

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE IN IMPLIMENTING PLAY
PEDAGOGY IN CLASSROOM SITUATIONS FOR HOLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

By

Zinnia Zerrin
ID-22155014

A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

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Brac University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

Zinnia Zerrin
Student ID-22155014

Approval

The thesis/project titled “Teachers' Experience in Implementing Play Pedagogy in Classroom Situations for Holistic Development of Children” submitted by Zinnia Zerrin, Student ID- 22155014 of Spring, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development in January, 2024.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

Riffat Jahan Nahreen
Senior Programme Manager &
Faculty Member, ECD Academic Program
BRAC Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

Ferdousi Khanom
Senior Lecturer, ECD Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

Dr. Dilruba Sultana
Senior Lecturer, Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Teachers' Experience in Implementing Play Pedagogy in Classroom Situations for Holistic Development of Children

Student name: Zinnia Zerrin

1. Source of population: Teachers of English medium schools teaching learners of junior section.

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

- a) Physical risk to the subjects- No
- b) Social risk- No
- c) Psychological risk to subjects- No
- d) discomfort to subjects- No
- e) Invasion of privacy- No

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

- a) Nature and purpose of the study- Yes
- b) Procedures to be followed- Yes
- c) Physical risk- N/A
- d) Sensitive questions- Yes
- e) Benefits to be derived- Yes
- f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study- Yes
- g) Confidential handling of data- Yes
- h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved- Yes

4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)

- a) from study participants- Yes
- b) from parents or guardian- N/A
- c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? - Yes

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

- a) Proposal- Yes
- b) Consent Form- Yes
- c) Questionnaire or interview schedule- Yes

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:
(chair/co-chair/other)

Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University

Abstract

This research has been conducted to present the experience of the teachers of private English-medium schools dealing with learners of 3–5 years of age in a play-based approach to teaching and learning. Play-based teaching and learning is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, and there is not much research done on the schools where the medium of instruction is English. A play-based approach to teaching and learning is different from the traditional method of teaching, and teachers require training and supervision to successfully implement this approach in classrooms. Based on in-depth interviews and classroom observation notes, the research was conducted among three English-medium schools in Dhaka and 10 teachers of English-medium schools who had experience with both traditional and play-based teaching methods. Qualitative research was set to explore the experience of teachers with two key research questions. Most of the participants were found to exhibit a positive perception of play-based teaching and learning in contrast with the traditional approach to teaching and learning, and at the same time, they shared about the areas that pose challenges to them. The research has provided a set of recommendations to overcome the limitations of implementing a play-based approach in their curriculum.

Acknowledgement

This thesis would have remained an unfinished endeavor only if the assistance of a few people were not there. Their unwavering appreciation motivated me to finish my studies.

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Acronyms	ix
Glossary	x
Chapter I Introduction & Background	1
Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the study.....	4
Significance of the study.....	4
Chapter II Literature Review	6
Chapter III Methodology	14
Research Approach and Design.....	14
Research Participant.....	15
Research Site.....	15
Participants Selection Procedure.....	15
Data Collection Method and Procedure	16
Data Collection Tool.....	16
Data Management and Analysis	17

Validity & Reliability	18
Etical Issues	18
Limitations of the Study.....	19
Chapter IV Results/Findings & Discussion	20
Results/Findings.....	20
Discussion	29
Conclusion	35
Recommendations.....	36
References.....	37
Appendices	41
Appendix A.....	41
Appendix B	42
Appendix C.....	43
Appendix D.....	45
Appendix E	46

List of Acronyms

ECD Early Childhood Development

ECE Early Childhood Education

IDI In-depth Interview

ECEC Early Childhood Education and Care

Glossary

Experience: According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) experience means “the process of getting knowledge or skill from doing, seeing, or feeling things.” In this research, the term experience refers to the knowledge, skills, and general incidents that they encountered in a process that was novel to the teachers.

Holistic development: Holistic development is a comprehensive educational approach that seeks to help children develop their physical, intellectual, emotional, cognitive, and social skills. It aims to improve these abilities at a young age, better equipping children to handle the obstacles and challenges of everyday life later on. These abilities also seem to be essential for building a strong and well-rounded personality as well as for success in the workplace (IntelliBrain, 2023)

Traditional teaching approach: Conventional education, sometimes referred to as "traditional methods," is extensively employed in schools. In the traditional educational model, the instructor serves as the source of concepts and knowledge, and the students engage with them as knowledge recipients. (Alessa & Hussein, 2023). The traditional method of teaching is a

teacher-centric method that promotes the supremacy of the teacher within the classroom setup. Here teachers followed the drill and rote method of memorization. In this method, children learn through repetition and memorization (Graphy, 2022).

Play-based pedagogy: Play-based pedagogy is a child-centered method that fosters children's holistic development by connecting them to learning contexts and capabilities through their innate curiosity and exploratory nature (Lunga et al., 2022).

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction

Ensuring a secure and joyful learning environment for preschool-aged children is a major priority in early childhood development. In the modern world, play-based curricula are regarded as important teaching and learning strategies. Although play-based learning is still relatively new in Bangladesh, academics and education entrepreneurs are paying close attention to this approach. The private sector of Bangladesh has been employing play-based teaching and learning for a while, even though the government of Bangladesh just recently started play-based pre-primary education in the official school system. Beginning in the early 1980s, government primary schools offered informal infant programs and in addition, there were several kindergartens, most of them were in cities, the concept of preschool education gained adhesion in the late 1990s when non-governmental organizations began offering early childhood care, and education with the assistance of various development partners (Akter, 2013). Play-based early learning arrangements have gained a lot of attention and appeal among urban education entrepreneurs; however, it remains to be seen how successfully or not these early learning centers or schools are implementing the play-based curriculum. In Universal Pre-Primary Education in Bangladesh Background, Murshid Akter states that a growing number of institutions are improving the early childhood education they offer in the form of baby classes, nursery and kindergarten schools, playgroups, daycare centers, and religious preschools in response to the growing demand for and awareness of this important education, however, the majority of these institutions lack an age-appropriate curriculum, instructional resources, or a conducive learning atmosphere (2013). The idea of "learning through play" or "play-based pedagogy" is still relatively new in Bangladesh's early childhood education area, and there hasn't been much discussion or study on play and early childhood education in

Bangladesh (Rashid & Jahan, 2021). However, in recent years Government of Bangladesh has started acknowledging the importance of early childhood education and according to the SDG 2022-"The National Education Policy 2010 emphasizes early childhood education (ECD) in the school system" (Sustainable Development Goals Bangladesh Progress Report 2022). Recently a two-year pre-primary education pilot initiative has been taken by the government and one year of pre-primary education has been implemented. Though the government has acknowledged and started implementing the one-year pre-primary education through the national curriculum neither in the education policy nor in the SDG has anything been mentioned in elaboration on why it is significant and how to proceed in implementing a successful learning environment in an ECD setting for children of Bangladesh. On the other hand, in the field of ECD, the approach of the developed countries is much more organized, detailed, and far-sighted. According to the Department of Education, Queensland, Australia, "implementing play-based learning in early year's classrooms affords opportunities for teachers to support learning across all learning areas of the Australian curriculum in combination with the emerging interests of young learners (2023)." As to the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2016), there is often a divergence in educators' perspectives regarding play and playful learning strategies. According to them, in order to achieve their intended developmental ability goals for the pupils, pre-primary teachers have to make a lot of short- and long-term decisions (Acharja et al., 2021). Compared to the developed nations, in the sector of early childhood development, Bangladesh is lagging and more research will enable both the government and private sector to have a better understanding of the importance of play-based learning, which is one of the trusted methods of pedagogical practice throughout the world. The main points of the research center on how to reframe experiences and the challenges teachers face when implementing play pedagogy in the urban classroom environment of schools in Bangladesh.

