

# The Power of Play: Exploring Stakeholders' Perception of Play-Based Education in Early Childhood

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## ABSTRACT

Play-based education is essential to promote children's social, emotional, and cognitive growth. This study aimed to explore the perceptions of the key educational stakeholders, including teachers, learners, and parents, on play-based learning pedagogy. This study focused on understanding the underlying concerns among teachers, learners, and parents with play-based learning and how these concerns affect their views on the role of play in children's overall development. A quantitative correlational research design was used with the sample population consisting of 100 primary grade teachers from different DepEd schools within Bulacan, 690 learners from primary grade, and 690 parents of primary grade learners. The data were collected using adopted-modified Likert questionnaires focusing on play-based education function, significance, and its efficacy in early childhood settings, along with learners' academic records. The findings indicate that both teachers and learners hold play-based education in high regard, with mean satisfaction ratings of 3.85 and 3.42, respectively. However, parents showed mixed perceptions, highlighting a gap in understanding. Teachers and the students strongly support play-based learning and a need for a campaign to help parents understand play-based education.

**Keywords:** play-based education; early childhood education; stakeholder perceptions; cognitive development; academic performance; awareness campaign

## INTRODUCTION

It has been demonstrated that children's development benefits from learning through play. Playing is educational if it is enjoyable, meaningful, energetic, and socially involved (Parker & Thomsen, 2019). Placement in the classroom fosters initiative, participation, creativity, and friendliness. Play-based education promotes social skill development, encourages children to learn, and improves their language and numeracy skills. Engaging in play involves being proactive, focused, and curious. It also aids children in solving problems, controlling their emotions, being creative, making decisions, collaborating, fortitude, sharing, and interacting with others in both small and large groups, all of which are beneficial. Children teach lifelong skills and help them make better decisions. Furthermore, stakeholders' perceptions about play might affect how they see children's education, growth, and the importance they place on playtime.

According to Keung and Cheung (2019), teachers perceive effective play-based learning to be closely linked to the overall development of children. Their conceptions of play pedagogy are influenced by their understanding of how play contributes to various developmental aspects, including social, emotional, and cognitive growth. In preschool classes, play-based learning offers opportunities to support students' social and emotional development. It demonstrates how play-based learning affects preschoolers' development of social and emotional skills.

Furthermore, although it was stated above that play-based learning played a crucial role in the development of children, some teachers could not execute play in the classroom. According to Zhang et al. (2021), while the

teachers favored the conventional curriculum, they were usually aware of play-based learning among early primary school students. In terms of practice and play-based learning, teachers believed that they were time-consuming and added to their burden. It was stated that children played anyway, but in terms of learning, the conventional methods were more effective.

While existing literature and studies support play-based learning in early childhood education that benefits learners' holistic development, stakeholders still have mixed opinions regarding this approach. In contrast, there were stakeholders—learners, teachers, and parents who had different views on this matter. Despite having a high level of knowledge, there were still stakeholders who had initial reactions or negative connotations when they discovered that children played at school to learn. They were concerned that play might not be sufficient for children to learn at school. They were used to believing that learning only happened through academic activities and not through play.

Play experience was emphasized in the DepEd Matatag Curriculum Program as a method of teaching young students. A child's natural activity aided in their exploration and interpretation of their surroundings. While the instructor recognized the learning process and considered what they had seen to decide which activities should be encouraged and expanded upon, the children played.

By addressing the knowledge gap and promoting positive attitudes, stakeholders can encourage more parents to embrace Early Childhood Education, ultimately benefiting children's development and educational outcomes. Through play-based learning, they were provided with a solid foundation for both academic and non-academic skills foster holistic development.

Play-based learning has been widely used in early childhood education. This way of teaching allowed learners to learn by doing the activities and not simply by learning it academically. However, due to different perceptions of stakeholders—learners, teachers, and parents putting it into practice sometimes became challenging.

Understanding the perceptions of different stakeholders in play-based learning is vital. By understanding the stakeholders' perceptions of play-based learning, the researchers formulated a well-rounded framework that benefited the teacher, parents, and learners in their different developmental domains. Through this study, the researchers fully understand the parents and create different approaches for them to realize that play-based learning is not merely playing but more than just that.

