

Systematic Review

What drives parents choices in toy selection for their children?

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ABSTRACT

Toys play a vital role in a child's development, serving as learning, exploration, and entertainment tools. The toy selection is not merely about fun and amusement; it significantly impacts a child's cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Parental involvement in appropriate toy selection is fundamental to a child's overall development. By employing strategic decision-making, parents can enhance learning experiences and ensure a balanced and healthy play environment for their children. Ultimately, parents are the guiding force in ensuring that toys contribute positively to their child's growth and well-being. This review aims to address the key factors influencing parental choices in the selection of toys for children. A comprehensive literature search was conducted through databases including Google Scholar, PubMed, Research Gate, etc. Both quantitative and qualitative studies were included. The database search yielded 1372 articles and 05 articles were obtained through a manual search. The search was narrowed to articles between 2014 and 2025. A total of 29 studies were included. The most common factors considered by parents were socio-demographic factors, the child's demographics, safety standards and quality, educational value, the child's preferences and environmental influences, marketing influences and toy features that contributed to decision-making for toy selection. Toy selection is a vital responsibility for parents influenced by multiple factors. Choosing the right toys supports a child's developmental journey and enhances interaction between parents and children, promoting emotional connection and trust.

Keywords: Parents, Choices, Toys, Children

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood, particularly the first five years of life, is a crucial period for a child's overall growth. During this sensitive period, children heavily rely on external stimuli such as toys to support their developmental milestones. Play is an essential activity of childhood that is fulfilled through toys. Play is foundational learning for children, which helps them to understand themselves and their environment.^{1,2}

Toys are one of the most important things in a child's world. Toys foster comprehensive development across

various domains, including cognitive, motor, social, linguistic, emotional, and imaginative skills.³ Toys with developmental value help children in performing age-appropriate activities such as hand-eye coordination, sensory stimulation, grasping, walking, arts and crafts, sharing and outdoor play.¹ Toys carry entertainment value that gives a sense of joy, fun, relaxation and excitement to the growing child through items like rattles, stuffed animals, musical toys and pretend play sets. Educational toys, such as puzzles, building blocks, and picture books, enhance a child's learning, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, visual-spatial and decision-making abilities.⁴⁻⁶

As children grow, their needs and interests evolve, so parents need to choose toys that align with their developmental milestones.⁷ Parental involvements in toy selection enhances child development and strengthens their bond. The factors like demographics, socioeconomic background, and cultural diversity influence their toy choices.⁸ In India, selection patterns vary based on parental autonomy and children's interests.⁹ Thoughtful toy selection ensures meaningful play, fostering creativity, trust, and engagement while catering to children's developmental and emotional needs. Although toy selection may seem like a straight forward task, it involves a complex array of underlying factors that deserve deeper exploration, particularly from a parental standpoint. Discovering these determinants is essential for understanding the broader motivations behind parental choices in toy selection.

Objective

The objective of this literature review is to critically assess and integrate existing studies on factors influencing parental choices in the selection of toys for their children. This review seeks to uncover similarities and contradictions in findings, investigate the underlying factors that influence parental preferences for toys.

METHODS

Search strategy

A systematic search of the literature was conducted using multiple academic databases such as PubMed, Research Gate, and Google Scholar from 2014 to 2025. Additionally, the reference lists of articles identified as relevant in the electronic searches were manually searched and integrated.

The search string was informed using a combination of the following keywords: factors, influences, parents, decision making, children, and toys etc, using Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT). To organize this review, we included quantitative and qualitative studies covering factors influencing parental decisions in the selection of toys for their children.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were as follows: original articles written in English, study methodology such as quantitative and qualitative studies, and studies examining the factors influencing parental choices in the selection of toys for their children.

Exclusion criteria

Excluded articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria, studies having no access to the full article, studies carried out primarily among children with special needs and developmental delays.

