



THE IMPACT OF PLAY-BASED INSTRUCTION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Play-based instruction is an approach that integrates structured and purposeful play into teaching and learning to promote holistic child development and enhance academic outcomes. This study, completed in April 2026, employed a quantitative research approach using a descriptive-correlational design with a comparative element to examine the impact of play-based instruction on the academic performance of elementary students. The findings revealed that teachers' attitude toward play-based instruction and participation in relevant in-service training were positively associated with the extent of its implementation, while students' attitude toward play-based instruction was also positively related to their perception of its implementation. Results further showed a significant positive relationship between the extent of implementation and students' academic performance, indicating that better implementation is linked to improved learning outcomes. No significant difference was found between teachers' and students' perceptions across developmental domains, suggesting consistency in their views. Based on these findings, the study recommends strengthening teachers' positive attitudes through continuous professional development and recognition programs, intensifying hands-on and sustained in-service training with coaching support, enhancing students' engagement through orientation and interactive activities, improving implementation by aligning play-based instruction with learning competencies and assessment, maintaining consistent practices through standardized guidelines and collaboration, providing enrichment and remediation through differentiated play-based activities, institutionalizing play-based instruction as a school-wide approach supported by resources and supervision, and encouraging future researchers to explore related variables and conduct studies in other contexts to further validate and expand the findings.

Keywords: *Play-Based Instruction, Academic Performance, Teacher Attitude, In-Service Training, Elementary Education*

INTRODUCTION

Play-based instruction is recognized as an effective approach for improving elementary students' language arts outcomes by tapping into children's natural curiosity and love of play to promote engagement, oral language development, and deeper conceptual understanding. Through activities like cooperative storytelling, role play, and dramatic play centers, learners build vocabulary, narrative organization, and expressive communication within a low-pressure environment that also fosters social-emotional growth and cognitive flexibility.

Extensive literature supports the pedagogical value of play, noting it goes beyond mere entertainment to play a vital role in fostering cognitive and linguistic development. Play-centered settings encourage purposeful interactions that boost vocabulary and narrative abilities while building a strong base for academic success (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015). Research indicates that play-rich environments empower children to experiment with diverse linguistic structures and navigate complex problem-solving, which are indispensable for cognitive acuity (Fisher et al., 2017).

Furthermore, play-based practices are foundational to early literacy, particularly when integrated with oral language networks and purposeful experiences like dialogic storybook interactions (Roskos & Neuman, 2017). Adult-child interplay during play has been shown to amplify vocabulary growth and logical reasoning, providing critical scaffolding for children to master new skills (Berk & Meyers, 2017; Vygotsky, 1978). When purposefully designed and supported by such adult scaffolding, play-based learning becomes indispensable for advancing language and symbolic reasoning (Bodrova & Leong, 2017).

International studies affirm that play-based learning improves academic outcomes, with meta-analyses revealing that child-directed activities often outperform direct instruction in fostering creativity and sustained attention (Mickelson, 2019). In the Philippines, the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum strategically incorporates play-based instruction to foster collaboration and communication. This is supported by DepEd Order No. 47, s. 2016, which recognizes play as a legitimate pedagogical tool that facilitates deep learning and prepares learners for lifelong success. However, national implementation remains inconsistent due to persistent training gaps, where many teachers still prioritize standardized testing over play-based methods (Pasig Teachers College, 2024). In Region VIII (Eastern Visayas), these challenges are reflected in low achievement scores and inadequate instructional supervision. Specifically, in the District of Tarangnan, local records show a significant disparity in professional development; while nearly all teachers attend general curriculum or assessment training, only a small fraction (as low as 7.82% in recent years) have participated in school-level play-based instructional sessions.

Despite the clear advantages of play-based instruction, a notable void persists in empirical studies exploring its influence on quantifiable academic results, especially after preschool. This shortfall is particularly pertinent as learners advance to elementary levels—a pivotal phase marked by heightened academic demands and performance stresses. There is a lack of local, sustained comparative studies that evaluate play-based language instruction against traditional worksheet-driven methods, particularly research that measures both language outcomes and socio-cognitive gains over time.

