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### Research Article

## The Effect of Play-Based Learning on Phonemic Awareness of Kindergarten in Teacher's Perspective

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### About Article

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### ABSTRACT

The study aimed to improve play-based learning in schools by addressing the problems that make it hard to use. Finding out what teachers need in terms of professional development based on age, gender, experience, and level of schooling is the first step in making and testing unique training programs. The plan calls for a study of the current play-based learning materials and creation of new materials to fill in any gaps. New guidelines and workshops will also be used to improve how play-based learning is integrated into the curriculum. To help with and keep an eye on the performance, progress will be tracked, and teachers will be given ongoing help. Regular tests will be done on play-based learning; the results will always be used to improve professional growth and support tools. The group has people with different amounts of experience, including some teachers with more experience. But most of the teachers are still new to their jobs. The fact that most respondents are women shows an imbalance between men and women in the group. Some people had been teachers for as little as five years and as long as nine years. A lot of the people who answered were new to the job. The people who answered have had a lot of different kinds of schooling. Many of them have better degrees, like master's and graduate degrees. With such a range of work and school experience, it's clear that these teachers have different information and points of view. Most teachers agree that play-based learning exercises are the best way to help kindergarteners become more aware of phonemes. Many teachers agree that these tasks help kids get better at hearing and understanding sounds, like recognizing letter sounds, blending sounds, segmenting sounds, rhyming, and listening. Despite a few minor disagreements, most people agree that play-based learning is an excellent way to help kids learn to read and write. This wide backing means that strategies based on play are seen as practical and helpful for helping young kids learn essential reading and writing skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten teachers play a crucial role in fostering a child's curiosity, instilling foundational skills, and cultivating a love of learning. The state provides equal opportunities for all children to access accessible mandatory and compulsory kindergarten education, promoting physical, social, intellectual, emotional, and skills stimulation. Kindergarten education is vital for a child's academic and technical development, as it is the period when the young mind's absorptive capacity for learning is at its sharpest. The state aims to make education learner-oriented and responsive to the needs, cognitive, and cultural capacity of learners, schools, and communities. Teachers are responsible for creating a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment that supports the growth of young learners. The Act emphasizes the role of play in young learners' education, emphasizing the importance of play-based learning activities and periodic assessment of each learner's development using appropriate tools and methods. Developmental assessment shall address development's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical aspects. Teachers must constantly monitor their learners' progress and take note. Teachers use many ways to educate innate talents in early children. However, in this respect, the teachers are keen to grasp their attention; as Kamara *et al.* (2021) point out, "Children need social learning contexts that promote empathy and reciprocity" (Kamara *et al.*, 2021). Even though the ECEC of Norway is interested in playing and explorations, it has failed to introduce a curriculum that involves active learning (Strassen *et al.*, 2023). Educators used unstructured practices for a designated daily period with ordered and unorganized play-based learning activities. Working in pairs or small groups, this strategy sought to fulfill discovery, investigation, and communication requirements. School officials were not offering extra professional development courses to foster better knowledge of play-based learning methods that might enhance teacher instruction in kindergarten literacy classes and kindergarten students' language and literacy development in elementary and secondary grades (Acevedo, 2022).

This study investigates the effectiveness of play-based learning in kindergarten classrooms and teachers' perceptions of its effectiveness in promoting early literacy skills. Despite the ongoing debate on the most effective methods for teaching phonemic awareness, traditional methods focus on direct instruction and structured activities. The research aims to understand teachers' perceptions of play-based learning's effectiveness and their operationalizing of this approach in classrooms. The study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of play-based learning in kindergarten education.

### 1.1. Research question

This paper aims to examine if there is a significant relationship between the assessment of the respondents on the effect of play-based learning activities and the challenges faced by the respondents in implementing play-based learning activities in enhancing phonemic awareness among kindergarten learners.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Challenges in implementing play-based learning

The increasing academic demands for early education

necessitate the incorporation of benchmarks into kindergarten learning experiences. This necessitates a comprehension of play's role in classrooms, particularly in developmentally appropriate practices like Play-Based Learning (PBL).

DeLuca *et al.* (2020) highlight the dynamic educational environment in kindergartens, with recent reforms emphasizing learning and play-based learning. Few studies investigate how assessment can be integrated with play-based learning, as playing is children's natural inclination and crucial for learning and development.

Scrabeck (2020) highlights the importance of play in children's lives, but it is often overlooked in early childhood education. Heang *et al.* (2021) suggest that children learn most effectively through play, fostering content knowledge, social skills, and a disposition for learning. Cheung (2022) highlights the relationship between teacher beliefs and pedagogical practices regarding play-based learning and their perceptions of whole-child development. The capacity building of teachers in implementing play-based learning curriculums partially mediates these associations, demonstrating a strong correlation.