Statement of the Problem

A Western idea known as "play pedagogy," or teaching kids through play, has recently gained popularity in Eastern culture. The popular discourse surrounding play-based pedagogy in early childhood education is greatly influenced by Western play techniques (Chowdhury & Rivalland, 2012). In Bangladeshi culture, play is typically seen as a form of recreation for children, and many people involved in the education of children still find it difficult to connect learning with play. In order to implement play pedagogy, a center must have the right infrastructure, and its teachers must possess extensive knowledge and experience in implementing a play-based curriculum that is appropriate for the local culture. Developing and implementing play pedagogy requires a school culture that values playfulness and emphasizes it as a powerful learning pathway. Play at the center of learning necessitates fostering a culture that values the core components of play, such as taking risks, making mistakes, trying new things, and having fun (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2016). Regretfully, a lot of parents and teachers in Bangladesh do not see play as a means of teaching children social and cognitive abilities. Play is viewed casually as a teaching tool because educators and parents themselves studied using traditional techniques in the past. In their study done in a semi-rural area of Bangladesh, Nurun Nahar Chowdhury and Corine Rivalland (2012) report that while parents saw play as a kind of pleasure, teachers realized that it actually helped young children learn more quickly and better prepare for school. However, the novel approach of the play-based method makes many teachers who have switched from the old teaching style to play-based teaching feel uneasy and demotivated. The majority of Bangladeshi teachers are unaware that games may be used as teaching aids, and they lack the information needed to adopt this innovative approach. (Shirin, 2020). Thus, the goal of this study's current investigation is to ascertain how teachers are utilizing the new teaching methodology and how they are handling the transition in the classroom.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand the practice and perception of teachers of English medium schools of Dhaka city who have the experience of teaching in traditional teaching-learning as well as play-based teaching-learning in its implementation process. As play based approach is a new intervention in Bangladesh, most of the teachers who were teaching in the traditional method previously, might experience the new method of teaching with both positive and negative phases while implementing it in classroom situation. To understand the experience and challenges of teachers of English medium schools of Dhaka city who have the experience of teaching both in traditional teaching-learning as well as play based teaching-learning in its implementation process is the aim/purpose of this study.

Significance of the study

Play-based learning plays a significant role in the holistic development of children. Children are not only learning and experiencing new things when they overcome obstacles in their play and practice managing their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors; they are also strengthening and combining their cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative skills to create a rope that they can use in a variety of situations throughout their lives (Zosh et al., 2022). That is why it is important to note that play-based teaching is a specialized arena of teaching techniques and teachers of this pedagogical practice need proper training and expertise. Without proper knowledge and training, a play-based approach to teaching and learning may not be implemented successfully despite its increased popularity in the academic arena. The goals of education, methods, teaching and learning process, teacher preparation, lesson content, school environment, and other aspects of private pre-primary education institutions vary. However, when it comes to quality and standards, the majority of these services are unstructured, do not uphold a minimal standard, and do not take into account developmentally appropriate pedagogy for the children (Akhter, 2013). Culture-specificity is another unique aspect of the play-based

approach. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which has implications for both teaching and learning, is among the most prominent theories in the field of education in this regard (Alharbi, 2022). Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory examines how social, cultural, and historical contexts affect how people develop their cognitive skills when interacting with others (Alharbi, 2022). Since play pedagogy is a relatively new concept in Bangladeshi society, it is important to highlight that the majority of the teaching strategies used to implement this approach are available in the West but are not as readily available in Bangladeshi culture. As a result, there may have been a tendency in Bangladesh to adopt and follow the Western play method construct. This tendency in Bangladeshi play pedagogy to adopt Western culture can be harmful since it threatens Bangladesh's rich cultural legacy and will also not be well-received by the local populace. For this reason, it is crucial to modify play pedagogy in more societally and culturally relevant ways in order to guarantee Bangladeshi children's holistic development. To do that more research is required in this arena. This research initiative can present valuable insights into how teachers are experiencing and coping with this approach in their classroom, how they have managed to adapt this play pedagogy in the Bangladeshi context, and what are their experiences and expectations from parents, school management, and policymakers.

Research Questions

- 1) What are teachers' experiences in implementing play-based pedagogy with learners aged 3 to 5 years old?
- 2) What are the factors that challenge teachers to implement quality play pedagogy in the classroom to ensure the holistic development of learners aged 3 to 5 years old?

Chapter II: Literature Review

In the Western world, unlike the Eastern world, play and pedagogical aspects of play have gained a lot of attention and a lot of research has been undertaken to understand play and how play makes a difference in pedagogical practices. In this section, definitions of play and play pedagogy will be presented through the insights of different American and European research scholars and after that a discussion contrasting play and play pedagogy in the context of Bangladesh and other developed nations will be presented.

Definition of Play:

Defining play is quite complex and different scholars have defined play in different ways.

Dorothy Justus Sluss, in her book *Supporting Play: Birth through Age Eight*, presented a collection of definitions of play by different significant scholars of this arena and some of those have been presented in the table below:

Scholar	Definition
Froebel	At this point, play is the purest and most spiritual activity that a man may engage in. It also reflects the essence of human life overall, the deep, hidden natural vitality that exists in all things, including man.
Erikson	Play is the way that a developing youngster learns to have creative freedom within a world where roles and visions guide and control their existence.
Vygotsky	The zone of proximal development is created through play. A youngster always acts older than his actual age when playing; during play, he acts as though he were a head taller than himself.
Freud	Youngsters mimic everything that has had a profound impact on them in real life, and by doing so, they replicate the impact of those

	impressions and effectively become masters of the circumstances.
Piaget	Every intelligent act embodies a balance between assimilation and accommodation. Imitation, on the other hand, is the continuance of accommodation for its own sake. Play, on the other hand, might be understood as primarily assimilation, or the preference for assimilation over accommodation.
Ablon	a free-form voluntary activity that follows established guidelines and takes place within predetermined time and location constraints. Play is accompanied by emotions of excitement and anxiety as well as a realization that it is not like everyday life.

(Note. From Sluss, 2005, p. 7).

In his research report *The Importance of Play*, Dr. David Whitebread states- research on children's play conducted in the fields of archaeology, history, anthropology, and sociology reveals that play is common in human communities and that play is encouraged by adults in all cultures through the production of toys and playthings. However, the focus on different forms of play varies among countries due to attitudes toward childhood and play, which are influenced by social and economic factors (2012). The characteristics of play include:

- Being physically, cognitively, or both active.
- significant
- Symbolic
- self-determined or voluntary
- enjoyable
- intrinsically motivated
- process-oriented
- being risk-taking
- being self-directed

The relevance of play for young children's healthy development and learning has long been recognized in early childhood education and care (ECEC), which is defined as settings that serve children from birth to age eight (Treasure, n.d.).

