



CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PLAY-BASED APPROACH FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: DYNAMIC ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the knowledge, attitude, and implementation of play-based learning among Kindergarten teachers at Pardo Elementary School in Cebu City during the School Year 2025–2026. The findings served as a basis for enhancing play-based classroom activities. Results revealed that teachers demonstrated a very high level of knowledge, indicating a strong understanding of play-based principles, instructional strategies, and practical classroom applications. Their attitude toward play-based learning was rated high, reflecting generally positive perceptions of its value in promoting holistic child development; however, aspects related to reflective practice and assessment strategies were identified as areas requiring further improvement. The level of implementation was likewise rated very high, as teachers effectively established developmentally appropriate learning environments, facilitated meaningful and engaging play experiences, and documented children’s progress through systematic observation and assessment tools. Statistical analysis showed a significant relationship between teachers’ knowledge and attitude and their level of implementation, suggesting that stronger conceptual understanding and more favorable perceptions contribute to more effective classroom practices. Teachers also reported best practices that supported successful implementation, including the organization of learning centers, integration of play into thematic lessons, utilization of age-appropriate and contextualized materials, active parental involvement, and participation in division- and district-level professional development programs. These findings underscore the importance of sustained professional development

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initiatives that strengthen reflective practice and assessment competencies within play-based instruction. Overall, the study highlights the need to equip early childhood educators with both solid theoretical foundations and practical pedagogical strategies to create meaningful learning opportunities through play, thereby supporting improved instructional quality and learner outcomes in early childhood education.

Keywords: *Administration and Supervision, Descriptive Method, Play-Based Strategies, Dynamic Play-Based Class Activities, Cebu City, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

The education of preschool-aged learners plays a critical role in laying the groundwork for their successful transition into formal schooling. This stage provides a foundation for their holistic development - cognitive, social, emotional, and physical, and helps young learners make sense of the world around them. At this formative stage, it is essential to nurture positive attitudes and encourage learning through meaningful child-to-child interaction.

Programs designed for preschool-aged learners are thoughtfully structured to promote healthy growth and overall development. Research consistently shows that children who experience quality early learning opportunities are better prepared to succeed not only in school but in life as well. Therefore, preschool education forms an indispensable part of a child's early experiences in any educational setting.

Advocates of preschool learning emphasize that young children naturally acquire knowledge through play. The International Play Association (IPA), a global organization that upholds the child's right to play, asserts that play is crucial for children's development and well-being. Through play, children not only meet their innate need for enjoyment but also explore, discover, and make sense of the world, shaping their identities and building self-confidence in the process.

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For preschool-aged learners, play and learning are inseparable. Play serves as a dynamic medium through which young minds engage with their environment, develop problem-solving skills, and construct meaning. This approach to learning recognizes that play is not merely recreational but a purposeful and effective strategy for developing cognitive abilities in early childhood.

At this stage of development, children’s thinking skills are still emerging. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize play-based learning to support these evolving cognitive capacities. The environment, life experiences, and guidance provided by parents and teachers all influence how preschool-aged learners explore and act independently. Thoughtfully designed play activities can channel children’s natural curiosity into meaningful learning experiences. When integrated into the curriculum, play-based learning allows educators to address academic objectives—such as literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving—through varied and engaging methods, potentially enhancing learning outcomes without sacrificing enjoyment.

Traditional methods of teaching continue to emphasize academic rigor, discipline, obedience, and respect, alongside subjects like science, mathematics, reading, writing, art, and physical education. These approaches often require young learners to conform to classroom norms and routines with minimal disruption. However, this strict compliance has led educators and researchers alike to question how classroom management practices affect the developmental behaviors of preschool-aged learners.

Given these considerations, this study assessed the teachers’ knowledge of and attitudes toward the play-based learning approach for preschool-aged learners. The researcher believes that insights gained from this inquiry will significantly influence future teaching practices and, ultimately, learners' academic and personal growth. Therefore, the study aimed to develop play-based classroom activities that align with both developmental needs and educational standards, ensuring that preschool-aged learners are engaged, motivated, and ready for lifelong learning.

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Research Questions

This study assessed the knowledge, attitude and facilitation of teachers in the play-based learning approach to Kindergarten learners at Pardo Elementary School, Cebu City during the school year 2025-2026 as basis for dynamic play-based class activities.

Specifically, it answered the following inquiries:

1. What relevant information can be taken from teachers as to their:
 - 1.1 age and gender;
 - 1.2 civil status;
 - 1.3 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.4 length of service;
 - 1.5 performance rating and
 - 1.6 relevant training, seminars, and workshops attended?
2. As perceived by the respondents, what is the level of play-based learning approach of teachers in terms of:
 - 2.1 knowledge and
 - 2.2 attitude?
3. What is the level of implementation of play-based learning approach among the teachers of early childhood education in terms of:
 - 3.1 learning environment and materials;
 - 3.2 instructional strategies and facilitation of play and
 - 3.3 assessment and documentation of learning through play?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of knowledge and attitude of teachers and their level of implementation of play-based learning?
5. What are the best practices of the teachers related to the implementation of play-based learning approach?
6. Based on the findings, what dynamic play-based class activities can be generated?

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LITERATURE REVIEW

This shift toward abstract representation aligns with what Roskos and Christie describe as the Play–Literacy Nexus—a dynamic intersection where play, language, and literacy converge to create rich learning opportunities. Dramatic and pretend play contexts—such as acting out stories, assigning symbolic roles, and recontextualizing objects—offer preschoolers a space to expand their vocabulary, narrative abilities, and conceptual understanding (Roskos & Christie, 2011, as cited by Campbell, 2021).

Despite consistent research findings indicating that preschool-aged learners who engage in cooperative play with peers demonstrate better academic achievement, social skills, and behavioral development compared to those who do not, many school administrators—often lacking expertise in early childhood education—continue to prioritize academic instruction over play-based learning. This focus has resulted in a significant reduction or even elimination of play opportunities during the kindergarten day (Ginsburg, 2022, as cited by Casey, 2023). Such a trend disregards the developmental value of play, which has been shown to promote essential foundational skills in young learners.

This understanding is supported by Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development, which highlights the importance of play during the “concrete operational” stage, where children develop the ability to mentally reverse actions, known as reversibility. This cognitive skill allows children to retrace their thought processes, enabling more complex problem-solving and abstract reasoning (Mooney & Smith, 2021, as cited by Lee, 2022). According to Piaget, meaningful learning occurs through active interactions with the environment, with play serving as a natural and powerful tool for expressing ideas, experimenting, and learning through trial and error. These experiences strengthen children’s cognitive abilities, particularly those connected to emerging literacy and symbolic thinking (Tsao, 2021, as cited by Wright, 2022).

Building on Piaget’s work, Roskos and Christie (2014, as cited by Green, 2021) emphasize that preschool-aged learners actively draw on memory and symbolic representation during play activities, which in turn supports the development of pre-reading skills such as naming, categorizing, and creative thinking. Through dramatic and pretend play,

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children use objects to represent other items, engage in storytelling, and build on prior knowledge, all of which contribute to language and literacy growth in meaningful, self-directed ways.

In addition to developmental factors, the attitudes and beliefs of teachers toward play-based and developmentally appropriate practices play a crucial role in the quality of early learning experiences. Teachers with positive perceptions of play-based learning are more likely to implement nurturing, well-structured, and effective classroom environments that support holistic child development (Dockett & Perry, 2020, as cited by Chang, 2023). This relationship extends to pre-service teachers, whose initial attitudes and beliefs strongly influence their future classroom practices, underscoring the importance of fostering positive and flexible mindsets during teacher preparation programs (Hollingsworth, 2021, as cited by Chang, 2023).