The purpose of this study was to explore how different stakeholders—including learners, teachers and parents—perceive the function, significance, and efficacy of play-based learning in early childhood settings the research addressed the central question: What are the underlying concerns among educators, parents, and students regarding on the perception of play-based learning, and how do these concerns influence their views on the role of play in fostering critical thinking, social skills, and overall cognitive development in early childhood education? This research sought to provide valuable insights and create a campaign that would help teachers, learners, and parents address their concerns, which would facilitate and improve students' academic performance.

While many stakeholders respond positively to frameworks that address their concerns and expand their understanding of play-based learning's educational value, others remain hesitant, still favoring traditional methods because they perceive play-based learning as "just play" and not a structured approach to development.

The general problem of this study is how stakeholders perceive play-based education in early childhood.

Specifically, this study will find answers to the following questions:

1. How can play-based learning education be perceived by teachers, learners and parents?
2. Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers, learners, and parents?

3. How may the academic performance of learners be described?
4. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' and learners' perception of play-based education and the learners' academic performance?
5. Is there a significant relationship between parents' demographic profile and their perception of play-based education?
6. What awareness campaigns can be developed to help parents understand the importance of play-based education?

This study investigated how early childhood educators, students, and parents perceive play-based learning. It concentrated on how play-based learning was perceived in terms of its goal, significance, and efficacy in fostering children's social, cognitive, and critical thinking development as well as their academic and non-academic progress. It also examined how the three stakeholder groups' perspectives differed from one another and how these perceptions were related to students' academic achievement. The study also suggested an awareness campaign to educate parents on the advantages of play-based learning and to dispel common misconceptions about it.

According to an increasing number of studies, play-based learning is beneficial for the development of a variety of social, emotional, and cognitive skills. According to Caven (2022), play fosters the development of 21st-century abilities such as confidence, teamwork, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. Children not only learn love but also acquire critical academic and life skills through meaningful, active, and socially engaging activities.

According to Yunianti (2020), learning through play is a potent way to promote holistic learning in contemporary educational settings because it improves children's capacity for observation, analysis, planning, and meaning-making. Even though early childhood activists and scholars strongly endorse play-based learning, real-world obstacles still need to be overcome. Particularly in kindergarten, the advent of standards-based accountability has caused many teachers to place a higher priority on academic teaching strategies such as rote memorization and direct instruction.

According to Caven (2022), despite the fact that some states, such as New Hampshire, have made child-directed experience a requirement of their educational policy, many instructors are still unsure of how to successfully incorporate play-based learning into their lessons. Despite its benefits, the application of play-based learning is fraught with difficulty. Many teachers use more conventional teaching strategies, such as rote memorization and direct instruction, as a result of the pressures of standardized testing and rising academic demands (Caven, 2022).

## METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative correlational research design. To examine stakeholders including teachers, learners, and parents' perceptions of play-based education in early childhood. This approach ensured that the numerical insights were supplemented by subtle experiences and perspectives. Quantitative data were derived from the Quarterly Kindergarten Progress Report and Quarterly Academic Performance of Grades 1 to 3 to describe the relationship between play-based learning and academic performance. This study complied with ethical guidelines. It was approved by the Ethics Review Committee of Bulacan State University. All participants gave their informed consent including teachers, learners written consent and parents or guardians consent. The findings were used to develop campaign awareness to promote the benefits and importance of play-based education, focusing on the relationship between stakeholder perceptions and measurable academic performance.

The study focused on key stakeholders in early childhood education, especially pupils and parents from a DepEd school in Bulacan, as well as teachers from selected DepEd Elementary schools in the same province. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator, a sample of 295 learners and 295 parents was drawn from a

combined population of 1,295. In addition, 100 teachers were selected to participate in the study. This brought the total number of respondents to 690, consisting of 295 learners, 295 parents, and 100 teachers.

This study used a Likert scale questionnaire and interviews to gather data on teachers, learners, and parents' perceptions of play-based education. The research used a Likert scale questionnaire and interviews to gather data on teachers, learners, and parents' perceptions of play-based education. The questionnaire consisted of four Likert-scale questions, seven open-ended questions for parents, and six open-ended questions for teachers and learners. The study used adopted-modified questionnaires and was validated by three educational professionals. Each modified questionnaire was adopted from a related study. The questionnaire for teachers was taken from Tuba (2021). The questionnaire for learners came from a study of Mauro (2024). The questionnaire for parents was adopted from Zhang et al. (2021) and Fogle and Mendez (2017).