Study selection and data extraction

We examined the abstracts and full text of articles based on the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The extracted data included the following items: author/year, study design, study subject, sample size and factors influencing parental decisions in toy selection. The detailed article selection process is given in Figure 1.

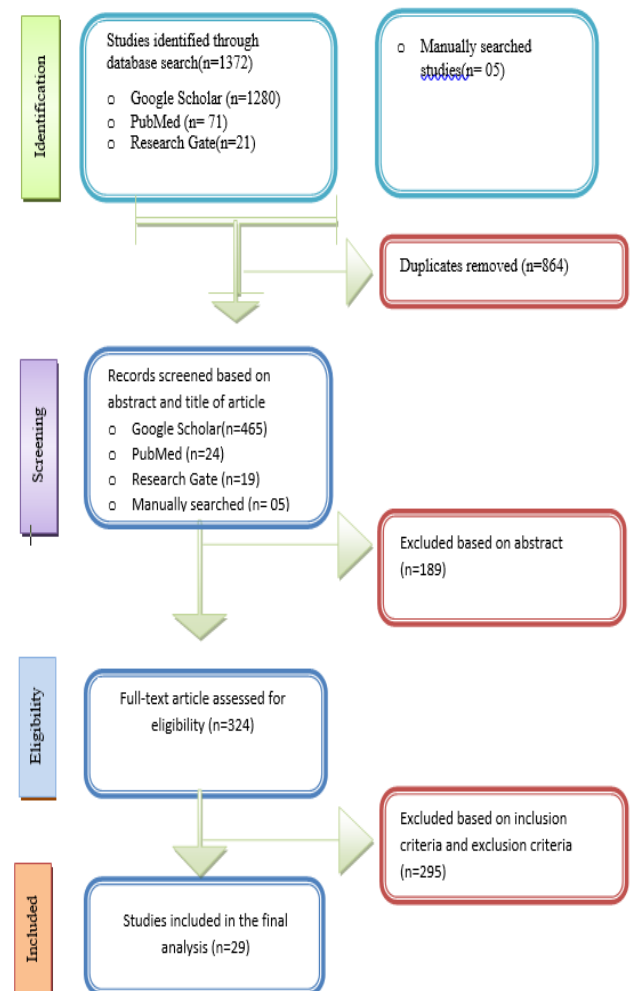


Figure 1: Identification of studies included in a systematic review.

RESULTS

Altogether 29 studies were identified that originated from different articles from 2014 to 2025, including both qualitative and quantitative studies. Parental choices during toy selection for children were influenced by various factors, including educational value, safety, cultural representation, and the child's preferences and environmental influences. Understanding these factors is crucial for parents, manufacturers, educators, and policymakers aiming to support child development through appropriate toy selection. The detailed result of every study is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Detailed result of studies included in systematic review.