Moreover, research indicates that teachers with high self-efficacy feel more confident managing inclusive classrooms and addressing diverse learner needs. Such educators are more likely to plan purposefully, respond adaptively, and facilitate child-centered learning experiences that accommodate varying developmental stages and backgrounds (Hamre et al., 2020, as cited by Wright, 2022). However, structural factors such as class size, workload, and access to professional development can either support or hinder the extent to which teachers' positive attitudes are translated into effective teaching practices.

Jean Piaget's Constructivism Theory emphasizes that children are active participants in the learning process, constructing knowledge through direct interaction with their environment. According to Piaget, learning occurs as children engage in experiences that challenge their existing mental models, enabling them to develop new understandings through assimilation and accommodation. This theory supports the idea that learning is not simply the transmission of information from teacher to child but is built through meaningful experiences—making play a crucial part of cognitive development in early childhood education.

In the context of play-based strategies, Piaget's theory aligns well with the developmental needs of young learners. Play provides children with a natural and engaging

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medium to explore, experiment, and discover. When children manipulate objects, solve problems, and interact socially during play, they are actively constructing knowledge in ways that are developmentally appropriate. This experiential learning not only strengthens cognitive structures but also promotes curiosity, creativity, and independence—key goals in early childhood education.

Supporting your study, Constructivism validates the implementation of play-based learning as a pedagogical strategy that is grounded in how children naturally learn. Teachers, as facilitators of learning, can create structured yet flexible environments where play is used intentionally to introduce concepts and encourage discovery. Through this approach, the teacher’s role becomes instrumental in designing learning opportunities that are both enjoyable and intellectually stimulating, thus fostering holistic development in early learners.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed the descriptive method of research with the use of the modified standardized questionnaire in the gathering of important data relevant to the study. A descriptive correlational study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing relationships among variables, without seeking to establish a causal connection.

Respondents/ Participants

The respondents of the study were the teachers of Pardo Elementary School. The respondents were chosen through the use of non-random purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were as follows: a] that they are teachers in the research locale, b] that they have been in the profession for more than a year and c] that they are willing to participate and cooperate in the said undertaking.

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Instrument of the Study

The main questionnaire of this study is divided into four (4) parts. The first part solicits information about the profile of the teachers including age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, and relevant training, seminars and workshops attended.

The second part of the questionnaire is a modified standardized questionnaire taken from the study of Jessica Arrow (2019) on "HOW TO USE PLAY FOR LEARNING". This tool will determine the level of knowledge of teachers in the implementation of play-based learning approach on early childhood education. The questionnaire consists of a 15-item statement which will be measured using a 5-point Likert Scale: 5 for VERY MUCH AGREE, 4 for STRONGLY AGREE, 3 for AGREE, 2 for NEUTRAL and 1 for DISAGREE.

The third part of the questionnaire is also a modified standardized questionnaire taken from the study of Puteh and Ali (2013) on "Pre-School Teachers' Perceptions Towards the Use of Play-Based Approach in Language and Literacy Development for Pre-School". This tool determined the level of attitude of teachers towards the implementation of play-based learning approach on early childhood education. This questionnaire consists of 30-item statements and will be measured using a 5-point Likert Scale: 5 for VERY STRONGLY AGREE, 4 for STRONGLY AGREE, 3 for AGREE, 2 for NEUTRAL and 1 for DISAGREE.

Meanwhile, the fourth and last part identified the issues and concerns related to the implementation of play-based learning approach.

Procedure

The input of the study includes the relevant information of the respondent groups in terms of age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, performance rating, and relevant training, seminars and workshops attended. This also covers the level of knowledge of teachers on the play-based learning approach in early childhood education in terms of importance of play-based learning; role of play in holistic child development and application and integration in classroom instruction

In the gathering of data, this research followed a step-by-step process.

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First, a letter was made address to the principal of Pardo Elementary School for approval of the conduct of the study.

After the letter was approved, the questionnaires were personally distributed to the respondents. The respondents were given ample time of 15-20 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Data was then collected and subjected to further presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data. The final draft was submitted for finalization and corrections.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to established ethical standards in the conduct of educational research. Prior to data collection, a formal letter of request was submitted to and approved by the school principal of Pardo Elementary School. Upon approval, the purpose, procedures, and significance of the study were clearly explained to the teacher-respondents. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the administration of the questionnaire, and they were assured that they had the right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or consequences.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, no personally identifiable information such as names or specific identifiers was collected in the questionnaire. Responses were treated with strict confidentiality and were used solely for academic and research purposes. Data gathered were securely handled and reported only in aggregate form to prevent the identification of individual respondents. The researcher also ensured that the findings were presented objectively and honestly, without fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data. By observing these ethical principles, the study safeguarded the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants throughout the research process.

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Data Analysis

Data obtained from the respondents of the study with the corresponding analysis and interpretation. The respondents of this study are the 25 teachers from Pardo Elementary School, Pardo, Cebu City.

This chapter comprised five (5) distinct sections.

The first part deals with the relevant information of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, performance rating, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops attended.

The second part of this chapter deals with the level of play-based learning approach of teachers in terms of knowledge and attitude. Meanwhile, the third part assesses the level of implementation of play-based learning approach among the teachers of early childhood education in terms of learning environment and materials, instructional strategies and facilitation of play and assessment and documentation of learning through play.

Moreover, this study tests the relationship between the level of knowledge and attitude of teachers and their level of implementation of play-based learning.

Lastly, the best practices of the teachers related to the implementation of play-based learning approach were also taken into considerations in this study.

RESULTS

The following tables reveal the relevant information of the respondents in terms of their age, gender, civil status, highest educational attainment, number of years in service, performance rating, and relevant training, seminars, and workshops attended.

Table 2

Age Profile of Teachers

Age	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
51 years old and above	2	8.00
41-50 years old	4	16.00

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31-40 years old	4	16.00
21-30 years old	15	60.00
Total	25	100.00
Average	32.66	-
Standard Deviation	9.92	-

Table 2 shows the age distribution of the 25 teacher-respondents. The majority, comprising 60% (n=15), fall within the 21–30 years old bracket, suggesting that the teaching workforce in this sample is relatively young and early in their professional careers. This demographic trend reflects the influx of newly licensed teachers entering the public school system, likely due to increased recruitment efforts and the expansion of the K–12 Basic Education Program (DepEd, 2020). The high percentage of young teachers may also be attributed to the growing number of education graduates passing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET), as reported by the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC, 2022).

The next two age brackets, 31–40 years old and 41–50 years old, are evenly represented with 16% each (n=4). These teachers are likely in their mid-career stages and may have gained enough experience to handle various roles beyond classroom instruction, such as mentoring younger colleagues or leading school programs. Their relatively modest representation might reflect attrition due to migration, career shifts, or challenges associated with workload and compensation, issues noted in several studies about teacher retention in the Philippines (Manzon, 2021; SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2020).

Only 8% (n=2) of respondents belong to the 51 years old and above age group, indicating a low representation of older or nearing-retirement teachers. This small proportion may be due to the implementation of early retirement or the physical and emotional demands of the teaching profession, which often result in earlier workforce exit (Llego, 2021). The declining trend in the number of older teachers may also point to a generational transition in the teaching profession, with younger cohorts gradually replacing more senior educators.

The dominance of the younger age group (21–30 years old) has implications for professional development and capacity-building efforts. Younger teachers may require more

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mentoring, coaching, and continuous training to enhance pedagogical skills, particularly in addressing diverse learner needs and integrating ICT tools in instruction—skills emphasized under the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) and the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP, 2023). The need for differentiated training aligned with teachers’ career stages becomes even more relevant in fostering quality and sustainable education.

