Teachers' Perspectives on Play-Based Learning for Children Aged 4-6 in Early Education

By

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Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing my 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 complete and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all primary sources of help.

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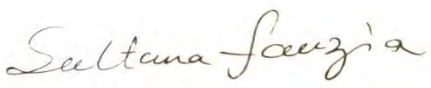

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Approval

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of Spring, 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development in April, 2025.

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Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: Teacher's Perspectives on Play-Based Learning for Children Aged 4-6 in Early Education

Student name: Sultana Fauzia

1. Source of population: English-medium pre-primary teachers

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 (no)
   d) Sensitive questions (no)
   e) Benefits to be derived (no)
   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 (n/a)

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

   a) from study participants (yes)
   b) from parents or guardian (no)
   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:

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Abstract

Play is the cornerstone of preschool and early childhood education; it supports children's physical, language, and social-emotional growth. It is often regarded as the bedrock of academic preparedness, as it fosters curiosity, creativity, and fundamental life skills. This qualitative research explored attitudes toward play-based curricula and early childhood training among English-medium teachers in North Dhaka, Bangladesh. Using data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with altogether twelve teachers, the study found pronounced support for play as a necessary learning mode. Teachers express that effective play requires enough time, good toys, and well-organized environments. Without access to high-quality, pragmatic training, they could only implement these approaches to a degree. The findings highlight the need for policies that emphasize play-based approaches in early childhood education and improve the preparation of teachers. Increasing the quality of teacher training programs and support with curriculum design is essential to enable meaningful learning experiences in these early years.

Keywords: Early childhood education; play-based learning; teacher professional development; child development; school readiness; teacher attitudes.

Dedication

Despite all my difficulties, this thesis is dedicated to my mother, Fauzia Hamid, to pursue my MSc. in ECD.

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List of Acronyms

ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
PLB	Play-based learning
IDI	In-depth Interviews
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ECE	Early Childhood Education

Chapter I: Introduction & Background

Introduction

Play is an instinctual behaviour of children, and learning through play is highly effective at the beginning of their education. Play-based learning is an essential strand of early years education, promoting cognitive, emotional, and social development through a sensory-rich approach. Play is a key component of children's cognitive growth, particularly in the formative years before formal schooling begins (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2018). Teachers play an important role in promoting play-based learning; positive teacher-child relationships create supportive environments that enhance children's motivation and academic success (Pianta, 1999). The period of early childhood is a festival of exploration, and during this time, children move from free explorations to structured forms of educational experiences. Play-based learning is active, physical engagement with the environment and has been shown to support cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skills development (Pyle & Biggs, 2015). Such a model encourages critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity, which are essential to personal and academic development. Children learn better when engaged in play; research has shown that play-engaged children display curiosity and creativity. Ginsburg (2007) states, "Play is not just something children do; it is fundamental to children's development and comprehension of the world around them." This is more than just a teaching method; it is also a building block for children's future success academically and socially.

The decision to pursue this research stemmed from uncovering more about the role of teachers in supporting play-based learning in young children, particularly preschoolers. This is where teachers play a crucial role in facilitating environments through play where children can explore, experiment, and build problem-solving skills. This study focused on

investigating teachers' beliefs (children aged 4-6) regarding play-based learning and how they enact it in reliance on experiential learning. Through the analysis of their meanings, the study seeks to uncover the advantages and limitations of this approach, particularly in areas where play-based learning is limited, miscomprehended, or mischaracterized.

While the existing studies on play-based learning have emphasized the positive side of this approach, few studies explicitly assessing teachers' perceptions from the context of Bangladesh and beyond remain in the literature. This study highlights this gap by providing insights regarding the unique challenges and opportunities for teachers trying to implement this approach to early childhood education in Bangladesh. This demonstrates the belief in early childhood education and the rationale for effective teaching strategies through research. Data from this study will be used to develop stronger teacher training and curriculum, ensuring teachers know how to implement play-based learning successfully. By improving teacher preparedness, the study hopes to advance the quality of early education, which positively impacts a child's development, especially how ready they are to start school. This study recommends integrating play-based learning approaches for young learners aged 4-6 in early childhood education. These practices will help them develop the skills they need to be successful in school and beyond.

Statement of the Problem

At ages 4-6, play-based learning plays a vital role in children's holistic development. This developmental stage is critical when children move from casual, exploratory play to more structured and focused learning experiences. Research has frequently demonstrated that learning through play significantly supports various developmental domains, offering a comprehensive foundation for cognitive and social-emotional growth, which ultimately fosters academic achievement. However, the absence of a unified understanding of play-

based learning remains a key barrier to its successful implementation. For as long as play-based learning has been a hot topic, the challenges remain that many of us have been discussing but have not demonstrated how to translate it to classroom practice. Research highlights teachers' ongoing uncertainty in understanding play-based learning, what it means for learning across domains, and how to balance developmental needs with broader curriculum goals (Fesseha & Pyle, 2016). Play-based learning can be misinterpreted in how it is defined and applied, thus resulting in uneven play practices in the classroom. Teachers are unsure how to fulfil the need for play alongside the curriculum demands that must be met. Thus, the power of play is primarily neglected, and its advantages are lost in many early learning settings.

The second significant barrier to incorporating play is the extreme pressure schools and teachers face to improve academic achievement. In the vast majority of systems of this world, there are an excessive number of standardized tests using academic outcomes that can easily be measured, leading to an emphasis on play with little for memorizing lessons taught in a formal setting. Play-based learning is often relegated to a secondary role in the curriculum, as the focus on academic standards and measurable achievements leaves little room for creative, exploratory learning experiences" (Howard, 2010). This binds teachers because they can choose between valuing play and creativity, which are not measured in standardized tests, or chasing academic benchmarks that critics could use as a judgment call. Many teachers face difficulties in understanding the concept of play-based learning and how it aligns with academic content, which leads to inconsistency in classroom practices (Wood, 2013).

The pressure for measurable academic success often leads to a preference for traditional, teacher-directed methods, diminishing the value of play-based learning despite its developmental benefits.

Another big issue related to play-based learning is the acceptance and adoption of it and the way that these types of educational practices are accepted, which is heavily dependent on cultural attitudes. In several cultures, there is a firm conviction in preparing our children for achieving incredible academic success in the future, so naturally, children should launch themselves into high-stakes, vigorous academic learning as toddlers. In such environments, play is often seen as an indulgence or frivolous exercise that does not add to learning and, ultimately, fewer academic achievements. Cultural bias against play in early childhood education can cause parents, school administrators, and even teachers to oppose play-based pedagogy in favour of more formal educational results. For instance, in some Asian cultures that value social conformity, visible effort, and academic rigor (Fung & Cheng, 2012), play is likely to be regarded with scepticism because it involves free play rather than structured and purposeful learning. This perception of culture can hinder the driving forces of parents and other stakeholders from adopting play-based learning strategies, affecting the drive for methodical play-based methods during classroom implementation by teachers. Teachers, particularly those who have never been formally trained in approaches to play-based pedagogies, are not sufficiently knowledgeable or confident to enact play in their classes. An uninformed teacher will struggle to create spaces that promote discovery and play-based learning, nor will they leverage play as a fundamental learning tool in the classroom. Although Miller & Almon (2009) argue that, “We have nothing to fear from play and much to win, and as evidence shows with reference, for example, to the Reggio Emilia principles, a lack of suitable training can lead to practices that are neither appropriately flexible nor coherent enough to support children's development through play." Moreover, most teacher training programs do not include implementing play in a classroom. In contrast, a teacher may know what they can teach with play, but there are few tangible tools for successfully implementing play-based learning. As a result, early childhood classroom practices remain

poor, overly reliant on play strategies that lack adequate training and professional development, and reaffirm traditional teacher-directed pedagogies.