Defining Play-pedagogy:

This section will examine the definition of play before moving on to the topic of pedagogy in early childhood education and care (ECEC). We run the temptation of believing that the education community already agrees on the meaning of the terms "play" and "learning" and that no definition is required because they are so well-known (Parker et al., 2022). A less well-known Vygotsky essay titled "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" serves as the foundation for Swedish academic Gunilla Lindqvist's play pedagogy, which emphasizes adult-child play that respects children's culture, creativity, and spontaneity while fostering their emotional, cognitive, and social development (Baumer, 2013). Children make sense of the world around them and their experiences by combining information, interpretations, and experiences through play (Hood, 2020). Through play-based pedagogy, children's natural curiosity and exploratory nature are used to connect them to learning contexts and capabilities, fostering their holistic development (Lunga et al., 2022). As per the Early Childhood Education and Care Pedagogy Review: England, pedagogical approach or educational strategy is a synonym for pedagogy. The term "pedagogical/educational approach" denotes the overall perspective utilized in the creation and implementation of pedagogical practices or techniques, while "pedagogy" refers to the scientific and artistic aspects of teaching, learning, and childcare. Notable and well-known pedagogical/educational approaches include the Montessori and Steiner methods (Wall et al., 2015). Inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, guided discovery learning, active learning, collaborative and cooperative learning, and Montessori education are the eight techniques that Parker and Thomsen (2019) identify as effective. Upon closer inspection, it is evident that all of these learning strategies are based on play's fundamental characteristics, which include being cognitively and/or physically active; significant and symbolic; self-determined or voluntary; enjoyable; intrinsically motivated; process-oriented; risk-taking; and

self-directed. Of the eight ways discussed above, inquiry-based learning promotes students to actively generate knowledge via questioning, problem-solving, critical thinking, and real-world experiences (Adeyale, 2023). The Reggio Emilia approach, which was created by pedagogist Loris Malaguzzi and parents in the Italian villages surrounding Reggio Emilia, is a powerful substitute for predetermined theme-based didactic curriculum. It has had a major impact on inquiry-based curriculum in early childhood education in North America (Nxumalo et al., 2020). The Goal of the Problem Based Learning (PBL) strategy is to support students' initiative in their work, intrinsic desire for learning, and interpersonal interactions as they build their problem-solving skills in group settings (Wijayanto et al., 2023). Expert in project-based learning John Larmer states that projects are authentic when they address real needs outside of the classroom or when the products that students make are useful. Project-based learning (PBL) is a powerful educational strategy that fosters student engagement, critical thinking, and practical skills (Koehler & Sammon, 2023). The Guided Discovery Learning approach is known to expand the cognitive processes of learners. It also fosters cognitively motivated behaviors in learners. Consequently, the application of discovery learning techniques can assist students in reaching higher thinking levels, a critical goal of education in general (Neber, 2012). Children learn cooperatively by participating in a variety of activities in pairs or small groups. It can be a fun way for children to study and interact with their classmates. Early collaborative learning significantly improves children's social and communication skills (Wondertree, 2021). Cooperative learning centers on structured group activities where students work together to achieve a common goal, often necessitating personal accountability and task delegation (Testbook, 2023). The Montessori pedagogy was developed during the early 20th century's new educational movement, when teaching was primarily top-down—that is, from the teacher to the student. Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and educator. With these alternative pedagogies, the needs and capacities of the

children are prioritized. Alternative pedagogies, which go against the conventional top-down view of education, are based on a more bottom-up understanding of knowledge and learning (Gentaz & Recard, 2022). Research have demonstrated the substantial benefits that integrated pedagogies can have on students' physical, creative, emotional, social, and cognitive growth. The similarities between the eight pedagogies and learning via play are referred to as "integrated pedagogies" (Parker & Thomson, 2019). When combined, these pedagogies can offer children engaging, socially engaged, active, meaningful, and interactive learning experiences (Parker & Thomson, 2019). Early on in their development, infants learn implicitly in play-based situations. In addition, growth in young children can occur both purposefully and accidentally (Wall et al., 2015). The comprehensive/social pedagogy approach, which prioritizes experiences and useful instructional techniques over student goals and accomplishments, is validated by Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes that learning should occur in a societal environment with the help of a caring mentor (Wall et al., 2015). Active learning, cooperative learning, guided discovery learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, and Montessori education are all constructivist learning theories that closely resemble play-based learning. These pedagogies are collectively referred to as "playful integrated pedagogies" because they combine teacher-led, teacher-guided, and child-directed learning (Parker et al., 2022).

Play-pedagogy in Bangladesh:

The definition of what we mean when we claim that play facilitates learning is still not well established. The play-based and casual preschool pedagogical traditions clash with the formal, subject-focused primary school curriculum structure in most countries (Walsh et al., 2010). One year of pre-primary education is largely focused on preparing children for formal schooling, with a heavy emphasis on academic ability development in the classroom, according to study results on the Bangladeshi context (Rashid & Jahan, 2021). The best

outcomes can only be attained when play is purposefully promoted by certified educators who understand pedagogy, can see children play, and can recognize how such play could help children develop their skills (KARAOĞLU, 2020). Because play has so many positive effects, most teachers were amenable to the idea of play-based teaching, according to Alpona Shirin's case study on Dhaka city teachers. However, they recommended that the government offer adequate training prior to putting the method into practice (2020). A World Bank review states that the PPE (Pre-Primary Education) teachers at the Government Primary School (GPS) have not been effectively trained to deliver the curriculum, particularly the play-based approach, or to identify, monitor, and track the developmental outcomes of the children. In other words, the one-time nature of the PPE training program has not produced effective teaching in the classroom (World Bank, 2022). The classroom environment has an impact on young children's play activities and learning. Specifically, space layouts and the classroom environment are two essential components that are necessary to improve young children's play in the classroom (Chowdhury & Rivalland, 2012). Bangladeshi teachers face a number of difficulties, including large class sizes, little time spent with students, a lack of developmentally appropriate play materials, and a lack of play areas for playful learning. They also need to continue receiving professional development training in order to enhance their teaching abilities (Acharja et al., 2021). Let's examine a reference from The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) in relation to the Bangladeshi scenario. It claims that since children learn through play, intentional teaching requires educators to intentionally create play-based learning environments. As a result, teachers should consciously create and produce challenging, dynamic, and play-based learning opportunities (2010). Early childhood education and development in Bangladesh has been acknowledged and strengthened because of the Pre-Primary Operational Framework (2008), the National Education Policy (2010), the

National Children Policy (2011), and—most importantly—the Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy (2013) (Rashid & Jahan, 2021).

Apart from the public sector the private sector of Bangladesh has been a precursor in the field of play based teaching and learning. In the field of informal and non-formal education, NGOs are fairly active and the NGOs run a range of educational initiatives among them are Basic Education, Continuing Education, and Early Childhood Development & Education (Alam, 2014). Non-government organizations such as BRAC has been a pioneer in implementing play based teaching and learning. One of the biggest nongovernmental organizations in the world, BRAC, has been implementing its Play Lab model—an early childhood program that employs a play-based curriculum—in Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Uganda since 2015 (Mariam et al., 2021). BRAC wants to become a global leader in early childhood development (ECD), especially in play-based early learning programs, and to reach children and families with high-quality play-based learning (BRAC’s Global ECD Strategy, n.d.). Apart from BRAC there are many national and international NGOs that provide informal education and collaborate with government to uplift the education sector in Bangladesh. Along with initiatives on nutrition and maternal and child health, several international voluntary organizations, including ACTION AID, CARE, CONCERN international, Save the Children-UK, Save the Children-Sweden, Save the Children-USA, World View, and World Vision international, made specific advancements in child education (Alam, 2014). However it is important to note that the NGOs working for the betterment of children’s early education is primarily focused on the betterment of the underprivileged children and the research that are done on these initiatives do not reflect the play based teaching learning scenario of the entire education system. The focus of my research is on the experience of the teachers who are employed in the Dhaka based English medium schools that are following the play based teaching and learning approach. Unfortunately, the existing literature portraying the scenario

of education in Bangladesh has little to no reliable facts and findings in this section of the education landscape of Bangladesh. A statistical survey report by Bangladesh Ministry of Education states that there are 137 English Medium schools in Bangladesh and most of them are located in Dhaka and the survey's inability to collect data from English-medium schools is one of its limitations (Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2022). In my opinion, Since the English medium schools mostly follow curriculum and examination system of other countries than Bangladeshi education policy, there is a gap between the government and these private English medium schools that are active in Bangladesh from a long time. Among these schools that are following play based teaching and learning can offer a scope of collaboration between public and private schools that can help both by exchanging of their views and experience in implementing play-pedagogy. As it is already mentioned that play based teaching-learning is a western concept in Bangladesh and teachers' as well as parents' opinions, views etc. matter a lot in the successful implementation of this approach, the experience of the teachers of English medium schools can open a new window of knowledge and information exchange that will help better implementation of this newly introduced education system to its full potential. Though collaboration between government and NGOs are present still it is important to note that the government initiatives are not adequate and lack of research initiatives to collect information of the diverse education arena such as Bangladesh is a reason to the impediments of success of the play-based learning in Bangladesh.