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
1.	Samara Oliveira Rocha ²⁶	2025	Preferences for 'Gender-typed' Toys in Brazilian Boys and Girls Aged 9 to 32 Months	Observational, 34 parents	Earth and Space Science Open Archive	Research Gate	The findings revealed that boys spent more time playing with stereotypically masculine toys, such as trucks, while girls preferred feminine toys over masculine or neutral ones. Notably, older girls showed a stronger inclination toward gender-typed toys. The study showed that boys were more likely to play with neutral toys when parents viewed them positively, highlighting that early gendered toy preferences are shaped by both age and parental attitudes.
2.	Kostas Karadimitriou ²⁷	2025	An exploration of Greek parents' toys selection criteria	Descriptive, 356 parents	International Journal of Quality in Education	Google Scholar	The research revealed that parents prioritized developmental, educational, and pedagogical aspects when choosing toys, while also valuing entertainment. Factors such as design, durability, quality, cost, safety, and environmental impact were also considered important. Additionally, the parents' age, gender, education level, and income influenced their toy selection preferences.
3.	Neha Saxena ³⁶	2024	A Study on Impact of Brand Equity on Purchase Intention of Educational Toys in India	Descriptive research, 200 parents	Indian journal of science and technology	Research Gate	The findings showed that parents had moderate knowledge and familiarity with brands and gave positive ratings to the quality and features of the toys. The brand association ($p=0.036$), perceived quality ($p<0.001$), and brand loyalty ($p<0.001$) significantly impacted purchase intentions, with brand loyalty being the most influential. Conversely, brand awareness ($p=0.321$) did not show a significant effect.
4.	Yijun Fan ¹⁹	2024	Beyond play: a comparative study of multi-sensory and traditional toys in child education	Quasi-experimental design, 144 children	Frontier in Education	Google Scholar	The study found that multi-sensory toys significantly enhanced children's engagement, attention, and cognitive development compared to traditional toys. Children using these toys showed better numeracy, literacy, and problem-solving skills, with positive feedback from parents and educators. Traditional toys were less effective, emphasising the value of sensory-rich play in early education.
5.	Dimitra Bourha ³⁷	2024	Views of Parents on Using Technology-Enhanced Toys in the Free Play of Children Aged One to Four Years	Sequential explanatory design, 68 children and their parents	Education Sciences	Research Gate	Findings revealed that parents expressed mixed views on technology-enhanced toys. Parents noted improvements in their children's skills, language, and creativity. There were also strong concerns about negative effects on social interaction and overexposure to screens. Overall, parents emphasized the balance and preferred toys that encouraged healthy play alongside technological features for early childhood development.

Continued.

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
6.	Barween AI Kurdi ¹⁰	2023	Investigating the Factors Influencing Parent Toy Purchase Decisions: Reasoning and Consequences	Descriptive, 252 Parents	International Business Research	Research Gate	The findings revealed that purpose of using toys and children's demographic related factors were mainly considered by the parents than emotional-related factors, informational-related factors, cost-related factors, and parental demographical-related factors.
7.	Sinem Halli ⁴⁶	2023	Sustainability factors affecting caregivers' toy preferences: An evaluation of e-commerce best sellers in Turkey.	Descriptive research ,220 participants	Wiley	Google Scholar	The research found that caregivers prioritized toys that supported child development and had long-term usability, valuing durability over price. Additionally, the study highlighted that e-commerce platforms often lacked sufficient information on the sustainability features of toys.
8.	Camelia COJAN ³⁰	2023	Parental perceptions of toys and games marketing	Qualitative, 20 participants	Network Intelligence Studies	Google Scholar	The research found that parents acknowledged the developmental benefits of toys but were concerned about aggressive advertising tactics targeting children. Additionally, parents' limited media literacy made them susceptible to promotional strategies, raising ethical issues about marketing practices aimed at children.
9.	Achelia Setiani ²⁸	2023	Factors influencing Parents ' Intention to buy early childhood educational toys	Descriptive, 262 parents	Jurnal Riset Bisnis	Research Gate	The findings revealed that perceived behavioral control was the strongest factor shaping parents' intentions to purchase early childhood educational toys. This was followed by their attitudes, social influences (subjective norms), perceived value for money, and the quality of the product. In contrast, perceived product risk had no significant impact on their buying decisions.
10.	Emre Dagasan ²⁰	2023	Parents' Roles in Children's Games and Toys.	Qualitative, 20 parents	Journal of Educational Research	Research Gate	The study found that parents play a key role in children's play by carefully selecting toys based on the child's preferences, safety, quality toys and developmental value. They believe play supports cognitive, emotional, and social growth. Parents also actively engaged in games like chess, playing ball and hide and seek with their children to strengthen bonds and promote learning.
11.	Margarita N. Gavrilova ⁸	2023	Toy Preferences among 3-to-4-Year-Old Children: The	Experimental,129 children	Psychology in Russia	Google Scholar, PubMed	The study revealed that among various socio-demographic factors, only the child's gender and the number of siblings in the family acted as significant predictors for the toy preferences. None of child's developmental characteristics