### 2.2. Enhancing phonemic awareness through play-based learning

Groth (2020) emphasizes the importance of phonemic awareness, a skill learned before learning phonics and reading, in children from birth. This skill is taught through games, books, and activities, starting from birth and continuing through kindergarten. As curriculum and teachers shift towards other standards, it is crucial to continue teaching these skills, as children with strong phonemic awareness skills are more advanced readers and writers. Effective instruction in phonemic awareness activities, such as games and conversation, has long-term benefits.

Mostafa's (2023) research explores the importance of play in fostering children's literacy skills, particularly in pre-primary education. Play-based pre-primary education is gaining popularity globally, including Bangladesh. Early literacy is crucial for a child's readiness for primary school. Teachers' perceptions of play-based pedagogy are crucial. However, challenges like lack of space, time, materials, and training hinder its implementation. The research suggests providing hands-on training, removing materials shortages, and creating a supportive classroom environment.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a descriptive quantitative research design. A descriptive quantitative research design gathers quantifiable data to statistically analyze a population sample. Descriptive research design is a research methodology that provides a detailed account of a phenomenon's characteristics or the relationship between variables. Its goal is to describe and present current affairs or existing conditions without manipulating the studied variables. The effect of play-based learning on phonemic awareness of kindergarten in teacher's perspective. The study consisted of seventy (70) Kindergarten Teachers from Al Raja School and PTAB (Philippine Teachers' Association Bahrain) 15 teachers in Al Raja School and 55 teachers in PTAB (Philippine Teachers' Association Bahrain) the respondents of the study.



To ensure the questionnaire’s validity and reliability, rigorous testing’s were conducted, including content validation, construct validation through factor analysis, and reliability assessment using measures such as Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Piloting the questionnaire with a small sample also helped identify and address any issues before administering it to the full sample of teachers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1.** Correlation between the assessment of the respondents on the Effect of play-based learning activities and the challenges faced by the respondents in implementing play-based learning activities in enhancing phonemic awareness among kindergarten learners

| Challenges Faced by The Respondents in Implementing Play-Based Learning in Enhancing Phonemic Awareness of Kindergarten Learners        |                     |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------|
| Effect of Play-Based Learning Activities in Enhancing Phonemic Awareness among the Kindergarten Learners Based on Teachers’ Perspective | Pearson Correlation | 0.181 |
|                                                                                                                                         | Sig. (2-tailed)     | 0.134 |
|                                                                                                                                         | N                   | 70    |

It conveys that the assessment of the impact of play-based learning activities and the difficulties respondents faced was found to have a weakly positive association, as indicated by the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.181. This indicates a slight tendency for assessing the effectiveness of play-based learning activities to rise along with the perceived challenges associated with their implementation. The relationship is weak, however. The standard alpha threshold of 0.05 cannot be satisfied by the p-value of 0.134. This implies that there is no statistically significant association. Stated differently, there is insufficient data to conclude that the difficulties teachers have in putting play-based learning activities into practice substantially impact the evaluation of such activities’ effectiveness. Considering problems are not strongly linked to effectiveness rates, it might be better to focus on giving more help and resources to deal with specific problems instead of just looking at how effective something is thought to be. Providing targeted tools, better training, or support networks could help teachers deal with problems and improve play-based learning. The result is backed up by the research of Pyle *et al.* (2023), which looks at how teachers think play-based learning affects early reading and the problems they face when using these methods. It gives information about the connection between problems with execution and how valuable people think play-based learning is.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study focuses on play-based learning as a method for helping kindergarteners become more aware of phonemes. The participants are mostly younger professionals with 5 to 9 years of experience, with a significant gender gap. They have a wide range of educational backgrounds, making it difficult

to understand how play-based learning activities effectively work. Despite some challenges, most teachers believe that play-based learning is a practical and helpful approach for teaching essential reading and writing skills. However, they also acknowledge that there are some problems that teachers may face in using play-based tasks to improve students’ phonemic awareness. These problems are often manageable and can be addressed through customized professional growth programs. The study also found that there is a lack of statistically significant link between the problems teachers face when implementing play-based learning activities and their overall success. There is not enough evidence to suggest that execution problems significantly affect teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of play-based learning activities. To address these issues, the suggested action plan aims to identify and meet teachers’ specific professional development needs, make play-based learning tools more accessible, and develop effective classroom strategies. Monitoring tools should be established to track progress and provide ongoing support. Regular evaluation of play-based learning will improve professional growth and support systems. The plan aims to make play-based learning more valuable and accessible to everyone by methodically handling known problems and needs.

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