In Bangladesh, teachers' understanding and practice of play-based learning (the integration of play with academic content) remain underexplored, particularly when negotiating the challenges of play with the demands of external pressures such as high-stakes testing and parental expectations. Play-based learning remains underutilized due to teacher uncertainty, limited training, and cultural perceptions that prioritize academic outcomes (Rahman & Choudhury, 2018). This research will help inform how we should integrate play into early childhood education, providing actionable recommendations for teachers, administrators, and policymakers. Ultimately, it sets out to develop a more balanced approach in early education that enhances child-centric learning by recognizing that play is a key element in enabling their development.

Purpose of the Study

This research points to exploring teachers' perspectives on play activities in early childhood education for children aged 4-6 years. It investigates how teachers assess the impact of play-based curricula within the context of curriculum requirements, administrative priorities, and parental expectations. Additionally, the study examines the tangible challenges teachers face when creating play-based learning experiences in the classroom.

The goal of this study is to better understand the significant changes in the educational landscape over the past 20 years. The study identifies the types of support teachers require in terms of professional development, resources, and a more profound understanding of play-based learning to effectively implement these approaches. The study emphasizes the importance of play in the overall development of young learners, particularly those aged 4-6, highlighting that play is an important tool of a holistic educational process.

The findings will provide research-supported insights that can assist teachers, policymakers, and curriculum developers in integrating play-based learning practices in early childhood settings. Ultimately, this research advises a model that places the child at the centre of the framework, recognizing play as a fundamental component of both a child's development and academic success rather than an afterthought.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses their challenges and critically explores teachers' perceptions of using play-based learning in early childhood education. It also studies how curriculum priorities tend to align with academic benchmarks and overplay during tense debates between adhering to rigid standards and amending child-based exploration. These challenges are exacerbated by administrative demands, where the focus on measurable ends can detract from the developmental benefits of play-based approaches (Williams, 2017). Parents' reluctance, often due to cultural or traditional attitudes towards education, is also a practical challenge. Research points up issues, including societal attitudes, lack of teacher preparation, academic pressures, and insufficient resources, that stop play-based learning from being widely embraced in classrooms.

The study supports the necessity of professional development programs to help teachers properly implement play-based learning by pointing out the lack of teacher preparation and inadequate resources for play-based learning. It also highlights the importance of play in developing critical cognitive capacities, such as problem-solving and creativity, as well as emotional and social skills, including emotional regulation, cooperation, and empathy. This study provides practical, evidence-based insights to close the gap between theory and practice. These include creating individualized professional development initiatives, supporting policy changes conducive to agile curriculum strategies, and encouraging greater

alignment between parental and teachers' educational expectations. Focusing on teachers' perspectives, the study sheds important light on what supports or prevents the integration of play-based learning into early childhood education so that it can bridge the space between theory and actual scenario. The study seeks to assist policymakers, curriculum developers, and teachers in developing settings where play-based learning can flourish by focusing on these aspects. In doing so, it supports the effectiveness of teachers and leads to improved educational outcomes for children.

Research Questions

1. How do teachers define and understand the concept of play-based education within their classroom?
2. How can teachers design meaningful play scenarios to incorporate holistic development of the young students aged 4-6?
3. What specific academic objectives are most challenging to integrate with play-based learning?

Operational Definition

Learning Through Play:

Play-based learning is an educational strategy that utilizes play to promote meaningful engagement and enjoyment in activities that foster a child's holistic development- cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. These play experiences can also include simple games but extend to more sophisticated tasks that promote creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills that can and should be implemented at all educational levels, with a significant focus on early childhood (Parker et al., 2022).

Perception:

Perception is the mental process of organizing and integrating sensory input to understand what is happening around you. In educational contexts, perception includes teachers' perceptions and biased dispositions shaped by personal engagement and professional expertise (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019; Oxford University Press, 2020; Wikipedia, 2019).

Early Childhood Education:

Early Childhood Education (ECE) refers to the formal and informal educational experiences that children undergo from birth to age eight, focusing on their cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development. This early phase profoundly impacts a child's cerebral development and establishes the groundwork for future academic and life achievements (Berk, 2009). Early childhood education transcends mere academic instruction; it prioritizes the development of whole individual’s adept at interacting with and adjusting to their surroundings. The roles of caretakers and educators throughout this critical period are vital for fostering children's growth (NAEYC, n.d.).

Chapter II: Literature Review

Literature Review

A play-based learning approach has proven to enhance learners' outcomes, self-regulation, and critical thinking skills (Arnold et al., 2020). However, there continue to be challenges to such an approach in systems focused on standardized testing and quantifiable outcomes, such as these barriers underlying policy constraints, poor understanding of play-based learning, and insufficiency in parental support (Lungu & Matafwali, 2020). Moreover, heavier pressure to perform in school and join extracurricular activities has decreased free play time. It is becoming increasingly clear that a broader mindset is needed, one that values academic ability, creativity, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence to equip children for the future (FYA, 2017; Ernst & Reynolds, 2021). This research describes the advantages and limitations of play-based learning and the potential for whole-child development in Bangladesh in a changing world, highlighting the pressing need for a shift in the educational minds.

Understanding of Play-Based Learning

Early childhood education is widely acknowledged to benefit from play-based learning. By means of active interaction with their surroundings, it enables young children to acquire cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Play gives a natural setting for learning, according to Sarker and Rahman (2020), particularly for children between the ages of 4 and 6, since it stimulates curiosity, improves communication, and meaningfully supports concept development. They also emphasized that Sarker and Rahman (2021), which emphasize the need to build dynamic, interactive learning environments for young learners.

Combining structured and unstructured play into the classroom, play-based learning lets kids investigate ideas, test concepts, and hone social skills (Miller and Almon 2009). By means of exploration and self-directed activities, this approach promotes active learning and helps youngsters to acquire a complete awareness of the world. Fisher (2011) claims that play is not only a leisure activity but also a necessary learning tool for young children.

According to Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009), play is vital for the growth of young children and ought to be the centre of preschool education, emphasizing its cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic advantages. These studies provide a strong argument for the value of fun learning. Children actively participate in important communications by means of play, which promotes their growth. Through the skilful mixing of enjoyment with knowledge, play-based learning makes the learning process both fun and developmentally appropriate.

The Transformative Power of Play-Based Learning

Development in early childhood through play-based learning is natural and joyful; it involves children's minds, bodies, and emotions, nurturing important cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. Play-based learning (PBL), the practice of integrating play into the learning process, is recognized as a holistic and dynamic way for children to meet their developmental goals in early childhood education (ECE). Play-based learning not only supports cognitive development but also enhances children's emotional and social skills. Mohammad & Kabir (2020) The study promotes a change in teaching methods to incorporate more play-based techniques that encourage young children's creativity and experiential learning. Play-based learning involves young learners in fun and learning activities, emulating real-life experiences like exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration. Many studies emphasize play's critical role in early childhood development, especially in shaping children's problem-solving skills, social interactions, and emotional control.

According to Ginsburg (2007), play is an essential part of a child's life since it is a standard way to learn. Play promotes vital cognitive, emotional, social, and physical skill development for children. The playful child is experimenting with their environment; therefore, the child is constructing knowledge and making sense of their world. Ginsburg stresses that play is essential to a child's development because it enables children to learn by doing, participating in hands-on, authentic experiences that promote creativity, critical thinking, and cognitive development. Through participation in these activities, children learn to create vital social and emotional bonds with others, which provide the foundation for essential life skills such as teamwork, negotiation, and emotion regulation (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). Studies supporting this notion (Pyle & Danniels, 2017; Kakembo & Annet, 2024) indicate that play as learning enhances the classroom to become a community of active learners who explore, experiment, and learn at their own pace. In such an atmosphere, children can explore a range of materials; they learn to solve problems and make choices. Allowing children to explore facilitates the internalization of knowledge and improves their critical and creative thinking skills. The play supports social and emotional growth, as it teaches kids about empathy, teamwork, and resolving disagreements skills vital for developing positive social skills and relationships later in life.