This study addresses that gap by implementing an extended, classroom-embedded play-based language arts program in local elementary settings within the District of Tarangnan to assess its effects on language achievement, narrative skills, oral communication, engagement, and social-emotional development. By providing context-specific empirical data and clarifying how play activities support these outcomes, the study aims to inform classroom practice, teacher training, and policy to reduce the disengagement and superficial learning often associated with conventional worksheet-centered instruction. This research is timely as the district confronts shifting educational priorities for the School Year 2025-2026, where expectations for student preparedness and achievement have reached new heights.

Research Questions

This study determined the impact of play-based instruction on the academic performance of elementary students in the District of Tarangnan, Schools Division of Samar, during the School Year 2025-2026.

Specifically, the research answered the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the teacher-respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 age and sex;
 - 1.2 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.3 gross monthly family income;
 - 1.4 number of years in teaching;
 - 1.5 relevant in-service trainings;
 - 1.6 performance rating based on the latest IPCRF; and
 - 1.7 attitude toward play-based instruction?
2. What is the profile of the student-respondents in terms of:
 - 2.1 age and sex;
 - 2.2 parents' highest educational attainment;
 - 2.3 parents' occupation;
 - 2.4 gross monthly family income; and
 - 2.5 attitude toward play-based instruction?
3. What is the extent of implementation of play-based instruction as perceived by the teacher- and student-respondents in terms of the following:
 - 3.1 social-emotional development;
 - 3.2 physical development; and
 - 3.3 cognitive development?

4. Is there a significant difference between the perception of the two groups of respondents in terms of the extent of implementation of play-based instruction?
5. What is the level of academic performance of the student-respondents based on their mean grades during quarters 1 and 2?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the perceived extent of implementation of play-based instruction and the following:
 - 6.1 teacher-respondents' profile variates;
 - 6.2 student-respondents' profile variates; and
 - 6.3 student-respondents level of academic performance?
7. What intervention program can be crafted based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

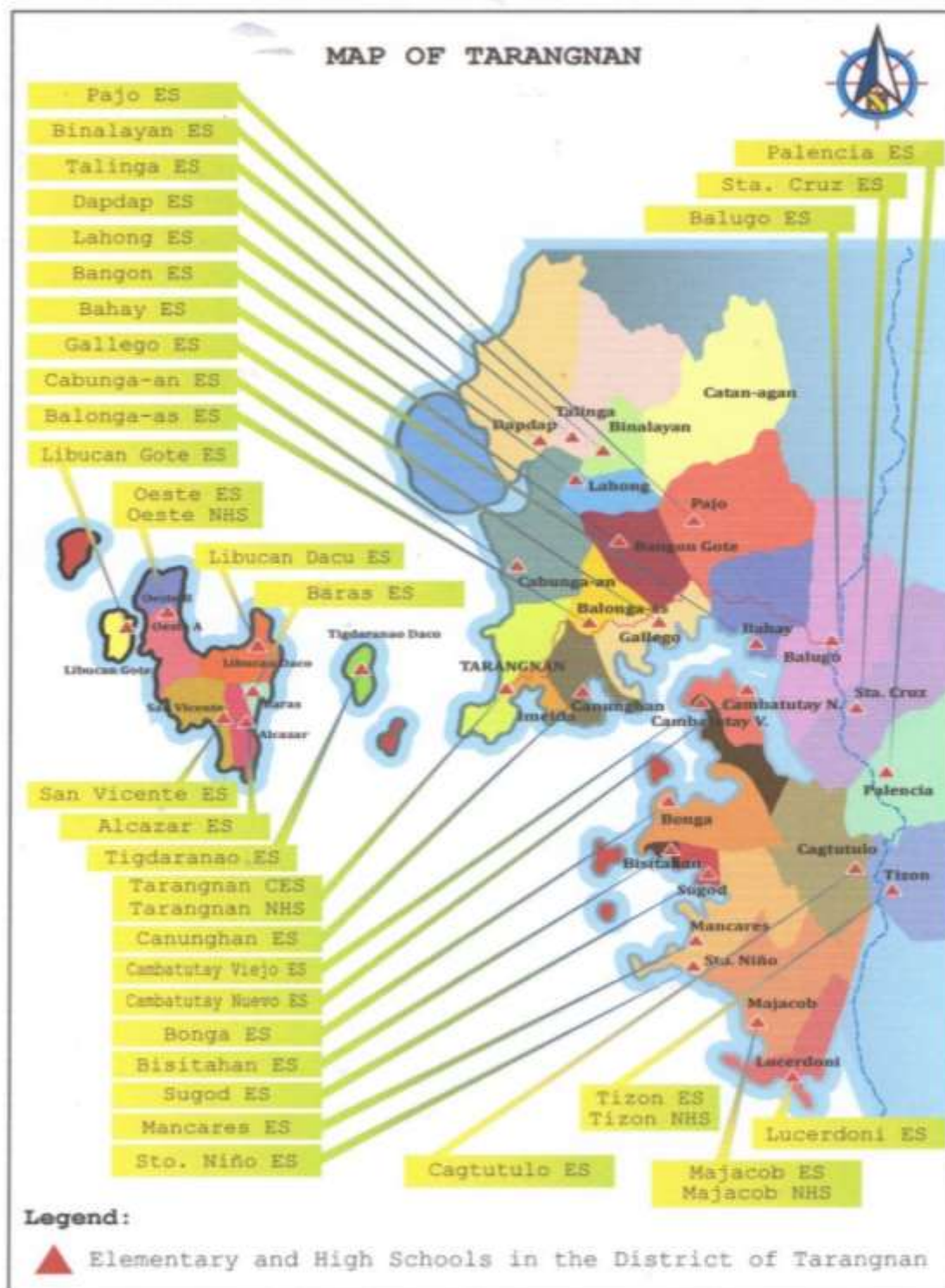
The study utilized a quantitative approach employing a descriptive correlational design with a comparative element, which assessed the impact of play-based instruction on the academic performance of elementary students in the District of Tarangnan, Schools Division of Samar, during the School Year 2025-2026.