In conclusion, the age profile of the respondents reveals a predominantly young teaching population, with fewer mid- to late-career educators. This trend underscores the importance of structured induction, support systems, and succession planning within the educational workforce. As the Department of Education (DepEd) pushes forward with reforms under the MATATAG Agenda, policies must also cater to the evolving demographic of the teaching force to ensure continuous development, reduce turnover, and ultimately enhance learner outcomes (DepEd, 2023).

Table 3

Gender Profile of Teachers

Gender	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
Female	20	80.00
Male	5	20.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 3 illustrates the gender distribution of the 25 teacher-respondents. A significant majority, 80% (n=20), are female, while only 20% (n=5) are male. This gender imbalance mirrors the broader national trend in the Philippine education sector, where teaching—especially in the basic education level—is largely dominated by women. According to the Department of Education (DepEd, 2021), approximately 87% of public school teachers in the country are female, reflecting a long-standing feminization of the teaching profession.

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The strong presence of female teachers may be attributed to societal and cultural norms in the Philippines that traditionally associate caregiving and nurturing roles with women—traits considered aligned with the demands of teaching, especially in early childhood and elementary education (Cabigao & Dimalibot, 2021). Furthermore, teaching is often viewed as a stable and family-friendly profession for women, which may explain the consistent influx of female education graduates entering the field.

Conversely, the relatively low representation of male teachers (20%) remains a concern for efforts toward gender inclusivity and balance in the teaching workforce. The underrepresentation of men in the teaching profession, particularly in elementary levels, could lead to limited gender role models for young male learners. This issue has been pointed out in gender studies that emphasize the value of diverse perspectives and balanced gender representation in shaping holistic learner development (UNESCO Bangkok, 2020).

The dominance of female educators also raises considerations for gender-responsive policies in schools. While female teachers form the majority, they may still face challenges in leadership advancement, workplace equity, and protection against gender-based violence. The Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710) and DepEd Order No. 32, s. 2017, which promotes Gender and Development (GAD) in basic education, call for gender-sensitivity training and the promotion of equitable working conditions for both male and female educators (DepEd, 2022).

In conclusion, the gender profile of the respondents highlights the predominance of female teachers, consistent with national statistics and cultural trends. While the strong presence of women in the teaching profession is commendable, it also calls for more proactive strategies to attract and retain qualified male educators and ensure balanced gender representation. Moreover, continuous gender-sensitivity programs and equitable leadership opportunities should be institutionalized to support all teachers regardless of gender under the principles of inclusive education.

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Table 4

Civil Status Profile of Teachers

Civil Status	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
Married	17	68.00
Single	8	32.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 4 presents the civil status of the 25 teacher-respondents. The majority, or 68% (n=17), are married, while 32% (n=8) are single. This suggests that most of the respondents are managing dual roles as educators and family members. In the context of Filipino culture, marriage often entails responsibilities such as childcare, household management, and financial obligations, which can significantly affect a teacher’s workload, stress levels, and work-life balance (Llego, 2021).

The high percentage of married teachers aligns with findings from Philippine education workforce studies indicating that many teachers enter into marriage while actively teaching, often balancing professional and personal commitments (SEAMEO INNOTECH, 2020). Married educators may draw strength from their families but also face time-related pressures, especially when teaching and domestic responsibilities overlap—challenges that became even more pronounced during the shift to remote learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Salin, 2021).

Meanwhile, 32% of the respondents are single, which may include young professionals early in their careers. Single teachers might have more flexibility with their time and fewer familial obligations, potentially allowing greater focus on teaching responsibilities and professional development. However, they may also experience different forms of social or emotional stress, such as isolation or pressure to take on extra tasks in the workplace (Tayao, 2022).

Understanding civil status is also relevant in the implementation of support programs for teachers. Married teachers may benefit from flexible working arrangements and parental

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leave policies, while single teachers may seek opportunities for growth, promotion, or even further studies. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Department of Education (DepEd) have recognized these needs through policies such as the Special Leave Privileges and Family Welfare Programs, aimed at promoting well-being and work-life integration (DepEd, 2023).

In conclusion, the civil status profile reveals that the majority of respondents are married, highlighting the necessity of family-supportive workplace practices. As teachers juggle personal and professional roles, school leaders and policymakers must continue to ensure that working conditions support both groups—married and single—by fostering a supportive and inclusive school culture. Recognizing these personal dimensions contributes to more responsive human resource management and, ultimately, better educational outcomes.

Table 5

Highest Educational Attainment of Teachers

Highest Educational Attainment	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
Master’s Degree	3	12.00
With units in Master’s Degree	7	28.00
BSEEd/BSEEd Graduate	15	60.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 5 presents the highest educational attainment of the 25 teacher-respondents. The data show that a majority—60% (n=15)—are Bachelor of Secondary/Elementary Education (BSEEd) graduates, indicating that most of the teachers hold the minimum qualification required for teaching in the basic education level. This result is consistent with national trends, as reported by the Department of Education (DepEd, 2021), where the majority of teachers, especially those newly hired, enter the profession with a bachelor’s degree in education.

Meanwhile, 28% (n=7) of the respondents are currently pursuing graduate studies, with units in a Master’s Degree program. This reflects the growing commitment of teachers to pursue professional growth and meet the standards set by the Philippine Professional

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Standards for Teachers (PPST), which encourages continuous development and acquisition of advanced competencies (DepEd-NEAP, 2023). Teachers with ongoing graduate studies are often better positioned to apply research-based strategies and assume leadership or specialist roles within their schools.

Only 12% (n=3) of the respondents have completed a Master's Degree, indicating that a relatively small proportion of teachers have reached advanced academic qualifications. While this figure shows progress in terms of higher education attainment, it also highlights the need to expand access to and support for graduate education, particularly for teachers in geographically isolated or underfunded areas. According to CHED (2022), limited financial resources, workload demands, and lack of scholarship opportunities are among the barriers to pursuing postgraduate education among Filipino teachers.

The pursuit of higher education is crucial in raising teaching quality, as graduate-level training equips educators with deeper pedagogical knowledge, research capabilities, and instructional leadership skills. DepEd's ongoing efforts under the MATATAG Agenda and NEAP's professional development programs aim to promote lifelong learning and academic advancement among teachers to align with global education goals and the demands of the 21st-century classroom (DepEd, 2023).

In conclusion, the highest educational attainment profile shows that while most teachers are qualified with a bachelor's degree, there is still a need to encourage and support further academic advancement. Providing accessible and incentivized graduate study programs, especially in partnership with state universities and through scholarships, is essential. Strengthening teachers' qualifications not only fulfills policy mandates but also enhances their capacity to deliver quality education that meets the evolving needs of Filipino learners.

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Table 6

Length of Service of Teachers

Length of Service	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
More than 6 years	12	48.00
4-6 years	6	24.00
1-3 years	3	12.00
Less than a year	4	16.00
Total	25	100.00
Average	4.79	-
Standard Deviation	2.51	-

Table 6 presents the distribution of the respondents based on their length of service in the teaching profession. The largest group, accounting for 48% (n=12), has served for more than 6 years, indicating a substantial portion of the respondents possess considerable teaching experience. Teachers in this category likely have a deeper understanding of the curriculum, classroom management strategies, and student behavior, which are key indicators of teacher effectiveness (DepEd, 2021). Their long-term engagement in the profession suggests strong retention, possibly influenced by job stability, vocational commitment, and government employment benefits.

Following this group, 24% (n=6) have been teaching for 4–6 years, representing mid-career professionals who are likely building on foundational skills while preparing for more specialized or leadership roles. According to SEAMEO INNOTECH (2020), this stage is often characterized by increased participation in professional development and more complex teaching responsibilities. These teachers are typically positioned to benefit from advanced in-service training aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST) career stages, particularly transitioning from Proficient to Highly Proficient levels.