Chapter III: Methodology

In this chapter the methods implemented to carry out the research has been described in detail. In the upcoming sections of this chapter, first the Research approach and Design has been described and afterwards Research Site, Research Participants, Participants Selection Procedure, Data Collection Tool, Data Collection Method and Procedure, Data Management and Analysis, Validity & Reliability, Ethical Issues and Limitations of the Study etc. has been described in detail.

Research Approach and Design

In this research qualitative approach has been opted. A definition of qualitative research would be an approach to the study of human behavior that is based on the interpretation of the meaning of these behaviors from the participants' perspective, within their social context, through the analysis of narrative data (Cobb & Forbes, 2002). Since my research topic is an investigation of the experience of the teachers implementing play-based teaching in an urban context where pedagogy play is relatively a new phenomenon, a qualitative approach is the appropriate approach for me to select. My field of inquiry is the educational sector and I want to observe and understand how educators operate and perceive in their field of practice. As an educationist, I have my own experience in the educational arena and based on my experience I came to know about the different approaches of teaching and learning. My aim of the study is to find out how other practitioners of this field are navigating through their journey and how their experiences can reflect upon the pedagogical approaches. In a qualitative approach, sufficient information must be provided so that the reader can appropriately assess the research (Caelli et al., 2003). Application of the in-depth interviews and observation of class in authentic settings have enabled me to investigate the experience of teachers and teaching circumstances in an unbiased manner and from teachers' point of view.

Research Participants

In this study, the participants are the teachers of different English medium schools having minimum experience of 5 years. The teachers are from the elementary sections of English medium schools in Dhaka city who have been dealing with children of 3 to 5 years of age in a play-based curriculum. A total of 10 teachers were selected who have the experience of teaching in both traditional and play-based method.

Research Site

The study has been carried out in three elementary/pre-primary/junior sections of schools of Dhaka city that have already employed or in the process of employing the play-based approach of teaching and learning. Based on the availability of institutes implementing play pedagogy, schools have been selected. The English language is the medium of instruction in these schools.

Participants Selection Procedure

For this study, purposive sampling has been opted for which is conjoint with qualitative research. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, depends on the researcher's judgment when choosing the people, situations, or events that can supply the most information to meet the study's goals (Nikolopoulou, 2022). For my research, I have employed a small sample size of 10 teachers for in-depth interviews, and among them, 8 class sessions of 8 teachers have been observed. Teachers having master's or bachelor's degrees and having experience teaching in both traditional and play-based methods of teaching for the last five years have been selected to capture a wide range of opinions, taking into account the experiences and challenges that each teacher confronts in implementing play-based learning in classroom settings. Since my target is to understand their teaching experience in the transitional phase from traditional to play-based teaching I have only selected teachers who have

experience of both the approaches so that I can collect their comparative and contrastive opinions on the teaching learning approaches.

Data Collection Method and Procedure

For my research I have opted for In-depth Interview and Class observation. In- depth interview and classroom observation both capture the experiences and the challenges that teachers go through in an unbiased manner. This study recognized the challenges of play-based learning in classroom settings and from the teachers' (informants') perspective through a combination of observation and interview methods.

In-depth interviews: An effective interview guide has been created in order to start collecting data. This guide includes various open-ended questions to help you learn more about the teacher's experiences, emotions, observations, and opinions regarding play-based learning. In order to maintain ethical standards, informed consent was acquired before to the interview. All participants have been fully informed about the purpose of the study, the interviewing procedure, and the potential applications of their responses. For the convenience of the participants, both offline and online communication has been implemented. This indicates that the interview session was conducted via Google Meet in cases where a face-to-face meeting was not feasible. Before the interview begins, participants will receive the Google Meet link via email, Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, and other channels at their convenience. A great deal of care was taken to record the core of the participants' reactions, expressions, and sentiments during the in-depth interviews. It is true that important details, memorable phrases, and illustrative observations are accurately recorded as people speak. The researcher has created a questionnaire that will elicit answers to questions about demographics like age, gender, years of experience, and educational background. It will also elicit answers to more in-

depth questions that require participants to elaborate on their motivation, emotions, observations, challenges, and perception of the subject.

Class Observation: Apart from interviews, 8 sessions of 8 teachers have been observed while sessions go on in the classroom. Based on a checklist, the researcher has observe the teaching procedure of the teachers, the overall class management and interaction of the teacher with her learners, and the effect of the physical environment of the classroom in implementing play-based teaching and learning. The observer in this observation stayed non-participant which means the observer had not participate in any of the class activities nor had communicated with anyone who had been observed. By staying completely detached from the participants observer has been better able to observe more closely.

Data Management and Analysis

Data management and analysis have been done through content analysis technique following the below-mentioned step-by-step procedure:

- **Data organization and transcription:** It is necessary to carefully arrange and transcribe the data utilizing field notes and recordings. All of the spoken words that were captured have first been turned into written text in order to provide an accurate written record, or transcript. Several comprehensive screenings have been carried out. After that, Microsoft Office was used to type down the transcriptions and compile them into a single file.
- **Familiarization of the data:** Thoroughly comprehend the intricacies and themes inherent in the responses, this entailed reading and rereading the transcripts.
- **Initial Coding:** After getting to know the data, the coding process began. Text segments that methodically encapsulate relevant thoughts, ideas, and recurring patterns were given illustrative names or codes.

- Identification and Development of Themes: Following the completion of the initial processing and analysis of the raw data, themes relevant to the objective and research question were developed. The broader concepts and conclusions derived from the participant tales were reflected in these topics.

Validity & Reliability

To ensure its authenticity, the supervisor and other Academic Group members went over the IDI standards and the Class observation checklist. Unique, thorough, and trustworthy data records were maintained in order to guarantee the validity of the study. In order to facilitate integration, comparable questions were posed to respondents in a variety of ways using IDI and class observation. In order to guarantee precision, comprehensive field notes containing documented data were gathered and swiftly transcribed.

Ethical Issues

Every participant in this research project has had their rights, dignity, and autonomy respected; coercion or arbitrary authority has not been used. Everybody who took part did so voluntarily. Informed consent has been acquired before to the start of the interviews. Throughout the study, no harm has been done in terms of social, legal, psychological, or physical aspects. Without coercion or inappropriate enticement, participants were provided with clear and accurate information on the objectives, anonymization, method, and storage of the data. Every participant was free to withdraw their responses at any point in order to opt out of the study. Participants received assurances that all of the personal information they provided would be kept private and that nothing would be disclosed to other parties. This study, which has only used human volunteers, has been evaluated and approved by BRAC University. This proposal has not been submitted to any other educational establishment to receive credit.

Limitations of the Study

The classroom observation in schools and interview of teachers were scheduled to be conducted from beginning of the month of November but due to political unrest situation in the country, the initiation of the classroom observation was delayed and as schools were shifted in to online mode chances for observation of classrooms in person got reduced. In this type of circumstances no more than three schools were observed and the prior testing of the in-depth interview questionnaire could not be done due to time constraints. The research tools included in-depth interview and class observation and the research tools were meant to be tried out before the beginning of the actual research but because of the above mentioned situation the research tools could not be tested out.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings & Discussion

The findings and discussions have been organized in four main sections based on the themes, generated according to the data collected from classroom observation and interview. In the upcoming segments first the research findings and then a discussion has been presented respectively.