Locale of the Study

Figure 1 shows the map of the locale of the study.

The study was conducted in the District of Tarangnan, which historically served as the first settlement of Jesuit missionaries on the island of Samar in the 17th century. It is part of the Schools Division of Samar, involving its different elementary schools, namely: Balugo ES, Bangon ES, Baras ES, Binalayan ES, Bonga ES, Cabunga-an ES, Cagtutulo ES, Combatutay Nuevo ES, Combatutay Viejo ES, Canunghan ES, Dapdap ES, Gallego ES, Lahong ES, Libucan Dacu ES, Libucan Gote ES, Lucerdoni ES, Majacob Integrated School, Mancares ES, Oeste ES, Pajo ES, Palencia ES, San Vicente ES, Sta. Cruz ES, Sto. Niño ES, Tarangnan Central School, Tigdaranao ES, and Tizon ES. This involved the Key Stage 1 students in the afore-cited district.

Figure 1
The Map Showing the Locale of the Study



Respondents and Sampling Procedure

The study targeted Key Stage 1 students and elementary grade teachers (Grades 1 to 6). The researcher employed total enumeration for the 40 teacher-respondents and random sampling for the 234 student-respondents. Table 1 presents the number of respondents by school and by category. To ensure reasonable accuracy in the student sample size, Slovin's Formula was utilized with a 0.05 margin of error.

As shown in Table 1, the total population of Key Stage 1 students across the participating schools was 243 (N). From this population, a representative sample of 151 (n) student-respondents was determined using Slovin's Formula with a 0.05 margin of error. Because a 100% retrieval rate was achieved during data collection, the final analysis is based strictly on this sample of n=151 students.

Table 1
Distribution of Target Number of Respondents per School

Respondent Schools	Total No. of Teachers (N)	Total No. of Students (N)	Total No. of Target Student-Respondents (n)
Alcazar Elementary School	3	15	9
Bangon Elementary School	3	20	12
Baras Elementary School	4	17	11
Binalayan Elementary School	3	17	11
Bisitahan Elementary School	2	15	9
Cagtutulo Elementary School	3	19	12
Cambatutay Nuevo ES	3	22	13
Cambatutay Viejo ES	3	19	12
Canunghan ES	3	16	10
Lahong Elementary School	2	14	9
Libucan Gote ES	3	14	9
Pajo Elementary School	3	20	12
Sto. Nino Elementary School	2	17	11
Talinga Elementary School	3	18	11
TOTAL	40	243	151
Response Rate		100%	

Instrumentation and Validation

The primary data collection tools were two sets of researcher-prepared survey questionnaires adapted from the study of Macabodbod et al. (2024).

