Variety of play’ and this included the smaller themes ‘Play can be work or the opposite of work’ and ‘Play takes

many forms'. These themes are exemplified in the following comments about play as a medium for learning and play as a break from work.

"If you came into nursery, like a lot of our older children come in, they say, "oh you're always playing, you're always doing nice things" and I say, "but, it's still learning." You know. We're learning as we play. And they are, aren't they? They're playing but it is learning through play, isn't it?"

"I was never that interested in board games but some children want to play them again and again. Or connect four or something. It's so, I can just see all the skills being developed through that kind of play...Turn taking...Talking to each other. Absolutely social skills. But also numerical skills...And, also, losing."

"I still think it's important that they get time [to play] because they need that time just to, kind of, unwind."

"If you've got those activities that are in, what we say is free-play...Umm. It's up to them if they want to use the things."

The theme of 'Adults play an important role' also highlights the perspective agreed upon by practitioners that it is important for adults to stimulate and enhance play in order for it to be of more enjoyment or benefit to children. The prevalence of this perspective is reflected in the overarching theme 'Importance of adults'.

"I think there is that more of an understanding that, you know, that adults need to be involved in that sort of interaction and the play but it's not just something that the children should be doing on their own in a play pen."

"If you were and adult...you'd want to, maybe find something...you want that child to do something a bit more fun."

However, practitioners were also in agreement that this is a complex area as adults should avoid leading play, as is reflected in the subtheme 'Difficulty of adult involvement' and the comments below.

"It's very hard to stop yourself from leading the play...I find it really difficult to do that."

"Initially [the children] were quite interested, you know, because it felt like a game. And then [the teacher] is saying, "right, who can throw the red ball into the blue bucket?" You know, or something like...and then she's trying to take pictures with her tablet because, of course, it has to be evidenced. And then she'll, "oh, could you do that again". You know, you could argue, she is trying to make that play. But actually...Was it play?"

4a. What influences or pressures affect the play of primary aged children, according to parents of Somali heritage?

Parents appeared to perceive three key influences on children's play: technology, barriers to the outside and adult responses. The first two influences contributed to the theme of 'Outside play is ideal but scarce', with parents' comments about technology referring to the addictive and negative nature of technology, including the following.

"He want a games. And he's addict, you know, the phones, tablets and wherever he sit, he want."

"He loves so much, you know, the watching. I just now refuse to give my phone. When he come to me I am going to hide my phone, I said I lost my phone."

The difficulties associated with going outside were identified under the subtheme heading of 'Barriers to outside play'. This included parents' perspectives that children had little or no space to play at home, that poor weather meant children could not go outside and that the local community does not feel safe for children due to the potential for hostile behaviour from strangers. The comments below refer to these three barriers.

“They don’t even have somewhere to play... It is not enough where... ‘cus most of them in a flat. Some or most of them in a rise flat. So there is no place to play really.”

“In the winter we close the home because it is very cold. I don’t want to go out.”

“I know some parents, they don’t like it. When it is raining, because the child is going to be wet.”

“Yes, it’s difficult [to go outside]. Sometimes they are thinking it’s not safe.”

“[19]98, I arrived here, there was less Somalis. So neighbourhood never used to want them really...so I used to keep them inside...Obviously, I don’t want problem. So whenever I am taking them outside, we sometimes, they throwing a stone, shouting, swearing, “come, come lets go, lets go.” I am running them...inside! And then that month, they not going outside. They’ve been terrified...So that was, my children really didn’t play much. It was just indoors, yeah...Now I can see much better really... Some parents, yes, they got that fear...They still having problem in park, yeah.”

With regard to the influence of adults on play, this typically referred to perceptions of adults as the enforcers of rules, however the overarching theme of ‘Unclear adult role’ reflected that parents’ perspectives were not clear-cut. The perception of adults as the enforcers of rules was perceived to be have negative effects at home when parents want children to be able to enjoy their leisure time in larger adult-free spaces, but to have positive effects and be necessary when children do not contain their play to suitable spaces.

“Because we are all inside together with the children, then they start hating each other because mums saying too much, “don’t do this, don’t do that.””

“Before yesterday, you know when is it raining...He’s gone out because nobody can refuse it. He go out always...And when I come back, it is very, very wet. I was so crossed, “What happened? Why? Why this?” Then Miss said to me, “oh, he liked to go outside...””

4b. What influences or pressures affect the play of primary aged children, according to primary school practitioners?

With regard to influences on children's play, practitioners reflected on play being age and stage dependent, with the quotations included above under Research Question 2b illustrating that practitioners view children's age and the need to prepare for the next stage of development as influencing the social nature of children's play.

Just as parents discussed the influence of adults on children's play, practitioners also discussed the adults' function, as reflected in the theme 'Adults play an important role'. However, rather than the effects of adults as the enforcers of rules, practitioners predominantly discussed the potential for adults to influence the amount and type of play that occurs by creating play opportunities and being involved in play.

"Parents have this idea that...you know that's going to make their child happy or it's going to keep them entertained. Just giving them loads and loads of toys rather than actually playing with them themselves."

"I think we could do loads more playing with the children...As they go up the school because it decreases as you go up, doesn't it?"

"I would be worried about some of the children who are still working at, developmentally, a very low level and going up to Secondary and not having the resources for any kind of play."

One of the key themes in describing how practitioners view children's play as being influenced concerns the themes 'Competing activities' and 'Barriers to play at home'. Like parents, practitioners discussed their worries about technology's influence and the need to balance activities involving technology with technology-free activities, as reflected in the subtheme of 'Too much technology'.

“Children, quite young really, I would say quite young, like Year 3, Year 4, umm, who, “oh they’ve thrown all their toys away because all they are interested in is their tablets.””

“But then you want to be able to sometimes get in that zone that you would get from playing or you would get from some sort of creativity...just a pleasanter place for your, particularly in light of so much technology at the moment, where nothing’s ever switched off.”

Practitioners also perceived the influence on play of where children live and, like the Somali parents, identified that children’s play can be affected by a lack of opportunity to go outside and ‘let off energy’.

“I just wondered sometimes, like at the moment, some of our children are just running round...whether they, they’re, they have got lots of energy and they need to let it off because...I don’t think they’re having that, umm, they’re not letting off that energy.”

However, also important to discussions about influences on play were comments about parents traditionally not valuing play and not providing what practitioners perceived to be sufficient play materials and opportunities. Consequently, practitioners’ comments were identified as not only referring to ‘outside’ barriers in the same way as parents’ comments were, but instead as ‘Barriers to play at home’ in order to reflect practitioners’ perspectives of some parents’ perceived values, as is evident below.

“In the past I think we’ve had a lot of parents who haven’t [valued play] and have said, “they are just playing”.”

“You know, if I think back to when I first started going on home visits...there have been, I would say, more houses that I’ve gone to, have got a few toys. Whereas before it wasn’t. There was nothing.”

Other key factors perceived as influencing children’s play and contributing to the theme of ‘Competing activities’ were the amount of other activities that children are required

to engage in (by parents or school) and the effect of these on the time and desire children have to play. These factors were included within the subthemes of 'Children's lives are busy' and 'Curriculum and external pressure' and contained such as the following

"I never remember doing homework...you know, before secondary school...Umm, so you know, you were outside playing as soon as you got home from school. Whereas now, you know they've got mosque to go to or they go to tutors, don't they, to have extra tutoring?"

"Even like, everything seems more full on. My niece comes home, I feel like she's just ready to veg, like watch TV 'cus she's just had such a full on day...But that's kind of, she just needs a bit of down time. To not really do anything, to just switch off and have a rest...any other time she's playing, like, a lot...she's six".

5a. In what ways can play be beneficial to children of different ages and with different needs, according to parents of Somali heritage?

As described above when answering Research Question 3a, the subtheme of 'Different opinions on learning through play' reflected some parents' descriptions of the learning they perceived as taking place during play. This included the learning of 'academic' skills such as literacy and numeracy as well as benefits to social skills. However, as previously discussed, these benefits were not agreed by the majority of parents, as is reflected in the range of comments below.

"They have to use maths to play...They have something to count and building is you know, like counting."

"Even the animals, they don't know how to read, but they can tell you the name of the animals. And also, she can learn through sharing as well."

"He's just playing, he is not learning anything."

“A lot of time is all about playing, she’s thinking they need more learning as well.”

More readily discussed and conclusively agreed upon by the Somali parents were the benefits they perceived play as having for children’s physical and emotional development, as identified in the theme ‘Play has health benefits’, the importance of which is reflected in the identification of the overarching theme Physical benefits’. Parents comments in these areas referred to the benefits of active play for weight control and energy levels and the negative emotions experienced when children have been unable to experience this kind of play.

“They are getting big and fat. It is not enough exercise going outside...We was just running and wild like.”

“This type of children, when you tell them, “go to bed,” they don’t get tired. You keep telling, “Go sleep,” “go quiet.” They are talking because they are not tired. Our time, I was tired.”

“I remember last summer, I will bring my kids, they not happy staying home... So I am saying, “Oh, who wanna go outside?” And everybody ready.”

“Because we are all inside together with the children, then they start hating each other because mums saying too much, “don’t do this, don’t do that.”

“After all that playing, if you give them something to do, like homework or something, they are more settled and they can do it.”

5b. In what ways can play be beneficial to children of different ages and with different needs, according to primary school practitioners?

In contrast to the dominance of active play during parents’ discussions of play’s benefits, practitioners discussed a variety of types of play, as is reflected in the theme ‘Play takes many forms’. It was evident that practitioners perceived play to be innately beneficial and therefore important, as exemplified below.

“I think it [play] is really important because the children really relate to you I think...We know don't we that if we play with those children you build up those really strong relationships.”

“I think [play] is important for all of them.”

The readily recognised benefits of play were reflected in the identification of the overarching theme ‘Learning through play’ and the smaller theme ‘Play can be work or the opposite of work’, as practitioners reflected on a range of ways in which children of different ages and with different abilities would experience the same activities as play or as work. Consequently, the subtheme of ‘Play as an intervention’ was also identified to describe the targeted way in which many practitioners perceived play to benefit children in various ways, such as through the development of social skills, physical skills or emotional wellbeing. This range of discussions is reflected in the comments below.

“I can just see all the skills being developed through [board games]...Turn taking...Talking to each other. Absolutely social skills. But also numerical skills...And, also, losing.”

“When you mention the skill of the stilts...You know, in nursery that is a real skill but, if you are someone further up the school, they will have probably mastered it because they've already developed that skill...So one might be work and one might be play.”

“We have the calm room, here. For those children from year one really to year six, and the game playing...I was never that interested in board games but some children want to play them again and again. Or connect four or something. It's so, I can just see all the skills being developed through that kind of play...Turn taking...Talking to each other. Absolutely social skills. But also numerical skills...And, also, losing.”

“I think play is just a way of working things through for children isn't it...Whether they're copying, you know, from their experiences, somehow they're getting out what's inside them...So it's a real problem solving thing.”

“It kind of calms them down sometimes, doesn’t it? If they, if during the lesson, it gets a bit much for them, you know, they go to one side and do something...Some sort of play and some sort of activity.”

“I think play is just a way of working things through for children isn’t it...Whether they’re copying, you know, from their experiences, somehow they’re getting out what’s inside them...So it’s a real problem solving thing.”

“It kind of calms them down sometimes, doesn’t it? If they, if during the lesson, it gets a bit much for them, you know, they go to one side and do something...Some sort of play and some sort of activity.”

6a. What concerns are held about children’s play, from the perspectives of parents of Somali heritage?

The main concerns about play held by the Somali parents in this study can be separated into distinct categories relating to concerns about play at home and concerns about play in school. With regard to home, parents frequently discussed the difficulties children have engaging with outside play. The importance of outside play to parents was reflected in the identification of the overarching theme ‘Outside play’ and the specific concerns about their children were represented in the theme ‘Outside play is ideal but scarce’, as a result of children’s interest in technology and physical barriers to outside spaces.

“He watching too much TV. And he playing too much game [on the tablet].”

“He want a games. And he’s addict, you know, the phones, tablets and wherever he sit, he want.”

“He loves so much, you know, the watching. I just now refuse to give my phone. When he come to me I am going to hide my phone, I said I lost my phone.”

“They don’t even have somewhere to play... It is not enough where... ‘cus most of them in a flat. Some or most of them in a rise flat. So there is no place to play really.”

“Yes, it’s difficult [to go outside]. Sometimes they are thinking it’s not safe.”

“In the winter we close the home because it is very cold. I don’t want to go out.”

“I know some parents, they don’t like it. When it is raining, because the child is going to be wet.”

With regard to school, parents’ main concern related to the perceived negative effects of too much play on children’s concentration during adult-led tasks. This was identified under the heading of ‘Distraction from work’, a subtheme within the larger theme ‘Play and work are usually different’.

“Almost the children in the nursery, you know, they going to play water and cars. Dinosaur...They no come sit down, even when you ask, “come, we going to write your name,” they refuse to.”

“My son, when he come in nursery, he no learn anything. Because he love playing... When we ask, when we at home, he is saying, until 10; 1,2,3...He count. And when you ask the blue plate or blue things...The colours, he knows. But when he come in the school, he never sit down...He don’t see me because he see the playing, the water.”

6b. What concerns are held about children’s play, from the perspectives of primary school practitioners?

The main concerns about play held by the practitioners in this study are all reflected in the overarching theme ‘Reduction in play’, which contained the smaller themes ‘Competing activities’ and ‘Barriers to play at home’. Subthemes were identified, which formed distinct areas of concern within the main themes. The first of these was ‘Too much technology’ and, as described above in answering Research Question 4b, this referred to practitioners’ concerns that technology can be addictive and needs to be balanced with technology-free activities.

“Children, quite young really, I would say quite young, like Year 3, Year 4, umm, who, “oh they’ve thrown all their toys away because all they are interested in is their tablets.””

“There’s more that they’re sucked, they are actively being, you know, their addictive sort of end, you know, there’s stuff that is targeted. They’re targeted aren’t they to make them want to stay on and do more things on technology.”

“But then you want to be able to sometimes get in that zone that you would get from playing or you would get from some sort of creativity...just a pleasanter place for your, particularly in light of so much technology at the moment, where nothing’s ever switched off.”

The second theme ‘Barriers to play at home’ reflects practitioners’ concerns that some children are vulnerable to their play being negatively affected by the housing they live in, as exemplified in the comment below.

“You know you were saying about children in nursery not able to listen or being a bit bonkers. And it really would lead to a lot...They can’t go out to play. You’re in those high rise flats.”

Lastly, but most frequently discussed by practitioners, were concerns relating to the subthemes of ‘Children’s lives are busy’ and ‘Curriculum and external pressure’, as described under Research Question 4b. These dominant concerns were around the perceived decrease in time and desire that children have to play as a result of a perceived increase in the amount of other activities that they are engaged in, as represented in the following comments

“I never remember doing homework...you know, before secondary school...Umm, so you know, you were outside playing as soon as you got home from school. Whereas now, you know they’ve got mosque to go to or they go to tutors, don’t they, to have extra tutoring?”

“Even like, everything seems more full on. My niece comes home, I feel like she’s just ready to veg, like watch TV ‘cus she’s just had such a full on day...But that’s kind of, she just needs a bit of

down time. To not really do anything, to just switch off and have a rest...any other time she's playing, like, a lot...she's six".

7.3 Discussion

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) was specifically applied during phase two of this study for a number of reasons. Firstly, it posits play as a 'leading activity' (Leontiev, 1981), which supports the centrality of play to focus group discussions. CHAT also enables exploration of the 'activity' of play in a culturally relevant way, by considering engagement with the activity in a context of the cultural dimensions of tools, rules, community and division of labour. The application of CHAT in the current research also reflects CHAT's frequent inclusion in the wider literature concerning play and culture (e.g. Gaskins et al., 2007; Göncü et al., 1999). Consequently, the discussion of phase two findings is organised below in a way that reflects the centrality of the CHAT framework to the findings. First is discussion of the themes that relate to each of the four individual activity systems and a comparison of these with the cultural conceptions of play provided by Gaskins, Haight and Lancy (2007). Following this, there is a discussion of the overarching themes for the two participants groups and how these relate to the existing literature. These overarching themes, through their representation of the most significant information across the four individual activity systems, reflect the dialectical nature of CHAT and consequently the opportunity to explore parallels and tensions between perspectives.

7.3.1 Parents' and practitioners' reflections on their own play

Three themes were identified as describing the discussions that Somali parents had about their play as children. These were 'Outside play was dominant', 'Play was a young

child's domain' and 'Play had unmentioned benefits'. These themes reflect that play for these participants, which mostly referred to play in Somalia, generally occurred outside amongst groups of children not in the presence of adults. Benefits of this play were reflected on in terms of socialising with peers, feeling free from adult control, being physically active and being creative due to a lack of purposeful toys. However, participants discussed these benefits as not being things they were consciously aware of or that anyone discussed aloud, as play appeared largely to be something children did to keep them busy and content when they were not in school or helping their parents.

Three themes were also identified as describing the discussions that school practitioners had about their play as children. These were 'Play occurred in different locations', 'Play companions ranged and might include adults' and 'There were many different motives for play'. These themes reflect that play for these participants is perceived to have been very varied, taking place in various locations including home and school, for various reasons including those stated by adults and with various play companions including children and adults or with no play companions.

The activity of play as described by these two groups of adults in different countries can be compared and theoretically considered by referring to the work of Gaskins et al. (2007) regarding the cultural construction of play. In particular, Gaskins et al. (2007) identify three broad cultural views of play: 'culturally curtailed', 'culturally accepted' and 'culturally cultivated' play. It is evident that the components of Somali parents' 'activity' of play during their childhoods are characteristic of what Gaskins et al. (2007) describe as 'culturally accepted' play, frequently observed in pre-industrial societies. Principally, the activity of play is driven by motives to keep children busy and away from adults, it occurs in a community of children and involves naturally available spaces and tools.

However, the components of practitioners' 'activity' of play during their childhoods are largely characteristic of what Gaskins et al. (2007) describe as 'culturally cultivated' play. 'Culturally cultivated' play refers to perceptions that play is a child's work; it is motivated by inherent and anticipated benefits and it should be encouraged and engaged in by a community that involves adults and purposeful tools provided by adults. Research highlights that this perspective is dominant amongst 'middle-class' Euro-American families (Whitebread, Basilio, Kuvalja & Verma, 2012), suggesting that the experiences of play described by practitioners in the current study reflect the perceptions of the majority of their adult peers.

7.3.2 Parents' and practitioners' reflections on children's play

Four themes were identified as describing the discussions that Somali parents had about their children's play. These were 'Child and adult roles', 'Play and work are usually different', 'Outside play is ideal but scarce' and 'Play has health benefits'. These themes reflect the variety of perspectives that the Somali parents have of their children's play as well as the conflicts within and between the perspectives of these individuals. Some participants did not think there was a role for adults in their children's play whilst others perceived that adults could be involved in, or direct, play. Most participants stated that they saw play and work as different and that the two should not be combined, although there was a minority perspective that play could help children learn academic skills such as mathematics or literacy. However, looking at the components of play within this activity system also revealed that parents typically perceived play as meaning outside activity, therefore the predominant benefits discussed related to health as a result of physical activity. Correspondingly, one of the largest contributing factors to the theme 'Outside play is ideal but scarce' was the role of technology in children's activities as this

was a regular topic of parents' discussions and was perceived as a barrier to outside activities and therefore play in general. In fact the theme of 'Outside play' was so prevalent in parents' reflections when discussing their own play and the play of children now that this theme was also identified as an overarching theme of the parents' discussions.

Seven themes were identified as describing the discussions that practitioners had about children's current play. These were 'Play is age and stage dependent', 'Adults play an important role', 'Play can be work or the opposite of work', 'Play takes many forms', 'Adults can promote and support play', 'Competing activities' and 'Barriers to play at home'. These themes reflect the complex play perspectives that practitioners have, the influence of their professional experiences on their perspectives in terms of their awareness of developmental stages and adult roles, and their concerns about a reduction in play.

Referring again to the three cultural views of play by Gaskins et al. (2007), there appears to be a combination of views evident in parents' and practitioners' discussions of children's current play. Some components of children's play according to their parents are characteristic of 'culturally accepted' play. In particular, 'culturally accepted' perspectives are reflected in the themes describing play and work as largely being perceived as different and play typically being instinctively perceived as occurring outside. However, other components of children's play according to their parents are characteristic of 'culturally cultivated' play. In particular, 'culturally cultivated' perspectives are reflected in the themes which pertain to there being some adult roles within the community play takes place in and recognition that play is motivated by some inherent benefits. With regard to the components of children's play according to

practitioners, it is evident that this activity reflects a ‘culturally cultivated’ perspective much more entirely. In particular, ‘culturally cultivated’ perspectives are reflected in the themes which pertain to play taking many forms, including as a part of ‘work’ activities, and that adults can have an important role within the community play takes place in.

7.3.3 Overarching themes

7.3.3.1 Differences in current perspectives as a result of earlier experiences

The activity system representing parents’ discussions about their own play as children show that these descriptions of play up to thirty years ago reflect the wider literature on play in Somalia in the past and present day, i.e. that children’s play occurs outside in groups with little adult direction or discussion (Degni, Pöntinen & Mölsä, 2006; Kirova, 2010; Nilsson, Barazanji, Heintzelman, Siddiqi & Shilla, 2012). The overlap between the themes of these Somali parents’ descriptions and the themes of their discussions about their own children’s play in the U.K. shows how their experiences influence their perspectives of their children’s play, despite the discussed differences between the countries and many aspects of the cultures. This is highlighted by the overarching themes that were identified to represent the Somali parents’ discussions about play all together, that is, with regard to their own play experiences and their children’s play. These overarching themes were ‘Outside play’, ‘Physical benefits’ and ‘Unclear adult role’. The first two themes represent Somali parents’ discussions around the motives and outcomes of play as these concentrated more frequently and significantly on those they associated with ‘free’ outside play, including benefits to physical health and attitudes at home and in school. The theme of ‘Unclear adult role’ highlights that the Somali parents were not in agreement about the benefits of school-based play and expressed uncertainty about the involvement of adults in their children’s play.

Comparing these findings with the existing literature shows both parallels and differences with the perspectives of adults who have more experience with a play-based education system. For example, with regard to differences, research has found that in early play-based education settings, most parents emphasise the importance of play being facilitated by adults and motivated by its effects for social development, rather than physical development (e.g. Einarsdóttir, 2006; Forskot, 1998; Graue, 1993). As already discussed, the activity system representing parents reflections on their own play highlighted the 'free' outside play they experienced most frequently as children, therefore, it appears that this dominates their perceptions of play as adults and their perspectives on the play of their children despite the discussed differences in the environment. This also contrasts with the activity of play that practitioners described themselves as having engaged in during a similar time period as the Somali parents but in the U.K. The variety of play activities, locations, communities and motives described by practitioners in the present study reflect the status attributed to play by most Euro-Americans and that this status has existed for many years (Whitebread, Basilio, Kvalja & Verma, 2012). Consequently, the overarching themes from practitioners' discussions reflected their childhood and career experiences in this context and included 'Variety of play', 'Learning through play' and 'Importance of adults'. Therefore, rather than being focused on 'free' outside play, practitioners more frequently discussed the benefits of structured play for academic skills, social skills and language, as well as the potential for play to support children with specific difficulties and in challenging circumstances. These discussions reflect the range of benefits that research has highlighted play as being capable of providing and that practitioners are increasingly aware of in play-based education environments, e.g. benefits to language (Fernyhough & Fradley, 2005),

metacognition (Whitebread, 2010), social skills (O'Connor & Stagnitti, 2011) and resilience (Berk, Mann & Ogan, 2006; Clark, 2006).