Pretend, or dramatic play, is one of the most recognized forms of play-based learning in which children assume roles and create imaginary scenes. Bornstein et al. pretend play fosters imagination and creativity in children because it helps them investigate and model the world around them in an entertaining and informative way (Pellegrini, 2009, 2013; Russon, 2004). For example, taking on someone else's role- a doctor, teacher, or parent; allows kids to practice social roles and learn how to behave in different social contexts. This form of imaginative engagement is a key driver of children's creativity and helps develop the cognitive and social skills they require to function successfully in society.

Developmental benefits of pretend play include problem-solving skills, as children must decide how to behave in various situations and what to do next. This also promotes the development of language and communication skills, as, during role-play, children often talk, tell stories, and describe what they are doing (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). Pretend play allows children to negotiate and resolve conflict as they play together, needing to agree on the rules and roles that fit into whatever imaginary universe they are cultivating. According to McClelland and Cameron (2006), these early pretend experiences are integral to the development of emotional regulation. Children learn to self-regulate their feelings and to respond to the experiences of others, early building blocks of empathy and social cooperation. Play-based learning also helps contribute to children's social-emotional development. McClelland and Cameron (2006) suggest that early engagement in physical activities alone, alongside pretend play and group games, serves a valuable purpose in developing children's confidence, which is positively correlated with children's academic achievement in later years. Confidence is vital to early childhood development because it allows children to explore, take risks, express themselves, and interact with others.

However, turning Play into peer-assisted Play is selfless and a great way to develop social skills in children, such as sharing, taking turns, and working as part of a group, which are essential life skills. Play is inherently social, including practicing cooperation, negotiation, and empathy well before language and social skills are developed academically (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). In these interactions, children learn to express their emotions, control their behaviour and follow social norms such as sharing and waiting their turn, all of which contribute to emotional intelligence. In addition, play allows children to practice succeeding and failing in a safe environment where they learn how to manage disappointments, feelings, and success (Kakembo & Annet, 2024). This resilience is crucial to their later success, both academically and personally.

Children learn to cooperate, communicate, compromise, and negotiate when playing together. The social cooperation side of play gives them practical experience in social negotiation, which sets them up for better communication and teamwork later in life. Play fosters social-emotional competencies that predict later academic and behavioural outcomes, such that children with strong social and emotional skills tend to do better in school and exhibit more positive behaviours (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). Play-based learning is also critical for children's cognitive development (Piaget, 1952) as a process of active exploration and interaction with the environment. Children who are given opportunities to engage in play-based learning explore, experiment, and manipulate objects, and these activities promote problem-solving skills, spatial reasoning, and early mathematical concepts. Blocks, puzzles, and basic science experiment activities teach kids about cause and effect, measurement, and patterns. Their play experiences are guided and provided with knowledge and information to advance their cognitive development through these learning objectives in literacy, numeracy, and social studies (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). Children can count, sort, or use language to negotiate roles during pretend play. These activities help to foster cognition and language development as children practice the new vocabulary, sentence structures, and concepts they have encountered in play situations. Likewise, physical activities like running or climbing facilitate fine and gross motor skill improvement and cognitive skills like problem-solving and spatial awareness (Pyle & DeLuca, 2017). Play offers children a low-stakes avenue for trying new ideas and concepts. They are also prompted to think critically, make decisions, and comprehend the outcomes of their actions as they play. Engagement in such activities provides opportunities for developing cognitive flexibility and the transferability of skills to new situations, which are critical competencies for subsequent academic achievement (Pyle & Danniels, 2017).

Studies show that early play-based learning correlates with better academic performance in later years. Children exposed to quality play-based early environments demonstrate superior language skills, enhanced problem-solving skills, and outstanding achievements as they progress through school (McClelland and Cameron 2006). Play fosters creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and emotional regulation, all essential skills for a child's successful transition into formal education and lifelong learning.

They are based on play-based learning, which strongly contributes to developing executive functions, including working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control. Executive functions like these are crucial for doing well in school; they help kids sustain attention, arrange their thinking, and control their behaviour in class. Research indicates that Play promotes the emergence of executive functions in children, which enhances academic success in more structured learning environments (Bodrova & Leong, 2017).

Challenges to Integrate Play-Based Learning

Despite the potential benefits of play-based learning (PBL), its successful implementation in educational contexts can be challenging. Such barriers may be rooted in societal attitudes, policy limitations, a focus on academic outcomes, a lack of professional development, or inadequate resources. The following sections look at the main barriers that prevent play-based learning from becoming more prevalent in early childhood education and how these barriers impact its effectiveness. The biggest challenge to implementing play in early childhood education is a disconnection between play values and purposes. Whitebread et al. (2012) show a divergence in mindset: some teachers strongly advocate play-based learning and its developmental benefits, while others consider it secondary to traditional instructional practices. This divide parallels a more extensive debate between constructivist, child-centred approaches, advocates, and proponents of significantly more structured, teacher-driven, and

academically rigorous teaching styles. Such a dichotomous articulation of play also plays a role in the marginalisation of play-based learning in classrooms, especially under academic excellence-dominated systems. Teachers working in these contexts frequently find it challenging to balance the developmental aims of play with the demands of academic performance (Whitebread et al., 2012). As Howard (2010) states, "Some teachers believe that play is a recreational activity that only has income-generating potential." This perception is even more pronounced in primary school environments, where a focus on quantifiable academic results, literacy, and numeracy, for example, supersedes nurturing social-emotional growth and creativity through play experiences. This focus on standardised assessments can result in a decrease in play and an increase in more traditional teaching methods that teachers believe can better prepare students for academic assessments. Another reason for the hesitance to adopt play-based learning is the absence of teachers' clear realisation of its learning potential. Others see play as a luxury and something that should be reserved for free time, as opposed to an essential component of the learning process. This gap in perception yields inconsistent play-related approaches, and play has become a buzzword rather than a part of educational practice (Pyle & DeLuca, 2017; Pyle et al., 2020).

A major barrier to embracing play-based learning lies behind the increasing focus on tested outcomes and strict curriculum requirements within many education systems. Kaufman et al. (2023) claim that standardised tests, though a prevalent practice to evaluate student performance, have been building a culture of high-stakes testing that emphasises rote memory and a teacher-centred classroom. In these contexts, teachers are often pressured to prioritise the material that will be tested over providing children with opportunities for creative, exploratory play. Test and drive to "teach to the test" is a significant barrier for many teachers who understand the value of play as a learning opportunity but must align their best efforts with the demands of standardised testing. This is often reflected in a narrowing

of the curriculum, in which subjects (such as the arts, social-emotional learning, and play-based activities) are pushed aside for subjects that are more heavily tested (e.g., mathematics and language arts) (Kaufman et al., 2023). This leads to deliberately erasing all the developmental gains. Play-based learning encourages problem-solving skills, creativity, social cooperation, and the return to tried and tested but paper/pencil, literature/language/academic-based teaching." Additionally, the emphasis on measurable outcomes in education pressures teachers to view play as less applicable as a pedagogical tool. Play-based learning is hard to measure against traditional academic skills, and as such, teachers contemplate it as less valuable or less effective in preparing kids for high-stakes tests. A study by Whitebread et al. (2012) have found this perception argues that in an environment where test scores reign supreme, play-based learning takes a back seat, with the potential of creativity and critical thinking, not to mention other skills critical to success in life, all but suffocated. One substantial hindrance to implementing play-based learning in the curriculum is the limited professional development available for teachers. Pyle & DeLuca (2017) and Pyle et al. (2020) emphasise a lack of adequate training on play principles for many teachers and a lack of pedagogical knowledge for integrating play with appropriate academic content. Many teachers who do not have specialised training in working with young children do not understand how to design play-based experiences with curriculum objectives. This might lead to the underuse of play-based approaches or to neglecting their role in creating play-rich environments conducive to active learning. The lack of targeted professional development programs worsens the situation. If teachers do not receive sufficient training, they may return to traditional lessons where the teacher is the focus, which is already more familiar and tends to be simpler. Such hesitancy to use new pedagogical strategies may limit the developmental opportunities that children can take through play (Pyle et al., 2020). In addition, the absence of professional development

opportunities via play-based approaches denies teachers the chance to see how play can nurture creativity, problem-solving, and social-emotional development.