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
			Impact of Socio-Demographic Factors and Developmental Characteristics				(nonverbal intelligence, executive functions, and emotional understanding) were found to be significant predictors of preference for particular toys.
12.	Julia Tesolin ²²	2023	Boys Love Boy Toys: a qualitative study exploring the role of fathers in young boys' gendered toy preferences	Qualitative research, 6 fathers	Discover Psychology	Google Scholar, Research Gate	Findings revealed that boys held more rigid views on "girl toys" than "boy toys," often avoiding toys they perceived as feminine. Fathers' attitudes toward gender roles closely aligned with their behaviors during interactions; those with traditional views subtly discouraged cross-gender play, while more open-minded fathers supported diverse toy choices. The study underscores the significant role fathers play in shaping early gender norms and suggests promoting inclusive play to challenge stereotypes.
13.	Hiroko Oe ²⁴	2023	Gender-neutral perceptions and toy purchasing behaviour: a sociocultural transition in UK Millennials' attitudes	Descriptive, 1127 Parents	Socio Economic Challenges	Research Gate	The result showed that many parents supported the gender-neutral parenting, their actual purchasing behaviors often contradicted these beliefs. Though 54.2% adopted a gender-neutral approach, many still chose gender-typed toys, especially before birth. The findings suggest that societal norms and personal upbringing continue to influence purchasing decisions, highlighting a gap between belief and practice in gender-neutral parenting.
14.	Camelia COJAN ³⁹	2023	Exploring how parents influence the values promoted in advertisements for games and toys	Descriptive research design, 336 parents	Journal of Public Administration, Finance and Law	Google Scholar	The research found that although parents prioritized educational and developmental benefits when selecting toys, their purchasing decisions were often influenced by children's exposure to aggressive advertising. While parents aimed to instill values such as empathy, responsibility, and curiosity, they faced challenges due to materialistic messages in advertisements and the influence of peers on their children.
15.	Jui-Che Tu ³⁵	2022	Analyzing Decision-Making Factors of Green Design for Kid's Toys Based on the Concept of Product Lifecycle	Mixed-methods research design, 324 consumers	Processes, MDPI	Research Gate	The study identified key decision-making factors for the green design of children's toys, which include using non-toxic materials, designing for easy maintenance and disassembly, enhancing aesthetic and collectible qualities, upgrading educational functions, improving recycling processes, prioritizing eco-friendly packaging, building a green brand, and promoting the value of green design to consumers.

Continued.

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
16.	Chandrasekaran S.	2021	Factors affecting the purchase decision of children's toys in organized retail stores	Descriptive research, 577 shoppers	Journal of Huazhong University of Science and Technology	Research gate	The demographic factors exhibited a higher impact on factors influencing purchasing decisions that the female shoppers have better perception towards the various dimensions of children toys buying behaviour (Need Recognition, outlet decision, website, promotion, influencer, influential factors, toy decision and purchase decision and purchase satisfaction).
17.	Sonia E. Cagle ³⁸	2021	Parents purchasing process of children's toys: a qualitative interview study of mothers in the United States	Qualitative study, six mothers	DiVA	Google Scholar	The research showed that the mothers' toy purchases were shaped by the occasion, price, educational value, toy quality, durability and safety. They also considered children's age, skills, and preferences, along with personal values like nostalgia. Online reviews and shopping convenience influenced their decisions.
18.	Brenna Hassinger-Das ⁹	2021	Looking deeper into the toy box: Understanding caregiver toy selection decisions	Survey, 63 parents	Infant behavior and development	PubMed	The study findings suggested that caregivers often chose electronic toys for their infants due to marketing claims of developmental benefits, despite evidence that traditional toys better supported caregiver-child interactions.
19.	Kornelia Lipowska ¹⁵	2021	When Parents Go Shopping: Perspectives on Gender-Typed Toys among Polish Mothers and Fathers from Big Cities	Descriptive, 526 parents	MDPI	Google Scholar	The study found that the majority of parents were aware of the labeling of toys in shops according to age, function, and especially by gender. Mothers viewed toys as more gender-neutral and favored egalitarian views than fathers. They focused on color, while fathers emphasized function. Urban parents were gradually adopting more open and inclusive attitudes toward gender and play.
20.	Azhar Khan	2021	The impact of children on parental purchasing behaviour	quantitative research design, 200 parents	Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government	Research Gate	The study concluded that children significantly affect parental purchasing behaviour. The age of the child (AOC), family orientation (FO), and Product Category (PC) were the three most significant factors that affecting parental buying behaviour.
21.	Melissa N. Richards ¹⁸	2020	Toy Buying Today: Considerations, Information Seeking, and	Exploratory, 193 mothers	Journal of applied mental psychology	PubMed	The research found that mothers prioritized educational value, safety and the child's personality and abilities over just the age recommendation on the package. Mothers reported that the most frequent source of their children's toys were online, followed by gifts. They frequently seek