- **Part I:** Collected demographic data including age, sex, and family income for both groups, as well as educational attainment, years of service, and IPCRF ratings for teachers.
- **Part II:** Contained 10 attitude statements regarding play-based instruction, appraised using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Agree" (5) to "Strongly Disagree" (1).
- **Part III:** Elicited the academic performance of students based on their mean grades during the first and second quarters, obtained from official School Forms.
- **Part IV:** Assessed the extent of implementation of play-based instruction through 20 indicators categorized into social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development. These were rated on a five-point scale from "Fully Implemented" to "Not Implemented at All".

The instrument underwent expert validation by an oral examination panel evaluating face, content, construct, pragmatic, and convergent-discriminant validity. Expert feedback was incorporated to refine the final version.

Data Gathering Procedure

Approval was first secured from the Schools Division Superintendent and the Public Schools District Supervisor. Request letters were then sent to school administrators to facilitate survey administration. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires face-to-face between February and April 2026, using probing questions to clarify ambiguous responses. A 100% retrieval rate was achieved.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Frequency Count. This statistic was used to report the profile of the respondents in terms of their identified personal characteristics.

Percentage. This tool was applied to convert the magnitude of occurrences relative to the total number of samples. It aided in interpreting simple numerical facts, particularly regarding the identified personal characteristics of the student-respondents. The formula employed (Sevilla et al., 1992:200) was:

$$P = [f/N] \times 100$$

where P refers to the percentage;

f refers to the number of occurrences; and

N refers to the total number of samples.

Median. This statistical tool was used to express the middlemost point of selected respondent characteristics, specifically for ratio and interval scale data that were not normally distributed. The following formula (Ferguson & Takane, 1989) was applied:

$$M_d = \left(\frac{[1/2N - F]}{f} \right) i$$

Where: M_d refers to the middlemost point of an array of

observations;

N refers to the total observations;

F refers to the accumulated frequencies equal to or less than.

then 1/2 of the total observations; and

f refers to the number of occurrences in the assumed

Midpoint step distribution.

Mean Absolute Deviation. This tool was used to describe the extent to which non-normally distributed data sets varied. The following formula (Ferguson & Takane, 1989) was applied:

$$MAD = \frac{\sum |X_i - \mu|}{n}$$

Where: MAD refers to the mean absolute deviation;

|X_i-μ| refers to the absolute difference between the

observation and the mean; and

n refers to the number of observations.

Mode. This tool was used to determine the most frequently occurring observation, identified by the highest registered frequency in the step distribution (Walpole, 1989:207).

Weighted Mean. This was used to express the collective percentage of each group of respondents.

$$\mu = \frac{\sum f_i X_i W_i}{n}$$

where: μ refers to the weighted mean;

f_i refers to the frequency of a category of variable;

X_i refers to the identified category of variable.

W_i refers to the weights, which are expressed in a five-point Likert or Thurstone Scales; and

n refers to the sample size.

In interpreting the weighted mean, the following sets of five-point scales were used:

<u>Range</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>	
4.50-5.00	Strongly Agree	(SA)
	Extremely Appropriate	(EA)
3.50-4.49	Agree	(A)
	Highly Appropriate	(HA)
2.50-3.49	Uncertain	(U)
	Moderately Appropriate	(MA)
1.50-2.49	Disagree	(D)
	Slightly Appropriate	(SA)
1.00-1.49	Strongly Disagree	(SD)
	Not Appropriate	(NA)

Mann-Whitney U-Test for Independent Samples. This tool was used to compare two independent groups of variables that were not normally distributed (Walpole, 1989). The formula was:

U = the smaller value between u_1 and u_2
where:

$$u_1 = w_1 - \frac{n_1(n_1 + 1)}{2};$$

w_1 = sum of ranks of the smaller groups;

$$u_2 = w_2 - \frac{n_2(n_2 + 1)}{2}; \text{ and}$$

$$w_2 = \frac{(n_1 + n_2)(n_1 + n_2 + 1)}{2} - w_1$$

Spearman's Rank Coefficient of Correlation. Spearman's Rho was employed to assess the linear relationship between two non-normally distributed variables using the following formula (Walpole, 1997:460).

$$\rho = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N^3 - N}$$

where ρ refers to the coefficient of linear association between paired ranks assigned to individual scores on two variables;

D refers to the deviation between paired ranks, and

N refers to the total number of paired observations.