Alongside a lack of professional training, limited resources in many classrooms also restrict play-based learning. Access to toys, manipulatives, and space to provide free play is essential for building a space for play-based learning. However, indoor availability for these resources is sorely lacking in many classrooms, particularly in underfunded schools. In such environments, teachers may struggle to find a way to embed play into their lessons, as they are without the materials to create an enriching experience. Another primary barrier teachers encounter is the absence of space to engage students in physical play, a key element in developing motor skills and social interactions (Bodrova & Leong, 2017). Resources are lacking to roll out professional development initiatives. Many educational systems have little or no funding for teacher training programs and study tours focused on play-based pedagogy. One contributing factor is a lack of targeted professional development in these two domains; without preparation, teachers cannot utilize play-based learning to its fullest potential or best practices when developing early childhood education programs (Pyle & DeLuca, 2017; Pyle et al., 2020).

However, structural and professional obstacles are not the only constraints. Cultural attitudes shaped by education severely complicate the integration of play-based learning. In many educational systems, particularly in third-world countries such as Bangladesh, there is a dominant thinking that academic mastery is better developed in the early years via education rather than developmental play. According to Mallick and Popy (2024), in many Asian countries, children are expected to perform well in school by the early years, so play is seen as an unimportant activity rather than a valuable learning tool. Parents and teachers with similar views can see play as a distraction and a waste of precious time, better spent on more substantive academic endeavours.

Both of these factors mean that there is significant cultural pressure on teachers and early childhood teachers to foreground academics and prioritize academic subjects over play. Resistance to play-based learning often comes from the parents, who should be staunch advocates of such an approach, as evidence mounts that an over-reliance on early preparation for school can be counterproductive. Real examples of how to do this are needed in practice. They begin with the point that there is an ingrained bias against play-based learning, which impedes the use of play-based strategies in schools and undermines the ability of young children to cultivate a host of higher-order skills, from problem-solving to creativity and social cooperation (Mallick & Popy, 2024).

Learning through play is hindered by teachers' misconceptions about it, pressures to teach standardized tests, and a lack of institutional resources, as well as cultural attitudes that emphasize academic achievement over learning through play. Addressing these obstacles involves rearticulating the value of play, focused professional development, and guaranteeing that schools have the resources they need to invest in play to promote learning.

The Complex Landscape of Play-Based Learning in Bangladesh

Play-Based Learning (PBL) in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Bangladesh now changes. BRAC's Play Lab model encourages early childhood education through play-based learning, which enhances cognitive, social, and emotional skills among young learners in Bangladesh (Chowdhury et al., 2014). This model has demonstrated positive outcomes, particularly in marginalized communities, by providing engaging and flexible learning environments (Islam et al., 2015). However, the educational system in Bangladesh is gradually acknowledging the significance of early childhood education. Teachers recognize the cognitive and emotional benefits of play; others view it as a distraction from academic goals (Kabir, 2019; Haque & Nasrin, 2021).

Traditional teaching methods, cultural attitudes, and institutional challenges, including crowded classrooms, limited resources, and inadequate teacher preparation, create major barriers. Therefore, even if PBL helps children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, these obstacles make it quite difficult to properly apply PBL. This section addresses Bangladesh's context that fuels these obstacles, including attitude towards education, particular challenges with PBL implementation, and what has to be done to remove these obstacles. One of the main obstacles to mainstreaming play-based learning in Bangladesh is the general cultural belief in education, which gives academic mastery and preparation for future tests top priority. Arguing, "The insistence that children perform academically from a very young age has marginalized play in education," Mallick and Popy (2024) contend. We also know that many times, teachers and parents view academic performance as the most important indicator of the effectiveness of early childhood education. Play is thus sometimes seen as a non-productive activity, something to be had second to the official education supposed to equip kids for future academic inflexibilities. As was already mentioned, Bangladesh has a cultural component to this view whereby any kind of educational success is valued, and pressure to perform well on tests from a very early age exists. Play-based learning, which emphasizes exploration, creativity, and hands-on learning, is thus sometimes seen as frivolous or unrelated to this environment. Parents who are concerned about their children's future academic performance can have fun teaching them through tutoring or official learning instead of leisure time activities. Teachers must prepare society's content for its needs; thus, once more, we are distanced from the play. Teachers, especially those employed in public schools, are sometimes limited by these cultural presumptions since they have to follow a curriculum that gives academic success top priority over developmental activities, including play (Haque et al., 2013). For this reason, many formal education systems ignore play, and teachers believe it to be incompatible with

learning results. More general structural problems within the Bangladesh educational system exacerbate the challenges to play-based learning. Although programs like the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) have sought to emphasize child-centred and play-based pedagogies, Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) point out that a lack of crowded classrooms, teacher training, and limited resources has had a limited effect on these initiatives.

Particularly for public schools with limited resources, overcrowded classrooms are one of Bangladesh's most important issues. Many more students than would be ideal for interactive and experiential learning abound in the nation's classrooms (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, 2020). Teachers in such settings sometimes find it difficult to provide individualised attention to children or create a play-rich environment that fosters innovation and problem-solving. Since play-based activities demand attention, teachers find it difficult to manage and arrange play in a high student-to-teacher ratio. They also take more time and require more space.

Teachers lack training for effective play-based learning; thus, another main obstacle is that many teachers in Bangladesh lack the necessary training to apply play-based pedagogies (Pyle et al., 2017; Pyle & DeLuca, 2017). Teachers find it difficult to link play with academic ideas in an integrated way without enough instruction. Although teachers may see the value of play, they lack the knowledge or ability required to create meaningful play-based learning projects aligned with the course of instruction. Teachers thus frequently have little time to support play and even less time to support play in a methodical way that advances children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Focusing on rote memorization and lectures, most teacher training programs in Bangladesh still employ conventional teaching strategies. Teacher preparation thus does not address contemporary educational theories emphasizing the part of play in a child's whole development (Haque et al., 2013). Teachers remain in

teacher-directed environments that do not always equip the range of skills used for children's development, even if professional development clearly invites them into play-based learning.

Lack of resources presents still another major obstacle to play-based learning. Many schools, especially those in rural areas, do not have instructional toys, tools, or a play area. Teachers find it quite challenging to design settings that support inquiry, creativity, and hands-on learning, given their limited means. It is impossible to offer the kind of real play-based learning that fits the hopeful rhetoric about its advantages without access to these basic materials. Early childhood programs at public schools exacerbate this problem by lacking the means to establish a quality program. Adequate resources are necessary. Thus, legislators and educators have to understand the need for proper distribution of resources in order to solve this problem.

Launched to support play-based pedagogy, the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) have not been embraced in Bangladesh with great ease. Many times, lacking direction on how to do so successfully, teachers using play-based learning find themselves. Teachers also lack the professional growth necessary to learn about ELDS and play-based strategies. As a result, many teachers have great uncertainty about how to properly apply the ELDS in their classrooms even if the ELDS sets clear objectives for early learning of children. Though policies recognize the value of play, this has not shown up in the classroom; play-based approaches are still underused. Initiatives like the ELDS will not, according to Kabir and Chowdhury (2021), help to raise the quality of early years education in Bangladesh without clear policies and continuous teacher support.

This is how Bangladesh's breakthrough approach to play-based learning works: Above all, play-based learning's pillar of early childhood education is positioned by policymakers as of great importance. Giving teachers tools and enough instruction to apply play-based pedagogy

will help them accomplish this. Training teachers on including play into the curriculum in line with academic criteria and arming them with the tools and supplies required to create imaginative environments for play should take front stage. Pyle et al. (2020) advise Bangladeshi legislators to value play as a means of guiding children's academic and social success so as to change the educational culture. Legislators can also help change society's view of play such that it is seen as a vital component of the learning process rather than a mere pastime by supporting a child-centred approach to instruction. Policymakers must also address issues of crowded classrooms and try to improve classroom conditions. This cultural shift may help teachers to be free to teach their students using play-based learning techniques and relieve pressure on them to concentrate on rote memorization and test preparation. This could mean adding more teachers, making room for learning, and giving schools the tools they need to include play-based learning into their courses. It will only remain a dream to see play-based learning as a central focus of early childhood education in Bangladesh unless we create an enabling environment whereby teachers are trained, supported, and empowered with sufficient tools to teach through play.