7.3.3.2 Parallels between current perspectives on the adult role

Whilst the above discussions highlight differences between the themes of the Somali parents' perceptions and some of the existing literature and themes of practitioners' perceptions, there are also parallels that are evident, particularly when the themes are considered in the context of some questions that arose from phase one of this study. A topic that was represented in an overarching theme of both parent and practitioner discussions concerned the role of the adult in play, with the theme of 'Unclear adult role' for parents' discussions and 'Importance of adults' for practitioners' discussions. As already discussed, these themes when considered individually represent largely different perspectives, with the former highlighting uncertainty over the adult role and the latter highlighting the importance of the adult role. Whilst the earlier described concept of 'culturally cultivated' play includes the perspective that adults should join in and develop children's play and this is therefore a perspective which is different to the typical experience of the Somali parents, the adult role is a regularly contested aspect of play even within 'culturally cultivated' play environments. Previous research has found that both practitioners and parents in play-based education environments have diverse and changeable opinions on how much adults should be involved in children's play (Einarsdóttir, 2006; Howard, 2010; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011) and that these perspectives differ depending on children's ages, with adult-directed play being preferable for older children (Graue, 1993; Wood & Attfield, 2005). The Somali parents' unclear perspective of the adult role is therefore aligned with the wider research and appears not simply to result from the dichotomy between aspects of their

own childhood environments and their children's current environments but also from a more prevalent confusion over the adult role. This reflects and answers one of the questions that arose from phase one findings and the fact that the question referred to findings concerning all three of the phase one participant groups, i.e. children, parents and practitioners; 'What affect does adult direction have on children's play?'. This question was based on the phase one findings that, in general, all three participant groups categorised the photographs containing an adult as 'play' less often than the matching photograph without an adult and of all the photographs containing a child with plastic blocks, the only one that children did not categorise as 'play' on 100% of occasions was the photograph where an adult was sat next to the child. It is therefore apparent that the adult role has considerable influence over play perceptions. Whilst this appears more significant for the Somali parents in the current research, the practitioners' discussions highlighted uncertainty also. For example, two other questions that arose from phase one were 'Why did staff categorise the difficult activity as play more often than the easy activity and as work less often?' and 'Why did the 'outside' cue (where the child was shown sitting in the playground with plastic blocks) increase both the 'play' and 'work' categorisation for staff?'. Practitioners' discussions of these results revealed that the simplicity of the easier puzzle meant that it appeared more like an activity that would be given as a task by an adult, rather than a playful activity chosen by a child. Similarly, it was discussed that whilst the outside is perceived as a playful location, the activity in the photograph looked like an 'inside' activity and therefore practitioners again perceived a set task taking place. The discussions of these findings typified practitioners' perspectives on the adult role as adults were perceived as being beneficial for play, as reflected in the overarching theme of 'Importance of adults', but their constant presence or direction was seen as reducing the quality of play,

or indeed the presence of play altogether. Ultimately, this is reflected in the overarching theme of 'Reduction in play' as, despite their everyday observations of the 'Importance of adults' and 'Learning through play', practitioners thought that overall there had still been a reduction in play due to the increased presence and direction of adults in children's activities. Additionally, contributing to the theme of 'Reduction in play' were concerns practitioners had about the presence of technology in children's activities, a perspective also shared by the parents in this study and contributed to their concern that outside play is scarce. These concerns reflect the existing literature, particularly around reduced 'free' play opportunities within the school-day (Armitage, 2005; Jachyra & Fusco, 2016; Pellegrini, 2008; Rasmussen, 2004), reduced 'free' play opportunities for children living in built-up areas or areas of low deprivation (Evans, 2004; Hillman, 2006; Nicolopoulou, 2010) and the negative effects of technology on children's activities (Clements, 2004; Gentile, Lynch, Linder & Walsh, 2004; Lester & Russell, 2008). Importantly, these shared concerns of the Somali parents and the practitioners in the present study demonstrate parallels in their perspectives despite differences in the distinct activity systems representing their conceptions of play.

8. Overall discussion

8.1 Summary of findings and contribution to knowledge

This study used two phases of research to explore perspectives of play and play's position in U.K. education according to children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners.

Phase one used a photograph sorting activity to identify definitions of play and work according to the three participant groups. Findings from this stage provided cross-cultural support for some of the previous findings regarding children's play definitions.

The Somali heritage children in this research used a number of cues to describe play activities, in particular reduced adult presence, elements of pretence and the provision of specific objects (e.g. those associated with construction rather than those associated with mathematics or literacy). The large number of 'play' categorisations and small number of 'work' categorisations made by the Somali heritage children in this research meant that they appeared often to dichotomise play and work, which is also in agreement with previous research concerning 'Western' children's definitions of play (e.g. Howard, 2002; Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; King, 1979; Robson, 1993). In contrast, the Somali parents in this research perceived significantly fewer photographs to be depicting play and more to be depicting work. There was still evidence of a greater polarisation of play and work for these parents in comparison with school practitioners, which corresponds with the existing research concerning 'Western' parents and practitioners (e.g. Keating et al., 2000; Wood, 1999; Wood & Bennett, 1997). However, parents' more frequent perceptions of work displayed a clear contrast with the dominance of play in their children's perceptions of the same activities, plus parents' perceptions of play were not increased in the same way as children's were

through the presence of the abovementioned specific objects. The findings of the photograph sorting activity also revealed that non-teaching staff did not use visual cues as conclusively as teaching staff when defining play. This appeared to be a result of the familiarity these participants had with undertaking a variety of activities that appear like trivial play but have wider purposes in an environment of 'culturally cultivated' play. The photograph sorting activity also revealed differences in participants' definitions of work; younger children and practitioners working with younger children were less likely to define children's activities as work in comparison with older children and practitioners working with older children, a finding that builds upon the previous research using this procedure (Howard, 2002) by highlighting the importance of studying play and work perceptions independently from each other as they may be differently affected by factors such as environment and experience.

Phase two of this study used focus groups to explore how parents of Somali heritage and primary school practitioners perceive play's relationship to children's development and learning, with consideration for their own experiences of childhood. The application of cross-cultural conceptions of play (Gaskins, Haight & Lancy, 2007; Göncü, Tuermer, Jain & Johnson, 1999) and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) during this phase supported a culturally relevant process of thematic analysis and enabled the identification of tensions and parallels between activity systems that all referred to the 'activity' of 'play'. Phase two revealed that Somali parents described play during their childhoods in ways which reflected an environment of 'culturally accepted' play, where play occurred outside amongst groups of children not in the presence of adults or explicitly influenced by adults. This contrasted with practitioners' descriptions of 'culturally cultivated' play during their childhoods in the U.K., whereby play took place

in various locations including home and school, for a variety of reasons and with various play companions which might include adults. 'Culturally cultivated' play also described perceptions of children's play now according to these practitioners, whilst there was a combination of 'culturally accepted' and 'culturally cultivated' perspectives amongst the Somali parents when they discussed their children's play. The influence of their different experiences on these varied perspectives was evidenced in the overarching themes as for parents' discussions these were defined as 'Outside play', 'Physical benefits' and 'Unclear adult role', whilst the themes describing practitioners' discussions were 'Variety of play', 'Learning through play', 'Importance of adults' and 'Reduction in play'. Despite differences that appeared to result partly from diverse cultural experiences, there were key concerns that were shared between parents and practitioners and these corresponded with the existing literature; these were around the challenge of adult-directed activities and reduced opportunities for 'free' play.

8.2 Shared and distinct definitions of play – causes and effects

In recent years there has been a move away from the 'deficit' view of play which occurs in non-Western cultures, particularly in specific areas of psychological research such as developmental psychology (Kirova, 2010). However, education research and practice has frequently assumed a "culture-free" approach (Fleer, 2014; Kirova, 2010; Kushner, 2007) and researchers opposing this assumption have consequently argued that it is important to explore the cultural underpinnings of play in diverse communities in order to ensure that policies and practice are culturally informed. With regard to research concerning the experiences and achievement of children of Somali heritage in the U.K., the majority of research has related to adolescents rather than younger children. The findings of the present study are therefore valuable as they contribute to a more

culturally diverse literature base and focus specifically on the play experiences of younger Somali heritage children in the U.K. Consequently, findings of the present study suggest cross-cultural support for previous findings regarding children's play definitions and the consistency with which children polarise 'play' and 'work' (e.g. Howard, 2002; Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; King, 1979; Robson, 1993). Furthermore, the findings of the present study provide some support for the suggestion that play's developmental benefits are recognised by adults from diverse cultures. For example, the Somali parents in the present study described the benefits of play for the development of social skills, as evidenced in examples of participants' comments below

"Children back home, we used to mix and play there was no this, like over here, the children like, they don't like to mix. They are like selfish. They like to play their own. They don't like to mix."

"And also, she can learn through sharing as well...Yeah, she can share with other children to play with."

This is consistent with previous research identifying comparable perspectives with parents from non-Somali ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Forskot, 1998; Graue, 1993). The Somali parents also expressed beliefs about the positive effects of play on children's emotional responses

"After all that playing, if you give them something to do, like homework or something, they are more settled and they can do it."

"You know, if you said, "how much do you love it," they love it a 10...They love it so much, playing."

These views are also reflective of the existing research, which highlights that the majority of parents attribute positive emotional outcomes to play (e.g. Keating, Fabian, Jordan, Mavers & Roberts, 2000; Parmar, Harkness & Super, 2004). Also consistent with

previous research (e.g. Einarsdóttir, 2006; Hyson, 1991; Lewit & Baker, 1995; Perry, Dockett, & Tracey, 1998) were comments made by Somali parents in the present study regarding the potential for play to support the development of academic skills

“When they going to do maths. They have to use maths to play...They have something to count and building is you know, like counting.”

“Like those dominos, if I ask her how many there, she can tell me how many. One, two, three. So she knows that.”

These findings overall show cross-cultural recognition of the widely-held perspective that play is a ‘leading activity’ for children (Leontiev, 1981) and an activity that is essential for healthy development (Wood, 1999).

However, despite this general recognition of play’s benefits, there were nuances in parents’ and practitioners’ perspectives that were identified through the thematic analysis process in phase two, supporting interpretation of the play and work definitions provided in phase one and elaborating on the theme of phase one qualitative data ‘Different perspectives on play and learning’. Significantly, the components that make up a child’s play activity are perceived differently by different adults based on their own experiences. This is evidenced in Somali parents’ discussions of play being represented by the overarching themes of ‘Outside play’ and ‘Physical benefits’, with discussions around motives and outcomes of play most frequently concerning the benefits of outside active play for physical health, e.g. to expel energy, to get stronger and to avoid gaining too much weight. This being the focus for Somali parents in the present study is not reflective of the focus for practitioners in the present study and whilst the existing literature does highlight the importance of play for physical development, this is not typically the main focus for ‘Western’ parents, as referenced above (Einarsdóttir, 2006;

Forskot, 1998; Graue, 1993; Hyson, 1991; Keating et al., 2000; Lewit & Baker, 1995; Parmar et al., 2004; Perry, Dockett, & Tracey, 1998). Consequently, a comparison of phase two themes with phase one data suggests that parents' less frequent perception of play in comparison to staff and children reflects parents' play 'tools' (i.e. found materials) not being present in the photographs, the environment being mostly inside and the photographs not depicting much energetic or physical play. This is important to consider in the context of home-school tensions and disagreements; before and during this research process, including during my practicum work as a Trainee Educational Psychologist, a number of school practitioners had commented that they perceive parents from particular cultural backgrounds, often Somali parents, as not valuing play and this discord formed part of the motivation for this study. However, the analysis of these parents' discussions about play reveals that play is valued, play opportunities are desired and there are a range of perceived benefits and purposes as outlined above. The difficulty therefore arises from the apparent difference between these purposes and the type of play available to children within school, especially beyond the EYFS. Table-based play which benefits the development of numeracy skills, a playful adult-child interaction which benefits social skills or a classroom-based literacy game do not occur outside, involve significant movement or visibly benefit physical health. The benefits of these activities may be evident to most school practitioners (as reflected in practitioners' 'culturally cultivated' descriptions of play in the present study and the overarching themes of their discussions including 'Variety of play', 'Learning through play' and 'Importance of adults'), but if they do not serve the purposes that are perceived as defining play from other cultural perspectives then it is not necessarily the case that play is not valued by these individuals, but that play is not perceived in the first place. This therefore contributes to the knowledge about adult perspectives in this specific school

community and helps those adults make sense of some of the tensions they have experienced.

8.2.1 Second generation acculturation

Findings of the present study as described in the previous paragraphs highlight the importance of not only encouraging home-school conversations about play, but ensuring this involves sufficient attention to the cultural components of play from a functional rather than deficit perspective. This is necessary so that practitioners and parents can understand diverse perspectives in different ways and take into consideration the benefits of various types of play that may not otherwise be at the forefront of their concerns. This also fits amongst existing research confirming the necessity of good communication and partnerships between parents and schools in order to best support children's general development (e.g. Department for Education, 2011, 2015; Grayson, 2013). More specifically, this aligns with research emphasising the concerning cultural dissonance that can occur when home and school perspectives on play are inconsistent (Levinson, 2005; Wood, 2014; Yahya & Wood, 2016). The present study cannot claim to add directly to literature regarding refugee or migrant children, as the research sample was formed of parents who had lived in the U.K. for a number of years and children for whom the U.K. was their birthplace or the only country that they had lived in for a significant time. Therefore, the perspectives of children that were gathered in phase one of this research are not representative of recently arrived Somali refugee or migrant children. However, the potential for cultural dissonance remains (Levinson, 2005; Wood, 2014; Yahya & Wood, 2016) and the concept of acculturation must therefore not be neglected. The earlier discussed acculturation model from Berry (2005) describes acculturation as a dynamic process whereby cultural and psychological

change is experienced by individuals or groups. This applies not only to children who have migrated but also to children who navigate very different home and school cultures, representing a connection with their parents' cultural heritage and with the culture of the country they now live in. The application in the present study of CHAT during focus group analysis provided a structured way of comparing the Somali parents' descriptions of their own play as children in Somalia with their children's play in the U.K. according to these parents and the school practitioners. This highlighted that whilst there were overarching themes that bridged these descriptions, differences existed across all components within the activity systems; tools, rules, community, division of labour and motives. Therefore, despite the activity systems referring to an activity described as 'play', these activities present very differently and mean children are often dealing with significant home and school differences. As earlier discussed, Berry's (2005) model recognises four acculturation styles resulting from different levels of identification with heritage and host cultures. An area in which there is a significant difference between a child's experience and the experience of those in their heritage or host culture is worth exploring and addressing in order to minimise the likelihood of a child facing challenges due to low levels of identification with either or both cultures.

As previously highlighted, the city in which this research took place contains an increasing number of Somali heritage pupils, with these children now forming the largest black and minority ethnic group and the greatest increase being amongst primary-aged children (Bent et al., 2012). Therefore, there are significant numbers of children classed as second generation Somali immigrants, experiencing a childhood that is likely to be different to that of their parents. The research presented here focuses on just one aspect of education, i.e. the role of play, and highlights the potential cultural differences

that may be present in that area; however, these children face a range of cultural challenges including issues relating to language, race and religion. A culturally-free approach to education is evidently unsuitable and ineffective as this overlooks the wider challenges faced by children and parents navigating unique cultural milieus. Consequently, the remaining discussions focuses on the contribution of the present study to culturally-informed knowledge on different types of play, their perceived benefits and barriers for this U.K. Somali community.

8.3 Directed and structured play

As stated by Bent et al. (2012) “Early Years settings, nurseries and primary schools have a particularly crucial role in initiating parental engagement at the outset of the journey through the school system” (p. 10). As found in the literature review for this paper, the majority of research concerning the experiences and achievement of Somali heritage pupils has related to adolescents, whilst the Early Years has often been overlooked (e.g. Kahin, 1997). As a result, many of the educational interventions and practices that have been implemented focus on improving these pupil’s specific academic skills, e.g. in literacy, or on raising the aspirations and self-esteem of secondary school pupils. However, as discussed earlier, existing research has long recognised the benefits that play can have for children’s early development across a range of significant areas and this has also been evidenced for children at risk of experiencing specific challenges following their own or their parents’ migration (e.g. Bratton et al., 2005; Robertson, 2002; Rutter & Hyder, 1998; Yahya & Wood, 2016). Practitioners’ comments in the present study supported this recognition that play can support development in areas such as language, relationship building and resilience, as exemplified below

“And then you can see a real progress with children after, you know, a little while of doing it...playing something like the headbands game for new arrivals. I can see their language developing within a week.”

“I think it [play] is really important because the children really relate to you I think, if you...We know don't we that if we play with those children you build up those really strong relationships, which makes...umm...a better place.”

“I think play is just a way of working things through for children isn't it...Whether they're copying, you know, from their experiences, somehow they're getting out what's inside them.”

However, as earlier outlined, the benefits of play discussed by the Somali parents in the present study referred overwhelmingly to physical health, e.g. to expel energy, to get stronger and to avoid gaining too much weight. There were some references to general academic and social benefits, but parents did not discuss more specific areas of concern that play might be able to support in a more targeted manner, reflecting the concerns raised by practitioners around parents not valuing play, as well as previous research with similar populations (e.g. Bent, Hill, Rose & Tikly, 2012; Harris, 2004; Kahin, 1997; Robertson, 2002). However, the culturally sensitive framework used during this research has enabled an understanding of parents' perspectives in a way that highlights that this is not due to an overall lack of value that parents assign to play but due to different understandings of what 'play' means. Despite this, it remains important that whilst parents' perspectives are not undermined or misunderstood, they are informed by knowledge on different types of play and potential benefits of this play, so that their children can benefit from a range of play experiences including those targeted at reducing specific difficulties.

8.4 Intrinsically-motivated 'free' play

As a contrast to perceptions of directed and structured play experiences, it is at least as important to explore how findings of the present study relate to unstructured and undirected play. As previously discussed, this is the play that appeared most familiar to the Somali parents. However, by considering phase one data and phase two discussions it is also possible to identify shared perspectives in this area, i.e. that even in a play-based school environment, adults and children recognise intrinsic motivation as a key feature of play. For example, 'Play is self-directed' was a theme identified during the analysis of participants' categorisation justifications in phase one. Furthermore, two questions that arose from phase one were 'Why did staff categorise the difficult activity as play more often than the easy activity and as work less often?' and 'Why did the 'outside' cue (where the child was shown sitting in the playground with plastic blocks) increase both the 'play' and 'work' categorisation for staff?'. As discussed in section 7.3, practitioners' justified these results by explaining that the simplicity of the easier puzzle made it appear more like a directed activity and that the appearance of the plastic blocks as an 'inside' activity made it also appear more like a directed activity when taken outside. This appearance of direction was therefore felt to reduce the quality, or even the presence, of play, indicating the significance placed on choice and intrinsic motivation when defining and perceiving play. This supports the existing literature base (e.g. Gleave and Cole-Hamilton, 2012; Ludvigsen, Creagan & Mills, 2005; Youngquist, & Pataray-Ching, 2004) which has consistently described play using such terms and is therefore not a novel or surprising concept. However, for the participants involved in the present research, this finding is particularly pertinent considering one of the themes of the parents discussions about their children's play was 'Outside play is ideal but

scarce' and one of the overarching themes of practitioners' discussions was 'Reduction in play', both of which were comprised of discussions referring to a lack of opportunity for children to engage in self-directed 'free' play for extended periods. This reduction in intrinsically-motivated play was attributed to a range of causes.

8.4.1 Weather

For the Somali parents, there were also concerns that children could not go outside to play in the same way that they had in Somalia because of frequent poor weather and lack of sunlight. This perspective is evident in the literature across a range of populations (e.g. Goodman, Paskins & Mackett, 2012; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002; Weir, Etelson & Brand, 2006); however, as a barrier to outside play, climate understandably appears to have greater significance for individuals who have moved from a warmer to a colder climate, as identified in research with similar populations to that in the present study (e.g. Arcan, Culhane-Pera, Pergament, Rosas-Lee & Xiong, 2017; Degni, Pöntinen & Mölsä, 2006; Greves, Lozano, Liu, Busby, Cole & Johnston, 2007).

8.4.2 Housing and community

Another factor identified by both parents and practitioners as being a barrier to 'free' play concerned features of housing and the local environment. The Somali parents participating in the present study described most of the local Somali community as living in 'high rise flats' and one participant commented that "there is no place to play really". Practitioners also identified housing as being a barrier to play, with one participant commenting on some children in the nursery "being a bit bonkers" and "just running round" because "I don't think they're having that, umm, they're not letting off that energy". This corresponds with existing literature not limited to Somali communities

highlighting the reduced outside play opportunities for children living in built-up areas (e.g. Evans, 2004; Hillman, 2006; Nicolopoulou, 2010). However, this is a concern that disproportionately affects some immigrant populations, including the Somali population, due to the high percentage of these individuals living in such areas (Ali & Jones, 2000; Demie, Lewis & McLean, 2007; Harris, 2004; Rutter, 2004). Parents also commented that they did not feel it was safe for children to go outside on their own due to the negative attitudes and behaviour of strangers that had been experienced in the past and despite these incidents being rarer now, this was still a worry. For example, one parent described the following experience

“[19]98, I arrived here, there was less Somalis. So neighbourhood never used to want them really...so I used to keep them inside...Obviously, I don't want problem. So whenever I am taking them outside, we sometimes, they throwing a stone, shouting, swearing, “come, come lets go, lets go.” I am running them...inside! And then that month, they not going outside. They've been terrified...So that was, my children really didn't play much. It was just indoors, yeah...Now I can see much better really... Some parents, yes, they got that fear...They still having problem in park, yeah.”

Incidents of hostility and abuse in the community are well-documented in literature concerning the experiences of Somali immigrants in the U.K. (e.g. Ali & Jones, 2000; Bent, Hill, Rose & Tikly, 2012; Harris, 2004; Macaskill, 2002; Sporton, Valentine & Nielsen, 2006). Whilst there is also evidence that parents not of Somali heritage are more concerned than previous generations about their children experiencing bullying, hostility or violence outside the home (e.g. Carver, Timperio & Crawford, 2008; Tranter & Doyle 1996; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997), research highlights that this is more significantly felt by “visible-minority individuals”, with these children, adolescents, adults and whole families experiencing marginalisation and discrimination in community

spaces (e.g. Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2003; Philipp, 1999; Scourfield, Evans, Shah & Beynon, 2002). This therefore highlights another factor likely to impact on the availability of 'free' play for these children.