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
			Thoughts about Manufacturer Suggested Age				information online and consult multiple sources before making a decision.
22.	Nikhil Chawla ²⁵	2020	Children's Influence on Parent's Purchasing Decision in Toy Industry	Descriptive, 103 children	Pacific Business Review International	Google Scholar	Children significantly influenced their parents' toy-buying decisions, especially for products meant for their direct use. There were significant differences in preferences between boys and girls. Their impact was strongest during the early and final stages of the purchase process. Factors like the child's age and family communication style also affected this influence.
23.	Manish Kumar ³³	2020	A Study on Factors Influencing Buying Behavior of Kids for Toys with special reference to Indian Kids	Descriptive, 50 parents	Pacific Business Review International	Google Scholar	The research identified that children are primarily attracted to toys featuring vibrant colours, appealing designs, and engaging digital functionalities. Additionally, the study highlighted the significant role of parental influence, peer pressure, and media exposure in shaping children's toy preferences.
24.	Abroro Ruwindah ³⁴	2019	The Efforts of Parents in Choosing Suitable Toys for Children Aged 3-4 Years	Qualitative, parents	Early Childhood Education Papers	Google Scholar	The research revealed that while parents recognized toys as tools for stimulating child development, their purchasing decisions were predominantly influenced by factors such as price, rather than educational value. Additionally, aspects like toy color, material, and labeling were often overlooked. Parents tended to base their choices on children's immediate desires and engaged in discussions with them.
25.	Marlene Kollmayer ²³	2018	Parents' Judgments about the Desirability of Toys for Their Children: Associations with Gender Role Attitudes, Gender-typing of Toys, and Demographics	Survey study ,324 parents	Springer	PubMed	The study found that younger parents, parents with lower educational levels, and fathers generally preferred gender-typical and gender-neutral toys for their children, while cross-gender-typed toys were seen as less desirable. Parents with more traditional gender role attitudes were less supportive of children playing with toys associated with the opposite gender.
26.	Yang Gao ¹⁷	2018	Research on Selection Differences	Descriptive, 120 students and their parents	Lecture Notes in Computer Science	Research gate	The study found that parents prioritized educational value, safety, and durability, while children preferred entertainment, visual appeal, and trends. Media heavily

Continued.