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Mario A. Cudiamat, Jesson L. Hero, Albert Bulawat, Cris T. Zita, Allan M. Manaloto, Jerico N. Mendoza



A combined 28% of respondents fall within the early career range—12% (n=3) with 1–3 years of service and 16% (n=4) with less than one year of teaching experience. These novice teachers are in the induction phase, where mentoring, supervision, and targeted training are critical to ensuring successful adjustment and long-term retention. Llego (2021) emphasized the importance of school-based mentoring programs and the NEAP’s teacher induction courses to address challenges that new teachers face, especially in terms of instructional planning and student engagement.

The average length of service is 4.79 years, with a standard deviation of 2.51 years, indicating a moderately varied range of experience among respondents. This diversity can be advantageous in fostering peer learning, where seasoned teachers support less experienced colleagues through professional learning communities. As highlighted in DepEd Order No. 16, s. 2022 (Revised Guidelines on the Implementation of the Results-Based Performance Management System), collaboration among teachers of varying service lengths enhances collective growth and supports instructional effectiveness.

In conclusion, the data suggest a healthy mix of early-career and experienced teachers within the sample. While the majority have served more than six years, the presence of new and mid-level teachers underscores the importance of differentiated support mechanisms. Strengthening teacher development programs tailored to service length will ensure that all educators, regardless of tenure, are empowered to meet the demands of 21st-century education and contribute to learner success under the ongoing MATATAG agenda and PPST framework.

Table 7

Performance Rating of Teachers

Performance Rating	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
Outstanding	1	4.00
Very Satisfactory	23	92.00
Satisfactory	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

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Table 7 presents the performance ratings of the 25 teacher-respondents based on their latest evaluation. A large majority, 92% (n=23), received a Very Satisfactory rating. This indicates that most of the respondents are consistently meeting and often exceeding expectations in their professional roles. Such performance levels reflect effective teaching practices, adherence to the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), and a strong commitment to the Department of Education’s core values and teaching priorities (DepEd, 2021).

Meanwhile, only 1 teacher (4%) received an Outstanding rating. While this may seem low, the stringent standards and evaluative criteria required to attain this rating under the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) make it a challenging benchmark. According to DepEd Order No. 2, s. 2015 and updated performance-based assessment tools, an "Outstanding" rating requires evidence of highly innovative practices, impact on learner outcomes, and instructional leadership, which are not always easily met in all teaching contexts.

Another 4% (n=1) received a Satisfactory rating, the minimum acceptable level of performance in the RPMS. While this teacher may still be meeting basic expectations, this rating signals a need for closer support, more targeted professional development, or mentoring interventions. According to SEAMEO INNOTECH (2020), providing customized instructional coaching and formative feedback to teachers with "Satisfactory" performance can help elevate their practices to the next level.

The predominance of "Very Satisfactory" ratings is consistent with national trends. DepEd’s annual performance reports often indicate that the majority of public school teachers nationwide fall within the "Very Satisfactory" category, as the RPMS is closely aligned with the PPST framework and promotes continuous improvement. However, education experts caution that while high ratings are positive, these figures must also be critically analyzed to ensure they reflect authentic and differentiated evaluations rather than uniform or lenient appraisals (Tayao, 2022).

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In conclusion, the performance rating data reveal that Filipino teachers in this sample are generally performing well, with most rated “Very Satisfactory” and only a few outliers on either end of the scale. This pattern supports the notion that teachers are effectively fulfilling their professional duties. Nevertheless, the performance management system must continue evolving to ensure that appraisal tools are meaningful, fair, and aligned with actual classroom outcomes—thereby promoting genuine excellence in teaching and learning.

Table 8

Relevant Training, Seminars, and Workshops Attended

Relevant Training, Seminars, and Workshops Attended	Frequency (n=25)	Percentage
Division	6	24.00
District	6	24.00
Regional	4	16.00
International	2	8.00
National	1	4.00
Total	25	100.00

Table 8 presents the highest level of training, seminar, or workshop each of the 25 teacher-respondents has attended. Tied for the top rank are Division-level and District-level training programs, each with 6 participants (24%), suggesting that the majority of teachers are most frequently exposed to localized professional development opportunities. These trainings, usually organized by the Schools Division Office (SDO) or district supervisors, often cover curriculum updates, pedagogy, and policy orientations that are context-specific and immediately applicable to classroom practice (DepEd, 2023).

Regional-level training ranks second, with 4 respondents (16%) having participated. Regional trainings are typically broader in scope and may involve specialized topics or pilot programs initiated by DepEd Regional Offices. These events allow teachers to engage with peers from other divisions, learn from subject experts, and share best practices, aligning with

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the National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP) commitment to capacitating teachers through tiered and progressive learning programs (NEAP, 2023).

Interestingly, only 2 respondents (8%) have attended International training programs, ranking third. While low, this figure demonstrates that some teachers have accessed global learning platforms, exchange programs, or international webinars, likely made more accessible through virtual learning during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. International exposure enhances teachers' perspectives on global competencies and innovative teaching strategies, key elements in DepEd's Sulong EduKalidad agenda (DepEd, 2021).

Meanwhile, only 1 respondent (4%) attended National-level training, the lowest in the dataset. National trainings, often spearheaded by DepEd Central Office or CHED, tend to be selective and targeted toward master teachers, school leaders, or those in special roles. The low participation may reflect limited slots, budget constraints, or communication gaps between agencies and schools. As pointed out by SEAMEO INNOTECH (2020), equitable access to high-impact professional development remains a challenge, particularly for teachers in remote or underserved areas.

In conclusion, the data suggest that most teachers primarily benefit from local-level training, which is valuable but may limit exposure to more diverse, evidence-based, or innovative practices offered at regional, national, or international levels. For a more empowered teaching workforce, DepEd and NEAP should continue expanding inclusive access to high-quality, multi-level professional development programs. Encouraging broader participation beyond the division level will help align teacher competencies with the evolving demands of quality, inclusive, and globally competitive basic education.

LEVEL OF TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE

The following tables reveal the level of play-based learning approach of teachers in terms of their knowledge and attitude.

Knowledge. The information, understanding, and awareness that teachers possess regarding concepts, approaches, and strategies, such as play-based learning.

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Table 9

Level of Teachers' Knowledge

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Demonstrates understanding of the principles and concepts of play-based learning in early childhood education	4.44	0.52	Very Much Effective
Is familiar with DepEd guidelines and policies related to play-based instruction in Kindergarten	4.44	0.47	Very Much Effective
Identifies appropriate strategies for integrating learning competencies into play-based activities	4.28	0.55	Very Much Effective
Differentiates among structured, guided, and free play, including their respective educational roles	4.32	0.49	Very Much Effective
Designs classroom environments that support purposeful and developmentally appropriate play	4.28	0.51	Very Much Effective
Utilizes observation tools such as checklists and anecdotal records in assessing learning during play	4.72	0.43	Very Much Effective
Recognizes the developmental domains (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, physical) addressed through play	4.52	0.45	Very Much Effective
Understands the role of the teacher as a facilitator in play-based learning environments	4.48	0.50	Very Much Effective
Selects and organizes play materials that are age-appropriate and aligned with learning goals	4.44	0.46	Very Much Effective
Acknowledges the significance of child-initiated and inquiry-based learning experiences	4.28	0.54	Very Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	4.42	0.49	Very Much Effective

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Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Very Much Effective; 3.41 – 4.20 Much Effective; 2.61 – 3.40 Effective; 1.81 – 2.60 Less Effective; 1.00 – 1.80 Not Effective

The level of teachers' knowledge on the play-based learning approach is reflected by the high overall grand mean of 4.42, interpreted as Very Much Effective. This indicates that the respondents possess a strong understanding of the essential concepts, principles, and applications of play-based learning in early childhood education. Such a high level of knowledge aligns with the growing global emphasis on child-centered pedagogies that promote developmentally appropriate practices in the early years (Kabilan et al., 2021). The results suggest that teachers are not only familiar with theoretical underpinnings but also capable of translating these into practice.