8.4.3 Technology and physical activity

During phase one of this research, one of the photographs participants were asked to categorise showed a child looking at a laptop. Responses to this photograph resulted in the question for phase two focus groups "What role does technology have in play?" This was a result of comments during phase one indicating indecisiveness about the relationship between technology and play. For example

Practitioner: "With the computer it's hard to decide because it could be that they're playing on it but they could be doing work too".

Parent: "We go on the computer to work and play".

During the focus group discussions participants had about children's activities in the present day, as well as being asked the above question directly, technology was frequently raised by both practitioners and parents. These discussions were largely characterised by negative attitudes towards technology, with participants discussing their concerns that from a young age children engage with technology (e.g. tablets, laptops, mobile phones, television) too regularly. Often, technology was seen as a barrier to other activities that children might otherwise engage in, activities that were more frequently described as 'play'. For parents, this was reflected in the theme 'Outside play is ideal but scarce', as contributing to this theme were discussions that were coded as 'children like technology', 'children want technology' and 'too much technology'. For practitioners, this was reflected in the theme 'Reduction in play', as contributing to this theme were discussions that were coded as 'lots of technology', 'too

much technology'. This corresponds with the existing wider literature about children and technology, which regularly focuses on the concerns that adults have about the increasing presence of technology in children's lives, particularly in 'Western' countries (Lester & Russell, 2008), concerns that typically fall into two areas. Firstly, are concerns that increased engagement with technology is having a negative effect on children's physical health mostly due to a reduction in physical activity (Buckingham, 2000; Clements, 2004; Jordan, Hersey, McDivitt & Heitzler, 2006; Palmer, 2006). Secondly, adults often describe concerns they have about what children are accessing via technology, whether the content of these activities is age appropriate and the potential for negative effects on children's emotional wellbeing (Crowe & Bradford, 2006; Gentile, Lynch, Linder & Walsh, 2004; Palmer, 2006). In the present study, parents and practitioners referred to children as young as two years old when discussing their concerns about technology, something that also corresponds to the existing research, which increasingly explores the technology experiences of infants and young children (e.g. Anand & Krosnick, 2005; Mendoza, Zimmerman, & Christakis, 2007; Vandewater, Rideout, Wartella, Huang, Lee & Shim, 2007; Zimmerman, Christakis & Meltzoff, 2007). Consequently, it is unsurprising that adults participating in the present study shared concerns that are prevalent in the existing literature. However, reflecting the overall approach of the present study, a culturally sensitive exploration of the interplay between play and technology perspectives is important, particularly as a significant amount of research concerning children's technology experiences is criticised for "failing to take into account the specific social, economic and cultural context for use of these technologies by children" (Lester & Russell, 2008, p. 31).

By looking at children's activities using the activity system framework afforded by CHAT, it is possible to observe multiple components driving different activities, which may not immediately be evident to those within the systems. The Somali parents participating in the present study attributed their children's 'over-use' of technology to children wanting to copy older siblings' activities, the addictive nature of technology and parents wishing to avoid arguments that would occur if they removed the technology. Whilst these motives are understandable and important to recognise if parents wish to reduce children's use of technology, the analysis of these discussions in the wider cultural historical context also highlights potentially important parallels that exist between parents' own play activities, the components of their play that they perceive as absent from their children's activities and the components of activities involving technology. Parents attributed the following qualities to the technology activities of children; they are child-directed, they are free from adult intervention, they keep children busy and out of the way, they are easily accessible, and children can immerse themselves in the activities for extended periods of time. These qualities are also highlighted in research with non-Somali populations and referred to as motives for some parents' provision of technology for their children (e.g. Christakis, 2009; Jordan, Hersey, McDivitt & Heitzler, 2006; Palmer, 2006). However, the influence of childhood experiences of play in different cultures on later adult definitions and perceptions of play, as established in phase one of the present study, highlights the importance of considering every 'activity' discussion in a cultural context in order to avoid assumptions that shared perceptions have an equal effect on individuals with diverse experiences. Consequently, a comparison of the abovementioned qualities with the different activity systems produced to describe participants' discussions (see Appendix 26) shows that these qualities correspond greatly with the components of the system describing the Somali

parents' play, due to the focus on child-directed, adult-free, unplanned but easily available play. Previous discussions and interpretation of phase one data have highlighted the dominance of these components in the Somali parents' perceptions of play and the consequential perspective that play is not as available to their children. Therefore, whilst these parents did not usually view activities using technology as 'play' due to some key components of these activities (e.g. technology is typically not associated with the outdoors or with significant physical activity), analysis of their discussions suggests it is important to consider whether there are subconscious perspectives that act as motivating factors within an activity system oriented towards children's technology usage, when there are factors forming obstacles in activity systems oriented towards other activities more consciously perceived as 'play'.

8.4.4 Curriculum expectations

Practitioners' discussions revealed some overlap in their perceptions of the barriers to play, as highlighted already in their concerns about technology and their recognition of the impact on younger children of living in a smaller space without easy access to the outside. However, one of themes of practitioners' discussions was 'Competing activities', which included the subthemes of 'Children's lives are busy' and 'Curriculum and external pressure'. This reflected the concerns from practitioners that play opportunities are fewer not only as a result of practical barriers at home, but that even when these barriers are removed, children across a range of cultural backgrounds do not have sufficient time in which to engage in 'free' play. With regards to home, this was attributed to children having "mosque to go to or they go to tutors". Most prominent in these discussions, though, was that the demands of the school day are increasingly substantial, resulting in children having less time to engage in 'free' play during the

school day, less time to engage in 'free' play at home due to homework requirements and being less motivated to engage in 'free' play at home due to tiredness as a result of the day's demands. These concerns reflect the existing literature, particularly around reduced 'free' play opportunities within the school-day (Armitage, 2005; Jachyra & Fusco, 2016; Pellegrini, 2008; Rasmussen, 2004). It is therefore important to recognise the impact of external demands on schools and how these may contribute to a reduction in play for children such as those involved in the present study, for whom, as already identified, play is perceived to be less available but potentially highly beneficial. There is evidence that improvements in academic achievement have occurred under the EYFS framework since its introduction in 2008 (Bent et al., 2012, p. 16), however, there have more recently been increasing concerns that externally-set expectations for primary education in the U.K. are not developmentally appropriate and consequently expectations of practitioners are also inappropriate. As a result, the available data on pupil achievement and, in particular, the achievement of certain groups of pupils, may not reflect this more recent situation. Even where academic achievement is not a significant concern, there are increasing worries from school practitioners, parents, Educational Psychology Services and the wider research on play and education around the impact of current curriculum demands on other areas of children's development, including their emotional wellbeing (Marian & Jackson, 2017; Noddings, 2013; Owen, 2017; Palaiologou, 2017; Robert-Holmes, 2015; Wood, 2014). Returning to the present study, this was described by one practitioner as follows

"I think that's just been awful for creativity and play. The curriculum. Because it changes. The way you must keep changing. It's so...it's so unsettling."

It appears that practitioners perceived externally-set expectations to impinge on their autonomy and on children's opportunities to learn through playful activities. Another

example came from a practitioner who recalled an occasion whereby a child had become less engaged in a playful activity as a result of the teacher needing to reproduce the scene in order to photograph it for 'evidence' of an EYFS target. These perspectives can be seen to correspond with the finding from phase one of the present study that non-teaching staff perceived fewer photographs to be depicting play than did teaching staff, with the hypothesis that non-teaching staff more frequently experience playful approaches being used as purposeful teaching methods. This suggested a decrease in perceptions of play resulting from an increase in extrinsic motivation and control, which also corresponds with the reduced play perceptions of the Somali parents being the result of their play definitions centring on 'free' play. Practitioners participating in this research also expressed beliefs that external expectations demand so much structure from the school-day that this often reduces the range of activities that can be offered and in particular, as already discussed, reduced opportunities for child-directed, intrinsically-motivated activities. Therefore, whilst practitioners can be well-versed in combining play with specific targets in order to benefit children in ways described in the previous section, there remains a perception from practitioners and parents that these 'playful' activities are not able to fully counteract the increased practical barriers to play as these activities lack the key component of play that is intrinsic motivation.

9 Limitations and implications for future research

9.1 Demand characteristics

During part one of this research, participants were asked to sort photographs into the two categories of 'play' and 'not play' or 'work' and 'not work'. There are a number of factors that need consideration with regard to this procedure. Firstly, during this type of research task there is the potential for participants to be affected by demand characteristics. It is likely that participants will have been attempting to work out the task purpose and perform in a problem-solving manner, i.e. they will be looking for cues to help them determine the research hypothesis and particularly as I was present during the task, they are likely to have been attempting to ascertain my expectations. Correspondingly, there is the potential for participants to view the tasks differently and for this to affect their responses; young children, parents and school practitioners will each be affected by different factors that alter their perception of a task such as the one used, e.g. experiences, level of education, comprehension of instructions, processing of information, views of research and responses to questioning. This range of factors therefore holds the potential to impact on how participants understand the research and the responses they provide. Consequently, I ensured I was aware of the potential for my behaviour and language to influence participants' responses. An informal setting was used, I introduced myself using my first name and during the task I ensured I was attentive but not over-vigilant (e.g. by shifting my attention between the task the participant was undertaking and other materials in the room). However, as stated by Orne (1962, p. 780) "In an experiment where [the participant] knows some purpose exists, it is inconceivable for him not to form some hypothesis as to the purpose, based on some cues, no matter how meagre". Consequently, other measures are important to

note, including those that attempt not to remove participants' hypothesis formation, but to understand it. On being introduced to me and to the research, participants were given a written and verbal explanation of the research project and for those participants for whom English was not their first language, a translator supported this explanation. This information was transparent regarding the aims and purpose of the research as a whole and the task they would be asked to do. This transparency was intended to result in participants being less likely to form their own hypotheses. Participants were also informed that there were no right or wrong responses to the task as the aim was to find out about individuals' opinions, hopefully reducing the likelihood that participants would seek to give a 'correct' response and to 'solve' the task. During the photograph sorting activity, as earlier described, participants were also asked to justify some of the responses they had given. This enabled me to check for consistency of decisions and as this was high, this suggested participants were confident in their responses and not liable to change them when questioned. Furthermore, collecting qualitative information on participants' responses enabled me to check that their justifications did not show evidence of decisions being based on demand characteristics.

9.2 Children's social-cognitive skills

The design of phase one of this study was based on the earlier described research of Howard (2002). This meant that there was previous evidence of children of a similar age to those in the present study being able to undertake the photograph sorting activity. However, some specific considerations and accommodations were necessary to account for children's social-cognitive skills being different to most adults and the effect of this on their engagement in the tasks.

Firstly, photographs were used during the sorting activity rather than drawings. Whilst some other research using apperception procedures have used line drawings (e.g. Jones, 1995), photographs were used in this study. This was necessary in order to depict the necessary details for some cues, e.g. facial expressions. With particular consideration for younger children, photographs are also less abstract and consequently require less hypothetical thought. Research suggests that children between three and six years old are more likely to associate photographic representation with reality (e.g. Kose, 1985; Zaitchik, 1990) but that children as young as three years old can also discriminate between a picture and the 'real thing' (e.g. Thomas, Nye & Robinson, 1994; Woolley and Wellman, 1990). This suggests that the youngest children in the present study are likely to have the cognitive skills to respond to the scene depicted in the photographs and not simply concentrated on the physical photograph as an object without a referent or been distracted by thinking the scene was really happening. In particular, research suggests that children have the conceptual skills to respond consistently to a photograph as a representation (as opposed to thinking the scene in the photograph is really happening) when they are not required to think about both at the same time, i.e. to consider the dual identity of the photograph (Thomas, Nye & Robinson, 1994). Therefore, prompts and questions used in the present study were phrased consistently to refer to the scene in the photograph rather than referring to the photograph as an object in itself (e.g. by saying "is this boy playing?", rather than "does this picture look like playing?").

A second consideration is whether the children participating in the research would have the cognitive skills to form conceptual categories, necessary for them to be able to categorise the photographs. Previous research has suggested that infants under one years are unable to develop conceptual categories, with their cognitive development to

that point only enabling perceptual processes (e.g. Haith & Benson, 1998) and even for infants older than this, traditionally it has been thought that they have no conceptual categories. However, research in more recent years has presented evidence of infants being able to make conceptual inferences (e.g. McDonough & Mandler, 1998), make conceptually rather than physically based inductions (Carey, 1985; Gelman & Coley, 1990; Gelman & Markman, 1986) and use cognitive skills that contribute to conceptual processing (e.g. Mandler, 2000; Meltzoff, 1988; Willatts, 1990). Research has also suggested that during categorisation tasks that assess conceptual organisation, younger children (i.e. three and four year olds) who appear to have different organisation rules to adults often do so as a result of spatial aspects of the task (e.g. being asked to arrange objects with physical similarities and differences into specific spaces on a table), rather than the conceptual differences that are assumed (Markman, Cox & Machida, 1981). The present study was also able to account for this through the physical design of the sorting task; children looked at one photograph at a time rather than having them presented together in a way that would require a particular layout, children placed the photographs into boxes where the opposing labels (e.g. 'play' and 'not play') were counterbalanced so the labels were not always on the same sides (as described in 6.1.2), the photographs went out of sight once they were in the boxes so the photograph's locations were less likely to affect each other. Consequently, the spatial organisation and relationships between the pictures was less likely to be a confounding factor in the categorisations made by younger children for whom this may affect. Lastly, the child participants, like the adult participants, were asked to justify some of their categorisations during the second stage of the sorting activity. This therefore checked that all participants, including children, were able to reflect on their categorisations and

could justify them according to meaningful concepts rather than as a result of arbitrary or confounding factors.

9.3 The use of video instead of photography

Whilst the procedure used in phase one of this research used photographs to explore play definitions, based on the existing Activity Apperception Story Procedure by Howard (2002), other forms of imagery have been used in research and are worth reflecting on. In particular, using video was a possibility and the notes in Appendix 2 draw attention to the reading and reflections on the topic of visual research that went in during the early stages of designing the present study. In the area of visual research, significant technological advances in recent years have influenced the availability and popularity of video (Emmison, Smith, Smith & Mayall, 2012). Video data has the advantage of being able to capture rich data in comparison with photographs, potentially enabling researchers to develop more in-depth and accurate understanding of the subject being studied. Like photographic data, the use of video also makes it possible to present raw data to participants in a way that they can immediately understand and respond to. Consequently, video methods are often used to collect data which is then shown to participants in order to gather their reflections as part of the data collection procedure (Robson, 2011). Video-stimulated discussions have been used in this way with children as young as three years old (e.g. Morgan, 2007; Valkanova, Watts, Jackson, 2004) and researchers have argued that asking children and adults to reflect on video data supports self- and collaborative-reflection (Forman, 1999; Valkanova, Watts, Jackson, 2004). Asking participants to reflect on videos can evidently also enable the researcher to collect further information about the context of what was filmed, the intentions of those people filmed and their feelings. Therefore, in the context of the current study,

this methodology could have been useful to provide participants with richer imagery of 'play' activities on which to reflect, as opposed to the still photographs that were used. Particularly with regard to the photographs of outside activities and of the child and adult interacting, some participants commented that they wanted to know 'what was happening' or 'what they were saying', suggesting that the ability to capture motion and speech in video format may have enhanced the qualitative data that was collected. However, there are challenges regarding the use of video that must also be considered, particularly considering features of the present study. Firstly, children as participants are especially vulnerable as their understanding of what they are consenting to is less clear, something that is of particular concern if they have not grasped the long-term nature of videos that are to be replayed at a later date. Similarly, children may consent to being filmed at the time of the research but as they mature they may regret taking part or want to have data about them removed from the research. Whilst anonymisation is easier for photographs and therefore less likely to be concerning for children as they get older, video data is less easy to anonymise and captures imagery that is often felt to be more 'personal' (Robson, 2011). As the present research also involved participants of various ethnic heritages with various levels of English language expression and comprehension, this was a further specific consideration due to similar concerns around vulnerable participants and their ability to fully comprehend the implications of such sensitive data and its use in a culturally less familiar environment. As the population that this research relied on had been identified as at greater risk of marginalisation, it was important to choose a data collection method that was sensitive towards this and did not increase the risk of participants feeling uncomfortable with the procedures and disengaging from the research. Future research should consequently consider whether the use of a video methodology may be beneficial in adding to the findings of the present

study in a way that is sensitive to these issues, for example, by asking participants to collect and edit their own video data or as part of a longer research project where it is possible to develop relationships between the researchers and participants.

9.4 Incorporating multiple cues into play definitions

The design of the photograph sorting activity in the present study meant that each photograph contained a single play 'cue'. However, there are limitations to this when considered in the context of a variety of theories regarding play definitions. Rather than play being defined and perceived according to the presence or absence of one cue (i.e. more reflective of categorical approaches to defining play), some theorists have advocated criteria or continuum approaches (e.g. Krasnor & Pepler, 1980; Pellegrini, 1991). These approaches suggest that play's complexity requires definitions to be made on the presence of a number of characteristics (i.e. multiple cues) such as intrinsic motivation, positive affect and choice. A continuum approach to defining play perceives that activities are defined according to a 'playfulness scale' which reflects the characteristics present in the activity, so that activities "can be categorised as 'more or less play', not dichotomously as 'play or not play'" (Pellegrini, 1991, p.215). Evidently, assuming this approach to defining play has an impact on the methods used to gain play perspectives. There is a significant research base exploring play as a continuum concept through directed tasks asking participants to place activities on a play-work continuum or through discussions referring to this concept (e.g. Ceglowski, 1997; Cunningham & Wiegel, 1992; Holmes, 2005; McInnes, Howard, Miles & Crowley, 2011; Wing, 1995). Therefore, it is possible that a research design taking a similar approach could have been revealing in the present study. However, there were a number of reasons for implementing the chosen design instead. Firstly, the photograph sorting activity used in

phase one was based on the design implemented by Howard (2002) to enable the findings to be compared with a similar study. Furthermore, this straightforward play/not play and work/not work design was thought to be most suitable for the present study due to the range of participants taking part, including children as young as four years old and participants with various levels of English language ability. The simple design of a two category sorting activity enabled these participants to understand the task and provide reliable responses in a way that may have been compromised by a more complex continuum-focused task, whilst separating 'play' and 'work' (i.e. into a play-not play decision and work-not work decision) reduced an assumption of a play-work dichotomy. Furthermore, whilst the photograph sorting activity was designed to enable individual photographs with specific cues to be compared (e.g. photographs of the same activity occurring in different locations), photographs from different cue groups could also be compared (e.g. photographs of different activities occurring in the same location). Consequently it was possible to identify how different cues combined to result in different perceptions of play, for example, showing that for the parent participant group the 'outside' cue did not make activities appear more like play, but when the 'activity type' cue was taken into account this result was different. The use of single cues in the present study was therefore appropriate for the participant sample and the aims of the research; however, research using a variety of designs is likely to continue to be useful, particularly in environments where there is a significant play-work overlap.

9.5 Piloting the study

It is recognised that there was no pilot study to inform the photograph sorting activity implemented in phase one of the present research. Considering the earlier discussion about the potential for child participants not to detect more subtle cues in some of the

photographs it is possible that a pilot study would have highlighted this difficulty and there could have been changes to the design to account for this, e.g. by planning to ask all children to comment on the photographs containing the most subtle cues. However, as also discussed earlier, the second part of the sorting activity ensured that child participants were able to justify their decisions, reducing this concern. Another factor that reduced the need for a pilot to inform the procedures was that the design of the photograph sorting activity was directly based on the procedure implemented by Howard (2002). This procedure was used with children of the same age as those in the present study and the stages of the procedure were the same, therefore, it was not a novel design and there was existing evidence of its efficacy. Other considerations with regard to the information gained from piloting a procedure concern internal consistency and construct validity, both of which were tested as part of the procedure rather than through a polite. Internal consistency was checked by asking participants to repeat some photograph categorisations and this gave an acceptable level of consistency as described in 6.2.4. With regard to construct validity, i.e. knowing what participants were referring to when they made their categorisations, this was also checked through the justification stage during phase one of the research and through the focus groups held during phase two. The collection of this qualitative data added to the understanding of participants' play and work definitions and ensured that the quantitative data collected through the photograph sorting activity was not assumed to refer to constructs in isolation of supporting information from participants.

9.6 Participant sample

The participant sample of this research was heterogeneous. Within the groups of school practitioners, these participants ranged in age, gender, years and type of teaching

experience and current position. However, as the aim of this research was to explore perceptions across the primary school range, these samples were consistent with this. The sample of parents who participated in the research also present challenges with regard to generalisation. These participants did not all have the same background in terms of the time they had spent living in Somalia, whether they had lived in other countries, how long they had lived in the U.K. for and other personal and family details. Consequently, the children participating in the research also represented this diversity of background. However, this is reflective of the fact that the Somali community in the U.K. is comprised of individuals representing a range of migration experiences, including single male workers, women and children on their own or reuniting with fathers and entire families.

It is important, though, also to address the fact that all of the parents who participated in this research were female, as it was only pupils' mothers who attended the meeting about the research and volunteered to take part. This is generally representative of the situation concerning the parental engagement of Somali families at this school and it reflects the wider situation in the U.K. whereby there are a "disproportionate number of single female heads of household" due to families being separated before or after migration, men remaining in Somalia or other countries or being killed in the war (Rutter, 2004, p. 3). However, this still presents a limitation of the research as it is not possible to discuss the perceptions of present fathers and the possible implications of these perceptions. As stated by Robson & McCartan (2016) "The exigencies of carrying out real world studies can mean that the requirements for representative sampling are very difficult, if not impossible, to fulfil" (p. 282). It will be of benefit to the research area if those in the psychology field with different access to Somali communities (perhaps via

means other than primary education) are in the future able to add to this research through the inclusion of fathers.

Another limitation of this research is that there was only one child available for the creation of photographs for the sorting activity carried out in phase one. This meant that it was not possible to create photographic depictions of activities involving more than one child. As participants in the focus groups commented on various social aspects of play and peer group differences between Somalia and the U.K., and previous research has suggested that activities involving peers are more likely to be perceived as play, it is disappointing that the present study was not able to facilitate exploration of this through the photograph sorting activity. This is an area that future research may therefore benefit from exploring, particularly considering the discussions contained in this paper regarding the increasing use of technology and the implications this may have for perceptions of social interaction during play.

Overall, the nature of this study as relatively small in scale and concerning a specific population of participants in one city in South West England means that it is appropriate and necessary to acknowledge limits to the generalisability of findings. However, the pragmatic orientation of this research adopts a position that accepts this, without necessitating the refusal of any possibility of generalisation. As stated by Morgan (2007, p. 72), the pragmatic approach “rejects the need to choose between a pair of extremes where research results are either completely specific to a particular context or an instance of some more generalized set of principles”. It is therefore hoped that the findings of this research will be useful to the individuals involved as well as similar populations who view their circumstances as containing similarities.

