



**STAKEHOLDERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAY-BASED LEARNING:
PRACTICES, CHALLENGES, AND COPING STRATEGIES
AS BASES FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative-phenomenological study examined how stakeholders implemented play-based learning, including their practices, challenges, and coping strategies. To gather the needed data, the following were purposely interviewed: three daycare workers, three supplemental feeding workers, and three barangay captains, from partner barangays with PHINMA University of Iloilo College of Education. The study identified several key themes regarding the stakeholders' implementation of play-based learning: children learn through play, exploration, and creativity. The stakeholders' practices included singing, dancing, tracing and coloring, assisting daycare workers, and providing support to them. Their challenges included issues with learners' worksheets and a lack of play space. To address these challenges, the stakeholders employed coping strategies such as being resourceful, providing assistance to daycare workers, and working with other stakeholders. The researcher suggests implementing policies aimed at improving the effectiveness of play-based learning while addressing the challenges faced by stakeholders.

Keywords: *Practices, Challenges, Coping Strategies, Play-Based Learning*

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INTRODUCTION

Play-based learning (PBL) is imperative to early childhood education, offering children an enjoyable and engaging way to explore and understand their surroundings. Unlike conventional teaching methods focused on drilling, rote memorization, and play-based exercises provide practical experiences that enhance uniqueness, curiosity, and problem-solving skills (Tekyi-Arhin, 2023).

In the Philippines, daycare centers—referred to as nursery schools, preschools, or childcare centers—serve as foundational spaces for children aged 2-6 to grow and learn in a supportive environment. UNICEF's 2021 Longitudinal Study indicates that early childhood education significantly boosts literacy and mathematics scores among young learners by Grade 4. The Philippine Institute for Development Studies reports that as of August 2023, there are 56,400 daycare centers in the Philippines, with 202 located in Iloilo City.

Despite the clear benefits of play-based learning, a gap often exists between educational theory and actual classroom practice. Many children are still confined to traditional desk-bound activities that may not fully support their developmental needs. This issue highlights the varying perspectives and beliefs of stakeholders regarding the significance of play in education and highlights how important teachers are in influencing instructional methods.

This study examined how play-based learning was utilized within the partner daycare centers of PHINMA University of Iloilo College of Education, focusing on practices, challenges, and coping strategies. By delving into the experiences of these stakeholders, the aim was to

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gather valuable insights that can inform effective methodologies for incorporating PBL into early childhood education. Ultimately, the goal of the researcher was to foster positive social change by enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes of daycare learners, ensuring every child has access to a nurturing and stimulating environment that supports their holistic development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the underlying procedure of qualitative research and discusses the parts namely; Research Method, Research Design, Participants of the Study, Sampling Design, Research Instrument, Validity of Research Instrument, Data-gathering Procedures, and Data Analyses.

Research Method

The study used the descriptive research method using in-depth interview to gather data. A validated questionnaire and interview guide were used to identify stakeholders' implementation of play-based learning: practices, challenges, and coping strategies as bases for policy recommendations. Moore (2022) claims that descriptive research approaches aim to describe or explain what occurs to whom and where, rather than concentrating on how and why something happens. Researchers and psychologists employ descriptive study techniques to gather information and explain the subtleties of patterns, behaviors, and other phenomena.

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Research Design

Using a phenomenological approach, the study employed a qualitative design to explore participants' lived experiences. Delve & Limpaecher (2022) explain that phenomenological research is a qualitative approach aimed at exploring and explaining universal human experiences or phenomena based on how individuals perceive them. This method seeks to deeply understand people's lived experiences by examining their interpretations and perspectives of particular events or situations.

Additionally, the study employed this strategy by determining methods, difficulties, and coping mechanisms used by stakeholders in the use of play-based learning. To obtain the required data, the researcher asked the participants to freely and meaningfully respond to the questions.

Participants of the Study

The participants in the study comprised the entire population of three daycare workers, three supplemental feeding workers, and three barangay captains from Barangay Ortiz, Barangay Rizal Ibarra, and General Hughes. The inclusion of the entire population aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the stakeholders' perspectives on play-based learning.

Sampling Design

In purposive sampling, researchers choose a sample based on a particular objective or aim, ensuring that the sample represents the characteristics or attributes the researcher seeks to examine.

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Research Instrument

The researcher used in-depth interview guide and written questionnaire with the same structured questions as a research instrument to get comprehensive and in-depth information during the process.

The interview guide questions have two parts. Part I is their short profile. Part II contained the major questions related to the study, focusing on stakeholders' implementation of play-based learning. Participants were encouraged to freely and meaningfully respond to the questions presented.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The research instrument underwent validity to eliminate the possibilities of ambiguity among the questions and to maximize possible responses from the participants.

As stated by Middleton (2023), the validity of an instrument is determined by its ability to measure what it is intended to measure.

The researcher-made interview guide was submitted to the adviser for review and revision, then to a panel of experts for content and face validation using the Eight-Point Criteria of Good and Scates (1972), as adapted and referenced by Oducado (2020).

Revisions were carefully noted, and suggestions and corrections were thoroughly incorporated.

Data Gathering Procedures

The data-gathering procedure began after the study was approved by the panel of experts. The researcher then obtained permission to carry out the study from the barangay

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leaders of Barangay Ortiz, Barangay Rizal Ibarra, and Barangay General Hughes, as well as the dean of the graduate school.