S. no.	First author	Year of publication	Title	Research design and participants	Journal name	Database	Specific findings
			between Parent and Child on Toys				influenced children's choices, often causing conflict. Despite differences, parents and children frequently negotiated, with children often swaying final decisions. The research suggested designing toys that balance education and fun.
27.	Kanokkan Vichasilp ¹¹	2017	Factors influencing purchasing decisions of toys for preschool children: a case study of parents in Sakon Nakhon province, Thailand	Descriptive research design, 257 Parents	International Business Management	Google Scholar	The results revealed that the important factors affecting purchasing decision were: • Parents demographics (education level, occupation, and income) • Safety • Product characteristics • Marketing mix gorgeousness, • Durability • Country of origin • Salespersons and advertising
28.	Milatul Ulfa ¹³	2016	The Influence of Parents' perception and involvement in Purchasing Decision of Toys For Children	Cross-sectional, 200 Parents	Journal of Consumer Sciences	Google Scholar	The results showed that respondents prioritized location or distance as the main factor in their toy purchasing decisions, primarily due to time, cost, and availability concerns. The second priority was the ease of use and safety warnings of the toys, followed by the price. Other factors considered were material of toy, standard mark labeled, product label, form size and type of toys. The findings suggest that the perception of toys had a positive and significant relationship with the involvement on purchasing.
29.	Abdülkadir Kabaday ¹⁶	2014	Analyzing the Factors that Affect Preschoolers' Parents' Choice of Toys	Descriptive, 194 parents	Croatian Journal of Education	Research Gate, Google Scholar	The findings showed that there were significant differences between the parents' levels of education and the sub-dimensions of TSPQ including the cognitive, parents' and toy design perspectives, and there were also significant differences between the parents' economic status and the sub dimensions of TSPQ comprising health, parents and toy design perspectives.

Parental socio-demographic factors

The demographic characteristics of parents play a significant role in determining their choices for toys. Research indicates that females were predominantly responsible for making toy selection choices, highlighting their active involvement in this process.¹⁰⁻¹⁵ Furthermore, the majority of parents belonged to the adult age group of 21-30 years and exhibited a higher impact on parental purchasing choices.^{11,13} Additionally, the parents' level of education and socioeconomic status played a crucial role in guiding their toy selection preferences.¹⁶ Notably, parents with undergraduate degrees demonstrated a greater emphasis on the artistic and creative aspects of toys, expecting them to contribute to their child's cognitive and aesthetic development.¹⁷ Moreover, the presence of siblings within the family influenced both play activities and the overall decision-making process regarding toy selection, further shaping children's engagement with different types of toys.⁸

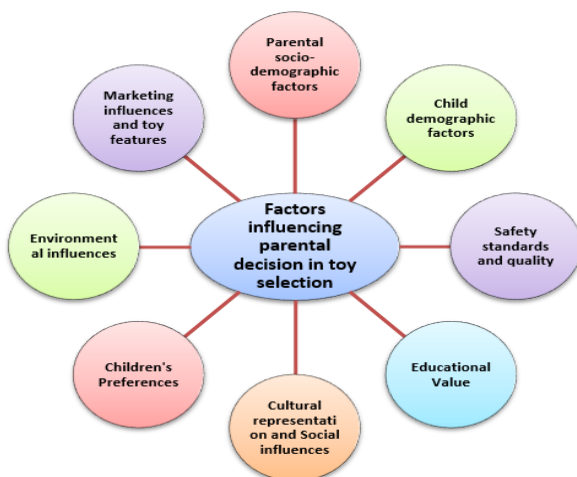


Figure 2: Factors driving parental choices in the toy selection.

Child demographic factors

The impact of the age of children creates a major involvement in the parents' toy selection decisions. Toys should match the child's growing age to ensure they are engaging, safe, and beneficial for growth. The parents considered toys according to the developmental stages of children, or those that enabled them to do age-appropriate activities during play.^{10,18-21} The majority of parents considered gender-specific toys for their children during the selection process.²² This inclination highlights the enduring influence of societal expectations on parental choices, shaping the types of toys deemed appropriate for boys and girls. While the concept of gender neutrality in parenting is gradually gaining recognition, many parents continue to exhibit ambivalent attitudes toward its adoption.^{8,23-26} Research findings indicate notable differences between the toy preferences of children and the selections made by their parents, particularly concerning

gender-specific toys.¹⁷ Literature revealed that parents of male children predominantly choose traditionally gendered toys, such as dolls for girls and trucks for boys, reinforcing conventional gender norms.²² Furthermore, there is a discernible variation in the toy selection preferences of mothers and fathers, suggesting that parental influence on children's play choices may be shaped by distinct gender-based perspectives.¹⁵