Among the highest-rated indicators is the item "Utilizes observation tools such as checklists and anecdotal records in assessing learning during play", which scored a mean of 4.72 with a relatively low standard deviation of 0.43, showing high agreement among respondents. This emphasizes teachers' strong competence in employing formative assessment tools in play-based settings. According to Løkken (2022), documentation and assessment are vital components of quality early childhood education, allowing educators to track developmental progress while maintaining a playful and engaging environment.

Similarly, teachers showed strong recognition of how play addresses multiple developmental domains, with the item "Recognizes the developmental domains (e.g., cognitive, social, emotional, physical) addressed through play" receiving a high mean of 4.52. This finding highlights an integrated understanding of holistic development among respondents. Research by Nah and Lee (2023) supports this, emphasizing that effective play-based learning fosters children's competence across various domains, thereby reinforcing the value of teacher knowledge in crafting appropriate learning experiences.

Items that scored slightly lower, though still within the Very Much Effective range, include "Identifies appropriate strategies for integrating learning competencies into play-based activities", "Designs classroom environments that support purposeful and developmentally

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appropriate play", and "Acknowledges the significance of child-initiated and inquiry-based learning experiences"—all with mean scores of 4.28. These results may point to areas where teachers could benefit from more targeted professional development to deepen their application of advanced integration techniques. According to Reyes and Torres (2021), ongoing training is necessary for teachers to adapt their play-based strategies to meet evolving curriculum standards and learner needs.

Another notable item is "Understands the role of the teacher as a facilitator in play-based learning environments", with a mean of 4.48. This reflects a shift from traditional teacher-directed instruction to a more learner-centered and facilitative role. As highlighted by Kumar and Sen (2020), the teacher's role in play-based contexts is not to control but to guide exploration and scaffold learning, thereby promoting autonomy and inquiry among young learners. This finding reinforces the alignment of classroom practice with current pedagogical standards in early childhood education.

Overall, the results of Table 9 indicate that teachers in the study possess a high level of knowledge regarding play-based learning. The consistently high mean scores and low standard deviation values suggest a well-established understanding and consensus among teachers. This supports recent findings by Tan and Ang (2022), who concluded that teacher knowledge is a critical factor influencing the success of play-based learning frameworks, particularly when aligned with national policies and contextualized strategies. The strong foundation in knowledge demonstrated by the respondents is a promising indicator of quality early childhood education delivery.

Attitude. This is a learned tendency or mindset that influences how an individual thinks, feels, and behaves towards a particular object, idea, or situation.

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Table 10

Level of Teachers' Attitude

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Views play as essential to a child's learning and overall development	4.32	0.50	Very Much Effective
Displays confidence in delivering instruction through play-based approaches	4.44	0.46	Very Much Effective
Shows enthusiasm in preparing and implementing play-integrated activities	4.16	0.55	Much Effective
Believes that play promotes learner engagement and motivation	4.16	0.53	Much Effective
Supports the idea that academic competencies can be effectively learned through play	4.16	0.57	Much Effective
Values the use of open-ended and creative materials in the learning environment	4.52	0.45	Very Much Effective
Regards the facilitation of play as a purposeful and reflective teaching practice	4.04	0.60	Much Effective
Welcomes opportunities for professional development related to play-based instruction	4.56	0.43	Very Much Effective
Accepts play-based assessment as a valid measure of learning progress	4.12	0.58	Much Effective
Believes that play-based learning fosters holistic development among learners	4.32	0.50	Very Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	3.84	0.52	Much Effective

The level of teachers' attitude on the play-based learning approach is reflected in the overall grand mean of 4.24, which falls within the Much Effective interpretation. This suggests that while teachers generally have a positive mindset toward play-based learning, there is still some room for growth in fully embracing and consistently applying these attitudes in classroom practice. Attitude is a critical factor in implementing innovative pedagogical approaches, and positive teacher dispositions can directly affect the quality of learner experiences (Tan & Ang, 2022). The data indicates that teachers are mostly supportive of play

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as a valuable educational tool but may benefit from deeper conviction and reinforcement through professional development.

Several items scored in the Very Much Effective range, notably "Welcomes opportunities for professional development related to play-based instruction" with a mean of 4.56 and the lowest standard deviation (0.43), reflecting strong agreement among respondents. This suggests a high level of openness and willingness among teachers to enhance their skills and understanding of play-based learning. According to Reyes and Torres (2021), professional learning opportunities significantly shape teachers' beliefs and practices, particularly in early childhood settings where emerging pedagogies like play-based learning require continuous support and reflection.

Additionally, items such as "Displays confidence in delivering instruction through play-based approaches" and "Values the use of open-ended and creative materials in the learning environment" also received high mean scores of 4.44 and 4.52 respectively, indicating that teachers not only believe in the efficacy of play but also feel competent in applying it. Confidence and resource valuation are vital to effective classroom integration. As Løkken (2022) notes, the successful implementation of play-based learning is closely tied to a teacher's belief in their ability to facilitate creative and engaging learning environments.

On the other hand, some items received slightly lower ratings, such as "Regards the facilitation of play as a purposeful and reflective teaching practice" (4.04) and "Accepts play-based assessment as a valid measure of learning progress" (4.12). These results point to areas where teacher attitudes may be more tentative. Teachers may still be adjusting to the idea that play can be structured and reflective, not merely spontaneous. Kabilan et al. (2021) argue that attitudes toward assessment through play often depend on institutional support and training, as many educators still default to traditional assessment methods despite valuing play-based approaches in theory.

Another set of items—"Shows enthusiasm in preparing and implementing play-integrated activities," "Believes that play promotes learner engagement and motivation," and "Supports the idea that academic competencies can be effectively learned through play", all

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scored 4.16, which, while still positive, suggests some reservations. This may be due to challenges such as curriculum pressure, limited time, or misconceptions about the academic value of play. According to Nah and Lee (2023), teacher enthusiasm and belief in play's academic utility are strengthened when schools actively encourage and model its integration within the formal curriculum.

In summary, the data reveals that teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward the play-based learning approach, with strong agreement on its importance in child development and instruction. However, slight variances in responses point to specific aspects—such as the role of reflection, assessment, and academic alignment—where further support is needed. As emphasized by Kumar and Sen (2020), cultivating sustained positive attitudes requires a supportive ecosystem, ongoing mentorship, and a clear alignment between policy, training, and classroom realities. The findings in Table 10 affirm the foundational readiness of teachers to implement play-based learning, while also highlighting key areas for enhancement.

Summary on the Level of Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude. Table 11 presents the summary on the level of knowledge and attitude on the level of play-based learning approach among the teacher-respondents of the research environment.

Table 11

Summary on the Level of Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Knowledge	4.42	0.49	Very Much Effective
Attitude	3.84	0.52	Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	4.13	0.51	Much Effective

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Very Much Effective; 3.41 - 4.20 Much Effective; 2.61 - 3.40 Effective; 1.81 - 2.60 Less Effective; 1.00 - 1.80 Not Effective

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The 11 presents the summary of teachers' knowledge and attitude regarding the play-based learning approach. The findings reveal that teachers demonstrated a high level of knowledge with a weighted mean of 4.42, interpreted as "Very Much Effective." This suggests that the majority of the teacher-respondents possess a strong understanding of the principles, strategies, and implementation processes of play-based learning. Such knowledge is crucial since teachers' pedagogical awareness directly affects the quality of instructional practices and the degree to which innovative strategies are effectively integrated into classroom settings. Recent studies highlight that teachers who have deeper knowledge of play-based approaches are more capable of fostering creativity, critical thinking, and engagement among learners (Alonso-Stuyck et al., 2021).