The data-gathering procedure for this quantitative correlational research study began with formal communication and consent procedures involving key stakeholders including teachers, parents, and learners' guardians. These steps ensured that all the parties were informed and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. To determine the sample size of students and parents, the Raosoft calculator was used, ensuring a 95% level of significance. From a total population of 1,259 a sample size of 295 was selected to represent the study population. The study employed stratified random sampling, which was administered proportionally to learners from Kindergarten to Grade 3. To maintain equity in the selection procedure, the advisory teacher actively assisted in selecting the students from each class. With the knowledge of their students, they were able to expedite the selection process while still honoring the essence of the sampling technique.

The researchers collected data on stakeholder experiences of play-based learning through structured surveys using interview techniques. Teachers shared information about their use of play-based teaching approaches, together with the number of occurrences and observed results. This study measured students' perspective through a series of specific questions customized for different age ranges. The survey evaluated parents to understand how play-based teaching methods affected their children academically and in social domains, as well as developmental outcomes. The collected survey data showed how different stakeholders understood these concepts by studying their responses to the search for shared beliefs along with divergent viewpoints. The faculty used the collected information to create an awareness strategy that improved play-learning methods and boosted the educational results for young children.

Following the completion of the data collection, the survey results were subjected to statistical analysis to identify the patterns and correlations of stakeholders' perceptions. This analysis revealed commonalities and differences among teachers, parents, and learners regarding the implementation and effectiveness of play-based learning. The insights obtained from the experiment were then utilized to develop an awareness campaign that addressed stakeholders' concerns and misconceptions, aimed at improving play-based learning practices to enhance students' academic performance in early childhood education.

## RESULTS

**Table 1 Perceptions of Teachers in Play-Based Learning Education**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. In my classroom, I recognize that play is a crucial part of early childhood education, helping children build important skills for both learning and social development.	3.80	0.49	Strongly Agree	High Variability
2. Play and activity-based learning should be an integral part of the early years' curriculum.	3.82	0.39	Strongly Agree	High Variability

3. Play-based learning practice helps learners easily grasp the lesson.	3.76	0.55	Strongly Agree	High Variability
4. Play-based learning is essential for fostering creativity, problem-solving, and social skills in children.	3.88	0.33	Strongly Agree	High Variability
5. Children are more engaged during play-based learning activities compared to traditional lessons, such as lectures, reading, and rote memorization exercises.	3.94	0.24	Strongly Agree	High Variability
6. The school administration supports the use of play and activity-based learning.	3.88	0.33	Strongly Agree	High Variability
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>High Variability</b>

**Table 1** shows the survey results regarding the perceptions of kindergarten and grades 1 to 3 teachers in DepEd schools in Bulacan. The results demonstrated that the teachers strongly agreed with play-based learning in early childhood education, as indicated by the overall total mean value of 3.85, with a standard deviation of 0.33, which was considered as extremely severe.

**Table 2 Perceptions of Learners in Play-Based Learning Education**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. I learn important things through play with my friends at school	3.49	0.96	Agree	Moderate Variability
2. I feel excited to learn through play every day at school.	3.71	0.67	Strongly Agree	High Variability
3. I think playing helps me become smarter.	3.17	1.09	Agree	Moderate Variability
4. Playing with friends during class helps me solve problems and word together better.	3.48	0.91	Agree	Moderate Variability
5. I much prefer play activities (like finding and counting lego) than normal activities (like reading or writing.)	3.14	1.13	Agree	Moderate Variability
6. I am happy when the teacher includes play in teaching!	3.53	0.96	Strongly Agree	High Variability
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.64</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderate Variability</b>

This table shows learners' perceptions towards play-based learning in their early childhood. The learners perceived play-based learning education positively in early childhood since the aggregate weighted mean was 3.42, reflecting an agreement rating in the descriptions, with a standard deviation of 0.64 reflecting a severe interpretation.