Results/Findings

The result/findings of this study are all derived from the data collected by in-depth interviews of teachers and class observations done on various English medium schools located in the area of Uttara model town of Dhaka city. The study aims to find out the experience of the teachers who have the experience of teaching in both traditional and play based pedagogy and how they are coping with the challenges of the newly implemented play pedagogy system of teaching. As research site three English medium schools were selected to observe classes and ten teachers were selected from these and other schools to interview. The interviews and class observations were conducted within 14 working days starting from end of November to middle of December. The three schools were selected keeping in mind that all of those schools have implemented or in the process of implementing play pedagogy in their junior section.

10 teachers in total were interviewed from the observed as well as from other schools. 8 class sessions from Playgroup and Nursery classes from those 3 schools were observed. The interviews were recorded and observation notes were written in hand and later transcribed and themes were generated from the collected data.

Themes, Patterns and categories were identified by examining interview questionnaire, and observation notes. Following are the key themes derived from the reviewed data.

1. Traditional vs. Play-pedagogy

2. Classroom experience, planning and execution of lessons in play-pedagogy
3. Institutional arrangement & support for teachers
4. Children's performance and development

Theme 1: Traditional Vs. Play-pedagogy

This theme talks about the first research question 'What are teachers' experiences in implementing play-based pedagogy with learners aged 3 to 5 years old?' where the understanding of teachers about play pedagogy has been examined through a comparison of traditional and play based learning. This theme has been segmented into three segments such as: 1.1. Teachers' view on traditional way of teaching, 1.2. Teachers' view on play pedagogy, 1.3. The method that, in their experience, is more fruitful in teaching and learning process. Let us look at what views teachers have shared on this theme.

1.1 Teachers' view on traditional way of teaching

Most of the teachers viewed traditional way of teaching and learning as archaic, and teachers have less scope to stay up to date in traditional pedagogy. In their view traditional way of teaching encourages rote learning and memorization in a monotonous way. Majority of the teachers identified that in traditional method, learners remain as a receiver of ideas and concepts and has less opportunity to try those concepts out. One teacher mentioned that in traditional method concepts are delivered through lectures and meager usage of visuals, real-life objects and hands-on materials make it difficult for teachers to convey the concepts in a fruitful and enjoyable way down to learners. In her words, "it is easier, from a teacher's side, to present a toy of a cow/horse to deliver the concept of four footed animals than to just verbally introduce them the concept because children in this age learn more easily by watching and touching things" (IDI# 1, December, 2023).

1.2 Teacher's View on play pedagogy

Majority of the teachers shared positive outlook about the play- based teaching and learning. According to them children of this young age are more into fun filled physical activities and enjoyment and as play-pedagogy enables teachers to let learners learn through enjoyable activities, learners enjoy a lot and learning occurs automatically. A significant number of teachers share that young children are better managed in a play-based learning environment because it is difficult for children of this age to stay seated quietly in one place. As play- based teaching enables teachers to let learners move, interact with peers and teachers, manipulate objects with their own hands, it is easier to keep them engaged in play based learning environment as opposed to traditional teaching and learning environment. According to a teacher,

“When students hear teacher singing the number song or alphabet song, children participate in the song/rhyme session and by this they enjoy singing the song not knowing that they are also picking up the names of the letters and numbers, whereas making them read from the number or alphabet book is monotonous and children get distracted quickly” (IDI# 2, December, 2023).

Few teachers though praised the play-based learning mostly, came up with one drawback of the play-based teaching and that is in Bangla class the alphabets are not taught following the letter sequence and children learn the sequence of the letters lot later in play-based curriculum than traditional curriculum. One teacher who has extensive experience of both the traditional and play based method noted “my learners of play based curriculum learn to identify ‘bo’ before ‘ko’ whereas in traditional teaching due to heavy emphasis on memorization children learn letters always in sequence” (IDI# 4, December, 2024).

1.3. The method that, in their experience, is more fruitful in teaching and learning process

In case of effectiveness of the method, majority of the teachers opted for the play based method as highly effective and almost all the teachers pointed out that play-based method makes children more apt in verbal communication and social- emotional skills. In their opinion, traditional way of teaching is focused more in developing the receptive skills but productive skills remain out of focus, whereas in play-based approach learners create their own projects in groups, they present their projects in front of the class and these types of activities enhance learners' confidence, eloquence and group dynamicity. According to one teacher, who herself a parent also, shared,

“Nowadays students don't like to listen to the teacher passively or to see visuals only, because they watch and listen a lot through tabs and mobiles. In school they like to engage in role playing, presentation, experimenting etc. and then they really pay attention and becomes curious about the concepts” (IDI# 6, December,2024).

Theme 2: Classroom experience, planning and execution of lessons in play-pedagogy

This second theme focuses upon the first and second research questions. Reflecting from the in-depth interviews and class observation notes, what does a teacher go through while activity planning, resource planning, assessment planning and taking a class that follows the play-based curriculum, has been presented in two segments below.

2.1. Classroom experience: Most of the observed class sessions portray that the teachers were well prepared for their class only except a few sessions, where teacher could have been more resourceful and could have taken more prior preparation to conduct the session. Among the observed class sessions some classes were conducted by only one teacher and some classes were conducted by two teachers. Normally if the class size is big then assist teachers are a must but the observations revealed that in some classes where there are less learners, even though the class had few learners still the assist teacher was busy enough because of the highly hyper

little ones. In most of the observed class sessions teachers were found to be engaging with learners lively and enthusiastically. A few class sessions had less engaging teachers where the session was mostly conducted by the class teacher and assist teacher was found to be a bit passively organizing learners. Teachers in majority of the class sessions were well-prepared beforehand with all the materials required for carrying out the activity tasks. Most of the classes displayed that the materials needed to execute the activities are handy and teachers prepared ample amount of materials for each and every child to handle. A few sessions though displayed a lack of coordination. In one observed session “teacher had to go outside of the class and had to call support staff to bring the materials which eventually delayed the class activities” (Observation note #2, 28.11.2023). Most of the observed classes had their classrooms decorated with craft works done by the learners and teachers shared that previously in traditional approach teachers had to decorate the display board of the class by creating craft works by themselves! As one teacher revealed,

“In the play based approach works of each and every learner are highlighted on the display board and learners take pride by looking at their own craft works thus enjoy a sense of achievement. In traditional method teachers used to be fussy about the quality of the works created by learners and only a few works of high achievers were presented on the display board and thus created unwanted competition among young learners” (IDI# 9, 20.12.2023).

2.2. Experience of planning and execution of lessons: Most of the teachers agreed upon the fact that lesson planning in play based method is time consuming and requires a lot of research. In the planning phase teaches need constant guiding of the supervisors. Almost all the teachers admitted that their supervisors are helpful and they provide necessary support to teachers while planning the lessons. Majority of the teachers shared that they take help from the internet

sources and different websites like Pinterest, Twinkle etc. are frequently visited websites for them. One teacher shared her experience of making lesson plans and said,

“Previously I was not that apt in internet searching since in traditional method lesson plans were pretty simple but in this play based method a lot of activities have to be generated in the lesson plans and for that I have to take the help of internet all the time” (IDI# 9, December, 2023).

About the execution of the created plans, most of the teachers shared that so far their experience is positive. The plans are created by keeping the need and level of the learners in mind. Still sometimes unexpected issues arise and in such cases teachers keep the back up plans ready. One teacher shared, “Time is most of the time an issue for the execution of a plan. As not all learners have the same capacity, sometimes completing activities in the stipulated time becomes a challenge for me” (IDI# 10, December, 2023). Some teachers reported that some flexibility is kept in the planning phase so that teachers can manage if any errors in lesson plans be there.

Theme 3: Institutional arrangement & support for teachers

This theme refers to the research question ‘What are the factors that challenge teachers to implement quality play pedagogy in the classroom to ensure holistic development of learners?’ After analyzing the observation reports of different class sessions from different schools and also by analyzing the feedback provided by the teachers in in-depth interview, below mentioned factors have been identified.