Table 2 served as a guide for interpreting the degree of linear association (SRTC, 2013:98).

Table 2
The Table of Coefficient of Correlation

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
0	No linear association
$0 < p < \pm 0.2$	Very weak linear association
$\pm 0.2 \leq p < \pm 0.4$	Weak linear association
$\pm 0.4 \leq p < \pm 0.6$	Moderate linear association
$\pm 0.6 \leq p < \pm 0.8$	Strong linear association
$\pm 0.8 \leq p < \pm 1.0$	Very Strong linear association
± 1.0	Perfect linear association

Chi-Square Test. This was used to determine the relationship between nominal dependent variables using the following formula (Walpole, 1989:390):

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

where: O refers to the observed frequency; and

E refers to the expected frequency.

Fisher's exact test. This was used to evaluate the null hypothesis that two categorical variables were independent (no association) against the alternative hypothesis that they were not independent (there was an association). The p-value was the sum of probabilities of all tables equally or more extreme than the observed table relative to the null hypothesis. A small p-value (typically < 0.05) indicated a significant association. The test was exact, relying on no large-sample approximations:

$$p = \frac{(a+b)!(c+d)!(a+c)!(b+d)!}{a!b!c!d!n!}$$

Where:

The p-value is the sum of probabilities of all tables that are equally or more extreme than the observed table concerning the null hypothesis.

A small p-value (typically < 0.05) indicates a significant association between the variables.

For hypothesis testing across all cases, the following decision rule guided whether the null hypothesis was accepted or rejected: the null hypothesis was accepted if the computed value was less than the critical or tabular value, or if the p-value was greater than α , otherwise, it was rejected if the computed value equaled or exceeded the critical or tabular value, or if the p-value equaled or was less than α .

Finally, the hypothesis testing assumed the level of significance equals $\alpha=0.05$ in a two-tailed test. Available statistical software or packages was utilized for accuracy and precision in the data processing.

RESULTS

Profile of the Respondents

The teacher-respondents (n=40) had a mean age of 39.80 years, a median age of 38.00 years, and an MAD of 7.58 years, suggesting a mature and seasoned workforce with moderate age variability. The majority (82.50%) held a Baccalaureate degree with MA units, reflecting an experienced workforce engaged in ongoing professional development. Most teachers (27.50%) had 10–12 years of experience and received "Outstanding" performance ratings (62.50%). Professional training was primarily accessible at the school level (WM=3.40) rather than national or regional levels.

The student-respondents (n=151) were a homogeneous group with a mean age of 9.55 years, a median age of 9.00 years, and a low MAD of 0.6391 years, indicating high age consistency among the learners. While most parents had reached college-level education, the majority of families (65.56%) were in the low-income bracket (Php 5,001–10,000), with fathers largely employed in fishing (41.72%) and mothers (77.48%) not formally employed.

Attitude and Implementation of Play-Based Instruction

Both groups exhibited strong support for play-based instruction. Teachers "Agreed" (GWM=4.46) with its benefits, particularly in developing critical thinking. Students "Strongly Agreed" (GWM=4.59), viewing it as highly effective for engagement.

As shown in A, the implementation was consistently perceived as "Largely Implemented" across all developmental domains by both teachers and students.

Table A

Summary of the Perceived Extent of Implementation of Play-Based Instruction

Developmental Domain	Teachers (General Weighted Mean)	Students (General Weighted Mean)	Interpretation
Social-Emotional	4.28	4.16	Largely Implemented
Cognitive	4.35	4.26	Largely Implemented

Source: Consolidated from the Full Research Manuscript (Tables 15–20)

Comparison of Perceptions and Academic Performance

There was no significant difference between the perceptions of the two groups regarding implementation ($p > 0.05$ for all domains), indicating a uniform classroom experience. Regarding academic performance, the majority of students (91.4%) performed at "Satisfactory" to "Very Satisfactory" levels (80–89 range).