10. Implications for practice

In his paper concerning the distinctive contribution of educational psychology, Cameron (2006) identifies five dimensions which offer possibilities:

1. adopting a psychological perspective to human problems,
2. uncovering mediating/psychological variables which link particular situations with specific outcomes,
3. employing psychological knowledge to create explanatory models of complex human problems,
4. using evidence based strategies for change and
5. sharing and promoting big ideas from psychology.

This places educational psychologists in a unique and variable position, being able to work individually with children and families, such as those involved in the present study, and being able to contribute to wider policy discussions and decisions. Through the application of psychology and methods such as consultation, educational psychologists are able to recognise and understand the factors affecting children in different contexts and raise awareness in others, working in a culturally competent manner. This does, however, highlight the importance of educational psychologists receiving appropriate teaching and training concerning cultural competence during the doctorate qualifying them to practice as an educational psychologist and through continued professional development once practicing. Subsequently, educational psychologists are in a position to work with children, families, schools, communities and policy makers to support implementation of the recommendations described below.

10.1 Home-school connections

In order to promote positive development and achievement for all children, it is necessary to facilitate positive acculturation processes for families as a whole and the engagement of parents is vital to this. Home-school contact was identified as a theme of both the practitioners' and the Somali parents' discussions in the present study, with parents desiring a greater home-school alliance and practitioners recognising the benefits of links they had previously made with parents. Consequently, the discussions facilitated by this research resulted in practitioners commenting that they had not previously heard about parents' childhood experiences or aspects of their current situations and that it had been interesting to do so as a result of parents being encouraged to share this information. The importance of home and school having good communication channels is well documented (Department for Education, 2015) and in the small amount of literature concerning children from Somali heritage families, home-school links are highlighted as particularly significant (Ali & Jones, 2000). Furthermore, through the discussions held with practitioners and Somali parents in the present research, it was possible to identify many common factors in the perceptions of these two groups and the diverse perspectives individuals had within each group as a result of early experiences and level of involvement with schools. This indicates the importance of home-school communication in order to avoid assumptions about the perspectives of others based on ethnicity. These connections are also likely to be most beneficial when they are facilitated as early as possible in a child's educational experience as this creates the groundwork for relationships in the years to follow (Bent, Hill, Rose & Tikly, 2012; Department for Education, 2015). However, previous research suggests it is important for settings to initiate this as involvement as the 'Early Years' is often not

prioritised by parents of Somali heritage due to their unfamiliarity with children attending settings at such a young age (Robertson, 2002). It is apparent that any type of home-school work requires a school to be flexible in its use of time and resources and this needs to be considered in the current context where, as was discussed in the present research, school practitioners feel increasingly pressured to meet government expectations (Day & Hong, 2016). It was also raised in the present study that parents can often feel nervous about contact with school due to a lack of understanding about the school processes, communication difficulties resulting from language barriers and anxieties about how they will be perceived by practitioners. Consequently it appeared that parents were encouraged to participate in the present research due to the impartial role I was perceived to have. This highlights a potential role for educational psychologists, who are typically in regular contact with link schools and so are aware of the school context, but maintain a sense of impartiality by not being employed by the school. Educational psychologists are also well placed to facilitate home-school discussions due to the nature of their work (i.e. holding meetings with parents and schools is a key component of the role) and the skills (e.g. in carrying out consultation or supervision) and knowledge (e.g. in child development and contextual frameworks) they have. Furthermore, educational psychologists can work on systems levels with the local authority or a group of settings, promoting the significance of early experiences and positive transitions and raising the profile of the Early Years amongst families who may be less familiar with these contexts. More research in this area would also likely be beneficial to explore the outcomes of Early Years engagement for families including migrants and refugees as well as the effectiveness of different methods aimed at increasing this engagement, as this is currently an under-researched area (Robertson, 2002).

10.1.1 Specific home-school discussions about play

In addition to the above general home-school connections that are highlighted as important, it is also necessary to emphasise the value in parents and practitioners entering into specific discussions about play that enable all individuals to learn about different perspectives of play. Whilst the matter of play definitions has been debated repeatedly and this debate may be considered arbitrary and purely academic, it is necessary to acknowledge that differences in perceptions can result in conflict and tension if there is an assumption of a shared underlying perspective, as evidenced in practitioners' comments that parents do not value play and in parents' uncertainty about the play that their children experience in school. This is an argument shared by Brooker (2011b), who recognises the need to appreciate cultural components of play and for school practitioners and parents to discuss their views of play so that practitioners can combine their professional expertise with the perspectives of parents. With the importance placed on play as a medium for learning in the EYFS, it appears crucial that as well as understanding play's relationship to learning, practitioners are able to appreciate the cultural dimension of play and "to reconcile their expertise and knowledge with that of the cultural capital of the children and the beliefs and expectations of the parents" (Yahya & Wood, 2017, p. 307). Failing to do so means accepting the possibility that the views of cultural minorities may be misunderstood or unappreciated and therefore sacrificed for the views of the majority.

With regard to parents' understanding of play it is important to acknowledge that the training of school practitioners, particularly those working within the EYFS, necessitates a certain amount of focus on the range of play benefits and the purpose it holds in an educational context, supported by adults. The majority of adults, regardless of their

cultural experiences will not have studied play in this depth or be required to reflect on play in this way. It is therefore important to recognise that parents are likely to benefit from opportunities to learn about the range of play benefits and there cannot be an assumption that there will be an inherent recognition of these benefits, particularly for those parents who have not experienced a play-based education themselves. The present study identified that the Somali parents who participated typically viewed play as something undertaken by young children and the 'free' activities most commonly described as play by these participants resulted in challenges when attempting to consider play in an adult-directed contained environment such as school. Consequently, as discussed, many parents did not readily perceive the potential for play activities within the school environment and the benefits of this play as the components of this play do not directly map onto the components of play according to these parents. Whilst Early Years settings are generally proactive at making initial contact with families and holding welcome sessions, there are likely to be advantages in more regular and extended opportunities for parents to learn about the range of benefits of play, particularly for parents who have little experience of play-based education. However, structuring these occasions so that both practitioners and parents have opportunities to share their perspectives and knowledge on play is likely to be vital to their positive reception and success, as this will ensure a shared understanding that the aim is not to re-educate parents but to inform the perspectives of all individuals.

10.2 Diversity amongst individuals within settings

Another implication of the present study relevant to the facilitation of culturally competent settings and productive home-school connections concerns the opportunities settings have to benefit from the existing and potential skills of individuals

from a range of cultural backgrounds, through formal and informal channels. The present study found that the Somali parents had different perspectives on play and their children's education depending on the type of involvement they had had with the school up to that point. For example, one parent who had regularly volunteered in the nursery setting commented more significantly and confidently on different types of play and various benefits. Whilst other parents had varying degrees of contact with practitioners in order to discuss their child's development and school matters in general, it was clear that in addition to these conversations there was significant value in parents having opportunities to immerse themselves in the school context. For school communities where there is the potential for diverse perspectives and miscommunication, the everyday involvement of parents therefore appears particularly beneficial. Possibilities in this area may include parents having increased presence and leading roles within parent and child play sessions and being involved in school trips and activities. In the Department for Education's (2015) good practice survey exploring perceptions of teaching and play in the early years, one nursery setting is described as having implemented sessions for parents to take lead roles in, including sessions for fathers and for those speaking English as an additional language. As described in the previous section, the value of such provisions is in maximising on the interests and skills of all parents and enabling individuals to feel valued for what they can contribute within the setting as well as what they can learn. On a more formal level, the cultural competency of settings should also be addressed by considering how schools and Local Authorities ensure that individuals from diverse backgrounds are represented and employed across a range of positions. As highlighted earlier, it was apparent that the Somali heritage parents in the present study often found it difficult to communicate with school due to a lack of understanding about school processes, language barriers and anxieties about

how they might be perceived by practitioners. The resulting absence of meaningful home-school connections is only likely to exacerbate conflicting or misunderstood perspectives on issues such as play. Consequently, engaging individuals from diverse and potentially marginalised communities via more formal routes is likely to be beneficial, a point supported by previous research concerning the experiences of pupils of Somali heritage (Ali & Jones, 2000). As experienced by one participant in this research, having a voluntary or paid position within a setting is one way to address this. Similarly, settings should explore opportunities for parents to train as teaching assistants, nursery assistants or play workers. Schools should also consider the diversity of their governing body and whether there is a need to increase the representation of individuals from particular cultural backgrounds or improve the quality of contact the governing body has with different communities. Local Authorities clearly have a significant role to play in these processes, for example, by ensuring sufficient procedures are in place to actively seek the training and employment of individuals from diverse backgrounds within schools and by implementing and monitoring collaborative processes between the Local Authority and diverse communities.

10.3 Outside play and technology

10.3.1 Replacing technology with outside play

It is important to recognise that some children have reduced opportunities for outside play at home and this may be particularly true for children from particular cultural backgrounds, for a variety of family and community reasons. This was identified as a key theme in the present study as, despite concerns over play's role within school, parents and practitioners were at least as concerned about the wider play opportunities children have and the detrimental effects for those children with fewer opportunities. Barriers

to 'free' play that were discussed by participants in the present study included a lack of space at home, poor weather, unsafe community spaces and children's perceived overuse of technology. With regard to technology, it was earlier discussed that despite parents' concerns over their children's 'addiction' to technology, there may be similarities between the motives and purposes behind these activities and the play that parents experienced as children in Somalia (e.g. child-led, immersive, easily accessible play). For parents who are concerned about their children's use of technology, the implications of this therefore appear to fall into two categories. The first set of implications involves focusing on ways in which activities that involve technology can be replaced with other activities containing the same motives and purposes; this will be addressed next. The second set of implications involves focusing attention on embracing technology and capitalising on its benefits whilst reducing its negatives; this will be returned to later.

The analysis in the present study of children's activities in cultural contexts highlighted that parents attributed qualities to the technology activities of children that corresponded with the play they experienced as children in Somalia; play which was child-directed, free from adult intervention, kept children busy and out of the way, was easily accessible, and that children can immerse themselves in for extended periods of time. In order to provide children with non-technological opportunities for activities that meet this same criteria, there needs to be consideration for the support parents have managing the barriers they experience. With regard to 'free' outside play, these barriers are acknowledged for children across a range of communities (e.g. Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012, discuss children's perceptions that their active play is restricted by poor weather and poor provision of play spaces); however, when discussing

recommendations it is important to recognise that for children from some communities these barriers are greater (Lester & Russell, 2008, p. 41) and as emphasised in the present study, are often culturally-situated.

One of the concerns of the Somali parents in this research was that the weather reduces opportunities for children to play outside throughout the year. This referred both to parents' objections to children playing outside during the school-day when the weather is poor and their reluctance to go outside with children when they are at home and it is cold or raining. It was apparent that parents' experiences of play in Somalia, with its warmer and drier weather and longer hours of sunshine, inevitably resulted in difficulties adjusting to the effects of inclement weather on their children's play. Participants who commented on their children's behaviour suggested that children wanted to play outside even in colder or wetter weather and it was often the parents' concerns that reduced outside play at these times. Consequently, it is important that schools encourage outside play during a range of weather and make suitable adjustments to enable this, for example, providing children with waterproof clothing. Doing so is likely to mean that playing outside in different weather will become more expected and typical for children and therefore reduce the likelihood that weather prevents outdoor play during their leisure time. Furthermore, as highlighted by Brockman, Jago & Fox (2011), in comparison with the influence of other factors on children's outside play, climate and weather conditions have largely been overlooked in the literature and more research in this area would likely be beneficial.

Another concern participants raised in the present study as being a barrier to children's 'free' outside play was that children have few outside places to go to that are suitable and safe. The increase of concerns such as these is also reflected the wider existing

literature (e.g. Brockman, Jago & Fox, 2011; Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012), with many adults believing that children need more safe spaces in which to engage in 'free' child-directed play. In terms of implications, schools are well-placed to respond to local conditions and can provide a range of extra-curricular opportunities that are easily accessible, targeted at vulnerable groups and provide opportunities for children to direct their own activities. With regard to actions that parents can take, it may be helpful to explore options for children to have mobile phones, even if these are provided solely for use when children go outside without adult supervision. As technology was often viewed by parents in the present study as a barrier to other forms of play, it is likely to be interesting and worthwhile to consider the potential for it also to encourage outside play as other research (e.g. Brockman et al., 2011) has found this to be the case regarding mobile phones.

Whilst schools and parents obviously have a central role to play in influencing the opportunities children have to experience 'free' play, this is not something they can do alone and requires the support of wider services, organisations and policies. For example, it is necessary that the importance of outdoor play spaces is prioritised in the design and development of schools, so that children have sufficiently large spaces in which to be active and explore during their school-day. Very recently, the main school involved in this research has become involved in an initiative whereby the local police and primary schools (most of whom have significant numbers of Somali heritage pupils) take part in a football league, playing matches once a week, to support community cohesion and children's access to extra-curricular activities. This presents one example of a play-based activity intended to support a particular group of children and it will likely be valuable to explore the effects of this initiative and ways in which to develop or

extend this. With the present research identifying that some children are more vulnerable than others when playing in public places and that this reduces parents' confidence to allow them out alone, it is important that the right of all children to play is reflected in the range of local and national policies and strategies that affect children's access to safe play spaces and provisions. As stated by Scourfield, Evans, Shah & Beynon (2012) "All must play their part in ensuring that rights of institutional and spatial access are extended to children of all ethnicities" (p. 173). In the development of local areas, towns and cities there's needs to be significant consideration for how children interact with public spaces. Planning policies need to be designed, implemented and reviewed with the needs of children in mind, for example, by consulting with relevant groups and local families and by creating checklists containing child-friendly markers that can be referred to during planning. For example, previous research has found that for children in low deprivation areas, the provision of cul-de-sacs and green spaces that are easily accessible to children increases their outside play (e.g. Brockman et al., 2011), which is relevant to the present study considering the comments parents made about the challenges of living in high rise flats. As highlighted by the findings of the present study, consulting with local families holds even greater value for specific communities where children face additional barriers to play, e.g. by considering ways of creating spaces that function during inclement weather; that enable all individuals to be safe in open, protected spaces; and that provide safe routes to and from schools so that children can be more independent in their access of public places.

10.3.2 Embracing technology and reducing its negatives

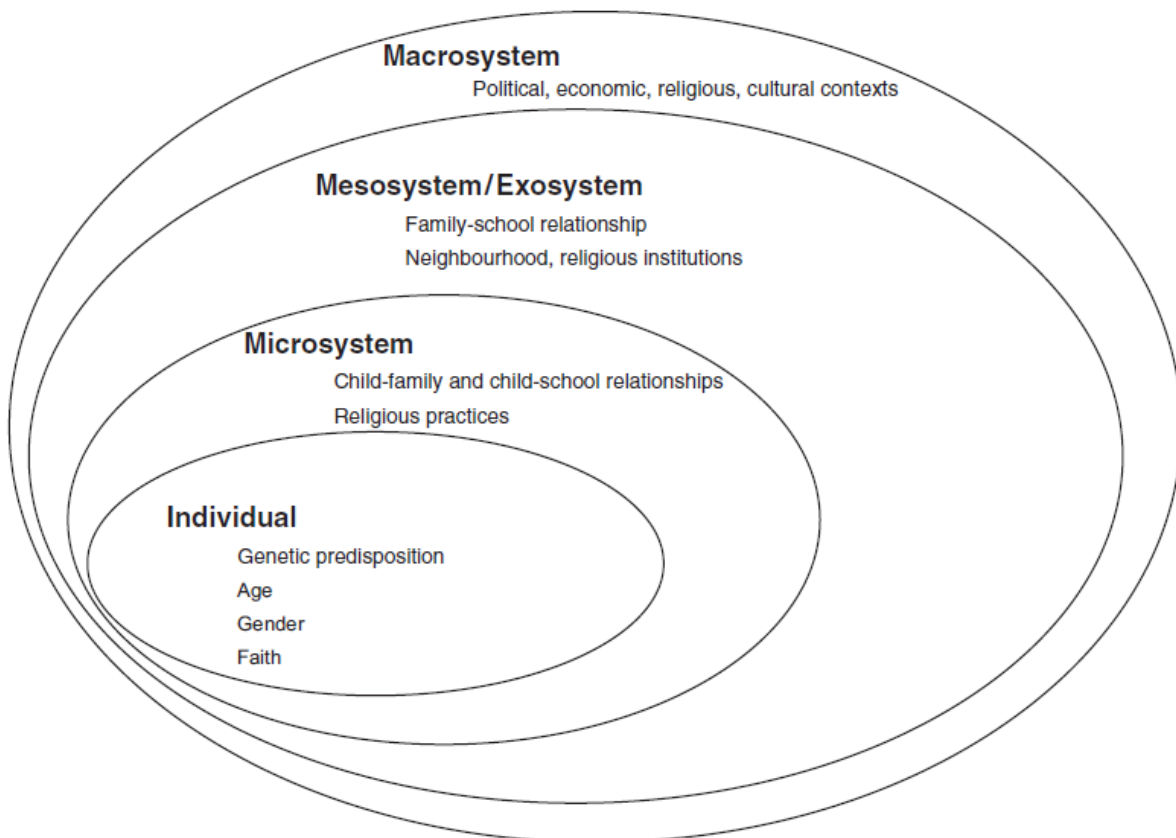
With regard to the concerns raised in the present study about children's use of technology, as earlier mentioned, there is potential to consider implications that involve

focusing attention on embracing technology and capitalising on its benefits whilst reducing its negatives. The Somali parents in the present study discussed the interest their children had in technology as very young infants and it is therefore important to acknowledge the need for parents to be aware of guidelines on children's screen time. Whilst there are no U.K. government guidelines on the amount of screen time children should experience, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2015) recommends 'television-free' days and setting limits of watching television to no more than two hours per day, whilst the American Psychological Association provide digital guidelines with different recommendations according to age. However, participants in the present study were anxious about managing children's technology use once this was already a concern, finding it challenging to confiscate technology or change habits once children had become used to technology within their activities. Therefore, it is important to recognise that as well as taking measures to reduce technology use amongst younger children, there is also value in promoting positive uses of technology and appreciating the possibilities for technology to enable and extend play. As stated by Wood (2008) "The new forms of play that are being created by popular culture and new media technologies offer extended affordances for interactivity, meaning-making and representation" (p. 113). Recently, there has been an increasing amount of research exploring the relationship of technology with physical activity and play, i.e. the ways in which children can engage with technology with reduced negative effects. For example, recent research (e.g. Althoff, White & Horvitz, 2016; LeBlanc & Chaput, 2016; Sheehan, Katz & Kooiman, 2015; Staiano & Calvert, 2011) exploring the effects of exergames (digital games which require physical movement, e.g. Pokémon Go) has suggested that these games present a possible solution to decreased childhood physical activity and can also have social and cognitive benefits. Furthermore, Staiano & Calvert (2011)

highlight the opportunities that exergames present for those living in communities where there is limited space and Althoff, White & Horvitz (2016) highlight the potential for these game-based interventions to be more effective for individuals with low activity levels, when compared with traditional approaches to increasing physical activity. Therefore, this area is worth exploration by practitioners and parents in order not to polarise physical activity and technology, but to consider ways in which the two may be brought together. There is likely also to be interesting and worthwhile research to conduct in this area, exploring in more detail the relevance and potential for these games to support younger children, those from particular cultural backgrounds and the implications in both home and school.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1: The social ecological model of risk and protection for children affected by armed conflict.



Appendix 2: Designing the Photographs: Notes on 'Researching the Visual'

NB. Sections from literature in quotation marks. Researcher's headings and notes in italics.

Photographs rely on 'tacit visual literacy' to provide conceptual points. "The photographs which provide the illustrative material for the field's ethnographic essays, research reports and monographs serve a purpose only to the extent that we can supply the theoretical or conceptual point they purport to deliver. Photographic visual sociology thus succeeds only because of the tacit visual literacy on the part of the reader".
(Chapter 3)

Concepts for the analysis of images (chapter 4):

- **Binary oppositions** – "these are concepts or signifiers which are arranged in pairs but opposed to each other in some photos". The assumption is that for many participants, play and work represent binary oppositions. Therefore, the design of the photograph sorting activity purposefully does not imply this (as participants put photos in boxes 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work', rather than being forced to choose between 'play' and 'work' boxes which would imply that these are definitely opposite). The cue used in each photo is also represented through the use of binary opposite imagery, e.g. 'teacher presence' cue shown through child being alone or with the teacher; 'pretend' cue shown through child having real or fake object; 'location' cue shown through child being inside or outside. The presence of binary oppositions in the photographs is therefore the most significant tool for exploring how the cues relate to play and work judgments.

- **Frames** – “these are the contexts within which an image, or part of an image, is presented to the viewer”. The photographs are presented as part of an experiment and therefore likely to be observed in a more questioning and analytical manner by participants compared with how they would be observed in a more natural context, for example, if they were found in a family photo album.
- **Genre** – “this refers to the categories that we use to classify cultural objects into groups with similar properties or themes”. *The photographs are likely to be seen as ‘school photographs’ even if the photo is set up to not look like school (e.g. it is a photo of the child playing outside). It will therefore be important to remember this when analysing the responses of participants in terms of their perception of a photo as showing ‘work’, as the overall school theme (and school’s association with work) may make it more likely that work is perceived to take place compared with photos of the same activities in a non-school context. This is not a problem for the research as the aim is to explore perceptions of play in the school context, however, it is something to explore in the second phase of the research (the focus groups) in terms of whether children ‘learn’ during play activities only in school, where learning is the aim.*
- **Identification** – “This refers to the ways in which people ‘relate to’ a particular image”. Importance of the photographed child being Somali so that Somali participants are more likely to be making judgments of the photos based on thoughts relating to themselves rather than relating to ‘others’. Non-Somali teacher participants are also more likely to be making judgments of the photos in the context of Somali pupils which is then more comparable with the judgments of Somali participants. Consideration of ‘identification’ within the

photos also leads me to think about the possibility that participants may identify differently with the photos in general (not just with regard to the child's ethnicity) due to their 'Western' school experience, i.e. the setting is likely to evoke greater identification for teachers and maybe Somali children but less for Somali parents. This is part of the whole research point really because the photo sorting choices will somewhat reflect the different judgements that are a result of identifying with different aspects of the photos.

- **Narrative** – “this involves a storyline”. I need to be aware of what else is around the child in each photo so that an unintended narrative is not suggested, e.g. the time on a clock could represent “play time” to some participants. Also, the random order that the photos are presented during the sorting activity needs to be carefully arranged so that unintended narratives are not conveyed.
- **Reading** – “this is the process of decoding the image”. If the photos contain items, activities, etc. that are unfamiliar to some participants then the photo will not be ‘read’ the same. If the photos are too complicated they may not be ‘read’ the same way by children. In a similar way to the identification concept, the reading concept is also part of the whole research point because there is an assumption/suggestion that participants will have divergent readings of the photographs depending on their life experiences, cultural factors, etc.
- **Denotation** – “this refers to the obvious, literal or common-sense meaning of a sign or image”. I want denotation to be the cue in each photo, i.e. the cue such as ‘teacher presence’ or ‘positive affect’ is obvious and literal.
- **Connotation** – “this refers to the more complex ideological or mythical themes that occur when denotation interacts with dominant cultural values”. *This is*

what will result in different play or work judgments, due to the interaction of denotation (the cue) and cultural values.