3.1. Space: The class observation notes portray that the space of most of the classrooms are satisfactory considering the number of students enrolled in each class. In play based approach as children need to move and do their activity classrooms are required to be spacious enough for children to move easily. A few classrooms in a few schools were found to be not spacious

enough regarding their class size. Overall decoration of the classroom space was up to the mark for most of the classrooms though a few classrooms lack the proper setup of a play-based learning environment. Most of the classrooms relied on artificial lighting, only a few had the sun light coming into the classroom. All the classrooms had low chairs and tables as the seating arrangement for the young learners. In the story corner mats and carpeting was common in almost all the classrooms except a few. Most of the classrooms had white boards and several classrooms had arrangements of both white board and black chalk board. In some classrooms low shelves and open cubbies were available but some classrooms lack open low height shelves and cubbies for children to reach the play materials on their own. In some classrooms the height of the boards were not in proportion of the young learners. One teacher mentioned that “it has been notified to the management of the school and arrangement is underway (Observation note# 2, 28.11.2023). One teacher addresses, “Outdoor facilities are not enough in the school and some activities need access to open air space which is not available” (IDI# 10, 20 December, 2023). Some teachers mentioned classroom setups were initially implemented properly but as these are rental buildings, when the school had to shift building the initial setup was hampered and teachers have to cope-up with that. One teacher who encountered such issues stated, “Previously we had four centers for four different skills but now I have to accommodate the Discovery center in the Art and craft center for which I had to move the furniture very often causing discomfort for both learners and teachers” (IDI# 5, December, 2023).

3.2. Materials: Most of the class sessions were well arranged with required materials except a few. Materials included soft toys, play dough, small plastic toys, 3D letter and number shapes, crayons, wooden color pencils, wooden pencils for writing, erases, copies, books worksheets etc. (Observation note# 7, 12.12.2023). All the classrooms had blocks for learners to play in their free play time. In one classroom no blocks or play materials were visible and later it was

clarified to the class observer that toys and blocks are there but these are kept away from the reach of children because while the oral class activities are going on children get easily distracted by the sight of the toys and instead of doing the oral activities they demand to play with those toys and that is why toys are kept aside. Most of the classrooms that had low height shelves and open cubbies had toys and stationary items in them but some classrooms had only closed door tall shelves and teachers were seen to take out the necessary items needed to carry on the task activities. In these classrooms children were restricted to touch the toys and there were no option for children to have access of different toy items except some plastic blocks. Most of the teachers in the interview sessions responded that they are satisfied with the materials provided by the institution to carry out the tasks. Few teachers said that the quality of the toys should be upgraded by the institution because the children of their institution comes from a high standard families and there are more provisions for the materials to upgrade and polish up. One teacher shared,

“I am satisfied by the provided materials. These are according to the lesson plans and upon requisition the institute provides all necessary items that teachers ask for but the only issue is Time. Most of the time it takes time to deliver the materials and when required materials don't reach on time then we have to substitute with whatever is available” (IDI# 8, December, 2023).

Another teacher shared “The school need to increase the budget as good quality toys and stationaries are expensive” (IDI# 6, December, 2023).

3.3. Training: Most of the teachers were aware of the benefits of training and shared that their institute train them enough. Almost all the teachers said that they attend yearly, quarterly and monthly training sessions. Teachers shared that these trainings make them knowledgeable and up-to-date about new teaching techniques and developments in the field of pedagogy. One

teacher shared, “Training sessions conducted by the fellow teachers make us exchange our knowledge and expertise and these types of trainings are more helpful” (IDI# 3, December, 2023). Some teacher pointed out the fact that since the new curriculum allows special children as part of regular schooling unlike the traditional method, there is more scope of training on how to handle such kids. A good amount of teachers admitted that apart from regular training, teacher themselves also has to be curious and have to search the online sources to stay up-to-date and to gather new ideas and information about pedagogy because in play based teaching, teachers are required to work hard and work smart.

Theme 4: Children’s performance and development

The theme focuses upon the first research question and all the teachers admitted that in play based method learners’ overall performance and development rate is higher than the traditional method. Based on the responses of the participants it can be said that play based learning improves the condition of the holistic development of the learners as opposed to the traditional method that focuses more on conceptual knowledge.

Majority of the of the teachers gave their opinion in favor of the play pedagogy and said that in this approach children get the opportunity to perform and develop in diversified manner. A significant amount of teachers reported that assessment of play based method is different than the traditional method and play based method assesses the ability/ skills of individual learners based on their aptitudes. In view of teachers, play-based pedagogy flourishes the development of all the faculties of a child from socio-emotional to physical, conceptual and practical skills of children. One teacher shared, “In traditional method the performance of individual learner mattered most but in play based method group performance is emphasized thus the social skills of learners are developed and children learn how to operate in different social settings from the very beginning of their life” (IDI# 6, December, 2023).

Another teacher mentioned, “In play based learning environment children are not stressed like traditional method and school is a fun place for them in play based learning for which children easily go through the ice-breaking phase when they first start school” (IDI# 9, December 2023).

Discussion

The research was conducted to explore the experience of the teachers who are teaching in different English medium schools that have already implemented play-based learning or are in the process of changing their curriculum from traditional method to play based method and three schools were selected for classroom observation with one school having the play based curriculum implemented for ten years, another school that have implemented the play based curriculum for 5 years and another school that just started implementing and have their Playgroup section launched their first year in play-based method. All the teachers who have been interviewed were selected carefully keeping in knowledge that they all have experience of teaching in both traditional and play-based method. To understand their experience teachers were observed while taking classes, as well as interviewed in their convenient time to gather responses based on the questionnaire. After analyzing the data gathered through the classroom observations and in-depth interviews, 4 themes were generated keeping a focus on the two research questions and the findings have been presented on the previous section based on those themes. Based on the same themes a discussion has been presented in the following segments to delve deep into the understanding of the findings, what trends the results reveal and what these findings signify in context of Bangladesh.

Theme 1: Traditional Vs. Play-pedagogy

The results indicate that teachers have well received the play-based pedagogy and their perception of this teaching method is also positive. They acknowledged that in play based

teaching and learning learners learn through enjoyment and learning through enjoyments enable learners acquire concepts better. The results also show that teachers are well aware of the shortcomings of the traditional method and the reason why traditional method has been replaced by the play based method. Apart from some benefits of traditional method and some drawbacks of play based method, overall opinion of the teachers are positive and they support the implementation of the play based method in the pedagogical system. The findings of the class observation notes also reveal the fact that the pedagogical systems of the schools where play pedagogy has been implemented newly, though they have many areas and scopes to develop further comparing to the schools who have already working in play based curriculum for 5 to 10 years, are showing signs of up gradation of their school from both structural and pedagogical perspectives. The research findings of Bhatta et al, on Bangladeshi preprimary context presents that outcome of the cultural belief held by the majority of parents and educators that the goal of education in general, including preschool, should be the development of a child's academic skills (2020) can be contrasted by the findings of this research where it presents that teachers understood well that in new curriculum a child's holistic development is assessed comparing to the practice of traditional approach where only academic skills were the target of development.

Some, if not many, research reports focusing on the pre-primary level government teachers of Bangladesh displays that play-pedagogy was widely acknowledged to be beneficial, but not everyone actively engaged in play pedagogy (Bassett et al, 2022). According to Mardel et al, educators who encourage playful learning take the lead in their own instruction and they intentionally navigate the conflicts that arise between play and learning, giving their pupils explicit objectives and justifications for using play (2023). According to the findings of this paper, if not all, there are many teachers who are self-motivated and they are conscious about the positive outcomes of play and their experience of teaching in both the traditional and play

based approach made them compare and contrast the positives and negatives of both the approaches and in the process preferred the play-pedagogy most.