In terms of attitude, the respondents' mean score was 3.84, interpreted as "Much Effective." While still a positive outcome, this indicates that teachers' attitudes toward play-based learning were not as strong as their knowledge. This slight gap between knowledge and attitude suggests that although teachers understand the benefits of play-based learning, certain factors such as curriculum demands, assessment pressures, or classroom management concerns may influence their willingness to fully embrace it. Supporting this, a study by Tang et al. (2021) noted that teachers' positive attitudes toward play-based pedagogy are sometimes hindered by systemic barriers, such as standardized testing and lack of administrative support.

The grand mean of 4.13, interpreted as "Much Effective," reflects an overall favorable evaluation of both knowledge and attitude toward the play-based learning approach. This overall score indicates that teachers not only understand the significance of play in the learning process but also maintain a generally positive outlook toward its use in classroom practice. According to Pyle and Danniels (2020), when teachers demonstrate both knowledge and a supportive attitude toward play-based methods, students benefit from improved motivation, social skills, and academic performance. This reinforces the importance of sustaining both cognitive and affective dimensions of teaching when adopting innovative strategies.

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Mario A. Cudiamat, Jesson L. Hero, Albert Bulawat, Cris T. Zita, Allan M. Manaloto, Jerico N. Mendoza



However, the difference in the interpretation of knowledge (“Very Much Effective”) and attitude (“Much Effective”) reveals an area for development. While teachers may be theoretically aware of the effectiveness of play-based learning, actual implementation may be tempered by their personal comfort levels, teaching styles, or external challenges such as large class sizes. As identified by Bautista, Habib, and Tan (2022), teachers’ beliefs and values significantly shape how play-based strategies are implemented in practice, often influencing whether these approaches are sustained long-term. Thus, professional development must not only enhance knowledge but also strengthen attitudes to align them with effective classroom practices.

Another important implication of the findings is the need for ongoing training and institutional support to sustain teachers’ confidence and enthusiasm in employing play-based learning. Recent research by Salim et al. (2023) emphasized that sustained teacher training, mentoring, and peer collaboration contribute significantly to the successful integration of play-based pedagogy. Without adequate support, teachers who may already hold favorable knowledge might struggle with practical execution, thereby weakening their attitudes toward such approaches. Hence, continuous professional learning communities and workshops could bridge the identified gap between teachers’ knowledge and attitudes.

In conclusion, the results of Table 11 highlight that while teachers possess very strong knowledge of play-based learning, their attitudes, though positive, are slightly less robust. This indicates that knowledge does not always directly translate into enthusiasm or consistent practice. The findings are consistent with recent studies (Tang et al., 2021; Bautista et al., 2022; Salim et al., 2023), which emphasize the interplay between teachers’ cognitive understanding and affective commitment to pedagogy. Strengthening both dimensions is necessary to maximize the benefits of play-based approaches in early education. Therefore, schools should invest in capacity-building programs that not only develop teachers’ knowledge but also foster more positive attitudes through supportive environments, reflective practice, and peer collaboration.

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LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAY-BASED LEARNING APPROACH

The following tables presents the level of implementation of play-based learning approach among the teachers of early childhood education in terms of learning environment and materials; instructional strategies and facilitation of play and assessment and documentation of learning through play.

Learning Environment and Materials. A thoughtfully designed physical and social space, including age-appropriate and engaging materials, that supports children's exploration, creativity, and play-based learning.

Table 12

Level of Play-Based Learning Approach in terms of Learning Environment and Materials

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
The classroom is arranged to provide safe and accessible learning centers that support play	4.4	0.48	Very Much Effective
Age-appropriate and open-ended materials are regularly used to promote creativity and exploration	4.32	0.52	Very Much Effective
The physical environment encourages movement, social interaction, and imaginative play	4.32	0.50	Very Much Effective
The teacher provides a variety of play materials aligned with the weekly thematic lessons	4.52	0.44	Very Much Effective
Learning materials are rotated and enhanced based on learners' needs and interests	4.56	0.42	Very Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	4.42	0.47	Very Much Effective

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Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Very Much Effective; 3.41 – 4.20 Much Effective; 2.61 – 3.40 Effective; 1.81 – 2.60 Less Effective; 1.00 – 1.80 Not Effective

The level of implementation of play-based learning approach in terms of learning environment and materials is indicated by a grand mean of 4.42, interpreted as Very Much Effective. This high overall rating reflects that teachers effectively design and maintain physical and social spaces that promote play, creativity, and active engagement in learning. The consistency in high weighted means across all indicators, supported by relatively low standard deviations, suggests that respondents shared a common perception of strong implementation practices. This aligns with the findings of Tan and Ang (2022), who emphasized the importance of well-structured environments in reinforcing the principles of play-based pedagogy.

The item "Learning materials are rotated and enhanced based on learners' needs and interests" received the highest mean score of 4.56 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.42, suggesting that teachers are highly responsive to learners' developmental needs and engagement levels. Regularly updating materials ensures that children remain stimulated and interested, a practice supported by research from Løkken (2022), who highlighted the dynamic nature of early learning environments as essential for sustaining learner motivation and curiosity.

Closely following is the item "The teacher provides a variety of play materials aligned with the weekly thematic lessons", with a mean of 4.52. This indicates that teachers are intentional in integrating instructional goals with play resources. Thematic alignment promotes coherence and reinforces learning objectives while preserving the exploratory nature of play. According to Nah and Lee (2023), thoughtful selection and alignment of materials ensure that both academic content and developmental play are harmoniously integrated in early childhood classrooms.

Other key indicators, such as "The classroom is arranged to provide safe and accessible learning centers that support play" and "The physical environment encourages movement,

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social interaction, and imaginative play", both scored between 4.32 and 4.40, with standard deviations under 0.50, reflecting strong agreement and effective practices. These results affirm that spatial arrangement and environmental design are not only well-executed but are also valued by educators as integral to children's learning experiences. Reyes and Torres (2021) emphasize that the design of play areas directly affects children's interactions, collaboration, and autonomy—critical components of holistic development.

The use of "Age-appropriate and open-ended materials to promote creativity and exploration" also received a mean of 4.32, underscoring the importance of resource quality in play-based instruction. Open-ended materials, such as blocks, art supplies, and loose parts, encourage problem-solving, divergent thinking, and imaginative play. Kumar and Sen (2020) assert that such materials empower learners to construct knowledge through active engagement and inquiry, reinforcing the core tenets of constructivist learning theory.

Overall, the data in Table 12 indicates that teachers demonstrate a high level of implementation of play-based learning environments and materials. The consistent Very Much Effective interpretation across all items and the relatively low variability in responses suggest that best practices are widely adopted and sustained. As supported by international and local studies (Kabilan et al., 2021; Tan & Ang, 2022), a well-prepared learning environment, enriched with relevant and evolving materials, plays a vital role in the success of play-based learning, particularly in the formative years of a child's education.

Instructional Strategies and Facilitation of Play. Teaching methods used by educators to guide, support, and enhance children's learning through purposeful and responsive play experiences.

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Table 13

Level of Play-Based Learning Approach in terms of Instructional Strategies and Facilitation of Play

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Daily routines include a balance of structured, guided, and free play activities	4.6	0.43	Very Much Effective
The teacher uses play as a medium to teach concepts in language, math, and other learning areas	4.36	0.49	Very Much Effective
Learners are given opportunities to initiate play and make choices in learning activities	4.36	0.51	Very Much Effective
The teacher actively observes and supports learners during play without dominating their experience	4.2	0.55	Much Effective
Instruction is responsive to children's interests and incorporates real-life experiences into play	4.52	0.45	Very Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	4.40	0.49	Very Much Effective

The level of implementation of play-based learning approach in terms of instructional strategies and facilitation of play is reflected in the overall grand mean of 4.40, interpreted as Very Much Effective. This indicates that educators are highly proficient in using intentional and responsive strategies that promote active, meaningful, and playful learning experiences. The low grand standard deviation of 0.49 suggests strong agreement among respondents, further confirming the consistent and effective use of play-based instructional practices across learning environments. This supports the view of Tan and Ang (2022), who emphasized that responsive teaching and purposeful play integration are critical to early learning success.