- **Signifier/signified** – “these terms refer to the sign and its referent. An iconic representation is one motivated by direct resemblance”. *I want the photographs to appear as iconic (i.e. directly resembling real life). “An index has a direct connection with the thing it represents. A symbol has a link to its referent that is purely arbitrary and a matter of cultural convention.” The different intentional cues in the photos are the indexes and symbols (i.e. the cue of plastic blocks has a direct connection with building and construction activities [index] and an arbitrary connection with play or work [symbol] depending on the perspective of the participant).*
- **Subject Position** – “this is, roughly speaking, the identity that is invoked in a particular image”. As the same child will be used for all photos, there will automatically be some level of consistency in terms of how each individual participant views each photo. The overall assumed subject position is that the child is seen as a ‘pupil’ although a child participant may view them as an ‘ally’ and a parent participant may view them as ‘someone’s son/daughter’. The context of the photo will need to be considered with this concept too, to ensure there is no unintentional positioning of the subject due to other people around them or the perspective that the photo is taken from.

Emmison, M., Smith, P., Smith, P. D., & Mayall, M. (2012). *Researching the visual*. London: Sage.

Appendix 3: Practicalities and Ethics of the Use of Photographs

Notes on 'Researching the Visual', 'Doing Visual Ethnography' and 'Photo-narrative processes with children and young people'

NB. Sections from literature in quotation marks. Researcher's headings and notes in italics.

Inclusion of participant-directed photographs (i.e. photographed children will be asked to suggest 'play' or 'learning' activities to be photographed). "These approaches mark an evolution in visual inquiry from the older documentary style in which the 'authority' for the interpretation of the image resided with the researcher, to a more collaborative stance in which a key goal appears to be the use of visual material as a tool to 'decrease the power differential between the researcher and the researched' (Packard, 2008: 63)." (Emmison et al., 2012).

"The question of when to take the first photograph varies from project to project. In some contexts photographing can help to initiate the research process and to establish relationships with participants, while in others it may be more appropriate to wait several months before beginning to photograph, or to hand the camera over to participants so they can photograph instead." (Pink, 2013). *The child-directed photographs will occur before children are asked to position themselves for the specific planned photographs that contain cues, as this order of control over what is photographed seems more likely to result in good rapport between researcher and child, rather than jumping straight into the child being directed.*

"Secondly, showing photographs to their subjects can provide feedback on the images and their content while also forging connections with members of the

'community'...Taking the first images with a digital camera with a good enough view finder to be able to show images to participants, or even using a portable printer, may speed up the process, allowing participants to be able to see the ways they, or things and persons that matter to them, are being photographed almost instantly, and if they are comfortable with these to engender their trust and interest." (Pink, 2013). *Photographs will be taken with a digital camera with a screen so that the photos can be seen by the child/children straight away.*

"In some projects photographing may come first and can be a means of making contact with local people. For example, Schwartz (1992) began her research by photographing the physical environment of Waucoma, the town she was studying. On arrival, she began photographing buildings to both inform the residents of her presence and to observe the goings-on of everyday life." (Pink, 2013). *Before the selected child/children are invited to be involved in the photography, I will visit the classroom to make my presence more familiar and when I invite the child/children to engage, we will begin by taking photos of the room, objects, activities, etc. but not people, before I ask the child to suggest some activities that I can photograph that include the child in the photograph. This will allow the process of photography to also become more familiar by starting in a 'safe' way, i.e. taking photographs of 'things' rather than 'people'.*

Negative implications of the intentions and undertones of photography. "Initial uses of photography in anthropology arguably had more dubious roles to perform...still photography was enlisted as a means of documenting supposed differences between racial groups... the production of these photographs cannot be understood outside of the assumption of racial and cultural superiority and the desire for controlling knowledge so central to the colonial gaze". (Emmison et al., 2012)

Impact of culture on interpretation of photographs (semiotics). “Hall (1973) argues we should decode these images in terms of Barthes’ distinction between connotation and denotation. Denotation is ‘precise, literal, unambiguous’ (p. 226) while codes of connotation ‘are more open-ended’...This can involve knowledge about our society, the meanings of its symbols and the codes that govern face, body and posture”. (Emmison et al., 2012)

Difficulty of anonymization. “According to Wiles et al. (2011) a key ethical issue in visual research is anonymization. While the use of visual and textual data share some ethical issues, visual data, including photographs, present particular challenges, such as those outlined above. There seems to be an ethical tension between the desire to protect young research participants and the desire to give them a “voice” (Wiles et al., 2011). The researcher has to respect the voluntary participation and right to privacy of children and young people, and ensure their well-being throughout the research process.” (Böök & Mykkänen, 2014).

Böök, M. L., & Mykkänen, J. (2014). Photo-narrative processes with children and young people. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 5(4.1), 611-628.

Emmison, M., Smith, P., Smith, P. D., & Mayall, M. (2012). *Researching the visual*. London: Sage.

Pink, S. (2013). *Doing visual ethnography*. London: Sage.

Appendix 4: Certificate of Ethical Approval



**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

Amory Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter UK EX4 4RJ

www.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Academic Unit: Graduate School of Education

Title of Project: Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Research Team Member(s): Elizabeth Bishop

Project Contact Point: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

Supervisors: Andrew Richards; Martin Levinson

This project has been approved for the period

From: 19th April 2016
To: 30th June 2017

Ethics Committee approval reference: 201516-080

Signature: _____ Date: 19th April 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matt Loble'.

(Matt Loble, Chair, SSIS College Ethics Committee)

Appendix 5: School A Information



Title of Research Project

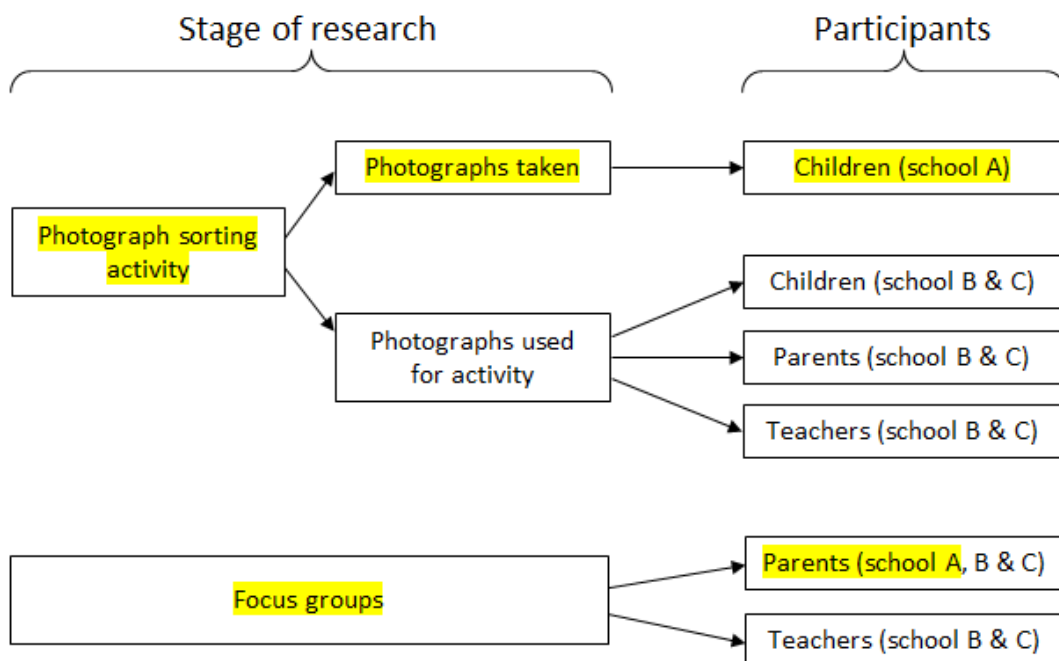
Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

Children and parents of Somali heritage are invited to take part in this research being undertaken for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter. The research is looking at perceptions of play from different cultural perspectives and its relationship to teaching and learning. There are many ways that play happens in primary schools and it is important to understand different cultural perspectives so that school is as fitting and positive as possible for all children.

Taking part

There are two stages to this research, as shown below alongside the participants involved in each stage. The highlighted text shows the areas relevant to ██████████ Primary School (School A), described further below.



Where 'schools B and C' are involved in the photograph sorting activity, this refers to teachers, children and parents (the latter two of Somali heritage) in two other schools being asked to sort photographs into boxes labelled 'play' and 'work'. These photographs will show children undertaking different activities in a classroom setting. It is hoped that this photograph sorting activity will help us understand how people involved in children's education perceive play and learning and whether cultural differences exist in these perceptions.

In order for this photograph sorting activity to occur with 'schools B and C', we would like children of Somali heritage attending [REDACTED] Primary School to help us create these photographs.

For the photographs, children will be asked to do some classroom activities. Examples are:

- Building with blocks and other apparatus
- Playing with other toys
- Drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor
- Talking with other children or a teacher

Children will also be asked if they would like to choose some play and work activities to show the researcher and these may also be photographed. The activities should take approximately one hour and some photographs will also include a member of staff that the children know. Parents will receive information and consent forms to sign if they agree for their child to take part but any children taking part can still stop at any time for any reason and neither they nor their parents will be contacted again.

So that parents can also be involved and hear feedback about the photograph sorting activity that their children's photographs have been used for, these parents will be invited to take part in a focus group. This is part of the second stage of the research, which will also include focus groups with parents of Somali heritage and teachers at 'schools B and C'. The focus group will take place in school and last for approximately one hour. The discussions that the parent focus group will have include: views of play and learning; play and education in different countries; their own experiences of play and learning as a child. For your information, the discussions that the teacher focus groups in 'schools B and C' will have include: perceptions of play and learning;

opportunities and barriers to play in school; play and children with additional needs; play and children from different ethnic backgrounds.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely the children or parents will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. Parents will, however, be asked to think about their and their child's play and school experiences. Therefore, they may find some discussions sensitive if they have had experiences that have been difficult or distressing. Parents and relevant school staff will be given contact details for the researcher and research supervisors that they can use if they have any concerns.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Photographs will be taken using a digital camera and afterwards, the photographs will be moved to a password protected device, known only by the researcher, and deleted from the camera. Focus group data will be collected in the form of an audio recording, which will be written and also stored on a password protected device, known only by the researcher. The photographs and focus group transcripts will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details of parents and their children will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. If parents would like to see the photographs of their child before they are used for the photograph sorting activity, they will be able to give an email address on the consent form and they will be sent a copy of the photographs of their child with the faces of any other children blurred. If parents would like to see a copy of the transcript of the focus group discussions, they can give their email address in the same way. Any hard copies of photographs or focus group transcriptions will also be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Researcher: Elizabeth Bishop

Telephone: 0783881646

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

Research supervisors:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 6: School B Information



Title of Research Project

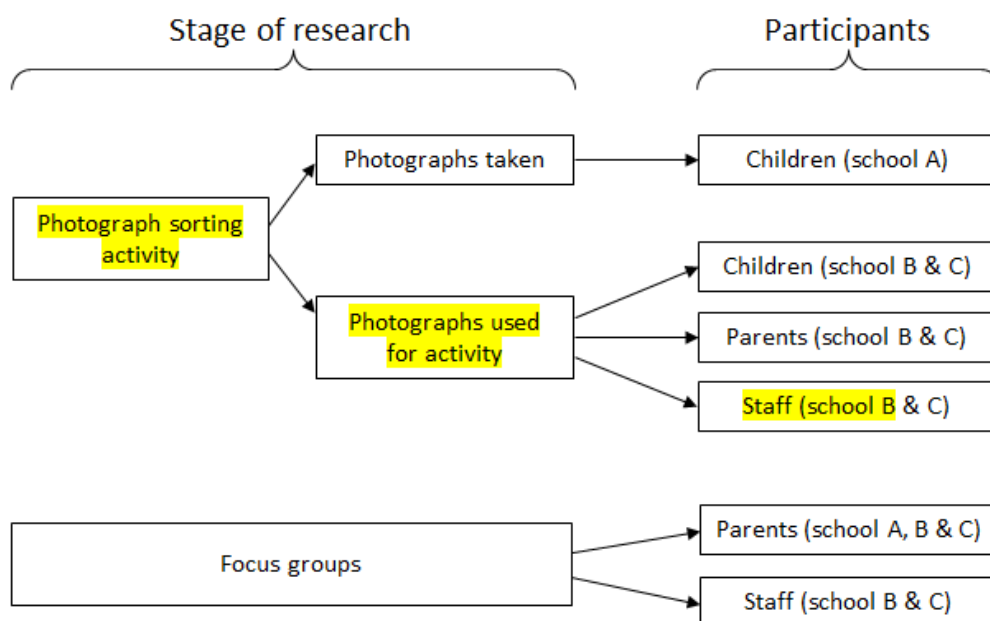
Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

Members of staff at ██████████ Primary School are invited to take part in this research being undertaken for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter. The research is looking at perceptions of play from different cultural perspectives and its relationship to teaching and learning. There are many ways that play happens in primary schools and it is important to understand different cultural perspectives so that school is as fitting and positive as possible for all children.

Taking part

There are two stages to this research, as shown below alongside the participants involved in each stage. The highlighted text shows the areas relevant to ██████████ Primary School (School B), described further below.



Photograph sorting activity

For the first stage of research, the photograph sorting activity, we would like to find out what sort of activities staff, children and parents (the latter two of Somali heritage, from Schools A and C) see as play and as work. Members of staff from [REDACTED] Primary School will be asked to look at photographs of children taking part in classroom activities and sort the photographs into boxes labelled as 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work'. The sorts of activities shown in the photographs include:

- Children building with blocks and other apparatus
- Children playing with other toys
- Children drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor
- Children talking together or with a teacher

The sorting activity will take place in school, take about 15 minutes per participant and participants will be able to stop at any time for any reason without being contacted again.

It is hoped that this photograph sorting activity will help us understand how people involved in children's education perceive play and learning and whether cultural differences exist in these perceptions.

Focus groups

For the second stage of the research, parents and members of staff from another school will be invited to take part in focus groups to discuss topics such as: views of play and learning; play and education in different countries; participants' own experiences of play and learning as a child, opportunities and barriers to play in school; play and children with additional needs; thoughts on findings of the photograph sorting activity.

It is hoped that these discussions will add context to the findings of the photograph sorting activity; facilitate parent and teacher discussions about teaching and learning through play; and build on existing research about differences between, and implications of, play perspectives and approaches in different cultures.

It is hoped that the overall research will benefit schools as well as adding to existing academic literature. Schools can make use of a range of approaches to teach and engage with children and families from diverse backgrounds. By finding out what children and

the adults around them think and believe about play and its relationship to learning, school experiences can be more fitting and positive for all children.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely any participants will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. Participants will be given contact details for the researcher and research supervisors that they can use if they have any concerns.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Data from the photograph sorting activities will be collected by looking at which box is chosen for each photograph; this information will be stored on a password protected computer, known only by the researcher. All data will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details participants will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. Any hard copies of information will be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely. As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Researcher: Elizabeth Bishop

Telephone: 0783881646

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

Research supervisor:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 7: School C Information



Title of Research Project

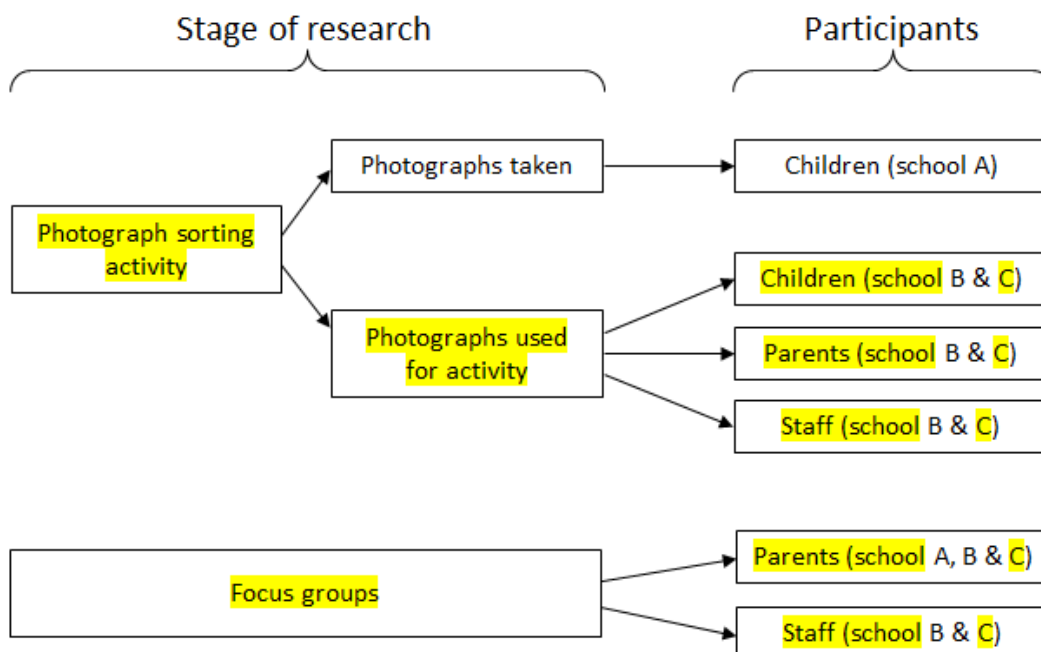
Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

Children and parents of Somali heritage and staff at ██████ Primary School are invited to take part in this research being undertaken for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter. The research is looking at perceptions of play from different cultural perspectives and its relationship to teaching and learning. There are many ways that play happens in primary schools and it is important to understand different cultural perspectives so that school is as fitting and positive as possible for all children.

Taking part

There are two stages to this research, as shown below alongside the participants involved in each stage. The highlighted text shows the areas relevant to ██████ Primary School (School C), described further below.



Photograph sorting activity

For the first stage of research, the photograph sorting activity, we would like to find out what sort of activities staff, children and parents (the latter two of Somali heritage) see as play and as work.

These participants (from [REDACTED] Primary School) will be asked to look at photographs of children taking part in classroom activities and sort the photographs into boxes labelled as 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work'. The sorts of activities shown in the photographs include:

- Children building with blocks and other apparatus
- Children playing with other toys
- Children drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor
- Children talking together or with a teacher

The sorting activity will take place in school, take about 15 minutes per participant and for child participants there will need to be a member of staff that the child knows in the room the whole time. Parents of child participants will receive information and consent forms to sign if they agree for their child to take part but any participants, including children, can still stop at any time for any reason and they will not be contacted again.

It is hoped that this photograph sorting activity will help us understand how people involved in children's education perceive play and learning and whether cultural differences exist in these perceptions.

Focus groups

For the second stage of the research, we would like parents of Somali heritage at [REDACTED] Primary School to take part in focus group discussions. We would also like staff at [REDACTED] Primary School to take part in focus group discussions. Focus groups can take place in school or another location chosen by participants and will last for approximately one hour. The discussions that the focus groups will have include: views of play and learning; play and education in different countries; participants' own experiences of play and learning as a child, opportunities and barriers to play in school; play and children with additional needs; thoughts on findings of the photograph sorting activity.

It is hoped that these discussions will add context to the findings of the photograph sorting activity; facilitate parent and teacher discussions about teaching and learning through play; and build on existing research about differences between, and implications of, play perspectives and approaches in different cultures.

It is hoped that the overall research will benefit schools as well as adding to existing academic literature. Schools can make use of a range of approaches to teach and engage with children and families from diverse backgrounds. By finding out what children and the adults around them think and believe about play and its relationship to learning, school experiences can be more fitting and positive for all children.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely any participants will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. Parents will, however, be asked to think about their and their child's play and school experiences. Therefore, they may find some discussions sensitive if they have had experiences that have been difficult or distressing. Teachers will be asked to reflect and comment on their own and others' teaching practice; tensions with regards to play opportunities; and disagreements that may occur in this area. Therefore, they may find some discussions sensitive if they have had concerns or experiences that have been difficult to manage or if they are concerned about discussing tensions in their existing workplace. However, responses will be saved and reported anonymously and participants can choose not to respond to any questions they wish not to. Adult participants and parents of child participants will be given contact details for the researcher and research supervisors that they can use if they have any concerns.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Data from the photograph sorting activities will be collected by looking at which box is chosen for each photograph; this information will be stored on a password protected computer, known only by the researcher. Focus group data will be collected in the form of an audio recording, which will be written and also stored on a password protected

device, known only by the researcher. All data will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details of teachers, parents and children will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. If parents or teachers would like to see a copy of the transcript of the focus group discussions, they will be able to give an email address on the consent form. Any hard copies of information, notes or focus group transcriptions will be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Researcher: Elizabeth Bishop

Telephone: 0783881646

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

Research supervisor:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 8: Photographed child info and consent



Information & Consent Form

Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

Your child is invited to take part in this study, as they attend [REDACTED] Primary School and they are of Somali heritage. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children and their children's teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part

Later on in this research, some children, parents and teachers in a different school will be asked to look at some photographs of children in a classroom. These children, parents and teachers will be asked to sort the photographs into a box labelled 'play' or 'not play' and a box labelled 'work' or 'not work'. Photographs are needed for this activity and this is what would like your child to take part in.

Your child will be asked to do some classroom activities that will be photographed.

Examples are:

- Building with blocks and other apparatus
- Playing with other toys
- Drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor
- Talking with other children or a teacher

The activities should take about one hour and there will also be a member of staff that your child knows in some of the photographs. Once you have read this information, please sign the consent form on page 3 and return it to the school if you agree for your child to take part. Your child's consent will also be needed, so the researcher will first see them and explain that photographs will be taken of them and other children doing different activities like they do in school. They will be asked if they would like to take part and they will be told that they do not have to and can stop at any time. If your child does stop at any time for any reason, you or your child will not be contacted again.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely your child will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Photographs will be taken using a digital camera and afterwards, the photographs will be moved to a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher, and deleted from the camera. The photographs will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details of you and your child will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. If you would like to see the photographs of your child, please give your email address below and you will be sent a copy of the photographs of your child with the faces of any other children blurred. Any paper copies of photographs or notes will also be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as being used during the study, photographs may be printed in the researcher's written dissertation, other publications and presented at events and conferences. The data at the end of the research may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above. There are two places to sign on the consent form so that you can show if you agree to photographs of your child being used in the research activity but you do not want them to be printed or presented elsewhere.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Haighton, St Luke's Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk



Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the research.

I understand that:

- my child does not have to take part in this research and, if s/he does choose to take part, s/he may stop at any time;
- photographs of my child will be used only for the research activity described above and therefore only shown to participants in this activity;
- the researcher will make every effort to protect my child's identity;
- I consent for the researcher to use photographs of my child for the research activity described above.

.....

(Signature of parent / guardian)

.....

(Date)

.....