**Table 3 Perceptions of Parents in Play-Based Learning Education**

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. Through play, I see my child develop new skills and abilities, which I believe are essential for their learning and growth.	4.00	0.00	Strongly Agree	High Variability
2. It is more important for my child to have good academic skills than to play well with other children.	3.14	0.93	Agree	Moderate Variability
3. I don't think my child learns important skills by playing.	2.85	0.88	Agree	Moderate Variability
4. I see play as an important way for my child to learn and explore the world.	3.20	0.84	Agree	Moderate Variability
5. Playtime is not a high priority in my home.	2.46	0.95	Disagree	Low Variability
6. Teachers need more training and seminars in implementing play-based learning classrooms	2.92	0.89	Agree	Moderate Variability
<b>Overall</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderate Variability</b>

**Table 3** shows the survey results regarding parents' perception of play-based learning education in early childhood. Based on the respondents perspective, the parents agreed on the significance of learning through play for young children, as evidenced by the general mean score of 3.09 with a standard deviation of 0.49, which has a severe interpretation.

**Table 4 ANOVA Test Among Three Groups**

Variables	f-value	Sig-value	Decision	Interpretation
Teachers, Learners and Parents	77.93548	0.00001	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference among the perceptions of the teachers, learners, and parents about play-based education.

The table presents the ANOVA results for the three groups. A statistical difference exists between the stakeholder perceptions of teachers, learners, and parents, according to the F-value of 77.9388 and p-value of 0.00001. The test's p-value of 0.00001 falls below the defined level of 0.05, and the researchers reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 5 Frequency, Percentage, and Remarks Distribution of Kindergarten Learners' Academic Performance Based on Grade Interpretation**

Interpretation	Grade Scale	Frequency	Percentage	Remarks
Suggest a significant delay in development	69 & below	0	0.00%	0
Suggest a slight delay in	70–79	0	0.00%	0

development				
Average Overall Development	80–119	67	100.00%	Passed
Suggest Advanced Development	120–129	0	0.00%	0
Suggest Highly Advanced Development	130 & above	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>	—	<b>67</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>Passed</b>

The table displays the grade classification for kindergarten learner achievement based on DepEd Orders No. 47, 2016 Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education. The average achievement for the second grading period showed a grade classification notation of 80-119. This means that collectively, all 67 students were aggregated under the heading average overall development, with a 100% in the percentage having a passing remark.

**Table 6 Frequency, Percentage and Remarks Distribution of Grade 1 to 3 Learners' Academic Performance Based on Grade Descriptors**

DESCRIPTOR	GRADE SCALE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	REMARKS
Outstanding	90-100	106	46.49%	Passed
Very Satisfactory	85-89	122	53.51%	Passed
Satisfactory	80-84	0	0.00%	0
Fairly Satisfactory	75-79	0	0.00%	0
Did Not Meet Expectations	Below 75	0	0.00%	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>228</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>Passed</b>

The table demonstrates the result distribution of the total 228 Grade 1 to 3 learners, from the descriptor of Outstanding (90-100) with a percentage of 46.49% and 53.51% as Very Satisfactory (85-89). Have an overall 100% in the percentage having a passed remark, this aligns with DepEd Order No. 8,s. 2015.

**Table 7 Correlation Analysis Between the Perception of the Teachers and Kindergarten Learners in Play-Based Education and the Academic Performance of Kindergarten**

Variables Correlated	r	Description	Sig-value	Decision	Interpretation
Teachers Perception and Academic Performance	-0.0345	Weak Negative Correlation	0.80956	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between the perception of teachers and the academic performance of kindergarten.
Kindergarten Learners Perception and Academic Performance	0.1211	Weak Positive Correlation	0.32897	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between the perception of kindergarten learners and their academic performance.

The table shows the correlation analysis between the perception of teachers and kindergarten learners regarding play-based education and the academic performance of kindergarten learners. The value of  $r$  between teachers' perceptions and kindergarten academic performance was  $-0.0345$ , indicating a weak negative correlation. With a  $p$ -value of  $0.80956$ , there was no significant relationship between teacher perceptions and kindergarten learners' academic performance. Similarly, the correlation between the kindergartens' perception and their academic performance, with the value of  $r = 0.1211$ , presented a weak positive correlation. Although there was a  $p$ -value of  $0.32897$ , there was no significant relationship between the perception of kindergarten learners and their academic performance.