Chapter III: Methodology

This section provides a brief overview of the research design employed in this study. The chapter is organized into several sections:

Research Approach and Design

This study embarks on an exploratory qualitative research inquiry, delving into the uncharted territory of teachers' perceptions of play-based learning for 4-6-year-old children in Bangladesh's early childhood education settings. Given the scarcity of studies on this topic, this research is a unique and pioneering endeavour. By adopting the qualitative research approach, we aim to unearth the teachers' insights, perceptions, and experiences regarding play-based learning, a realm that quantitative research cannot fully capture.

Qualitative research is particularly suited for this study, as it is designed to explore human feelings and phenomenology within a natural context. By using qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups, this study aims to generate rich, nuanced data that can serve as a foundation for future research in this area. Qualitative researchers observe and interpret human experiences directly to understand why humans behave in a certain way, and this premise correlates with the aim of the study. (Denzin and Lincoln (2018)**.**

Research Site

Teachers of children aged 4-6 took part in an in-depth interview and a focus group discussion. The participants are from the Uttara area of Dhaka district. This area boasts a variety of educational institutions, and early childhood education is gaining traction in this area. These schools cater to divergent families, from local populations to foreigners, and thus present a compelling setting to gain insight into teachers' perspectives working with young children.

Research Participants

The study focused on teachers from English-medium institutions, specifically selecting preschool and early primary level teachers from two different schools. For this research, in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) were conducted. Six teachers—three males and three females—were selected for the in-depth interviews. Similarly, another group of six teachers (three females and three males) was interviewed in the focus group discussions. Teachers age range is between 28 and 50 years.

Participants Selection Procedure

Using purposive sampling, they were chosen because they satisfied the study's specific criteria and aligned with its objectives. The samples consisted of teachers from an English-medium school working with children aged between 6 and 8 years old.

Data Collection Tool

Data was collected through In-depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in this study.

In-depth Interview (IDI): In-depth interviews use open-ended questions to gather data about participants' beliefs, reasoning, understanding, and emotions on a particular topic (Johnson & Christensen, 20121).

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): Focus group discussions (FGDs) are a method of collecting qualitative data through structured discussions with a small group of participants. FGDs are effective for gathering detailed information about participants' perspectives (Khanan & Sandat, 20201).

Data Collection Method and Procedure

The study involved interviews with 12 teachers of young learners aged 6 to 8. Each participant was given the opportunity to choose a time that worked best for them. Before data collection, guidelines for the In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were developed and reviewed by a supervisor and academic experts. Before the interviews, all interviewees received a detailed overview of the IDI and FGD procedure and were formally asked for their consent to participate. The discussions began with some welcome notes and unstructured conversation to make the participants comfortable. Information was collected about each individual's age, educational qualifications, and work-related experiences, with a particular focus on their understanding and viewpoints. With permission, all data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussion were recorded, and relevant points were noted. The goal was to capture a clear, thorough, and exhaustive description of every data item in accordance with the research objectives and questions by carefully probing for detailed explanations in order to ensure accuracy. Confidentiality was guaranteed; participants' identities and any information they provided would only be used for the study. Each IDI lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes. And FGD's duration was 80 minutes. The research questions and objectives served as the foundation for a thorough, descriptive response.

Data Management and Analysis

All in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) were meticulously transcribed based on audio recordings and written notes taken during interviews and discussions after data collection. All six IDI transcripts and one FGD transcript were transcribed with utmost care. The name, ID number, and interview date were recorded as

pseudonyms. Transcribed information was analysed separately, ensuring the highest level of accuracy.

After compiling the data, summaries were meticulously organized based on the identified themes that aligned with the research objectives. We created these themes by systematically grouping key concepts, ideas, and actions that were lifted from the data. The content investigation technique was used to examine data according to these themes and to interpret and assign meaning to the collected data. Points from the above process through lines of perfectly identifiable formats allowed for synthesizing key insights and themes that led to a deeper understanding of teachers' perspectives regarding play-based learning.

Validity & Reliability

In this study, several qualitative measures were used to assess the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments. The research was conducted using designed tools, such as the survey questions, according to the research objectives, so that they accurately measured what they were intended to measure. The study sought to ensure that the right instruments were aligned with the appropriate research questions to obtain meaningful and relevant information.

Initially, data were measured for reliability using consistency within the data. The interview questions were standardized across all participants, and the data was further cross-checked for consistency. The instruments were checked for reproducibility so that other researchers

using similar tools would derive similar results. In addition, triangulation, which involved using different data sources to cross-check findings, also ensured the robustness of the study. The study sought to collect reliable and valid findings through these methods.

Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations were thoroughly taken into account. All participants received adequate information to make an informed decision about their participation, and informed consent was obtained. The respondents voluntarily agreed to participate in the in-depth interviews, and the study was entirely voluntary. All phases of the research ensured privacy and confidentiality. I used only the data provided by participants, and all participants were de-identified. To protect each respondent's anonymity, they were assigned a fictitious name and guaranteed that their information would be managed securely. Before the study process commenced, I verbally contacted the respective school teachers and got their approval to conduct the in-depth interviews (IDIs).

The study only selected participants who agreed to participate. All participants retained their privacy, and no personal information was made public. I clarified that participants were welcome to skip questions if they felt uncomfortable answering them. If a participant refused to continue the interview, their decision was respected. Data is collected via interviews, focus groups, or surveys, avoiding leading questions by not revealing personal beliefs that may persuade participant responses.

Limitations of the Study

The study acknowledges certain limitations. To begin with, the specific sample selection of teachers from only English-medium schools may limit the study, as it may not fully reflect the broader educational system for early childhood teachers.

Second, the research only aligns teachers' perceptions and not those of other relevant stakeholders (e.g., parents and administrators) that could add perspective.

Lastly, the study might not take into consideration the long-term effects of play-based learning, like its ongoing influence on children’s growth and academic achievement.

Finaly, the study may not adequately address or capture the ways in which limited resources, such as tangible play materials or access to training programs, can hamper the successful implementation of play-based learning. However, all efforts were made to collect and analyse data rigorously to mitigate this risk.

Chapter IV: Results/Findings & Discussion

The study's results and discussion are based on information gleaned from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with teachers who teach children between the ages of 4 and 6. In-depth interviews and FGDs were done in person to collect all the data. The research questions guided the process of categorization.

Demographic Details:

The teachers' ages in the study ranged from 28 to 50 years. All the teachers held at least a graduate degree, several at the master's level, and a few could boast double masters; their teaching experience was between 2 and 20 years, representing a wide range of insights based on different levels of expertise. They provided an in-depth insight into their experiences and perceptions towards implementing play-based learning on young learners aged 4-6 years.

Demographic Information					
Name of Participants	**Age Range**	**Educational Qualification**	**Years of Teaching Experience**	**Gender**	**Teaching Subject/Grade Level**
A	30-40	M.Sc.	14	Male	K. G.
B	20-30	B.B.A.	3	Male	K. G.
C	40-50	M.A.	10	Female	K. G.
D	40-50	M.A.	20	Female	Nursery
E	20-30	B.B.A.	2	Male	Nursery
F	40-50	M.A.	19	Female	Nursery
G	30-40	M.B. A	14	Male	Nursery
H	30-40	M.A.	3	Male	K. G.
I	40-50	M.A.	10	Female	Nursery

J	40-50	M.A.	20	Female	K. G.
K	20-30	B.B.A.	2	Male	K. G.
L	40-50	M.A.	19	Female	Nursery

Results/Findings

Theme 1: Pre-primary Teachers' Understanding of Play-Based Learning within Educational Frameworks

Since the study's first objective concerns teachers' knowledge about learning through play, especially for younger children (4-6), the subsequent subsections display teachers' understanding and concept of learning through play within educational frameworks.

