Developing a semi-structured interview instrument to explore preschool children's understanding of economic issues related to sustainable development

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Operationalizing the economic aspect of sustainable development
Defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, sustainable development is commonly modeled within the three-interlocking-circle framework (Elliot 2013), which portrays equal importance and inter-dependency of its environmental, social and economic dimensions (WECD 1987).

Environment
Economic
Sustainable

Two economic themes:
- Financial affordability
- Resource sharing

Economy for young children is not only cash money. Candy and toys are considered to be a kind of possessions that children deal with in their daily lives at home, at preschool and in the playground (Webley 2005).

But, what is economy for preschool children?

Designing an explorative interview instrument for children
From theories to pre-testing and validation of the semi-structured interview instrument.

1. Development of illustrations.
2. Creation of play-based activities using toys and soft animals.
3. Drafting of semi-structured interview questions.

Pre-testing and validation of illustrations, question design, question wording, interview techniques and timing.

Bruner’sModes of Representation
Children aged one till six construct their knowledge by organizing and categorizing information through iconic representation, in which information is stored in the form of images (Bruner 1966).

Bandura’s Social Learning Theory
Children are surrounded by many influential role models (for example, parents, teachers, siblings, friends, TV characters) and their learning occurs through being taught by others, through direct observation, through participation in activities, etc. (Bandura 1977).

The finalized semi-structured interview instrument

Financial affordability

Can all children in the world afford to buy toys from a shop?

☐ Yes  ☐ Maybe  ☐ No  ☐ I don’t know  ☐ Others: _______________________

Why do you think that other children [child’s response] afford to buy toys from a shop?

From where have you got to know [child’s response]?

Resource sharing

If you had a bowl of candies and your friend came and wanted to have some candies from you, what would you do?

☐ I would give all the candies.  ☐ I would give about half of the candies.
☐ I would give a few/very few candies.  ☐ I would not give any candies.

Why would you [child’s response]?

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