**Table 8 Correlation Analysis Between the Perception of the Teachers and Grade 1 to 3 Learners in Play-Based Education and the Academic Performance of Grade 1 to 3**

Variables Correlated	r	Description	Sig-value	Decision	Interpretation
Teachers Perception and Academic Performance	0.1031	Weak Positive Correlation	0.307368	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between the teachers' perception and grade 1 to 3 learners academic performance.
Grade 1 to 3 Learners Perception and Academic Performance	0.0573	Weak Positive Correlation	0.389148	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between the grade 1 to 3 learners' perception and their academic performance.

**Table 8** shows the correlation analysis between the perception of teachers and grades 1-3 learners about play-based education and their academic performance. The findings found a weak positive correlation between teachers' perception and grades 1 to 3 academic performance, with a value of  $r = 0.1031$  and a  $p$ -value =  $0.307368$ , indicating no significant relationship between the variables. Similarly, the correlation between Grade 1 to 3 learners' perceptions and their academic performance was  $0.0573$ , which represented a weak positive correlation. However, with a  $p$ -value of  $0.389148$ , there was no significant relationship between Grades 1 to 3 learners' perception and their academic performance.

**Table 9 Correlation Analysis Between Parents' Demographic Profile and Their Perception of Play-Based Education**

Variables Correlated	r	Description	Sig-value	Decision	Interpretation
Gender	0.1009	Weak positive correlation	0.83617	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between gender and perception of place-based education.
Age	0.0444	Weak positive correlation	0.447415	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between age and perception of place-based education.

Marital Status	0.196	Weak positive correlation	.000712	Reject	There is a significant relationship between marital status and perception of place-based education.
Relationship to the Child	0.0097	Weak positive correlation	0.868236	Do not reject	There is no significant relationship between the relationship to the child and perception of place-based education.
Educational attainment	0.2178	Moderate positive correlation	0.000163	Reject	There is a significant relationship between educational attainment and perception of place-based education.

**Table 9** shows the correlation between parents' demographic profiles and their perception of play-based education. The findings found no significant difference in parents' perception of play-based education based on gender, age, marital status, relationship with the child, or educational attainment. However, a moderate positive correlation was found, suggesting that higher educational attainment leads to a more favorable perception of play-based education. The results suggested that parents' ages, marital status, and relationship with their child did not significantly influence their perception of play-based education.

# THE POWER OF PLAY: EXPLORING STAKEHOLDERS PERCEPTION OF PLAY-BASED EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the College of Education  
of the Bulacan State University  
City of Malolos, Bulacan

## CAMPAIGN AWARENESS PROGRAM PLAN

### THE POWER OF PLAY: MORE THAN JUST FUN! Exploring Its Impact and Importance of Play in Early Childhood Development

#### I. BACKGROUND:

In education, playing allows for initiative, engagement, creativity, and sociability. Play-based learning aids in the development of social skills, increases motivation to study, and enhances language and numeracy abilities in youngsters. Playing entails taking initiative, concentrating, and being interested in the world. It also helps children with problem-solving skills, emotion regulation, creativity, decision-making, teamwork, resilience, sharing, and socializing in small and large groups, all of which help children make better life choices and teach them lasting skills. In addition, stakeholders' perceptions of play may influence their views of children's learning, development, and the degree to which they value playtime.

Thus, the researchers will conduct an awareness campaign seminar.

#### II. OBJECTIVE:

- To address the understanding gap of parents toward play-based education in early childhood.
- To offer a firsthand experience through a play-based educational booth where children can engage and parents can observe.

#### III. PARTICIPANTS

The target audience of the awareness campaign are Parents, Caregivers and Community members who are interested in early childhood development.

#### IV. PROGRAM

The campaign awareness seminar will present an opportunity to empower parents with knowledge to support their child development through play. Parents/Guardians will be able to observe and engage with their children as they participate in interactive booths within the provided educational booth.

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The seminar is scheduled to happen before the opening of the new school year in both DepEd schools and Daycare Centers, aligning with the start of the academic calendar to maximize parent involvement from the beginning.

Through this initiative, the researcher strives to strengthen the partnership between the educators and families.

**Campaign Activities:**

**1. Welcome and Registration**

- o Attendees check in and sign up for the seminar and child participation.
- o Light refreshments available.
- o Informational leaflets about play-based education handed out.