Subtheme 1.1: Meaning of Play-Based Learning

Almost every teacher advocated for play-based learning. They express their viewpoint on what play-based learning actually is and how meaningful it is at a young age, especially for children 4-6. Young students can learn best in a play-based curriculum that supports their overall development. Incorporating play within education allows a child to explore, experiment, and discover new concepts. Teachers use songs, games, and yet-unmentioned object lessons to teach basic concepts, making it feel more natural and less like formal homework. Through this approach, children can learn numbers and other ideas in an enjoyable, almost subliminal way.

"*Play-based learning can be both structured and unstructured. Traditional teaching method may become monotonous for young children, making it harder for them to stay engaged. Since they are still very young, it is crucial to incorporate different teaching techniques to help them retain information effectively. The ages of four to six are a critical period for a child's development. At this stage, learning should be dynamic, interactive, and engaging. By*

using a different kind of methods, we can ensure that they not only grasp concepts but also enjoy the learning process." (IDI#02, 03-03-2025)

Teachers presented their views on science-based strategies to foster a cooperative environment, promoting creativity and problem-solving skills through play-based learning. These methods priorities social interaction over rote memorization, gamifying learning with gentle guidance and promoting social engagement. Play-based learning promotes hands-on exploration and the development of fundamental skills.

Subtheme 1.2: Importance of Play-Based Learning

It makes education active, flexible, and enjoyable. Play-based learning is a great way to keep children focused and highly interested. It's unusual games where children engage with ideas, concepts, and notions and walk away with clear experiences to remember. One of the teachers stated that

"*The ages of four to six are a critical period for a child's development. At this stage, learning should be dynamic, interactive, and engaging."* (IDI#02, 03-03-2025)

Through play, kids are often unaware that they're learning. One teacher said,

"*When we say it, 'Okay, let's play a game,' children are so excited, and learning is happening automatically.*" (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

Most of the teachers agreed that play-based techniques allow the children to memorize numbers and letters more successfully. In addition, children learn the concepts most efficiently when they are combined with interactive techniques like rhymes, poems, games, and so on. One teacher added that

"*When children go to kindergarten or nursery level, they are taught through rhymes and poems; everything from numbers to letters is taught through games. This makes the children remember what they are learning.*" (IDI#04, 03-03-2025)

A play-based curriculum is centred around play and establishes the links between what is learned and what can be applied in reality, making education relevant and appealing.

Subtheme 1.3: Most Suitable Age Group for Play-Based Learning Methods

Teachers advocated that play-based learning best suits 3- to 6-year-old children. For 3-5 years, as per one teacher,

"From my perspective, when you have 3-5 years, this is the time for play-based learning." (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

which also corroborated the similar stance taken by others in focus group discussions.

This confirms that early childhood, especially the pre-primary years, is the best age to use play-based strategies. The 3-5 age bracket is still most useful for play-based teaching methods, even if some teachers note that they can reach the 5-6 range.

Subtheme 1.4: Successful Implementation of Play-Based Learning

Most teachers underlined that in play-based learning, traditional teaching relies on passive student interaction, while play-based learning is flexible and focuses on children's interests. It is essential for teachers to be well-trained to incorporate this approach into their lessons, as it can enhance learning outcomes and maintain children's attention. One of the teachers said,

"In the science subject, for KG-1 or KG-2, which is 4.5 to 6 years, they take children to playgrounds, and they learn about flowers or plants. Rather than just talking, they will go and see them directly in the garden, or it is hands-on. This is not just classroom knowledge; it

is a combination of knowledge and experience in a fun and engaging way." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

This type of learning through play is also beneficial for children who tend to have a hard time in the traditional classroom settings.

The curriculum should be flawlessly combined into play-based learning, especially for younger children, to allow for investigation, creativity, and hands-on learning.

Subtheme 1.5: Play-Based Curriculum Classroom

Visually stimulating and interactive classrooms designed based on a play-based curriculum allow children to learn through engagement. Classrooms should be

"Interactive, colourful, and eye-catching." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

teachers said, adding that such classroom decor should be used to grab children's attention. Tools such as flashcards, visual media, and hands-on teaching elements (e.g., toys, writing flashcards) are also a big part of creating an engaging classroom experience. The classroom should also be thematic, with decorations and materials in conjunction with the activity. These connections with the real world strengthen the learning objectives. One teacher stated that,

"It's an opportunity for them to touch, feel, and observe a real plant in the classroom, and that makes their learning more effective and attractive." (IDI#06, 03-03-2025)

Essentially, a play-based classroom should be an interactive, stimulating environment that supports children's emotional and cognitive development.

Subtheme 1.6: Differences Between Play-Based Learning and Traditional Teaching Methods

Traditional methods employ less stimulation and are teacher-centred and static, while play-based learning is child-centred, active, and dynamic. In this play-based curriculum, all power is to the teacher, who transmits content to students so that they memorize it without any interaction. Traditional teaching (the more formal way of educating children) is usually a set curriculum with established goals and time frames, but play-based learning is relatively flexible and focuses on the interests of the children while allowing them to explore at their own pace. According to one teacher,

"Play-based learning is individualized and flexible," which makes it *"an individualized and flexible learning experienc*e." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

There are differences in terms of the resources used. Visual aids, books, and multimedia presentations dominated classic classrooms. A teacher noted,

"We had limited scope in educational toys, and learning was primarily achieved through visual aids such as books/multimedia presentations. There wasn't anything like that before that. In traditional ways, teachers used to talk about things and show them the book." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Theme 2: Teachers Design Meaningful Play Scenarios to Incorporate Holistic Development

Play-based learning, which promotes the development of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains, is a very successful strategy for encouraging holistic development in young children. Teachers are incorporating play in the classroom for the development of their students. One teacher highlighted her observation,

"Observing children's interactions during play provides insight into their cognitive, social, and emotional development, allowing teachers to assess progress informally." (FGD#1, 05-03-2025)

Combining learning and play allows children to interact with academic ideas while enhancing critical social skills, flexibility, and confidence within a positive, energetic context. At the same time, play-based learning encourages creativity and problem-solving while helping children develop a sense of belonging and self-esteem.

Subtheme 2.1: Impact of Play-Based Learning on Emotional Well-Being

Play-based learning is an amazing source of strength for children emotionally. They promote a comfy subject that helps children to work as a team and follow equal participation. As a teacher said,

"*In play-based learning, mostly every student participates equally. However, the same pace of learning may not be set by some students in academic or book-based learning. They don't feel behind because they can't stay on top of their studies."* (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

This inclusive environment helps children not to feel like they don't belong and reminds every child that they are valued and capable. Another teacher said,

"*School gives students an important opportunity to socialize, particularly if they don't have siblings living at home. Some kids don't have siblings and are alone most of the time at home. For them, school is where they have friends, and it's the only place to meet and interact*." (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

Other teachers also added that play is important for emotional development:

"While playing, children tend to experience happiness and fulfilment when they build something; this contributes to emotional balance. Creative play provides a sense of

accomplishment and, since it is fun, provides emotional resilience, meaning that children will have good emotional stability." (IDI#05, 03-03-2025)

Finally, one Teacher affirmed the importance of play-based learning as it offers natural opportunities for learning that support emotional well-being:

"*When children play, they learn naturally while having fun. And this successful experience makes them feel good, one thing that is going to enhance emotional well-being and facilitate learning."* (IDI#06, 03-03-2025)

Subtheme 2.2: Play-Based Activities Nurturing Social Skills and Collaboration

Play-based learning provides cooperative opportunities, breaking social boundaries and fostering new friendships. One teacher said,

"Explaining that it is their active participation in play that inspires kids to interact with their peers, helping them learn how to communicate and work together." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

This is especially good for shy or lonely children who may find it hard to start conversations or make friends. Play-based learning helps break down social barriers by creating opportunities for collaboration, as children can help and learn from each other. This type of interaction promotes the formation of new friendships, improves students' confidence and social activity, and creates a more integrated and supportive learning environment. One teacher said,

"Play-based learning is especially beneficial for children who have difficulties connecting with other kids. We promote bonding by organizing team-based games." (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

Learning fosters an opportunity for children to interact with each other, work on important social skills, and create lasting relationships that help promote a learning environment that is more socially rich and collaborative.