Table B

Level of Academic Performance of the Student-Respondents

Academic Grade	f	%
95 – 99	0	0.00
90 – 94	10	6.62
85 – 89	69	45.70
80 – 84	69	45.70
75 – 79	3	1.99
Total	151	100.00

Relationship Analyses

Correlation analysis (Table C) revealed that the successful implementation of play-based instruction is driven primarily by attitude and training rather than demographic factors.

A critical finding is the significant moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.484$, $p = 0.000$) between implementation and students' mean grades, suggesting that as play-based learning increases, academic performance improves. Other variables (age, sex, income, etc.) showed no significant relationship ($p > 0.05$)

Table C
Significant Relationships with Implementation of Play-Based Instruction

Variable	Group	Correlation (ρ)	p-value	Result
Attitude	Teachers	0.833	0.000	Very Strong
In-Service Trainings	Teachers	0.467	0.046	Moderate
Attitude	Students	0.423	0.033	Moderate
Academic Performance	Students	0.484	0.000	Moderate

Source: Consolidated from the Full Research Manuscript (Tables 23–25)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that teacher-respondents are generally in their early to middle professional careers, with a mean age of 39.80 years, suggesting a mature and seasoned workforce. This demographic is predominantly female, aligning with common trends in the teaching profession regarding gender imbalance. Despite having substantial teaching experience—most notably in the 10–12 year range—and high performance ratings (IPCRF), teachers' participation in professional development is largely localized at the school level, with very limited engagement in national or regional training.

Regarding attitudes, both teachers and students exhibit highly positive views toward play-based instruction. Teachers strongly recognize its cognitive benefits, particularly in developing critical thinking skills, though they acknowledge challenges regarding time consumption and classroom management. For students, there is a strong belief that play-based methods enhance learning engagement, though their personal confidence in participating is slightly lower than their perception of the method's effectiveness.

The extent of implementation of play-based instruction is perceived as "largely implemented" across all three developmental domains: social-emotional, physical, and cognitive. Teachers and students share a consistent perception of this implementation, with no significant statistical difference between their viewpoints. Specifically, the implementation is strongest in areas like fine motor skills and learner engagement, while sub-skills such as decision-making and information recall are addressed but less emphasized.

The rejection of the null hypothesis is supported by a Spearman rho value of 0.484, indicating that students who perceived a higher extent of play-based instruction implementation tended to achieve better academic performance. This moderate correlation suggests that while play-based strategies are effective, they work best when consistently integrated across all developmental domains.

Correlation analysis reveals that attitude is the most significant predictor of implementation for both groups. For teachers, a very strong positive correlation exists

between their attitude and the extent of implementation, while relevant in-service training also shows a moderate positive relationship. Most importantly, the study found a significant moderate positive correlation ($p=0.000$) between the perceived implementation of play-based instruction and student academic performance. This suggests that as the implementation of play-based strategies increases, students' grades in Quarters 1 and 2—which currently sit in the satisfactory to very satisfactory range—also tend to improve.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. **Teacher Readiness and Professionalism:** Teacher-respondents are generally in a mature, mid-career stage and are predominantly female with substantial service years, reflecting a seasoned and experienced workforce. While they demonstrate high professional competence through "Outstanding" performance ratings and hold positive attitudes toward play-based instruction, their professional development is largely localized, suggesting a need for broader capacity-building opportunities beyond the school level.
2. **Student Acceptance and Socioeconomic Context:** Students are a homogeneous group of early-grade learners who, despite coming from economically challenged households with irregular income sources, maintain a very positive attitude toward play-based instruction. They strongly recognize the method's effectiveness in enhancing their learning and engagement.
3. **Implementation Effectiveness:** Play-based instruction is perceived as "largely implemented" across social-emotional, physical, and cognitive domains by both teachers and students. Teachers effectively focus on engagement and fine motor skills, though specific sub-skills like decision-making and memorization are comparatively less emphasized.
4. **Consistency and Credibility:** There is no significant difference between teacher and student perceptions regarding implementation ($p > 0.05$), indicating a uniform understanding of the instructional process across the school setting.
5. **Academic Impact:** Most students maintain satisfactory to very satisfactory academic performance. Crucially, there is a significant moderate positive correlation ($\rho = 0.484$, $p = 0.000$) between the implementation of play-based instruction and student academic performance, indicating that better implementation is linked to improved learning outcomes.
6. **Drivers of Implementation:** The extent of implementation is primarily shaped by teachers' professional mindsets (attitudes) and training exposure rather than demographic factors like age, sex, or years of experience. Similarly, students' perceptions are driven by their own personal attitudes rather than their socioeconomic background.