(Printed name of parent / guardian)

.....

(Printed name of child participant)

.....

(Email address of parent/guardian if you wish to view a copy of the photographs)

- I also consent for photographs of my child to be included in the researcher's thesis, other publications and shown at events and conferences (please do not sign below if you do not want photographs of your child to be seen outside of the research activity).

.....

.....

(Signature of parent / guardian)

(Date)

.....

.....

(Printed name of researcher)

(Signature of researcher)

Please return the signed form to school. These details will be kept separately from photographs of your child.

Appendix 9: Focus group School A info and interest



Information Form – Focus Group

Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this study as your child's participation has also been requested for another stage of the research, and you are of Somali heritage. Parents and teachers at a second school have also been invited to take part in a different part of the research. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children and their children's teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part

You will participate in a focus group with about 6-10 other parents of Somali heritage. The discussions that the focus group will have include: views of play and learning; play and education in different countries; your own experiences of play and learning as a child. The focus group will take about one hour. Parents of Somali heritage and teachers from another primary school are also participating in similar focus groups. If you take part you can still stop at any time, your responses would be removed from the research and you will not be contacted again. Once you have read this information, please sign the form on page 2 and return the form to school if you are interested in taking part.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely you will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. You will, however, be asked to think about yours and your child's play and school experiences. Therefore, you may find some discussions sensitive if you have had experiences that have been difficult or distressing. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Focus group data will be collected in the form of an audio recording; this information will be written and stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. If you would like to see a copy of the transcript of the discussions, please give your email address below. This data will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. Any hard copies of focus group notes or transcriptions will also be stored in a locked space, accessed only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Haighton, St Luke's Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

✂-----

I am interested in taking part in the research titled "Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers". I am happy for the researcher to contact me using the information below:

.....

Full name

Signature

.....

.....

Telephone number or email address.

Date

If you would prefer to be contacted through the school you may leave this blank.

These details will be kept separately from the information you provide during the study.

Appendix 10: Staff sorting activity School B info and interest

Information and Consent Form – Sorting Activity



Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this study as you are a teacher or teaching assistant at [REDACTED] Catholic Primary School. Staff and children and parents of Somali heritage at other schools have also been invited to participate. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children think and what primary school teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part

We would like to find out what sort of activities you see as play and as learning. You will be asked to look at some photographs of children taking part in classroom activities and sort the photographs into boxes labelled as 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work'.

The sorts of activities shown in the photographs include:

- Children building with blocks and other apparatus
- Children playing with other toys
- Children drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor

- Children talking together or with a teacher

The sorting activity will take place in school and will take about 15 minutes. You do not have to take part. Once you have read this information, please sign the form on page 2 and return the form to [REDACTED] if you are interested in taking part. If you take part you can still stop at any time, your responses would be removed from the research and you will not be contacted again.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely you will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Data will be collected by looking at which box is chosen for each photograph; this information will be stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. This data will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. Any paper copies of notes or information will also be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Haighton, St Luke’s Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road,
Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with
someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

✂-----

I am interested in taking part in the research titled “Using a cross-cultural conception of
play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and
primary school teachers”. I am happy for the researcher to contact me using the
information below:

.....

Full name

Signature

.....

Telephone number or email address.

Date

If you would prefer to be contacted
through the school you may leave this blank.

These details will be kept separately from the information you provide during the study.



Research about play

I would like to find out what children and parents of Somali heritage think about play. To do this, I would like you and your child to look at some photographs and put them into boxes saying ‘play’ or ‘learning’. This will take about 15 minutes.

For another part of the research I would like to meet with a small group of parents to find out what you think about play in school. This will take about an hour.

Findings of the research will be written up and may be shown in presentations but names will not be shared. There are more details for you to read on page 2 and 3 and the consent forms are below. When you have read all three pages, please sign the consent forms and return them to school.

✂-----

For your child to take part in the photograph activity:

.....

Signature of parent

Date

.....

Name of parent

.....

Name of child

✂-----

For you to take part in the photograph activity:

.....

Signature of participant (Your signature)

Date

.....

Name of participant (Your name)

.....

Telephone number or email address.

If you would prefer to be contacted through the school you may leave this blank.

For you to take part in the focus group:

.....

Signature of participant (Your signature)	Date
.....
Name of participant (Your name)	Telephone number or email address.

Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

You and your child are invited to take part in this study, as your child attends [REDACTED] Primary School and they are of Somali heritage. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children and their children's teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part – photograph activity

We would like to find out what sort of activities children and adults see as play and as work. Participants (you and/or your child) will be asked to look at some photographs of children taking part in classroom activities and sort the photographs into boxes labelled as 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work'.

The sorts of activities shown in the photographs include:

- Children building with blocks and other apparatus
- Children playing with other toys
- Children drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor

- Children talking together or with a teacher

The sorting activity will take place in school and take about 15 minutes. Participants (you and/or your child) can stop at any time for any reason, their responses would be removed from the research and they would not be contacted again. If your child is taking part, their consent will also be needed, so the researcher will first see them and explain the activity. They will be asked if they would like to take part and they will be told that they do not have to and can stop at any time. There will also be a familiar member of staff in the room when your child does the activity.

Taking part – focus group

We would like you to participate in a focus group with about 6-10 other parents of Somali heritage. The discussions that the focus group will have include: views of play and learning; play and education in different countries; your own experiences of play and learning as a child. The focus group will take about one hour. If you take part you can still stop at any time, your responses will be removed from the research and you will not be contacted again.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely you or your child will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. During the focus group, you will be asked to think about yours and your child's play and school experiences. Therefore, you may find some discussions sensitive if you have had experiences that have been difficult or distressing. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

For the photograph activity, data will be collected by looking at which box is chosen for each photograph; this information will be stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. Focus group data will be collected in the form of an audio recording; this information will be written and also stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. The photograph data and focus group discussions will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details of you and your child will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. If you would like to see a copy of the focus group discussions, the researcher can send these to you. Any paper copies of photographs or discussions will also be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic

publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the research.

By signing the consent form, I understand that:

- my child and I do not have to take part in this research and may stop at any time;
- all information me or my child give will be treated as confidential and used only for this research project, which may include use in publications or presentations;
- I can refuse for any information about me or my child to be published;
- the researcher will make every effort to protect mine and my child's identity;

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Highton, St Luke's Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

Appendix 12: Staff sorting activity School C info and interest



Information Form – Sorting Activity

Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this study as you are a member of staff at [REDACTED] Primary School. Children and parents of Somali heritage have also been invited to participate. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children and their children's teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part

We would like to find out what sort of activities you see as play and as learning. You will be asked to look at some photographs of children taking part in classroom activities and sort the photographs into boxes labelled as 'play' or 'not play' and 'work' or 'not work'.

The sorts of activities shown in the photographs include:

- Children building with blocks and other apparatus
- Children playing with other toys
- Children drawing with paper and pencils at a table or on the floor
- Children talking together or with a teacher

The sorting activity will take place in school, take about 15 minutes and if you would like to have someone else with you who is not participating in the research then you may do so. You do not have to take part. Once you have read this information, please sign the form on page 2 and return the form to [REDACTED] if you are interested in taking

part. If you take part you can still stop at any time, your responses would be removed from the research and you will not be contacted again.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely you will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Data will be collected by looking at which box is chosen for each photograph; this information will be stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. This data will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. Any paper copies of notes or information will also be stored in a locked space, used only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher's written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Haighton, St Luke's Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

✂-----

I am interested in taking part in the research titled “Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers”. I am happy for the researcher to contact me using the information below:

.....

Full name

.....

Signature

.....

Telephone number or email address.

.....

Date

If you would prefer to be contacted
through the school you may leave this blank.

These details will be kept separately from the information you provide during the study.

Appendix 13: Staff focus group School C info and interest



Information Form – Focus Group

Title of Research Project

Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers.

Introduction

You are invited to take part in this study as you are a member of staff at [REDACTED] Primary School. Children and parents of Somali heritage have also been invited to participate in a different part of the research. This study is part of the research I am undertaking for my Doctorate in Educational, Child and Community Psychology at the University of Exeter.

Background

Other research has suggested that people from different countries have different views about play and learning. Some people think that there should be lots of play in school and some people think that there shouldn't. Because of the differences between Somalia and England, we are interested in finding out what parents of Somali heritage think about play and learning and whether this is the same as what their children and their children's teachers think. It is important to understand these different views so that schools can include children from different cultures as well as possible.

Taking part

You will participate in a focus group with about 5 other teachers from [REDACTED] Primary School. The discussions that the focus group will have include: perceptions of play and learning; your own play experiences, opportunities and barriers to play in school; play and children with additional needs; play and children from different ethnic backgrounds.

The focus group will take place in school and take about one hour. Parents of Somali heritage from [REDACTED] Primary School are also participating in a similar focus group. Once you have read this information, please sign the form on page 2 and return the form to [REDACTED] if you are interested in taking part. If you take part you can still stop at any time, your responses would be removed from the research and you will not be contacted again.

Benefits and risks of taking part

It is hoped that this research will help us understand what children and adults from different cultures think about play and learning. It is unlikely you will feel psychological stress or anxiety or experience harm. You will, however, be asked to reflect and comment on your own and others' teaching practice; tensions with regards to play opportunities; and disagreements that may occur in this area. Therefore, you may find some discussions sensitive if you have had concerns or experiences that have been difficult to manage or if you are concerned about discussing tensions in your existing workplace. However, your responses will be saved and reported anonymously and you can choose not to respond to any questions you wish not to. If you have concerns, you may use the contact details given below.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Focus group data will be collected in the form of an audio recording; this information will be written and stored in a password protected computer area, known only by the researcher. If you would like to see a copy of the transcript of the discussions, please give your email address below. This data will be will be stored without names and labelled with a code. A separate list of names and contact details will be linked to the codes; this list will be available only to the researcher and research supervisors. Any hard copies of focus group notes or transcriptions will also be stored in a locked space, accessed only by the researcher. All data will be stored until the research is completed, in July 2017, and then destroyed securely.

As well as the researcher’s written dissertation, the data may be presented at events and conferences. The dissertation may also be sent to journals or other academic publications and the data may be used for future studies. In each case, confidentiality and anonymity will be the same as written above.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Name: Elizabeth Bishop

Postal address: 2.25 Haighton, St Luke’s Campus, University of Exeter, Heavitree Road, Exeter, Devon, EX1 2LU

Telephone: 0117 931 1111

Email: eb508@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Andrew Richards: A.J.Richards@exeter.ac.uk

Dr Martin Levinson: M.P.Levinson@exeter.ac.uk

✂-----

I am interested in taking part in the research titled “Using a cross-cultural conception of play to explore the play perspectives of children and parents of Somali heritage and primary school teachers”. I am happy for the researcher to contact me using the information below:

.....
Full name	Signature
.....
Telephone number or email address.	Date

If you would prefer to be contacted through the school you may leave this blank.

These details will be kept separately from the information you provide during the study.

Appendix 14: Script and consent process for children

As well as written consent from parents, child participants were required to give verbal consent. These children were told the following information (individually, with a familiar staff member present) and asked to say yes if they agreed to take part:

“I am doing an activity today with lots of children and I wonder if you could take part. The activity means that you will be shown some photographs of children and asked to choose a box to put each photograph into. No-one outside of this room will know your name and what boxes you choose, your teacher with you here won't tell anyone what boxes you choose and you won't be asked to do anything else afterwards. You don't have to do the activity and if you would like to stop at any time then you can. I will explain more about what you need to do if you would like to take part. Would you like to do this activity?”

If the child said yes they were given further instructions about what to do, i.e. they were told (and shown) that they can decide if each photograph shows a child playing or not playing and then put the photograph in the box labelled 'play' or 'not play'. The child was then asked if they understood what to do in the activity. If they said yes then this was considered their consent to take part.

Appendix 15: Script and consent process for photographed child

As well as written consent from the photographed child's parent, this child was also required to give verbal consent. He was told the following information (individually, with a familiar staff member present) and asked to say yes if he agreed to take part:

"I would like to take some photographs of you doing different activities. These activities are things like doing a puzzle, drawing or running outside. I can show you the photographs as I take them. Afterwards the photographs will be kept on a computer with a password so no-one will be able to get them. The only people who will see the photographs will be some children and adults in another school, so that I can ask them about the activities in the photographs. But the people who see the photographs will not be told your name or anything else about you. You don't have to do all the activities and if you would like to stop at any time then you can. If you would like me to stop taking photographs then you can tell me and I will stop straight away."

The child was then asked if he would like to take part and if he said yes this was considered an indication of his consent.

Appendix 16: Justification for the inclusion of one participant

Before signing a consent form, one parent revealed that she was from Yemen rather than Somalia, but due to similarities between the countries (such as the Arabic language, historical ties and close physical proximity) she often talked with the Somali parents at the school and had therefore attended the meeting. She was keen to participate in the research in order to discuss her experiences with play and school and to hear others' thoughts.

I decided to include this participant for a number of reasons. Firstly, as previously stated, there are long-standing economic and cultural ties between Somalia and Yemen. Many Somalis were displaced to Yemen in the 1980s and 1990s following the outbreak of the Somali civil war. As a result, a significant number of Somalis who now live in the U.K. have lived in Yemen (Rutter, 2006). Similarly, many Somalis now living in the U.K. have also lived in other countries, as wide-ranging as Kenya, Italy and Sweden. This meant that excluding one parent from the research due to her originally being from Yemen would be applying a criterion that was more arbitrary than meaningful. Lastly, one aim of this research was to engage parents who are often classed as "hard to reach" or "marginalised". To exclude a participant who was willing to take part would therefore have contradicted this aim. This is consistent with the pragmatic approach taken during this research process.

Throughout the two stages of the research I was able to identify this participant using the Participant Number she had been assigned; therefore I was able to monitor any discrepancies in responses should the participant's different country of birth become specifically necessary to consider.

Appendix 17. Photographs used in sorting activity (photographs edited for print only to conceal identities in line with the consent obtained)



Photo 1 - Child is doing a difficult puzzle (cue: difficulty)



Photo 2 - Child is doing easy puzzle (cue: difficulty)



Photo 3 - Child has building blocks surrounded by 'work' displays (e.g. numeracy/literacy posters) (cue: context/background)



Photo 4 - Child is sat at a table with real food (cue: pretend)

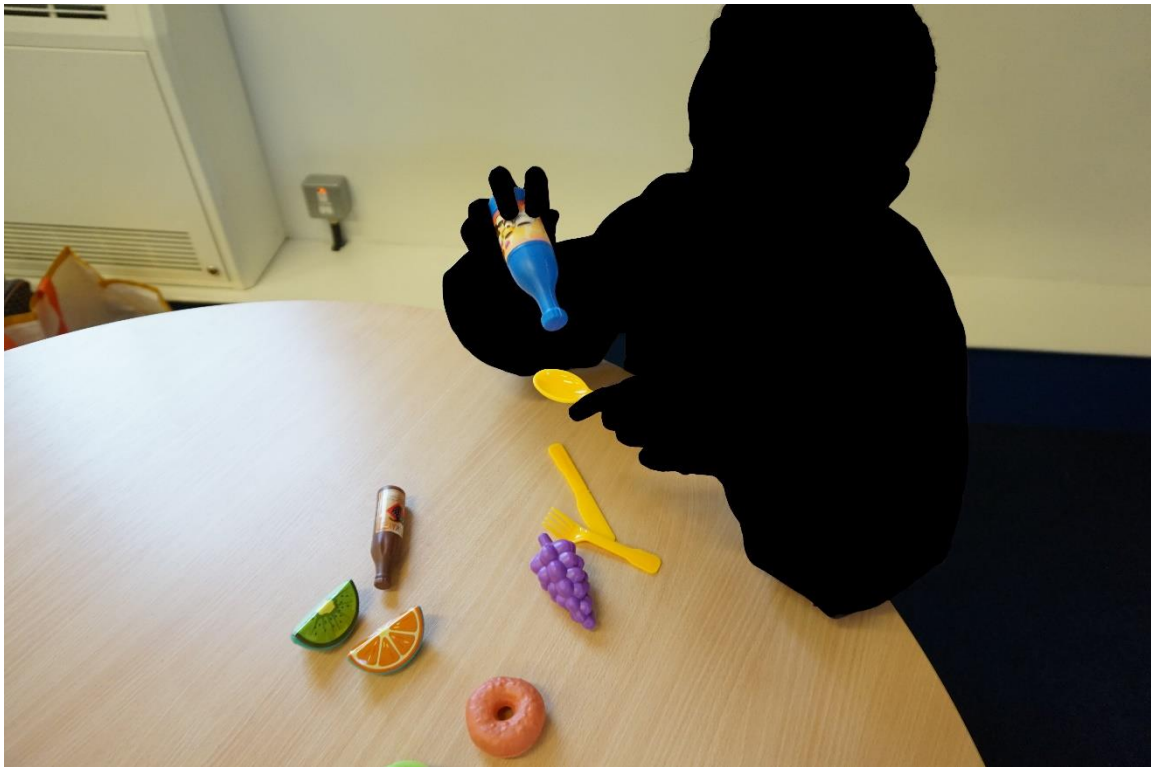


Photo 5 - Child is sat at a table with pretend/plastic food (cue: pretend)



Photo 6 - Child has building blocks surrounded by 'play' displays (e.g. sports posters or posters of toys) (cue: context/background)

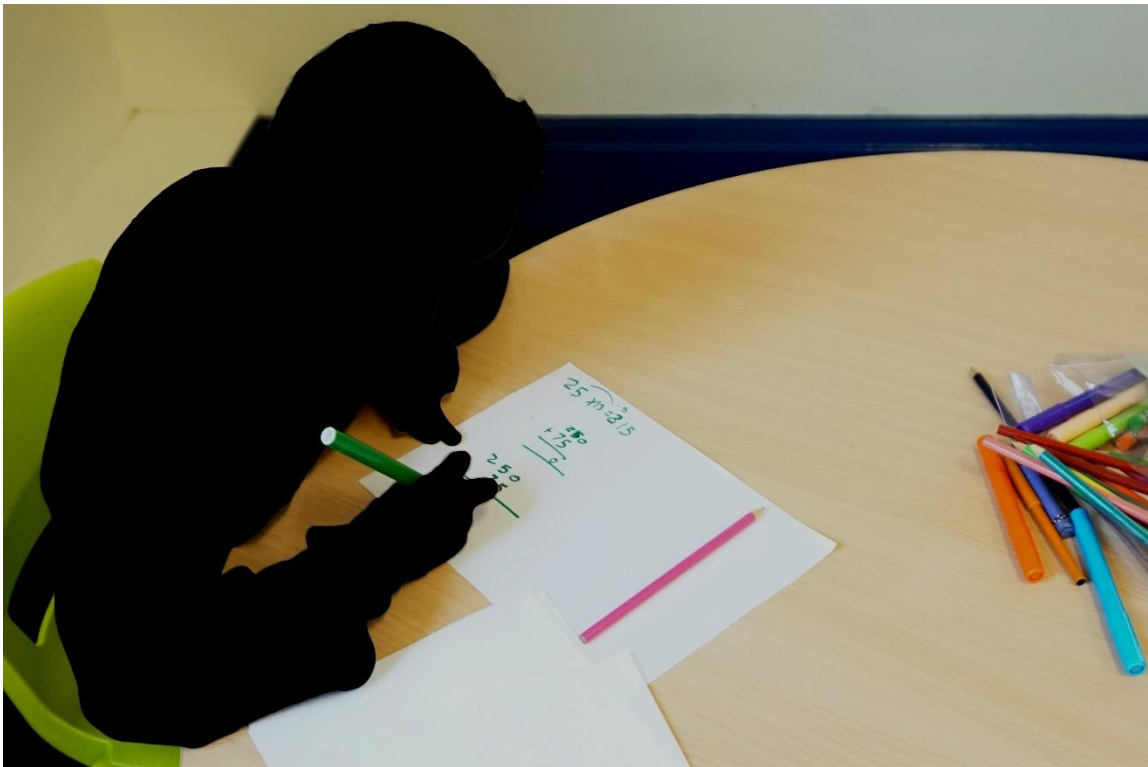


Photo 7 - Child is writing sums on paper (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 8 - Child is running outside with no materials (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 9 - Child has a blank piece of paper and pencils (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 10 - Child is drawing (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 11 - Child has building blocks at a table and is laughing (cue: positive affect)



Photo 12 - Child has building blocks at a table and has an expression of concentration (cue: positive affect)

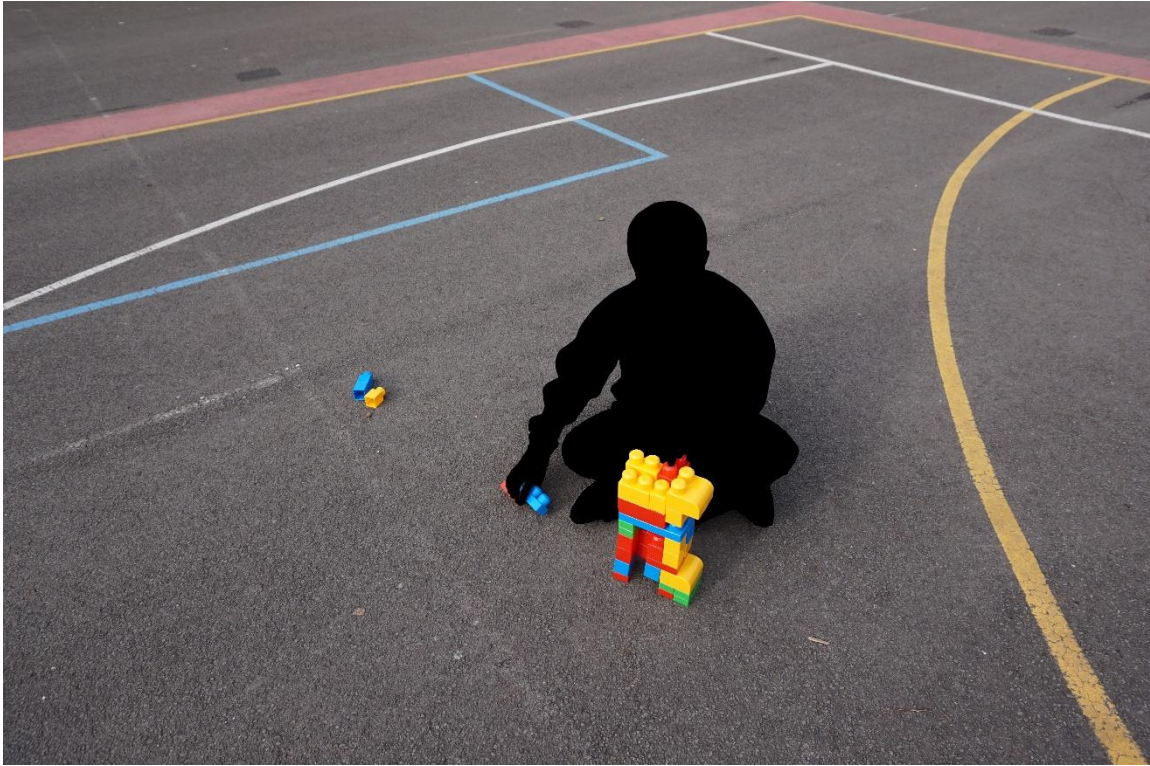


Photo 13 - Child has building blocks outside (cue: context/background; space and constraint)