Subtheme 2.3: Enhancing Physical Growth and Motor Skills through Play-Based Learning

Teachers agreed that through appropriate play, children can explore their environment, learn about the world around them, develop gross and fine motor skills, and improve their coordination. One teacher insisted that activities like

"*Grabbing a ball or doing paper cutting"* (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

help in the development of motor skills in toddlers, thereby engaging them in fine motor development and gross motor development. Aligned with that, another teacher added that

"Playing outside strengthens children's metabolism and physical development. When they play and interact with peers, they automatically promote their physical strength and coordination while also learning." (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

Another teacher described how they blended academic concepts with physical activity to bring students into the learning process and have fun.

"For our lesson on ordinal and counting numbers, we wrote these numbers on cards and gave them out to the kids. Students who were assigned counting numbers would clap, while those assigned ordinal numbers would jump. Along with that practice, key concepts were taught, and children's motor skills were improved. Movement was included in the activity, such as clapping and hopping, which helped the children with their coordination and build some physical strength, contributing to their physical growth." (IDI#06, 03-03-2025)

In short, play-based learning is effective for building children's physical development. Combining movement, play, and education can be a fun way for children to develop essential motor skills, coordination, and physical health.

Subtheme 2.4: Long-term Impacts of Engagement in Play-Based Learning Spaces

Teachers stated that contributing to play-based learning has lasting effects on children's development, benefiting them academically and emotionally. According to a teacher,

"If we divide them into four groups of five students each, everyone gets to participate in learning... that very much helps them come out of their comfort zones." The small group setting promotes cooperation, communication, and collaboration skills that can shape long-term socialization skills in the classroom and life." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

Play-based learning needs to be fluid to keep participation high. Another teacher said,

"Every time you can make small, purposeful changes in the activities, it helps keep all students engaged." (IDI#03, 03-03-2025)

This ensures that slowly, little ones are constantly excited and engaged and check learning-propelled, encouraging long-term interest in mastering. Games and methods to teach are continuously repeated, resulting in a very engaging experience that students continue to come back to.

Subtheme 2.5: Effective Ways to Assess Children's Learning in a Play-Based Setting

Play -based learning methods improve the educational process and help every child grow continuously in a significant manner. Teachers who use play-based learning assess children’s learning in a play-based environment, requiring a shift from conventional assessment strategies prioritizing observation and documentation. One teacher stated that

"Portfolios, which include samples of children's work and play, allow teachers to track growth over time in creativity, problem-solving, and academic skills." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Teachers emphasize the importance of designing interactive activities that allow children's natural curiosity to flourish and enable significant evaluation. Some successful strategies include using topic-related items, such as toys, pictures, or objects, to link the material to something else; matching objects with descriptive language; and including rhymes and songs in the classroom. One teacher periodized on including songs and rhymes.

"We basically teach them the rhymes as well. For example, the wheels on the bus have similar rhymes. That's how we try to relate. That's how it's easier for them to conclude." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

This contributes to the enjoyable and engaging method of forming ideas. Learning stories and developmental checklists help capture a child's learning journey, linking play experiences to milestones in language, math, and social-emotional skills. The teacher mentioned developmental checklists and learning tales as helpful assessment tools. One teacher said,

"Learning stories and developmental checklists help capture a child's learning journey, linking play experiences to milestones in language, math, and social-emotional skills." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

This method improves the educational process and helps every child grow continuously in a significant manner.

Subtheme 2.6: The Effect of Play-Based Learning on Self-Esteem and Confidence in

Teachers agreed that play-based learning enhances young students' confidence, self-concept, and social skills by promoting self-discovery, choice, and success, fostering a sense of

belonging and self-worth as children explore and solve problems while playing. Teacher continued,

"They develop skills and experience success, increasing their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Every tiny play that is a success, however modest, builds a child's confidence in their abilities. In addition, one teacher noted that group play

"*Contributes to a child's sense of belonging and self-worth.*" (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

It enhances social skills and provides opportunities for positive reinforcement. Being collaborative with the rest of their classmates offers sentiments of encouragement and affirmation to children, thus allowing them to connect and feel valued.

Play-based learning supports cognitive development, helping children reach their mental potential. It also encourages their self-esteem and confidence by enabling them to self-direct their learning experience, make decisions, solve problems, and make friends**.**

Theme 3: Challenges in Implementing Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning, or PBL, is becoming more and more popular in early childhood education as a potent way to support kids' holistic development. However, juggling the flexibility of play with the strict framework of curriculum requirements and academic standards can be extremely difficult for teachers. Since time constraints can limit the ability to fully engage children in play while still meeting academic goals, integrating play-based activities requires careful planning. It can also be challenging to get the support of parents and administrators who might place a higher priority on conventional academic results. In addition to examining how PBL can meet the academic needs of kids at various developmental stages, this conversation delves into the different challenges teachers face

when putting PBL into practice, especially with regard to curriculum integration, time management, stakeholder support, and progress evaluation.

Subtheme 3.1: Harmonizing Academic Standards Play-Based Activities

Many teachers have expressed concern about struggling to find a suitable balance between academic pressures and play. As one teacher said,

"We find that certain lessons cannot be merged into play-based learning. In such cases, we can use different methods, like flashcards, to teach them." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

In these instances, teachers rely on flashcards or other alternative techniques to ensure that learning objectives are met. Teachers emphasized the challenge of balancing the two approaches. While play-based learning is engaging, she admitted, it can't always be integrated seamlessly with other elements of the academic curriculum. As another teacher explained,

"Schools tend to be resource- and time-constrained." (IDI#05, 03-03-2025)

This situation makes addressing this issue significantly more challenging.

Further, even if play-based learning works, it can require an extraordinary degree of time, energy, and extra help.

However, the consensus remains that play-based learning is more interesting and beneficial for children. Play-based learning is more valuable than other means of teaching, one teacher showed his concern,

"Which indicates that despite its downfalls, it offers much in terms of a child's learning outcomes if done correctly." (IDI#04, 03-03-2025)

However, teachers need to figure out how to balance the academic standards within this model while dealing with classroom dynamics.

Subtheme 3.2: Academic Requirements and Time Restraints

Most teacher acknowledges the challenges of implementing play-based learning within time limitations. As a result, the syllabus is frequently not fully completed on schedule. However, it has a greater impact on learning, but it requires more time. Play-based learning might be difficult to achieve when attempting to achieve time-limited academic criteria since it entails longer, more engaging activities. Another teacher explained that

"It becomes kind of difficult to incorporate play-based learning because if we have to finish a lesson within 40 minutes, then that kind of becomes a challenge." (IDI#02, 03-03-2025)

Teachers acknowledge the challenges of implementing play-based learning within time limitations. As a result, the syllabus is frequently not fully completed on schedule. She did emphasize that this is doable, though, as play-based learning is incorporated into the program a few times a week, which balances the overall curriculum. A well-organized lesson plan may efficiently reduce time restrictions and guarantee that learning and academic objectives are met. One teacher stated that

"It's time-consuming, but we balance it by creating our lesson plans accordingly to ensure we meet the yearly academic curriculum." (IDI#06, 03-03-2025)

While play-based learning requires time, instructors may be able to effectively juggle academic aspects and experiential learning through careful planning and scheduling. Even with a shortage of time, its effectiveness still makes play-based learning a preferable educational method. The benefits of play-based learning are witnessed in students when it comes to their understanding and retention of topics.

