

Mahampang Kita: Play-friendly Classroom Practices of Kindergarten Teachers

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Abstract

The study identified the seven kindergarten teachers' experiences and practices employed in a play-friendly classroom for kindergarten pupils in the District of Nabas, Aklan. It employed phenomenological research and used semi-structured interview guide questions along with a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gather the needed data. It was found that the teachers employed various play-friendly classroom practices and valued their importance to the teaching-learning process. The specific activities employed by the teachers include: play dough, dress-up, role-play, drawing, jigsaws, puzzles, shape sorters, painting blocks, table blocks, and sorting things are manipulative toys. Teachers also provided play places such as Bahay Kubo, sand play, water play, a toy area, a playing area, and a reading area. Other practices were done through worksheets, workbooks, flashcards, and multimedia videos. Most often, the activities were taken from the Department of Education's Kindergarten Development Curriculum, DepEd Portal, and training attended by the teachers, but various difficulties in implementing them still need to be considered. Kindergarten teachers suggested that these play-friendly classroom practices should have a play-based learning center, an updated play-based curriculum, and a project campaign where the school or Department of Education may help kindergarten schools get funding from the private and public sectors. Kindergarten teachers should also obtain extra training, developing or designing new plays or games in all competencies, and integrating with other learning domains, especially in kindergarteners' least taught abilities. Teachers should develop a contextualized program of play-friendly practices suited to the personalities and needs of their pupils, and there should be more in depth training for Kindergarten teachers so that they know what to do and are confident in how to teach their pupils.

Keywords: *Parents' Involvement, Academic Performance, Family Participation Questionnaire, Spearman's Rank Correlation*

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Introduction

This study examines play-friendly classroom practices of kindergarten teachers in the District of Nabas. The researcher employed strategies, beliefs, and the impact of these practices on children's learning and well-being. Kindergarten classrooms, in particular, provide a rich environment for play-based learning that fosters children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. This study highlights the importance of play-friendly practices in kindergarten classrooms. Professional development opportunities and resources can be provided to support teachers in implementing effective play-friendly strategies. By prioritizing play in the kindergarten classroom, we can create a nurturing and enriching environment that optimizes children's learning and holistic development.

Methodology

This study focuses on identifying the play-friendly classroom practices employed by the kindergarten teachers and their experiences regarding its effects and difficulties to kindergarten pupils. This study used descriptive-qualitative-phenomenological research to achieve a detailed description of the experiences of the teachers. The scope of this study covers the seven (7) female public kindergarten. Unstructured interview guide questions was used as a measurement device. This instrument was used to learn about the practices employed by teachers and their personal experiences with the effectiveness and difficulties of implementing play-friendly classroom practices for kindergarten students in their respective school. This study used an unstructured interview guide questions as a measurement device. This instrument was used to know the practices used by the teachers and their personal experiences with regards to the effectiveness and the difficulties in employing their employed play-friendly classroom practices to the kindergarten pupils. The information gathered are focused on their practices of play friendly classroom employed in their kindergarten classes, effects of the practices to the social interaction of the learners, difficulties identified, and the possible program were proposed for the enhancement of the play-friendly classroom. After the actual interview, the researcher presented the instrument to the experts specifically to the school head/principal of the researcher's school for validation. The school guidance counsellor including Education Supervisor in kindergarten were also considered as one of the expert evaluators. The script in this instrument is expressed in English since the participants are all teachers who easily comprehended the language.

This study employed the phenomenological research to achieved a rich detail of the experiences of the teachers. A phenomenological technique is used when little is known about a topic and the purpose of the research is to clarify and comprehend the most crucial significance of an intriguing phenomena from the viewpoint of individuals directly associated with it (Giorgi, 1997). This research study was conducted in the municipality of Nabas, including the schools under Area 1 and Area 2 of the Schools District of Nabas. Where the identified respondents are regular teachers teaching kindergarten, individual residents of the teachers can also be a place where the interview can be conducted depending on the convenience of the teachers.

Findings

This study was based on the actual observations, one on one interview, and answered questionnaire revealed by the respondents.

Kindergarten teachers described play-friendly classroom practices with the following responses: Playing promotes pupils' physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development, according to one instructor; Encourages pupils' deep knowledge and helps them explore, experiment, discover, and solve issues in innovative and fun ways; Foster rapport, psychological domain, and cooperative group activities, they say; Help pupils' recognition, teamwork, and idea review; and pupils have fun with their classmates, challenge them, and make them appreciate learning.