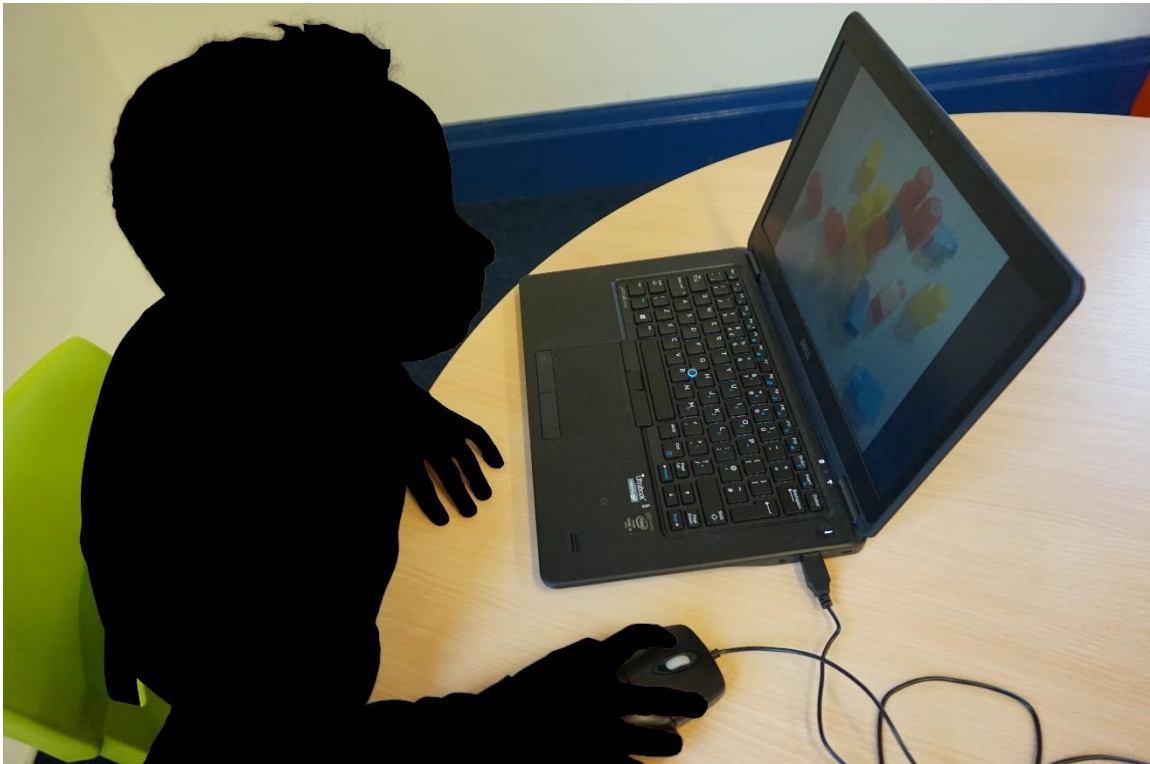


Photo 14 - Child is looking at building blocks on a laptop screen (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 15 - Child is looking at building blocks in a book (cue: activity/material/toy/technology)



Photo 16 - Child has building blocks at table, on their own, with blank walls (cue: context/background; activity/material/toy/technology; space and constraint; adult presence)

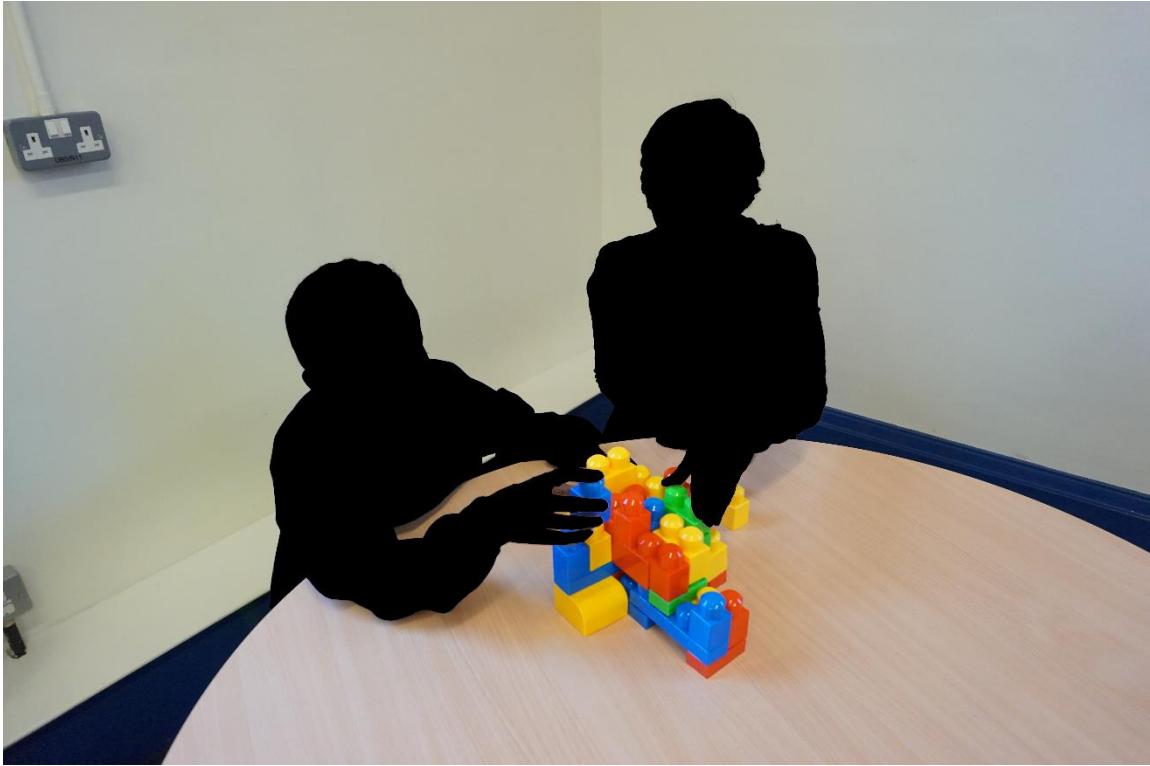


Photo 17 - Child has building blocks at a table with an adult (cue: adult presence)

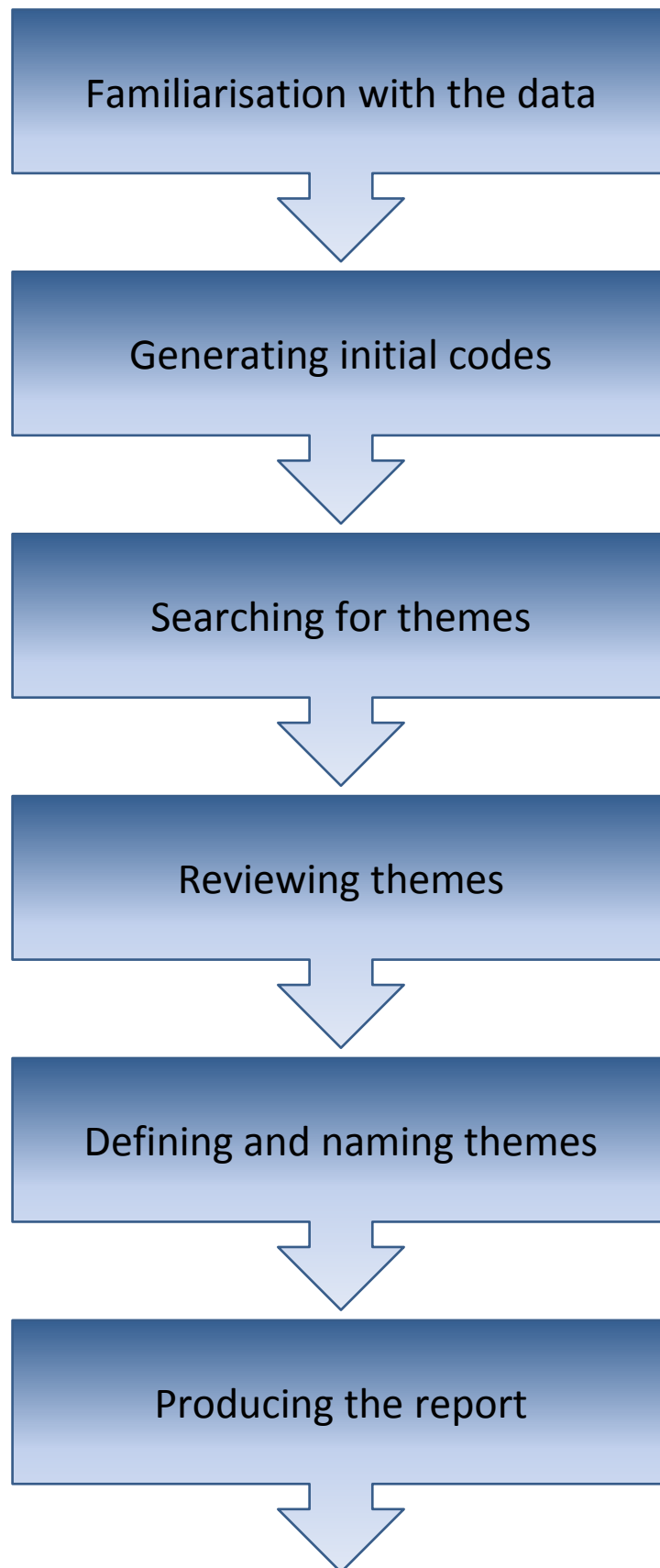


Photo 18 - Child has building blocks at a table with adult nearby (cue: adult presence)



Photo 19 - Child has building blocks on the floor inside (cue: space and constraint)

Appendix 18: Braun & Clarke (2006) Thematic Analysis Process



Appendix 20: Work and not work decisions

		Photographs																			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
Teachers																					
Non-teachers																					
Children																					
Parents																					

Work
 Not Work

Appendix 21: Focus Group Schedules

Focus Group Schedule - Parents

The economic structure of a community

- What is the physical environment like where your children play?
- What other activities do your children do that are not play?
- What about the 'things' your children play with, i.e. materials, objects, toys?

The roles and activities of adults

- What activities do you and/or your partner do around the house or for a job? Do these have an effect on your children's play?
- How much are adults involved in your children's play?

The value the community assigns to play

- How important do you think play is?

The implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children

- Are there ways that your children know how you feel about play?

Play, work and learning

- Do children learn when they play?
 - Same for all children? (Piaget – universal stages of development)
 - Social play (Vygotsky – development through social interaction)
 - Playing alone (Piaget – knowledge construction via independent explorations)
- What role should play have in school?
 - Play freely during the school day (Froebel and Isaacs)
 - Play used as a way of teaching (Montessori)

Questions based on phase one findings

- Do different activities "belong" in different locations?
- What role does technology have in play?
- What affect does adult direction have on children's play?

Probes: "What was that like when you were a child?", "Can you tell me more about that?", "Can you think of an example?", "What do you think/feel about that?", "Do you have an experience of that that you can tell me about?", "Some people think that..."

Focus Group Schedule - Staff

The economic structure of a community

- What is the physical environment like where children play?
- What other activities do children do that are not play?
- What about the 'things' children play with, i.e. materials, objects, toys?

The roles and activities of adults

- What activities do adults do? Do these have an effect on children's play?
- How much are adults involved in children's play?

The value the community assigns to play

- How important do you think play is?

The implicit or explicit way in which these values are communicated to children

- Are there ways that children know how you feel about play?

Play, work and learning

- Do children learn when they play?
 - Same for all children? (Piaget – universal stages of development)
 - Social play (Vygotsky – development through social interaction)
 - Playing alone (Piaget – knowledge construction via independent explorations)
- What role should play have in school?
 - Play freely during the school day (Froebel and Isaacs)
 - Play used as a way of teaching (Montessori)

Questions based on phase one findings

- Why did staff categorise the difficult activity as play more often than the easy activity and as work less often?
- Why did the 'outside' cue increase both the 'play' and 'work' categorisation for staff?
- What role does technology have in play?
- What affect does adult direction have on children's play?

Probes: "What was that like when you were a child?", "Can you tell me more about that?", "Can you think of an example?", "What do you think/feel about that?", "Do you have an experience of that that you can tell me about?", "Some people think that..."

Appendix 22: Pictures displayed at focus group meetings













Appendix 23: Excerpt of transcript from staff focus group

EB = interviewer

P = participants

EB: So just talking a bit more then about, yeah, the physical environment and thinking about things that you said about when you were younger and then about children now. What do you think about the physical environment where children play now?

P: It's more built up. So my children, I always felt very sad that my kids weren't playing outside like I used to, on the road.

P4: Yeah.

EB: Mm.

P: Umm, and I think it's the increase in cars and traffic, cars and traffic seem massive. And, as well as more worry about stranger danger. But I think it's cars and traffic that feels the main thing.

EB: Yeah.

P: So where you could've just been on and off kerbs, we were on our bikes and on off kerbs and all over, there was space on the pavement and the road to play.

EB: Mm.

P3: And I think, also, we probably... umm... we were probably, our parents were probably... umm... more risk takers...

EB: Mm.

P3: ... I would say. Because, you know, I can remember, I was only about eight, with my younger sister, going off to a park that was probably, ok only about 10 minutes walk, umm, you know with our fishing rods and...

EB: Mm.

P3: ... you know, and that was the norm.

EB: Yeah.

P3: Umm, and I think that risk taking has kind of subsided, hasn't it?

P: Yeah.

P3: You know, there's not...

P: Yeah, yeah, we feel more worried.

P3: There's more traffic. There's, I don't know, I suppose that's the question, isn't it? Is there more risk, now...

EB: Mm-hm.

P3: ... than there was, when we were younger?

EB: Mm. Ok.

P2: Or... Go on...

P1: There's more limits. Me and my sister were saying the other day how, umm, we've noticed that my niece and nephew absolutely love the woods and they love the beach and we realise it's because it's the only place where you go, "stay in there, don't touch that, don't," you know, "beware of this, beware of that."

Many participants agree.

P1: Beach you go, you can wander on, you still got an eye on them, they seem relatively contained and relatively safe. The same with the woods, like, you know, it's relatively not that much that, unless they're gonna climb a tree and ping out of it or anything...

Appendix 24: Excerpt of transcript from parent focus group

EB = interviewer

P = participants (P1 participant from Yemen)

P1: Is the children and the women is in the home in my country and Somali, every Arabic Asian. The children will play in outside, no mummy going with you.

EB: So the children go off on their own?

P1: Yeah, yeah. Maybe 3 years ago, I go in Yemen.

EB: Yeah.

P1: Holiday. Again, you go. More freedom.

EB: So is that the same?

P4: More freedom in the outside.

P: You have the area is bigger and the play, yeah.

P2: I remember when I was 5 years old. I was playing all the other children my age and we going to walk. Because nobody look after us, it's the same everywhere.

Other participants are vocal in support of this.

P2: One day we go, 5 children, including me 6 and we walk away you know because we are going to look at what we going to play and what we will like. And we go and walk, walk, walk, far away...

P4: It did happen to me as well

P2: ...and when we found, we lost, we don't know how to come back a home.

EB: Wow.

P2: We all was crying.

The other participants are humoured by the story.

P4: It did happen to me, yes.

P2: I was crying, crying, crying, crying and one lady, she saw us, she call us and she talk to us and we can't say where we live.

EB: Right.

P2: We can't say where we come from. We can't say what is name, what is the full name mum, or dad because we just know one name. My mum she called her name only.

EB: So you'd be lost.

P2: Yeh. We lost and she bengahazed, you know the radio someone.

P4: Ahh, radio someone. Yeah! They took you to the radio station.

P2: Yeah.

EB: Right. And why, why was...

P2: And my dad, he hear.

P4: He was listening to radio!

EB: Oh right!

P2: And they come all the way!

P4: In the evening, when they are having cup of tea in the evening after prayer, 4 O'Clock, they usually like to listen radio. My dad, he was always with the radio. It was always close to him.

Laughter and agreement amongst the other participants.

P4: And other one, that doesn't have the radio used to come with him because, my dad I'm talking about, he used to have a little hotel of cafeteria, something like that.

EB: Ok.

P4: So evening, about 4 or 5 o'clock, other mens used to come and gather and they used to play this domino...

EB: Yep.

P4: ... together and the radio was there in the middle and they were listening back home and what's happening.

P2: You know, and when we come back home, my mum she said to us, even I don't know if they are gone one hour or two hour.

EB: Wow.

P2: So we are long time gone because we left our home you know, might be...

P2 speaks to P4

P4: Lunchtime.

P2: Lunchtime and at four o'clock she give to us the food for eating the lunch and we refused, we said, "no, we want mum's."

EB: Gosh. Wow.

P4: It was free really. There was a lot of freedom.

P2: Yes, there was freedom.

Appendix 25: Coded data in NVivo

This screenshot of thematic analysis in NVivo shows all coding of this section, including coding to two activity system components ('tools' and 'motives'). Text coded to 'found materials' is highlighted in the transcript.

The screenshot displays the NVivo interface. At the top, a coding scheme is shown with various nodes and their associated colors:

- Tools (Orange)
- Outside play (Blue)
- Motives (Purple)
- Making things (Red)
- Making models from s (Yellow)
- Imagination - creativity (Green)
- Found materials (Green)
- Children ran far (Orange)
- Being physical (Blue)
- Adults provided materials (Purple)
- Coding Density (Black)

Below the coding scheme, a transcript window titled "Parents script" is visible. The transcript contains the following text, with certain phrases highlighted in yellow to indicate coding:

T: So for me we used to go to the, umm, there is bicycle people, the people who repair bicycles. So the part they don't need they used to give to us.

EB: So you get the tyre...

T: and then we take a wire and then you roll it, like a hook and then you are walking with it, you are running with it. You don't know, you go far sometimes!

EB: Right, you played that as well?

P1: This the big, I go inside.

EB: Inside!? Wow. Did anyone else used to do, a big and you go inside it?

General agreement amongst the participants.

P1: Like this, big and I'm going inside and you...

EB: run inside it. Wow.

Enthusiastic discussion.

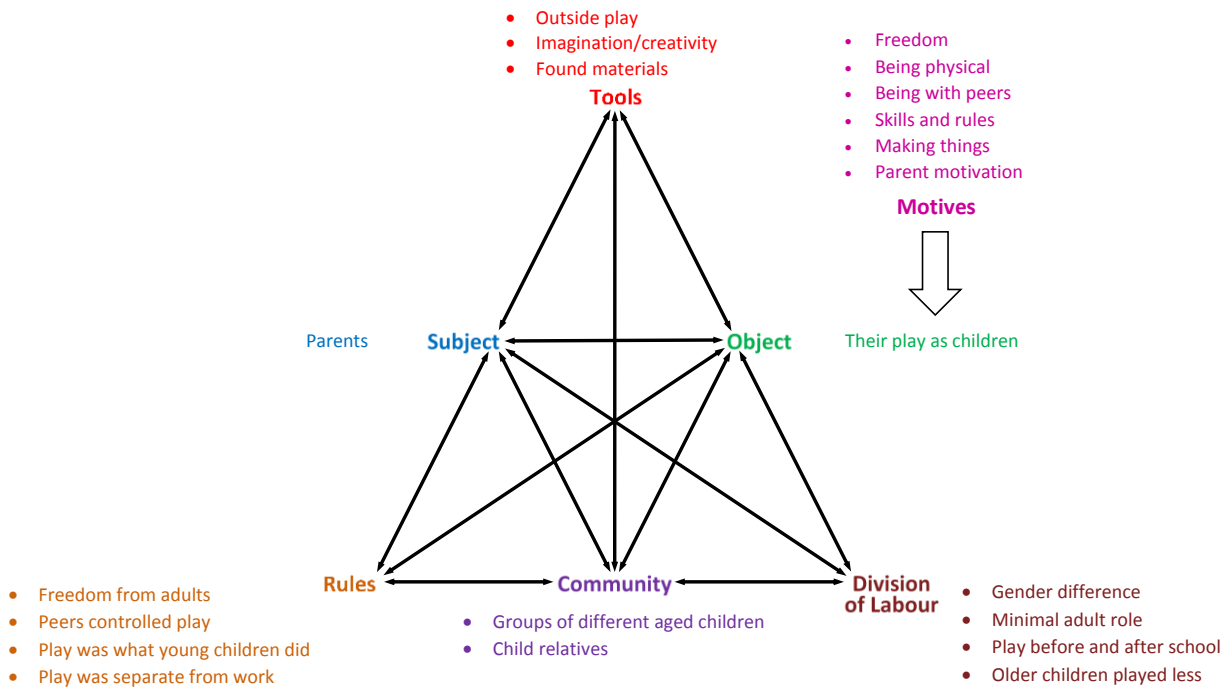
T: The other thing is we was going by the side of lake or river and then we take sand...

EB: Right.

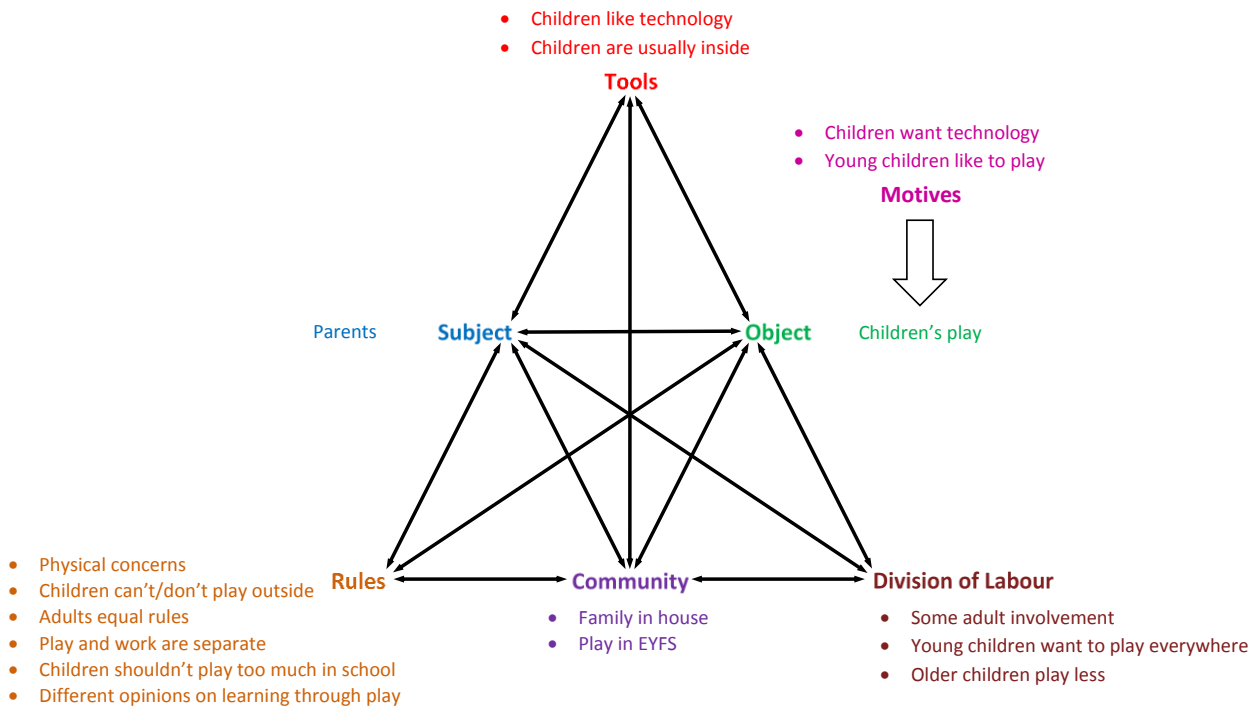
T: ... and we build like a home.