Theme 2: Classroom experience, planning and execution of lessons in play-pedagogy

The findings portrayed in the second theme reveals that teachers' responsibility to run a class successfully in play-based approach of teaching and learning is immense. A well-trained, well-prepared teacher is integral for a successful class environment and the results of the research shows that most of the teachers, if not all, are well- aware of the fact. Time management and favorable work load make a teacher prepare herself/himself well for carrying out the responsibilities of classroom. Play based curriculum is highly activity based and that is why a good teacher-learners ratio is favorable for better management of class. In the context of Bangladesh the scenario is quite disappointing and according to Rashid & Jahan, the number of students in the urban classes ranged from thirty to over one hundred, making them very staggering (2021). A highly crowded classroom with less teacher is never the desired picture of a play-based classroom. Rather if the class size is comfortable enough for teachers then both teacher and learners are in a healthy environment to work and grow. As play based approach encourages learners to be engaged with a lots of hands on activities it is important for teachers to know how to cater to every single child and schools that train their teachers with regular intervals produce class sessions with improved quality.

Parents decide to send their children to nursery or kindergarten (private) schools instead of government preschools, which have less play facilities, taking into account the teacher-student ratio(Alam, 2022). In case of student teacher ratio the picture is extremely discouraging. In pre-primary education, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) sets a global guideline of 20 students per teacher; however, in Bangladesh, government pre-primary classes are run by a single teacher (30:1 is the current official target set by Bangladesh government) and

teachers have a difficult time giving the children high-quality early childhood education because of the vast class sizes and lack of extra support (Bhatta et al., 2020). In early childhood education (ECE), the global standard is 10:1, or one teacher for every ten pupils but in Bangladesh, an ECE institution's student body often consists of more than 40 (Alam, 2022). The nature of the pre-primary teacher training in public schools is also not up to the mark and pre-primary teachers were not well prepared by the Pre-Primary Education training program to detect, report, and monitor children's developmental results, or to effectively teach the curriculum, particularly the play-based approach (Bassett et al., 2022).

Planning and execution is a key factor in the experience of teachers of play based approach. The results signify that planning and execution of lessons in play pedagogy is much different than traditional method of planning and more detail oriented planning needs teacher to research more while creating the plans. A proper planning makes half of the successful execution in the class but though everything feels good in pen and paper, execution of the created plans need further testing and revision for which a helpful guide or supervisor is crucial for teachers to be successful. As play based approach is a widely researched and executed teaching-learning approach in the west most of the teaching materials that are available in the internet are based on the western culture. Teachers of our country rely heavily on the internet to access these materials and they have to adjust their activity ideas and plans according to Bangladeshi classroom context and facilities.

As it is already mentioned, planning and execution of lessons are successful when teachers are well trained and supervised by experienced and expert guides or supervisors, the situation of the pre-primary teachers of Bangladesh, in case of training and supervision, is not satisfactory at all. As a matter of fact, teachers' training for pre-primary teachers is highly centralized and there is no school based training facilities, teacher has to travel to the district level teacher training centers for his/her training and these training centers also lack experienced

professional trainers in play-based approach (Bassett et al., 2022). The developed nations like Japan prioritizes teacher education and training heavily. According to Md Jahangir Alam, teachers in Japan are required to complete two years of in-service training and associate degrees in early childhood education and ECE college programs in Japan recommend two different types of degrees for instructors: working in daycare centers is a primary issue, and working in preschool programs for kids ages three to five is the second (2022).

Theme 3: Institutional arrangement & support for teachers

The results present that the classes of the 3 schools that have been observed and the 10 teachers who have been interviewed from different schools all agreed that their institutes try to furnish and provide them with necessary supports as much as possible. Though irregularities in some aspects are there but more or less the atmosphere in these private schools that try to maintain a certain standard are aware of the necessity of proper space, material and training for their teachers. The findings clarify the fact that these private schools that do not have any permanent campus of their own sometimes face trouble to provide proper indoor and outdoor facilities to their students but in case of materials and trainings of their teachers the institutes are concerned enough. It is noteworthy that the private schools demand high tuition fees from their students as maintaining proper play-based learning environment is expensive. It is also significant to note that constant observation from school management also required to train their teachers of better usage of play-based classroom materials and it is also important to use materials that are culture specific and environment friendly.

There are not enough qualified and experienced teachers to provide play-based learning, an essential part of this educational opportunity (Alam, 2022). In the context of the public schools of Bangladesh, maintaining a play-based approach requires much precision as ours is a developing country and government budget allocation in education sector is still not

satisfactory. BRAC play labs, in this case, can be a praise worthy example for Bangladesh government to look up to. BRAC and other NGOs are better equipped with teaching –learning, play materials and customized early childhood learning curricula, emphasizing play and happy learning with an emphasis on child development outcomes rather than academic outcomes (Bhatta et al., 2020).

Theme 4: Children’s performance and development

The best part of the play pedagogy is that it let the children enjoy their childhood while in school and the traditional image of a teacher with a cane on hand has been replaced by the image of a teacher with a play material in his/her hand as a playmate of the children. It is evident from the results that children’s performance in play based learning is more improved and holistic in nature comparing to the traditional method and teachers need additional expertise to assess children learning in play-pedagogy. The concept of play in ECE is seen by the National Curriculum Standards for Kindergarten (NCSK), an organization of the Japanese government, as the cornerstone of life and according to the NCSK, children can acquire a variety of skills through play-based learning, including mental, emotional, physical, communication, and linguistic abilities (Alam, 2022). A significant trait of the play-pedagogy is that it emphasis enjoyment over academic achievement and overall development over knowledge gathering. Teachers are positive and well convinced about the wholesome outcome of this approach on children and they perceive this method as the right method for the twenty-first century education which will prepare children as balanced citizens of the society. However, comparing to the perception of the teachers of the private schools, the perception of the teachers of majority of the public schools are more archaic; teachers and head teachers present a conventional view of pre-primary education as offering children a foundational education rather than a chance for full growth in the formative years (Bassett et al., 2022). Therefore, more motivational training and awareness building on the advocacy of play

pedagogy can make a difference and a collaboration of public and private schools can set the stage to exchange skills and experience among teachers of both sectors.

Conclusion

Play based teaching and learning is gaining momentum in the educational sector of Bangladesh and comparing to the public sector, private sector has more experience in implementing play-pedagogy in their curriculum though there are less published research on private schools implementing play-pedagogy. In Bangladesh, English medium private schools have incorporated this play based teaching and learning from quite some time and this research has tried to present the experience and opinions of the teachers of the private English medium schools on play based teaching and learning. It is evident from the study that this method of teaching and learning is undoubtedly popular among teachers and proper training and support can yield good result in the implementation process of this new approach. As the government of Bangladesh is implementing the play-based pedagogy in public pre-primary schools in recent years, the insights and experiences of teachers of the private schools can assist government to understand and implement this new approach. As the experience of the English medium schools is a less ventured topic, more research is required to be done in this field and this research paper is a small-scale initiative towards that.

Recommendations

The study was designed to portray the experience and challenges of the teachers of the private English medium schools those who have the experience of teaching in both traditional and play based approach and in implementing the new approach how they have perceived this new approach. Based on the results and discussions above some recommendations have been suggested for the advancement of the play-based approach in Bangladesh:

- Teachers' training should be increased to aid teachers to cope up with the implementation process.
- Training sessions should include skill development of teachers to understand the need of this approach well.
- Before implementing play based approach proper research should be done to adjust the play based curriculum according to the socio-cultural and economic conditions of Bangladesh.
- Policy makers should venture on the existing private, non-governmental organizations to have insights from their experiences.
- A public- private partnership should be sought for so that exchange of experience and skills become smooth among teachers and trainers of both sectors.
- Government should increase fund for more research initiatives on this field.