**2. Seminar**

Speaker:

**Jeffrey James F. Paulino, Otrp, MA, RPsy**  
Director of Kalinga Center for Well-Being (trade name: Kalinga Well-Being Therapy Center)

Discussion:

- Importance
- Benefits
- Common Misconceptions

Interactive Q&A Session:

- Parents/Guardians are open to ask questions and share concerns.

**3. Play-based Educational Booth**

Different booth activities that are designed for Early childhood learners.

**• Activity Stations:**

- Math Playland

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*Early Numeracy - Counting games, matching activities, etc.*

- Literacy Land  
*Language and Literacy - Storytelling, puppetshow, etc.*
- The Discovery Zone  
*Early Science - Little experiments, etc.*
- Sensory Play Station  
*Motor Skills - Sands, playdough, texture exploration etc.*

**• Station Guide**

Event Facilitators are guiding the learners on an activity and explaining to the parents the benefits while they are observing their child.

**• Giveaway kits for learners**

Loot bags with simple play-based learning materials for continued learning at home.

**4. Closing**

**V. BUDGET REQUIREMENTS**

ITEM	
Booth Materials	Php. 20,000.00
Giveaway kits	Php. 5,000.00
Food	Php. 5, 000.00
Flyers	Php. 2,000.00
Token	Php. 2,000.00
Plaque	Php. 1,000.00

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**Key Messages:**

**1. Play is Learning**

- Play has nothing to do with fun only but it is especially the way children learn perfectly.
- By the game some of children's mental, social, emotional, and physical abilities grow.
- Doing play brings about creativity, problem-solving, and the natural curiosity of kids.

**2. Different Types of Play Support Development**

- Free Play (child-led) gives the child the chance to be independent and creative.
- Guided Play (with adult support) can explain new concepts and skills to the child.
- Physical Play is the motor skills' and the body's health's arena other Jr-n.
- Through Pretend Play, children find the imagination, language, and social skills very useful.

**3. Play Strengthens Parent-Child Bonds**

- By playing with a child, you help in building up trust, communication, and emotional security
- Making stories, setting up blocks, or outdoor games take the relationship to the next level.

**4. Play Encourages Social and Emotional Growth**

- In the play a child realizes that he/she has to cooperate, give the others the chance, and even express his/her emotions.
- They build resilience, patience, and ability to navigate through social situations.

**5. Play Supports Academic Readiness**

- Early concepts of literacy, math, and science are naturally learned through playing.
- Play activities such as sorting, counting, storytelling, and experimenting with materials all help to build the skills.

**6. Reduce Screen Time, Encourage Hands-on Play**

- Hands-on play that is physically active is much more beneficial for your children than passive screen time that is rather.
- It is important to get the children to consume minimum digital devices and to invite them to explore and communicate in real life.

**7. The Importance of Play-Rich Environment**

- Providing open-ended tools such as blocks, art supplies, and puzzles is one way that the children can be creative and of course, the same product can be used in a number of ways thus promoting the child's creativity and imagination.

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- It is seen that mostly in the indoor environment where the materials which are open-ended can be found. Outdoor play and nature-based experiences imbue learning with greater depth and relevance.

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**Figure 1 The Visual of the Campaign Awareness Plan about Play-Based Learning**



**Figure 2 A Visual of Leaflets Used for Campaign Awareness about Play-Based Learning**

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the perceptions of stakeholders -teachers, learners, and parents, regarding play-based learning education. Through survey questionnaires, the researchers found that the majority of teachers, learners, and parents held a positive perception of play-based education. The results of the study showed that teachers from four DepEd schools in Bulacan strongly agreed to recognize the important role played in fostering creativity, problem-solving, and social-emotional development that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Supported by Kangas (2025), play-based learning increases students' motivation, active involvement, and learning. The learners perceived favorable views of play-based learning education, with study results showing a positive, agreed-upon view, which means that the learners enjoy playing a lot and find it motivating. The results of the findings showed that most of the parents agreed, although while parents valued play-based learning, there was still a tendency to prioritize academic capability over play.

The results showed significant differences among stakeholders' perceptions concerning play-based education based on the results of the ANOVA Test. In this case, the researchers accepted the alternate hypothesis and concluded that there were differences in how teachers, learners, and parents perceive play-based education. Most teachers appreciated play-based education because of its systematic contribution towards organized learning outcomes, while pupils regarded it as active and participatory learning. On the other hand, parents held mixed views based on their varying educational experiences. These results underscore the different interpretations defined by the various roles and functions of each stakeholder group and show how these differences need to be reconciled to value and support the effective use of play-based learning models in education.