Kindergarten teachers employ play-friendly classroom practices such as physical play, social play, constructive play, fantasy play, and structured games. These are play dough, dress-up, role-play, drawing, jigsaw, puzzles, shape sorters, painting blocks, table blocks, and sorting things are manipulative toys. Teachers also provided play places such as Bahay Kubo, sand play, water play, a toy area, a playing area, and a reading area. Other practices were done through worksheets, workbooks, flashcards, and multimedia videos.

Kindergarten teachers follow the Department of Education's Kindergarten Development Curriculum as they implement play-friendly classroom activities inside their classroom, where students are permitted 15 minutes to participate in any indoor activity of their choice during the designated study periods. At the same time, outdoor activities are also available.

Most kindergarten teachers get play-friendly classroom materials online, particularly on the DepEd Portal, which offers contextualized Self-Learning Modules and other Digital Learning

Resources. Moreover, teachers took their sources from the training and seminars they attended, but they were limited only.

Kindergarten teachers claimed that the following are the effects of play-friendly practices on the pupils. It helps pupils have fun while learning. It allows pupils to plan, organize, communicate, and regulate emotions. It develops imagination, creativity, and literacy by improving language, math, social abilities, and stress management. It enhances pupils' confidence and social skills and develops empathy, kindness, patience, charity, and respect. And makes the pupils get excited to go to school every day.

Play-friendly classroom practices impacted kindergarten teachers' teaching through the following:

- Increase student interest, teachers' reinforcement, and classroom happiness.
- Boost classroom motivation.
- Motivate students to concentrate, pay attention, and complete their homework.
- Promote teamwork and student accountability.

However, one teacher remarked that the practice does not directly teach children science, the alphabet, and numbers; this technique can only describe some topic information and ideas.

With the absence of play-friendly classroom practices in the teaching-learning process in kindergarten, teachers claimed that pupils would miss crucial chances to learn fundamental motor skills, social skills, and life skills such as cleaning up after oneself.

Kindergarten teachers' difficulties in implementing play-friendly practices are the following: the individual differences of the pupils; the small space of the classroom that is inadequate for all the SIM's reading corners and playing corners; a lack of materials needed in the play; and insufficient training for the kindergarten teachers on how to implement play in the teaching and learning process.

As kindergarten teachers let pupils play, the classroom becomes messy, loud, and chaotic, which is what play-based learning anticipates. Kindergarten teachers say pupils are only seldom taught science, the alphabet, and numbers if they play and can't express all topics and thoughts. In other cases, children's play may be unsafe, requiring parental and teacher supervision.

The kindergarten teachers proposed the following programs to better implement play-friendly classroom practices: Have a play-based learning center; an updated play-based program;

conduct a project drive where the school or the Department of Education itself can initiate a project that can help the kindergarten schools get donations from the private and public sectors; conduct more training regarding the play-friendly classroom, on making or creating different plays or games in all competencies, and integration with the other domains of learning, especially in the most minor learned skills of the kindergarten pupils, is highly suggested to equip the kindergarten teachers.

Conclusion

Based from the summary and findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The implementation of play-friendly activities in kindergarten of teachers has a significant positive impact on the learning and development of learners. Play, as an essential aspect of early childhood education, offers numerous benefits that go beyond mere entertainment. By incorporating play into the curriculum, educators can create an enriching and dynamic learning environment that promotes holistic development across various domains.

Play-friendly activities the positive impact of implementing play-friendly activities in kindergarten extends beyond the classroom, shaping well-rounded individuals who are curious, confident, and equipped with essential skills for lifelong learning. These encourage curiosity, promotes a sense of discovery, and allows children to make connections between concepts, enhancing their cognitive abilities.

Play-friendly activities foster opportunities for social interaction, cooperation, and communication among kindergarten learners. Through collaborative play, children learn to negotiate, share, and take on different roles, developing important social skills and emotional intelligence.

Kindergarten teachers should learn and discover more innovative games and practices to be employed in order to create and established a play-friendly classroom. Further, they should understand its importance to the teaching-learning process as well.

The following are specific activities that the kindergarten teachers employed in the play-friendly classroom practices: such DIY (do it yourself) games like geography activities, calendar activities to teach young learner on how to determine days, months and years, language activities like playing sound games, learning the initial, middle and initial sounds and CVC word building.

They could still utilize the common games such play dough, dress-up, role-play, drawing, jigsaw puzzles, shape sorters, painting blocks, table blocks, and sorting things are manipulative toys. Teachers also provided play places such as Bahay Kubo, sand play, water play, a toy area, a playing area, and a reading area. Other practices were done through worksheets, workbooks, flashcards, and multimedia videos.

Most often, the mentioned above activities were taken from the Department of Education's Kindergarten Development Curriculum, DepEd Portal, and trainings attend by the teachers but various difficulties in implementing are still need to consider.

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