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Appendices

Appendix A. In-Depth Interview Guideline for Teacher

- 1) Do you have experience of teaching with play pedagogy as well as traditional teaching?
- 2) Do you feel play pedagogy or learning through play is different than other traditional ways of learning? If yes how is it different?
- 3) Which one do you perceive as more helpful for children and why?
- 4) Do you find it more teachers' friendly? If yes/no then why?
- 5) In your experience how would you judge the classroom space that has been provided by the institution for executing the play-based lessons?
- 6) How would you evaluate the materials that are provided by the institution to carry out the play-based activities?
- 7) Have you been successful in implementing your lesson plans in your class?
- 8) Tell us about your experience while planning a lesson plan for your class.
- 9) How have you responded to or overcome the challenges while executing lesson plans in the classroom?
- 10) How helpful is the institution in the implementation of play pedagogy in your experience?
- 11) What do you suggest that could make the implementation more teacher-friendly?
- 12) Tell us about the responses of your learners while taking part in play-based activities in class.
- 13) Do you feel like you are getting enough training on implementing this new way of teaching?

Appendix B. Class Observation Guideline/Checklist

- Class Observed:
 - Teacher Assigned:
 - Conducted on Date:
 - Observed by:
-
- Structural environment and decoration of the class:

 - Materials used for executing lessons/ Play materials:

 - Class size and age appropriateness:

 - Teacher's preparation:

 - Teacher's conduct and responses with learners:

 - Learners' responsiveness:

Appendix C. In-Depth Interview Transcript

- 1) Do you have experience of teaching with play pedagogy as well as traditional teaching?

Ans: Yes. I have been teaching for 10 years and in traditional method I taught for 6 years and in play-based curriculum I have experience of 4 years of teaching.

- 2) Do you feel play pedagogy or learning through play is different than other traditional ways of learning? If yes how is it different?

Ans: Yes these two methods are different in so many ways. In traditional method students need to memorize a lot. But in Play pedagogy learners do more hands on activities. Traditional method of teaching and learning is monotonous whereas in play based method learners can move and play and through different activities they learn implicitly through enjoyment.

- 3) Which one do you perceive as more helpful for children and why?

Ans: In my opinion play based method is more helpful because it not only focuses on academic concepts development but also focuses on the social, emotional development of children.

- 4) Do you find it more teachers' friendly? If yes/no then why?

Ans: yes I found Play pedagogy as more teacher's friendly because learners stay more engaged in play based method and teachers can help them more through becoming a part of them.

- 5) In your experience how would you judge the classroom space that has been provided by the institution for executing the play-based lessons?

Ans: yes the classroom space was good enough for the class to take and learners are able to move and get whatever they want by themselves. Though for changing the building nowadays our class space has shrunk a little still its ok. Before we had more space and had separate rooms for all the centers but now we have to convert the discovery enter into math center according to the routine because there is no extra room for individual centers.

- 6) How would you evaluate the materials that are provided by the institution to carry out the play-based activities?

Ans yes, the materials provided are good and children enjoy a lot while working with those. Though school can go for improving the quality because these children are coming from an affluent background so they demand more polished toys. Stationary items ok. Based on the topic we have to arrange items for different activities and then sometimes we need toys that are not may be in the store and upon prior requisition the school vendor provide it to us.

- 7) Have you been successful in implementing your lesson plans in your class?

Ans: Yes so far. Sometimes though I get trouble but mostly yes.

- 8) Tell us about your experience while planning a lesson plan for your class.

Ans: In traditional method planning was not detail but in play based we have to be very resourceful. We have to research a lot while creating these plans and while arranging resources according to the written plan if any items are not available then we have to

replace it with an available one and that might not always up to the standard of the resources mentioned in the written plan.

9) How have you responded to or overcome the challenges while executing lesson plans in the classroom?

Ans: by keeping some extra time allotted I try to be ready with my preparation. In traditional method planning was not detail but in play based we have to be very resourceful. We have to research a lot while creating these plans and while arranging resources according to the written plan if any items are not available in school we have to replace with whatever available in school and for that reason some times the implementation of the plan might not be exactly the way it in in pen and paper.

10) How helpful is the institution in the implementation of play pedagogy in your experience?

Ans: yes they are helpful and keep us up-to-date through trainings and provide us with necessary materials. We have training going on throughout the year.

11) What do you suggest that could make the implementation more teacher-friendly?

Ans: timely supply of resources and extra teachers as helping hand to prepare resources.

12) Tell us about the responses of your learners while taking part in play-based activities in class.

Ans: They are very enthusiastic and enjoy a lot. They stay focused and interact a lot with teachers and friends. They are interested to show their creativity and since teacher do not interfere in their activity learners can pour out their imagination to their ideas. As a facilitator I only observe if they are keeping it to the structure of their age level or not.

13) Do you feel like you are getting enough training on implementing this new way of teaching?

Ans: Yes I get enough training and in every month we are trained. Also yearly trainings are there too. We have training in quarterly basis as well. Apart from that, while making plans our supervisors help us in many research works which also help us in planning as well as in execution phase. Teachers in my school also help me and teachers are also training other teachers in the process. And it is really helpful

Appendix D. Class Observation Transcript

- Class Observed: PG
 - Teacher Assigned: 2
 - Conducted on Date: 8.12.23
 - Observed by: Zinnia Zerrin
- Structural environment and decoration of the class: Spacious, with artificial lighting. Class room was well decorated with child friendly furniture. Though in some classes the height of the whiteboard was not up to the level of the students. Walls were painted with vibrant colors. The walls were showing charts and hangings related to the topic of the class session.
- Materials used for executing lessons/ Play materials: Play materials mostly include blocks, stationary items, and textured materials. Soft toys were there too. Teachers were seen to bring toys according to the need of the lessons. Children were given materials enough in numbers.
- Class size and age appropriateness: Learners were not too many and the children were all of the same age of 3 years of age. Each teachers has 15 students in one class sessions.
- Teacher's preparation: Teachers were prepared well though some were seen to be preparing in front of the class. Teacher were singing songs and it showed that they are well versed in the nursery rhymes.
- Teacher's conduct and responses with learners: Teachers were friendly and went down to the eye level of the students to make them understand the concepts.
- Learners' responsiveness: Learners were all seemed engaged and active during the whole session. Some were crying and teachers tried to calm them down.

Appendix E. Consent Form

Consent Form for Teacher

Title of the Thesis: Teachers' experience in implementing play pedagogy in classroom situations for holistic development of children.

Researcher: Zinnia Zerrin

Purpose of the research

I am conducting this research as a part of my Master's Degree requirement from the Institute of

Educational Development (IED) - BRAC University. This research aims to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and practices regarding learning and holistic development in preschool years.

Expectation from you

If you agree, you will be expected to share your perception, views, and thoughts on pre-primary play-based education. This will include the physical environment, pedagogy, and teaching-learning process of pre-primary classes. The interview may take 60 to 90 minutes, depending on your response.

Risks and benefits

There is no risk to you for participating in this study; directly or indirectly parents, children, and policymakers may be benefited in the future.

Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality

All information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. I would be happy to answer any of your queries about the study and you are welcome to contact me.

Future use of information

Some of the information collected from this study may be kept for future use. However, in such cases, information and data supplied to other researchers, will not conflict with or violate the maintenance of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of information identifying participants in any way.

Right not to participate and withdraw

Your participation in the study is voluntary, and you are the sole authority to decide for and against your participation in this study. Refusal to take part in the study will involve no penalty.

If you agree to my proposal to participate in my study, please indicate that by putting your signature in the specified space below.

Name of the Teacher:

Name of the Researcher:

Signature of the Teacher:

Signature of the Researcher:

Thank you very much for your cooperation. For any further query, you may contact me. My contact no is,01712094631, or you can email me at zerin119.zz@gmail.com