Recommendations

Anchored on the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

- 1) **Strengthen Teacher Attitude:** Conduct regular professional development and peer mentoring to build positive beliefs about play-based instruction and recognize consistent implementation.
- 2) **Intensify In-Service Training:** Provide hands-on workshops with simulations and micro-teaching, followed by coaching and instructional feedback.
- 3) **Enhance Student Engagement:** Use orientation activities to explain the benefits of play and utilize interactive, enjoyable activities while gathering regular student feedback.
- 4) **Institutionalize and Align Practices:** Align play-based activities with Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) and adopt play-based instruction as a school-wide approach supported by clear policies and dedicated resources.
- 5) **Support Diverse Learners:** Use differentiated play-based tasks to provide enrichment for high-performers and structured play-based remediation for lower-performing students.
- 6) **Future Research:** Conduct similar studies in different settings or with larger populations to validate findings and explore variables like classroom environment and training duration.

Proposed Intervention Program: Project SHINE

To specifically address these recommendations, the researcher proposes Project SHINE: Scaffolding Hands-on Instruction for Nurturing Excellence in Elementary Learners.

Rationale: Project SHINE intentionally integrates scaffolding and hands-on learning to meet diverse learner needs, narrowing gaps in understanding by breaking content into manageable steps. It serves as a practical guide for teachers and leaders to sustain effective play-based instruction.

Primary Objectives: The program aims to improve academic performance through flexible grouping and tiered tasks, promote active engagement via inquiry-based activities, and nurture self-regulated learners.

Implementation Strategy: The program is a three-day training-workshop:

- Day 1: Crafting a tailored Action Plan and an introduction to play-based instruction.
- Day 2: In-depth workshops on implementation strategies, including technology integration.

- Day 3: Practical workshops on delivering instruction, including demo teaching and the development of instructional materials.

Stakeholders and Monitoring: The researcher acts as a facilitator, with Master Teachers and the Public Schools District Supervisor (PSDS) as resource speakers. Monitoring is conducted by the PSDS and school heads using a dedicated tool and post-training debriefing.

Budgetary Requirements: The estimated budget is P 65,000, covering supplies (P 30,000), meals (P 25,000), and incidental expenses (P 10,000), to be funded via School MOOE, PTA funds, SEF, or donations.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researcher strictly adhered to established ethical protocols throughout the conduct of this study in the District of Tarangnan. Informed consent was secured through formal approvals from the Schools Division Superintendent and the Public Schools District Supervisor, as well as permission from school administrators to ensure that all teacher and student respondents participated voluntarily. The respondents' freedom to withdraw from the study at any time was respected, and the anonymity of all participants was rigorously maintained throughout the sampling and data gathering procedures. Data Privacy was strictly followed, particularly during the retrieval and tabulation of academic performance data from official School Forms, which was only accessed through formal requests to authorized personnel. The respondents' well-being was safeguarded during the face-to-face interviews and the administration of survey questionnaires.

The researcher declares that no conflict of interest exists in the conduct of this study and that plagiarism was strictly avoided by ensuring the instrumentation adapted from previous research was properly validated and credited. There was no bias in the interpretation of the findings, as the researcher utilized objective statistical software and treatments to ensure the accuracy and precision of the results. The results were used purely for research purposes to assess the impact and implementation of play-based instruction within the Schools Division of Samar. Furthermore, the researcher declares that no artificial intelligence (AI) was utilized in the development or analysis of this study, providing full disclosure in accordance with academic integrity standards.

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