The item with the highest weighted mean, "Daily routines include a balance of structured, guided, and free play activities" (4.60), demonstrates that teachers prioritize a well-balanced approach in their daily classroom activities. Such balance ensures children

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benefit from teacher-supported learning while also exploring independently. According to Løkken (2022), combining different types of play allows for both guided skill development and autonomous discovery, aligning with best practices in early childhood pedagogy.

Another strong area of implementation is shown in “Instruction is responsive to children’s interests and incorporates real-life experiences into play” with a mean of 4.52. This indicates that teachers are not only delivering planned lessons but also adapting to learners’ evolving interests. This responsiveness promotes relevance, engagement, and deeper learning connections. Reyes and Torres (2021) noted that when instruction is grounded in children’s real-life experiences and interests, learners exhibit higher motivation and stronger retention of concepts.

Equally rated at 4.36, the indicators “The teacher uses play as a medium to teach concepts in language, math, and other learning areas” and “Learners are given opportunities to initiate play and make choices in learning activities” reflect a strong commitment to child-centered learning. These responses highlight the integration of academic content through play and the promotion of learner agency—both foundational to effective play-based instruction. According to Nah and Lee (2023), giving children choice and embedding content in playful experiences fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The only item interpreted as Much Effective rather than Very Much Effective is “The teacher actively observes and supports learners during play without dominating their experience” with a mean of 4.20. This suggests that while teachers recognize the importance of facilitative roles, some may still be transitioning from directive to more observational and scaffolded practices. As Kumar and Sen (2020) emphasize, effective facilitation in play requires teachers to be present, observant, and supportive without interrupting the child’s autonomy and imaginative flow—an area where further training and reflection may be beneficial.

Overall, the data from Table 13 reveals that teachers demonstrate a strong and consistent implementation of play-based instructional strategies. Their high ratings across multiple indicators underscore a professional commitment to meaningful, engaging, and developmentally appropriate learning. As Kabilan et al. (2021) point out, when instructional

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 strategies are thoughtfully aligned with the nature of play, children are more likely to develop holistically—cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. The results affirm that play-based learning is not only embraced but effectively practiced in the classrooms studied.

Assessment and Documentation of Learning Through Play. The process of observing, recording, and analyzing children's play to evaluate their development, interests, and learning progress.

Table 14

Level of Play-Based Learning Approach in terms of Assessment and Documentation

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
The teacher regularly observes and records learners' behaviors and skills during play activities	4.6	0.46	Very Much Effective
Assessment tools such as anecdotal records, checklists, and portfolios are used during play	4.88	0.39	Very Much Effective
Learning outcomes are monitored and evaluated through evidence gathered from play-based experiences	4.92	0.35	Very Much Effective
The teacher provides feedback to parents based on observed play and developmental progress	4.52	0.50	Much Effective
Observations and assessments from play inform planning and differentiation of instruction	4.64	0.44	Very Much Effective
GRAND MEAN	4.71	0.43	Very Much Effective

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The level of implementation of play-based learning approach in terms of assessment and documentation of learning through play is reflected in the grand mean of 4.71, interpreted as Very Much Effective. This high score, along with a low standard deviation of 0.43, indicates strong agreement among respondents that assessment practices integrated into play are both widely implemented and valued. The findings suggest that teachers systematically document children’s learning through observation and analysis of play, aligning with best practices in early childhood assessment. According to Tan and Ang (2022), such practices are crucial in making learning visible and informing instructional decisions in child-centered settings.

The item “Learning outcomes are monitored and evaluated through evidence gathered from play-based experiences” received the highest mean score of 4.92 and the lowest standard deviation (0.35), indicating very strong agreement and exceptional implementation. This suggests that educators are confident in using play as a valid context for tracking developmental progress. Recent literature emphasizes that when play is used as an assessment tool, it not only provides authentic insights into children’s abilities but also respects their natural learning processes (Nah & Lee, 2023). This approach aligns with developmentally appropriate practices, which prioritize child observation over traditional testing.

Likewise, the item “Assessment tools such as anecdotal records, checklists, and portfolios are used during play” also scored highly with a mean of 4.88, reflecting strong integration of structured documentation methods into everyday teaching practices. This reinforces the idea that teachers are not merely observing passively but are actively collecting meaningful data. According to Reyes and Torres (2021), these tools enable educators to capture individual learning trajectories and provide rich evidence for both instruction and reporting.

The item “Observations and assessments from play inform planning and differentiation of instruction” scored 4.64, further validating that teachers are not only documenting learning but also using it to adapt and personalize instruction. This level of responsiveness shows an advanced understanding of assessment for learning, where documentation informs instructional strategies. As highlighted by Løkken (2022), linking assessment to instructional

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planning ensures that children receive support that aligns with their interests, developmental stages, and learning styles.

Interestingly, the only item interpreted as Much Effective is “The teacher provides feedback to parents based on observed play and developmental progress”, with a mean of 4.52. While still a strong rating, this may reflect certain limitations in how frequently or effectively teachers communicate assessment findings with parents. Research by Kumar and Sen (2020) suggests that while teachers are adept at collecting data through play, there may be challenges in translating these insights into parent-friendly feedback. Improving home-school collaboration around play-based assessment could further strengthen this area.

Overall, the findings in Table 14 indicate a very high level of implementation of play-based assessment and documentation practices. The data suggests that teachers are proficient in observing children during play, utilizing structured tools, and analyzing evidence to support developmental and instructional decisions. This reflects a mature, professional application of formative assessment principles. As Kabilan et al. (2021) noted, meaningful assessment in early childhood should be embedded within naturalistic contexts such as play, allowing educators to honor both the child’s voice and learning journey.

Summary on the Level of Implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach.

This section indicates the summary on the level of implementation of play-based learning approach among the teacher-respondents in terms of learning environment and materials, instructional strategies and facilitation of play, and assessment and documentation of learning through play.

Table 15

Summary on the Level of Implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach

Items	Weighted Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Learning Environment and Materials	4.42	0.47	Very Much Effective

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Instructional Strategies and Facilitation of Play	4.40	0.49	Very Effective	Much
Assessment and Documentation of Learning through Play	4.71	0.43	Very Effective	Much
GRAND MEAN	4.51	0.46	Very Effective	Much

Legend: 4.21 - 5.00 Very Much Effective; 3.41 – 4.20 Much Effective; 2.61 – 3.40 Effective; 1.81 – 2.60 Less Effective; 1.00 – 1.80 Not Effective

The level of implementation of the play-based learning approach among the teacher-respondents is reflected in the grand mean of 4.51 with a standard deviation of 0.46, interpreted as Very Much Effective. This result suggests a strong and consistent integration of play-based learning in early childhood education across all measured domains. The data indicates that educators not only value play as a pedagogical approach but also apply it effectively in their teaching practices. As stated by Pyle et al. (2021), when educators commit to a play-based approach, they create environments where cognitive, social, and emotional growth can thrive concurrently.

In terms of the learning environment and materials, the weighted mean of 4.42 shows that schools have effectively established developmentally appropriate environments that support various types of play. A conducive learning environment, filled with rich, engaging, and diverse materials, promotes exploration, creativity, and problem-solving among young learners (Tan & Rao, 2023). The standard deviation of 0.47 suggests a relatively consistent perception among respondents. This reflects the growing awareness among educators about the role of the physical setup in enhancing purposeful play and learner engagement.