Safety standards and quality

Safety of toys is a paramount concern for parents when making selection decisions on toys. They place significant emphasis on high-quality materials and strict adherence to established safety standards, recognizing these factors as crucial in selecting appropriate toys for their children.¹¹ Research by Setiani et al also noted that perceived product quality plays a key role in influencing parents' purchasing intentions, whereas perceived product risk does not significantly impact on their decision-making process. In their assessment of toy safety and quality, parents carefully consider multiple aspects, including compliance with industry safety regulations and certifications.²⁸ They also paid close attention to labeling practices that indicated potential hazards, such as chronic health risks, flammability, and the presence of toxic substances like lead. Ensuring that toys were free from harmful chemicals and met rigorous safety standards provided parents with greater confidence in their choices, ultimately contributing to the well-being and healthy development of their children.²⁷⁻³⁰

Educational value

Parents place significant emphasis on selecting toys that contribute to their children's learning and overall development. Literature suggested that the perceived educational benefits of toys play a significant role in influencing parents' decisions when choosing early childhood educational toys. Parents strongly believe that such toys facilitate the development of essential cognitive and social skills, including problem-solving abilities, learning capacity, and communication proficiency. Additionally, they expressed concerns about ensuring that their children, particularly those in preschool and the early years of primary education, had access to toys with strong educational value. Their primary objective was to foster key developmental skills such as creativity, mathematical reasoning, and visual-spatial abilities, which were essential for a child's academic and intellectual growth.^{18,27,30}

Cultural representation and social influences

The significance of culturally diverse toys has grown among parents, as they recognize their role in fostering inclusivity and cultural awareness.²⁷ Additionally, cultural heritage is often preserved through toy selection. Indigenous and ethnic communities often choose traditional toys like handcrafted dolls, wooden figurines,

or musical instruments to pass down history, traditions, and values to future generations.³¹ According to a 2024 survey reported by the New York Post, 65% of parents believe that exposing their children to toys representing various cultures enhances social skills and self-confidence.³² Whether reinforcing societal norms, promoting education, preserving cultural identity, or embracing global perspectives, the toys chosen by parents play a crucial role in shaping the cultural awareness of future generations.

Children's preferences

Children's preferences greatly influence the selection of toys. Factors such as a child's skills, abilities, and desire for new toys often influenced the parent's decision-making.^{13,18,30} Additionally, the toy's characteristics, including appearance and colour, tend to attract children's interest.³³ Children are more likely to engage with toys that align with their interests, which are often influenced by media exposure and peer interactions. Parents frequently engage in discussions with their children to understand their preferences and interests before making a final decision on toy selection. This demonstrates a balance between parental intentions and children's desires during toy selection. Therefore, parents prioritize their children's requests to ensure greater satisfaction, engagement and overall enjoyment with the selected toys.³⁴

Environmental influences

Parents considered the environmental impact of toys when making choices during toy selection. They prioritized options based on factors such as recyclability, durability, eco-friendly and green design, sustainability, high-quality craftsmanship, and the use of environmentally friendly materials.^{10,13} Additionally, many parents expressed strong support for toy libraries, recognizing their benefits in promoting sustainability while meeting children's developmental needs. These libraries encouraged values such as responsibility and sharing, fostering socialization among both children and parents.^{14,35} However, despite their environmental concerns, some parents still opted for plastic toys, acknowledging their widespread availability and appeal, even though they contribute negatively to environmental sustainability. This highlights the complexity of balancing sustainability with practicality in toy selection.¹¹

Marketing influences and toy features

Parents encountered various factors related to the toy's features during the toy selection process, including price, durability, colour, digital features, design, style, visual appeal, and overall product quality.^{14,33} Their knowledge of toy brands and attributes was moderate, with a particular emphasis on choosing toys that offer educational value.³⁶ Additionally, parents acknowledged their children's engagement with digital, technology-driven toys, which significantly influenced toy selection choices.³⁷ Marketing

features also played a keyrole in capturing parental attention during toy selection, especially as electronic toys have become increasingly popular, even among infants.^{9,11} Literature revealed that online reviews served as a primary source of information for parents when selecting toys, whereas advertisements had only a minimal impact on their selection decisions.^{18,38} However, children's exposure to television commercials and peer influence strongly shaped their toy preferences, ultimately affecting parental choices. Despite considering developmental benefits, parents often aligned their choices with their children's desires to ensure engagement and satisfaction.³⁹