Appendix 26: Parent activity system nodes

Parent Activity System

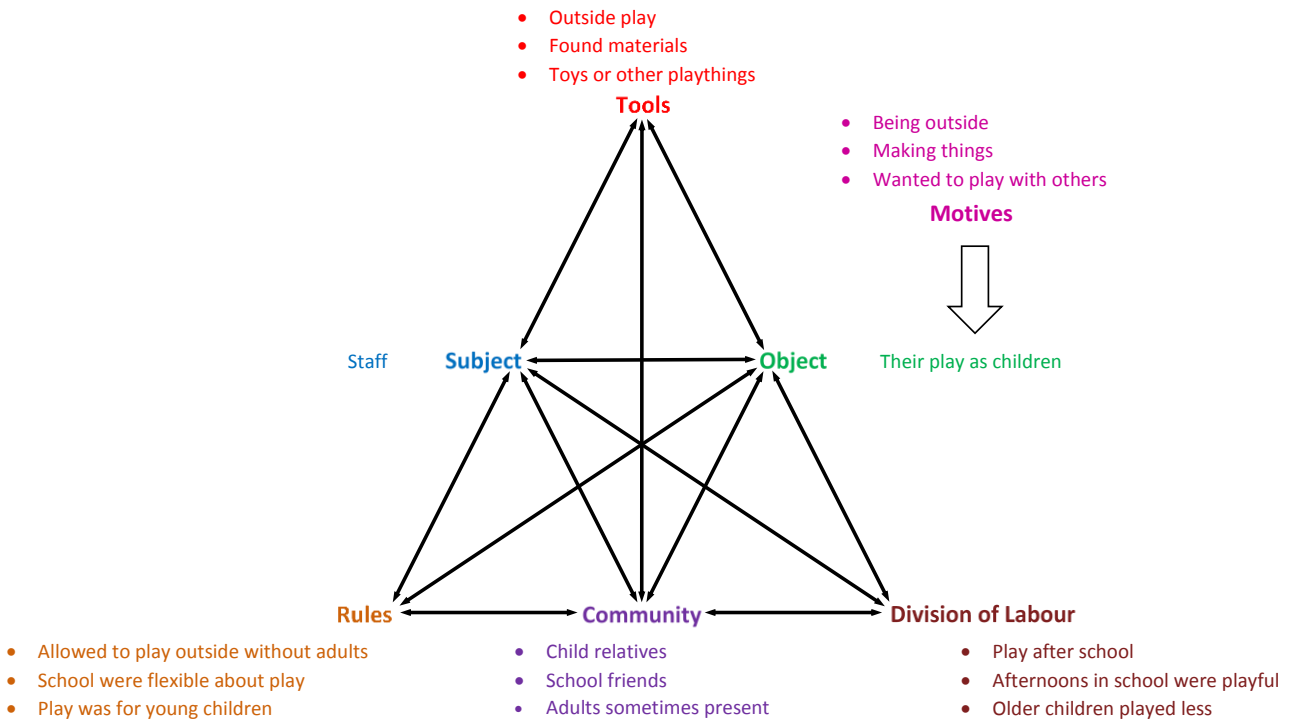


Parent-Child Activity System

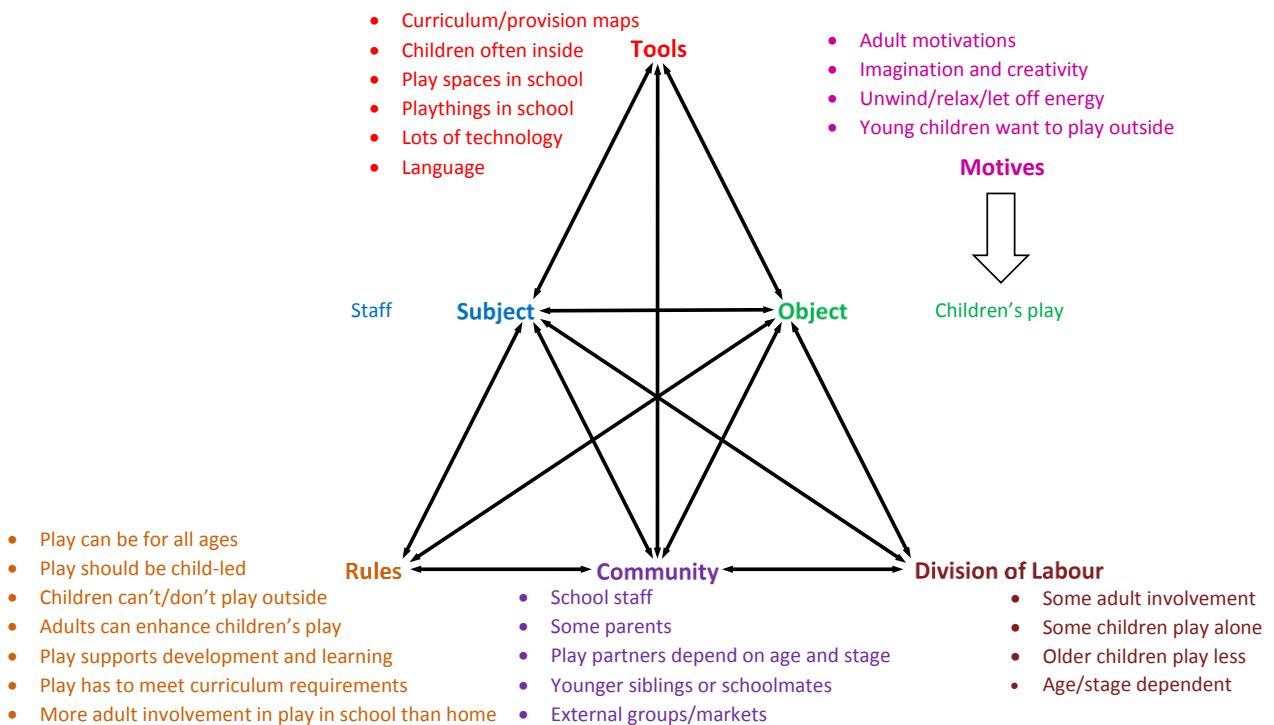


Appendix 27: Staff activity system nodes

Staff Activity System



Staff-Child Activity System



Appendix 28: 'Parent' nodes for each activity system framework

Parents' 'parent' nodes

- Play occurred outside
- Play was away from adults
- Parents played outside a lot
- Play was away from adults
- Play was separate from work
- Play was a social activity
- Impulsive/unstructured play was good
- Play had physical benefits

Parent-child 'parent' nodes

- Barriers to outside play
- Too much technology
- Unclear adult role
- Young children play a lot
- Different adult roles
- Importance of home-school alliance
- Play and work are separate
- Play is a distraction from work
- Different opinions on learning through play
- Play has physical benefits
- Play has emotional benefits
- Play is important

Staff 'parent' nodes

- Play was often outside
- Play sometimes happened in school
- Adults sometimes played
- Range of play companions
- Sometimes play linked to work

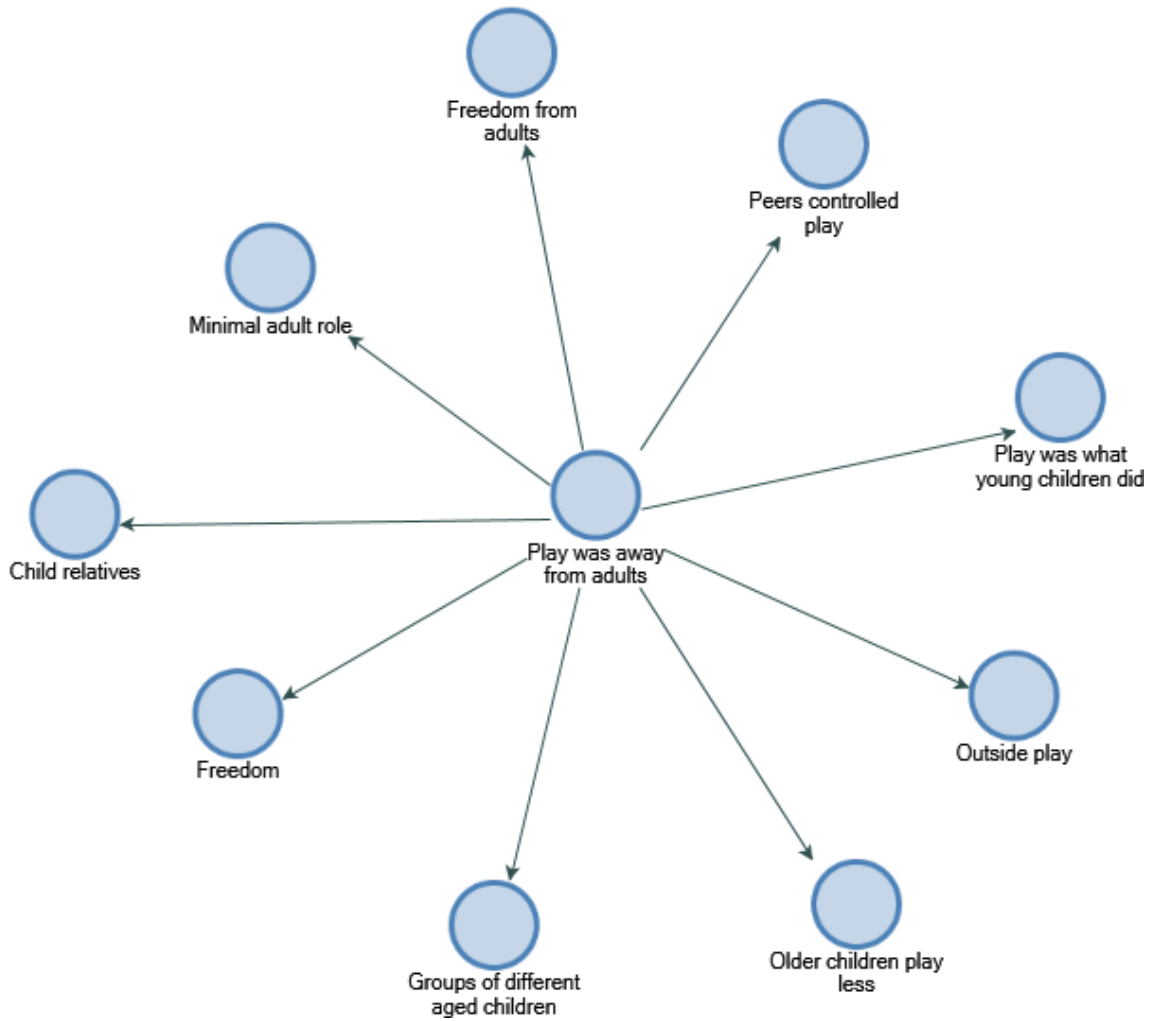
- Range of playthings
- Adults sometimes present

Staff-child 'parent' nodes

- Play is stage dependent
- Developmental stage
- Play reduces with age
- Learning through play
- Play as break from work
- Play as an intervention
- Curriculum and external pressure
- Play is important
- Adult responsibility
- Difficulty of adult involvement
- Play as break from work
- Home-school contact
- Too much technology
- Curriculum and external pressure
- Children's lives are busy
- Barriers to play at home

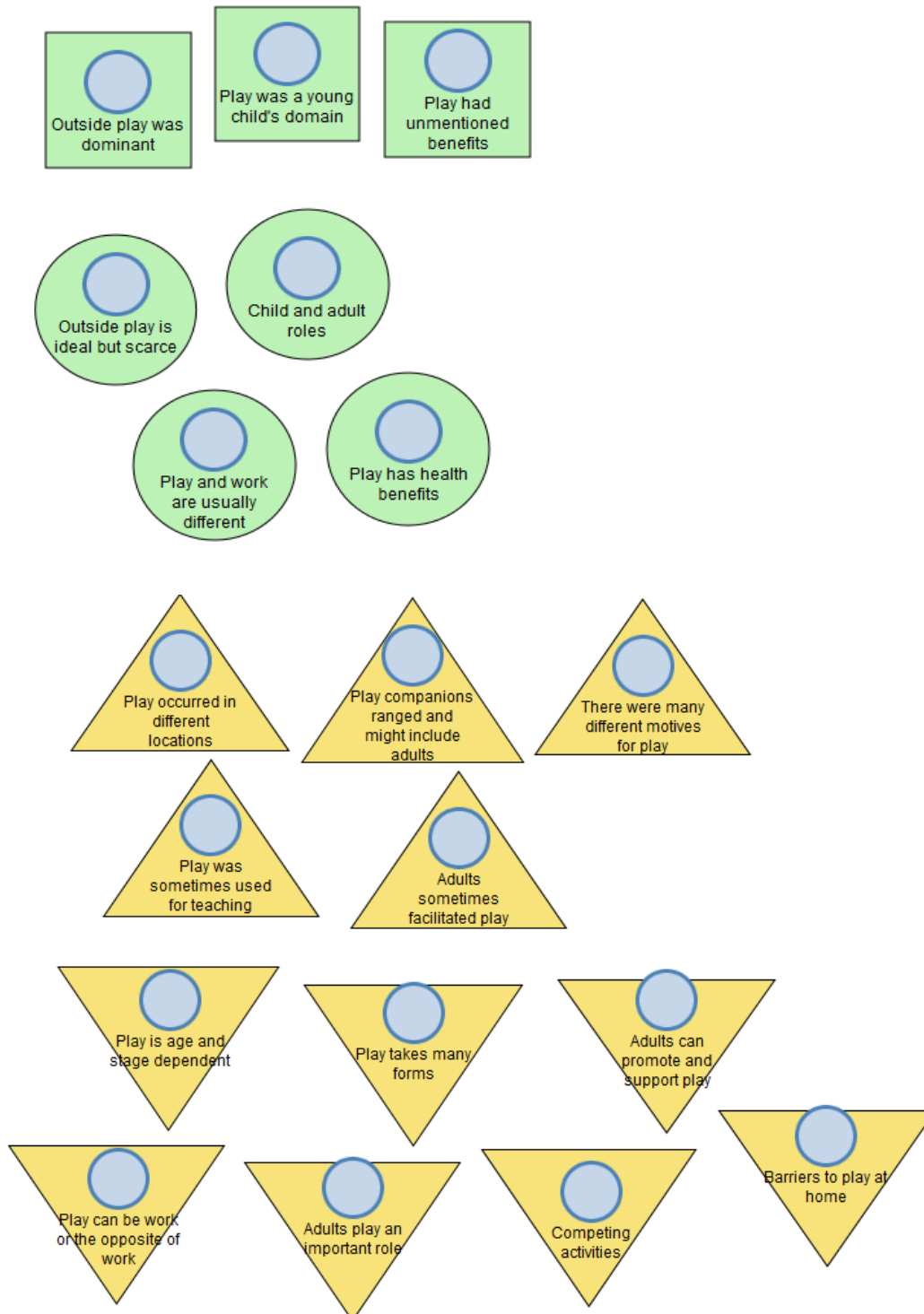
Appendix 29: Example of a 'parent' node with contributing 'child' nodes

This map created in NVivo shows a 'parent' node ('play was away from adults') with its contributing 'child' nodes from different activity system component sections, including the 'child' node of 'outside play' which can be seen in the example of coded data in Appendix 25.



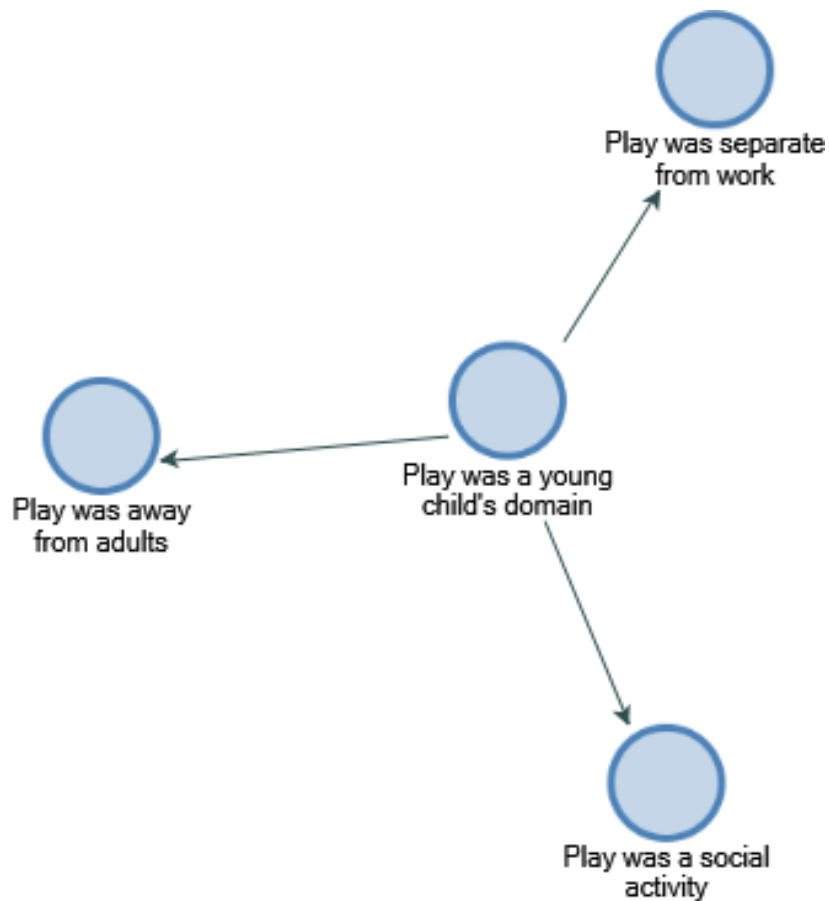
Appendix 30: Activity system themes from focus group discussions

These maps created in NVivo show the themes of parents' discussions (green) and staff discussions (orange) for each activity system. Shapes were used to represent discussions about parents' play as children (square), children's play now according to their parents (circle), staff play as children (triangle) and children's play now according to staff (upturned triangle).



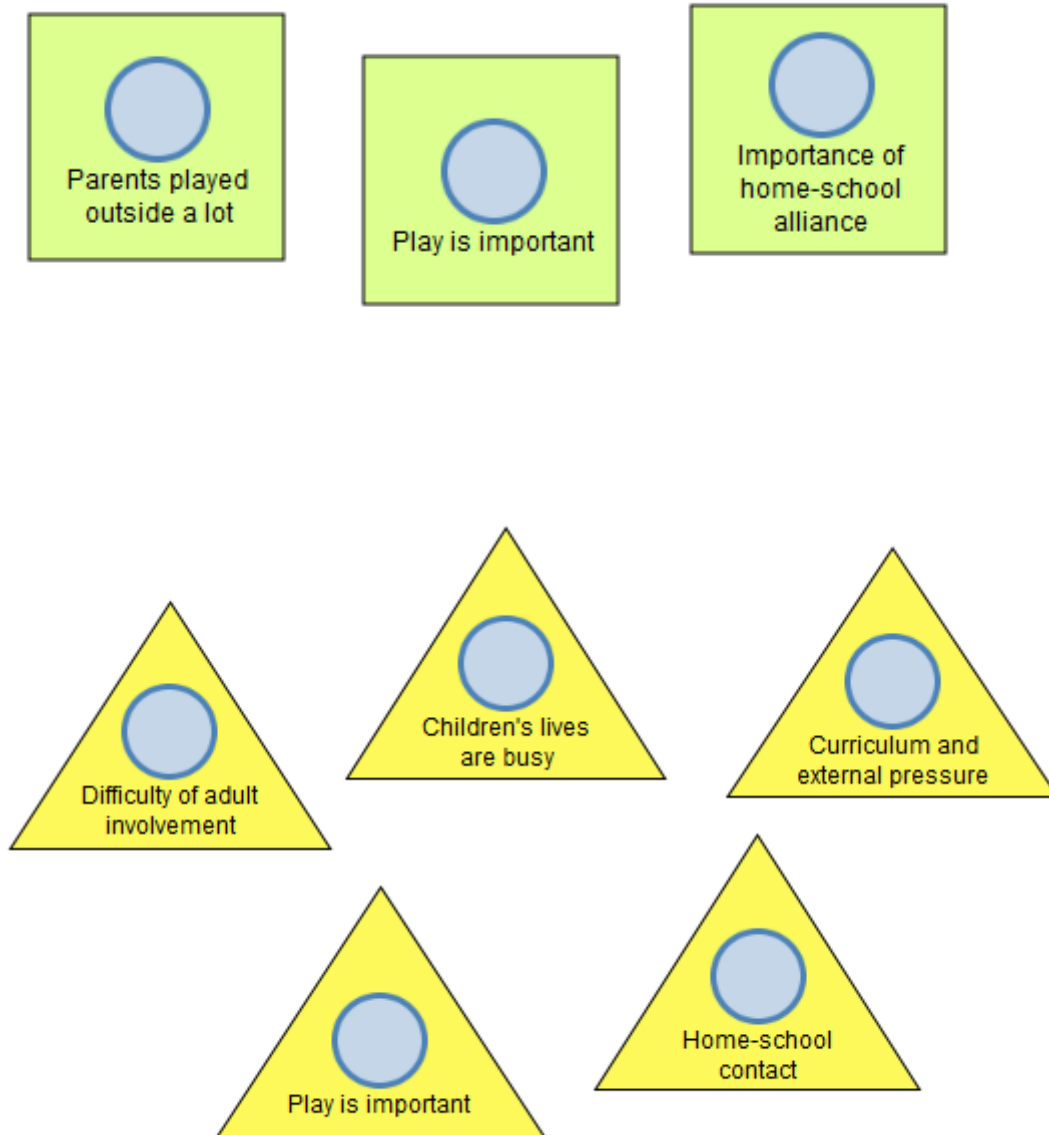
Appendix 31: Example of a final theme ('play was a young child's domain') with contributing 'parent' nodes

This map created in NVivo shows a final overarching theme ('play was a young child's domain') with its contributing 'parent' nodes, including the 'parent' node of 'play was away from adults' which can be seen in the example map in Appendix 29.



Appendix 32: Inductive themes from focus group discussions

These maps created in NVivo show the inductive themes of parents' discussions (green) and staff discussions (yellow).



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