The researcher scheduled a convenient time with the participants, provided them with the questionnaire to answer, and, after they had completed it, conducted the in-depth interview. The researcher assured the participants that their answers would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

After they were done answering, the researcher collected then transcribed, interpreted, and analyzed all the comprehensive and in-depth information collected.

Data Analyses

The study's data were transcribed, interpreted, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006; Blanza, 2022) thematic analysis is defined as "a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. It minimally organizes and describes data set in rich detail."

Thus, the researcher adopted the six-step thematic analysis, which is thought to be the most popular and prominent method (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). These procedures include familiarizing oneself with the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, identifying and labeling themes, and creating the report.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study aimed to determine the stakeholders' implementation of play-based learning in the partner daycare centers of PHINMA University of Iloilo College of Education in Iloilo City Proper to help improve the quality of ECE in daycare settings and improve the daycare workers' status.

The participants were the three (3) daycare workers, three (3) barangay captains, and three (3) supplemental feeding workers of the partner barangays of PHINMA University of Iloilo College of Education: Barangay Ortiz, Barangay Rizal Ibarra, and Barangay General Hughes.

The following are the findings of the study:

Stakeholders viewed play-based learning as children learn through playing, exploring, and being creative and learning through playing.

Practices in implementing play-based learning were singing, dancing, tracing, and coloring, assisting daycare workers, and providing support to daycare workers.

Challenges in implementing play-based learning were: learners' worksheets, lack of resources, and lack of play space.

The coping strategies for overcoming challenges were: (1) being resourceful, (2) providing assistance to daycare workers, and (3) working with other stakeholders.

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CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the following insights were drawn:

Play-based learning is being implemented in daycare centers within Iloilo City, particularly in collaboration with stakeholders like daycare workers, barangay captains, and supplemental feeding workers. These stakeholders have a strong belief in the value of play-based learning, viewing it as essential for children’s growth and development. They emphasize that activities like playing, exploring, and being creative help young learners develop their cognitive skills and creativity, making learning more engaging and effective.

In practice, play-based learning in these centers includes activities such as singing, dancing, tracing, and coloring, all of which are designed so that children should be actively involved in their own education.

The collaborative effort among various stakeholders plays a crucial role in supporting these activities, with barangay officials and other community members stepping in to assist daycare workers.

However, the study also highlights significant challenges. Limited resources, particularly the lack of worksheets and space, restrict the range of activities that can be offered, making it difficult for the daycare centers to fully implement play-based learning. Despite these limitations, the stakeholders have shown resilience by coming up with creative solutions. They maximize what little they have, work closely with one another, and provide additional support to daycare workers to ensure that the program continues.

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue II

November 2024

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Ultimately, the findings suggest that addressing these challenges—by improving access to resources like materials and more spacious facilities—could greatly improve the quality of play-based learning. Ongoing support for daycare workers and continued collaboration among all stakeholders will also be key to ensuring the program's success and improving early childhood education in these communities.



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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume VI, Issue II

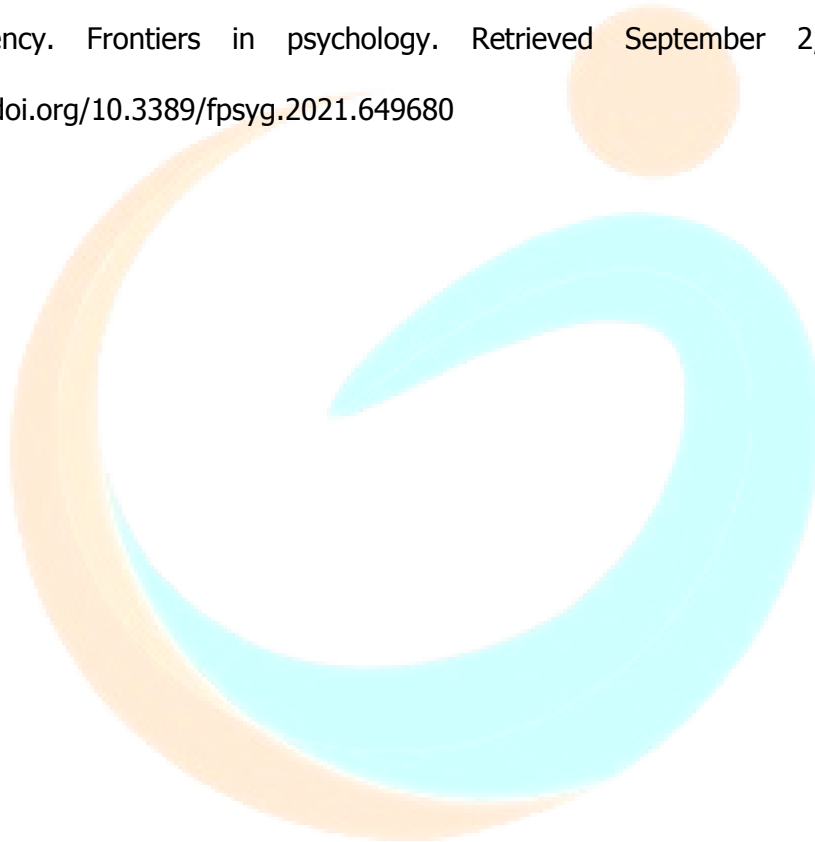
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