DISCUSSION

The comprehensive literature search from various countries such as India, United Kingdom, Canada, Indonesia, Poland, Turkey, United States, Thailand, Greek, Austria, Brazil etc. revealed different aspects of the toy selection by the parents for their growing children. Parents' toy selection is shaped by a variety of modern influences, balancing developmental, safety, cultural, and economic considerations. Research from recent years has highlighted the growing emphasis on developmental benefits, with studies Deshpande et al showing that parents are increasingly prioritizing toys that encourage cognitive and physical development.⁴⁰ As awareness grows, they're choosing play that supports development. Many parents now reject gender-specific toys, favoring inclusive, skill-building play that supports learning, social growth, and challenges old stigmas through greater community awareness.⁴⁰ Another study by Liu et al, found that infants' prior experiences and parental attitudes significantly influence toy preferences, suggesting that nurture plays a crucial role in early development.⁴⁰ Another study by Dhabhai et al, explored gender socialization practices among parents of preschoolers, examining their views on gender-neutral toys, education, and clothing, shedding light on parents' evolving attitudes towards gender roles in early childhood.⁴² In the growing world, technological advancements have introduced 'smart' toys that offer interactive experiences among children. Komis et al, highlighted that such toys can aid in developing children's storytelling, problem-solving, and emotional thinking skills.⁴³ In contrast, Healey et al, emphasized the role of traditional toys in fostering language, problem-solving, and creativity through caregiver-child interactions.⁹ Marketing and branding strategies also heavily influence decisions, with parents tending to trust well-known brands or those with strong reputations. Taghavi et al, found that parents and children are influenced by attractive packaging and familiar brands, with marketing strategies such as celebrity endorsements and product appeal playing a key role in shaping purchasing decisions and often impacting parental choices during store visits through pester power.⁴⁴ The factors influencing parental toy selection are diverse and interconnected, ranging from the educational value of the toy to broader societal and economic considerations. The literature highlights the need for further in-depth research on toy safety standards, environmental impact,

and developmental value. Additionally, there is a need for deeper research on toy safety, sustainability, and developmental value, along with increased parental awareness to support children's growth through informed toy choices. These insights can assist toy manufacturers, educators, and policymakers in designing toys that encourage play and promote children's holistic development.

CONCLUSION

Parental involvement in toy selection is crucial to a child's overall development. Carefully chosen toys aid in enhancing physical motor skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and meaningful social interactions. The preferences and choices of parents are influenced by a blend of demographic factors, societal expectations, and cultural norms, making the decision-making process complex and multifaceted. Key considerations include the educational value of the toy, adherence to safety and quality standards, cultural relevance, alignment with the child's interests, and environmental sustainability. Additionally, marketing strategies and toy features play a significant role in guiding parental choices. A deeper understanding of these considerations can empower various stakeholders in offering toys that promote holistic child development.

Recommendations

Based on the review findings, the following recommendations are proposed to guide parents in making informed decisions when selecting toys for their children: 1) prioritize safety standards of toys ensuring they are certified, high-quality, and non-toxic for their children's well-being and healthy development, 2) explore educational value of toys that enhance cognitive, social, and problem-solving skills to support their children's academic and intellectual development, 3) incorporate culturally diverse toys to foster inclusivity, cultural awareness, and social development in children, 4) involve children in toy selection discussions to ensure choices align with their interests to enhance engagement, satisfaction, and development benefits and 5) encourage the adoption of sustainable toy options which can help parents to make environmentally responsible choices with practicality during toy selection.

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