The results of the correlation analysis between the perception of the teacher and learners in play-based education and the learners' academic performance found that there was no significant relationship between the perception of the teacher and learners in play-based education and the learners' academic performance. These findings align with those of previous research on early childhood education. According to Lynch (2015), while teachers value the importance of play in developing creativity and motivation, academic demands elsewhere

outside the classroom limit the perceived or measurable academic value of play-based approaches. Similarly, Nicolopoulou (2007) asserted that play fostered the development of narrative and symbolic skills through developmental processes; however, it was difficult to measure direct academic effects without using long-term evaluation techniques.

Moreover, the learners achieved successful outcomes in the study, with most excelling in their academic work based on their academic performance. All kindergarten learners displayed Average Overall Development with passing remarks results according to the assessment measurements by DepEd Orders No. 47, s. 2016, while half of the learners in Grades 1 to 3 received Outstanding grades, also with passing remarks, aligned with DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, which provided a summary of learners' progress through a grading scale and its corresponding descriptors to assess performance. The powerful data indicated that learning through play does not interfere with academic development, but possibly serves as an excellent basis, even though the statistical evidence is weak.

The results of the study revealed a weak positive correlation between parents' demographic profiles and their perceptions of play-based education. The results showed no significant differences in gender, age, marital status, relationship to the child, or educational attainment. The higher the parents' educational attainment, the more favorable their perception was toward play-based education. However, the relationships between gender, age, marital status, relationship to the child, and educational attainment were not statistically significant. This study supports the finding of Wright et al. (2023) that parents with higher educational attainment tend to favor play, while less educated parents are generally inclined to prefer direct instruction. Similarly, a study by Navitha Jayaraj et al. (2022) also revealed factors that affect the way parents perceive play, such as age, educational level, race, and religion. Moreover, parents' marital status greatly affected their attitudes toward play.

The researchers developed an awareness campaign program plan and designed easily understandable leaflets that highlight the importance and benefits of play-based learning in children's academics for parents to see that play-based learning was not just about playing, and for them to know that incorporating play in their child's academic activity was very helpful for their child's development. The objectives of the proposed awareness campaign program plan is to address the understanding gap of parents toward play-based education in early childhood and to offer a firsthand experience through a play-based educational booth where children can engage and parents can observe.

The campaign awareness seminar will present an opportunity to empower parents with knowledge to support their child development through play. Parents/Guardians will be able to observe and engage with their children as they participate in interactive booths within the provided educational booths. Interactive booths consist of different booth activities that are designed for Early childhood learners.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study affirmed the vital role of play-based learning as a meaningful strategy in early childhood education. The strong support among teachers, the positive reception among learners, and moderate yet critical approval among parents highlighted the multifaceted value of play as both a developmental and academic tool. The existence of significant differences among stakeholder perceptions reflects the natural diversity of expectations surrounding early education, but it also underscores the necessity of bridging these perspectives for more cohesive and effective implementation. Moreover, the positive influence of teachers' and learners' perceptions of academic outcomes substantiates the educational value of integrating structured play into early learning environments. The results further suggest that although play-based learning was generally embraced, targeted efforts remained necessary to strengthen parental understanding, particularly regarding marital status and educational background. Ultimately, the study concluded that fostering shared commitment among teachers, learners, and parents to play-based methodologies is essential for maximizing children's holistic growth. Play should not merely be regarded as a supplementary activity but also recognized as a core pedagogical practice that meaningfully supports cognitive, social, and academic development during the foundational years of education.

Every author made a significant contribution to the completion of this study. Trixie Marie Riño, Kaira C. Brozo, Kimberly C. Ignacio, Fatima C. Isidro along with Micaella-Anne B. Sanglay was primarily responsible for gathering data, analyzing it and writing the manuscript. Esther G. Domingo Joel B. Faustino provided oversight on research methodological design and validation, while Joseline M. Santos offered guidance in refining the conceptual framework and reviewing the improvement of the final paper. Every author looked over and gave their approval to the final version of the manuscript. The data that support the findings and conclusions of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The writers say they have no conflicts of interest.

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