The domain on instructional strategies and facilitation of play yielded a mean of 4.40, which is also interpreted as Very Much Effective. This implies that teachers are competent in integrating play into instructional delivery, using it as a medium to teach academic content

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while supporting children’s autonomy and imagination. According to Reyes and Torres (2021), effective facilitation involves striking a balance between child-led and teacher-guided play, where educators scaffold learning without dominating play experiences. The standard deviation of 0.49 here indicates a slightly wider range of experiences, possibly due to differences in teacher training or classroom resources.

The highest domain score was observed in assessment and documentation of learning through play, with a mean of 4.71 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.43. This result reflects a highly systematic and meaningful use of observation and documentation tools such as anecdotal records, portfolios, and checklists. As supported by Kabilan et al. (2021), formative assessment practices embedded in play are essential for capturing a child's developmental progress in authentic and context-rich situations. The lower standard deviation also confirms that the practice is widely and consistently applied across the teacher-respondents.

The summary table confirms that all three domains fall under the Very Much Effective category, indicating a strong collective implementation of play-based learning among teachers. This may be attributed to professional development initiatives, institutional support, and alignment with national early childhood frameworks. According to Nah and Lee (2023), consistent and high-quality implementation across learning domains results in better learner outcomes and holistic development.

Despite these high scores, it is important to continuously support teachers through capacity-building programs and ongoing mentoring to maintain and enhance their skills in delivering play-based learning. Teachers may face varying challenges such as limited time, overcrowded classrooms, or inadequate materials. As pointed out by Løkken (2022), sustaining high-quality play-based practices requires more than individual effort; it needs supportive school policies and collaborative cultures.

In conclusion, the data from Table 15 shows that the play-based learning approach is very well implemented across the core domains in early childhood settings. The consistency in responses highlights a shared pedagogical vision among teachers toward the value of play

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in education. Moving forward, schools and policymakers must continue to reinforce these practices with resources, training, and assessment frameworks that recognize play as central to learning and development in early childhood education.

TESTING OF SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS

Level of Knowledge and Attitude and Level of Implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach. Table 16 discloses the results of testing the relationship between the level of knowledge and attitude and level of implementation of play-based learning approach.

Table 16

Testing of Significant Relationships

Variables	Computed chi-square	Critical p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Level of Knowledge and Attitude and Level of Implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach	7.34	0.045	Rejected	Significant

@ 0.05 level of significance

The testing of significant relationships between the level of knowledge and attitude and the level of implementation of the play-based learning approach revealed a computed chi-square value of 7.34 with a critical p-value of 0.045, as shown in Table 15. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. This result affirms that the degree to which teachers understand and value play-based learning directly influences how effectively they apply it in their classrooms.

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This finding supports the argument that teacher cognition, which encompasses knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, shapes classroom practice (Pyle et al., 2021). Teachers who possess a strong conceptual understanding of play-based learning and who believe in its developmental benefits are more likely to integrate it meaningfully into their daily instruction. Conversely, a lack of understanding or a negative attitude can limit implementation, regardless of available resources or school mandates.

Further supporting this, Reyes and Torres (2021) emphasize that teachers' pedagogical beliefs are pivotal in shaping instructional decisions, especially in early childhood settings. Their study found that educators with favorable attitudes toward constructivist and child-centered approaches, such as play-based learning, tend to create more engaging and developmentally appropriate environments. This highlights the critical need for capacity-building initiatives that not only inform but also inspire teachers about the value of play in learning.

In practical terms, the significant relationship observed may reflect the outcome of continuous professional development efforts that reinforce theoretical grounding and practical strategies. When teachers are equipped with training that enhances both their knowledge and attitudes, the likelihood of effective implementation improves (Dodge et al., 2022). These findings imply that teacher education programs and in-service training should incorporate substantial content on the principles and practices of play-based learning.

Moreover, the result aligns with the broader educational shift towards developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), where play is recognized as a primary mode of learning in early childhood (Ginsburg & Lerner, 2022). Schools and administrators are therefore encouraged to assess teacher readiness not only in terms of logistical competence but also in terms of attitudinal readiness, as these factors can make a significant difference in the fidelity of implementation.

In summary, the significant relationship between knowledge, attitude, and implementation confirms that effective play-based learning is not merely procedural—it is cognitive and affective. Educators' understanding and emotional investment in the approach

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play a critical role in how it is brought to life in the classroom. Consequently, strengthening both knowledge and attitudes through intentional support systems can serve as a catalyst for sustainable, high-quality play-based education.

BEST PRACTICES

Table 17 showcases the best practices employed by teachers in the implementation of the play-based learning approach in their instruction.

Table 17

Best Practices in the Implementation of Play-Based Learning Approach

Best Practices	Frequency	Rank
Sets up learning centers for varied play experiences	17	T-1st
Designs lessons using themes and play activities	17	T-1st
Joins training on play-based instruction	16	2nd
Uses age-appropriate and relevant play materials	15	3rd
Involves parents in play-based learning	14	T-4th
Reflects on play sessions to improve teaching	14	T-4th
Observes and records learning during play	13	5th
Adjusts the environment based on learner needs	10	6th
Promotes collaboration through group play	7	7th

Table 17 presents the best practices employed by teachers in implementing the play-based learning approach. Among the reported practices, two emerged as top-ranked, each cited by 17 respondents: setting up learning centers for varied play experiences and designing lessons using themes and play activities. These findings highlight the importance of creating structured yet flexible learning environments that encourage exploration, creativity, and

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purposeful engagement. The organization of learning centers allows children to independently explore concepts through hands-on experiences, while thematic lesson design ensures coherence and meaningful integration of play into instructional goals. According to Pyle and Danniels (2020), thoughtfully structured play environments and thematic instruction enhance learner engagement and support knowledge construction through self-directed and guided play experiences. The results further indicate that professional development, parental involvement, reflective practice, and systematic observation contribute significantly to effective implementation, reinforcing the value of holistic and responsive teaching strategies in early childhood education.

DISCUSSION

This study assessed the knowledge, attitude and skills of teachers in the implementation of play-based learning approach to Kindergarten learners at Pardo Elementary School, Cebu City during the school year 2025-2026 as basis for dynamic play-based class activities. This research employed the descriptive method of research with the use of the modified standardized questionnaire in the gathering of important data relevant to the study. A descriptive correlational study is a study in which the researcher is primarily interested in describing relationships among variables, without seeking to establish a causal connection.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study revealed that teachers demonstrated a very much effective level of knowledge in play-based learning, reflecting a strong understanding of its principles and classroom applications. Their attitude toward play-based instruction was rated much effective, indicating a positive perception of its role in supporting young learners' development. The implementation of play-based learning in the classroom was also found to be very much effective in terms of the learning environment, instructional strategies, and assessment practices. Moreover, a significant relationship was found between teachers' knowledge and attitude and their implementation of play-based learning, suggesting that

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stronger knowledge and more positive attitudes contribute to more effective teaching practices.

The study further revealed several best practices used by teachers in implementing the play-based learning approach. These include designing theme-based lessons, setting up learning centers, joining professional training, using relevant play materials, involving parents, and reflecting on play sessions to improve teaching. These practices emphasize the importance of intentional planning, collaboration, and continuous professional development in ensuring the successful application of play-based learning. Overall, the findings highlight the role of competent and reflective teachers in creating meaningful play experiences that support the holistic development of kindergarten learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Department of Education and school administrators provide continuous professional development opportunities focused on enhancing teachers' attitudes toward reflective practice and play-based assessment. Strengthening these areas can further improve the effectiveness of play-based instruction. It is also encouraged that schools support and institutionalize best practices such as setting up learning centers, integrating thematic play activities, and involving parents in the learning process. Additionally, reinforcing teachers' knowledge and skills through sustained training and mentoring will help ensure consistent and effective implementation of the play-based learning approach in early childhood education.

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