Subtheme 3.3: Securing Support from Parents and Administrators

Most of the teachers said that paly-based learning is most effective with administrative and parents' support. Not all the time do teachers get full support from parents' side. The teacher said,

"In play-based learning, not all parents are equally cooperative. However, sometimes when we give homework, parents eagerly help their children. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, we observed that parents were very supportive of play-based learning." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

Some teachers express that some parents thought that in play-based learning, children can get hurt or mess up with the lesson. Another teacher added that

"Parents should not mind play-based learning as long as their children are not harmed. It is simply a friendly way to help their children learn about subjects covered in school." (IDI#04, 03-03-2025)

Although it can be difficult to get parents and administrators to support play-based learning, most parents are amenable to the strategy as long as the setting is secure and orderly. Observations, portfolios, developmental checklists, and consistent communication between teachers and parents are all useful tools for evaluating academic progress in play-based learning environments.

Subtheme 3.4: Evaluation of Academic Growth in a Play-Based Setting

Teachers agree that in play-based learning, it's a big challenge to measure the academic result with formal measuring tools. In play-based learning, teachers focus on long-term development. As one teacher noted,

"Academic progress can still be assessed and is more than possible: "In a play-based curriculum, we engage all aspects of the senses—through auditory, kinaesthetic and visual learning, and with their whole body." (IDI#01, 03-03-2025)

This multi-sensory exponential learning approach lets children learn in the way they feel most comfortable, which makes tracking their progress even more straightforward. Engaging activities, like games, keep children focused and in a state of learning. For children, play-based learning provides a pleasant, multimodal method wherein they may learn via games and interesting activities. Especially for young students Although other teachers admitted, it was difficult to measure any progress made on creativity and emotional intelligence, he highlighted the overall growth within play-based environments, saying,

"I would highly rate students who learn through play in terms of their development." (IDI#05, 03-03-2025)

And aligned with what the other teacher said, without formal measuring tools, indicated that play-based learning is effective by noting

"*The growth of the learning capacity of our young learners*." (IDI#06, 03-03-2025)

The focus on emotional engagement, sensory learning, and play makes it easier to assess their development through this method, even though it is not the usual academic manner of evaluation.

Subtheme 3.5: Convincing Parents of the Benefits of Play-Based Learning

Most of the teachers said that if they were able to make the parents understand the benefit of play-based learning, then they would eagerly help. Here, the challenge is that teachers need to make them understand the outcome of play-based learning. One teacher commented,

"*Parents are already vended on play-based learning*." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Furthermore, the school's reputation for active learning helps with regard to parents' confidence in the approach. Play-based learning had positive benefits, and this helped to build parent trust and support in the school and what the teacher implemented.

Subtheme 3.6: Using Play-Based Learning to Address Elderly Children's Academic Needs

Play-based learning is often seen as unable to satisfy older children's scholastic demands. Actually, it presents special chances to push students to practice critical thinking, problem-solving, and more interesting enjoyment of learning. One teacher said,

"*Play-based learning for older students incorporates these fun challenges so they can think critically and develop skills in math and science*." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

These practical assignments improve students' problem-solving skills by allowing them to apply academic information in practical situations. Teachers also noted the social advantages of play, saying that

"*Playing with others helps kids learn how to work together, talk to each other, and solve problems."* (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Cooperative play develops not just academic abilities but also communication and teamwork, qualities necessary for success both in and outside of the classroom. Using games to convey difficult topics also makes learning more fun and accessible.

Another teacher noted,

"Using games or activities to explain tough subjects helps children understand better and enjoy what they are learning." (FGD#01, 05-03-2025)

Play-based learning, therefore, helps older children to master difficult subjects while having fun, hence promoting their cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

Discussion

Play-based learning (PBL) is becoming more and more acknowledged as a great tool for promoting the whole development of young children, particularly in the age range of 4-6 years. The insights acquired from teachers about their knowledge and conceptualization of Play-based learning inside educational frameworks are discussed in this part together with its meaning, relevance, and application.

Theme 1: Pre-Primary Teachers' Understanding of Play-Based Learning within Educational Frameworks

Particularly for young children, pre-primary teachers passionately argued for play-based learning. Young children learn best, according to teachers, when they participate in activities that let them investigate and play with fresh ideas in an interactive and fun way. Teachers pointed out that Play-based learning can be both structured and unstructured. For young children, conventional teaching approaches may become boring, which will make it more difficult for them to remain involved. This is consistent with studies understanding of play-based learning in the research by Sarker and Rahman (2021), which emphasize the need to build dynamic, interactive learning environments for young learners. Children's natural platform for learning free from the pressure of formal academic expectations is playing, which helps them to internalize important ideas in disciplines including math, language, and science**.** Emphasizing its importance in allowing young students to acquire fundamental ideas via play, most of the teachers supported play-based learning. They emphasized that children learn faster when they play because they don't feel pressure, and they explore everything naturally. This supports Hirsh-Pasek et al. (2009), article on A mandate for playful learning in preschools who found that guided play facilitates deeper learning compared to rote methods by promoting active engagement and discovery. Another point is the traditional

classroom is rigid, whereas a play-based classroom is more attractive to grab the attention of young learners. Teachers stated that colourful and thematic classroom activities attract young students. Bodrova and Leong (2017) advocated for an interactive classroom in their book 'Play and learning in early childhood education: Connecting theory and practice.' Pearson. Teachers stated, in the science subject, for KG-1 or KG-2, which is 4-6 years, they take children to playgrounds, and young learners learn about flowers or plants. Rather than just talking, they will go and see them directly in the playground, or it is hands-on. This method links academic ideas to practical situations, so making learning more relevant, interactive, and authentic. Research by Bodrova and Leong (2017) also supports this, implying that play-based activities let for active exploration and hands-on learning, which results in deeper knowledge and participation. Fisher (2011), in his article 'Taking a closer look at play: A review of contemporary perspectives,' promotes self-directed learning where children have the choice to explore their interests, make decisions, and reflect on their experiences.

Play-based learning is a method that integrates play into the educational process, promoting the development of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities in young children. Ginsburg (2007) and Mohammad and Kabir (2020) assert that play is vital for children's development, offering possibilities for exploration, problem-solving, and social contact, which are crucial for early childhood education.

Theme 2: Teachers design meaningful play scenarios to incorporate holistic development

Teachers in this research agreed that they designed play-based learning to enhance the emotional well-being of young learners. They noted that play fosters a feeling of belonging and self-esteem in youngsters, particularly within an inclusive atmosphere where all students engage equally. According to teachers, play-based learning enables youngsters to feel

appreciated and assists individuals who may otherwise have difficulties in academic pursuits to participate at their own pace. This corresponds with Bodrova and Leong (2017), who asserted that play facilitates emotional regulation in children and fosters emotional resilience, hence enhancing general well-being. In the same way, McClelland and Cameron (2006) suggest that play-based learning in early years significantly boosts emotional resilience, enabling children to develop better emotional control, which is directly linked to positive academic outcomes in later years.

Play-based activities foster teamwork and facilitate the development of crucial communication skills in youngsters. Through play, which promoted friendships and raised their confidence, teachers saw that originally quiet or socially excluded children could break through social boundaries. Play helps children develop strong social skills for future interactions by encouraging negotiation, teamwork, and empathy, claim Pyle and Danniels (2017).

Teachers observed that play-based learning (PBL) improves both fine and gross motor abilities in terms of physical development. Children inherently develop coordination and strength via activities such as outdoor play, running, and manipulating things like balls or scissors. This finding fits Piaget (1952), who argued that children's cognitive and physical development depends on physical play, which lets them learn by tactile exploration and experimentation. Bodrova and Leong (2017) presented the same thought that play-based learning supports motor development by engaging children in physical activities, such as climbing, jumping, or running, which improves both gross and fine motor skills. These physical activities not only support physical growth but also contribute to cognitive development by encouraging children to think critically about their actions and decisions.

The use of group plays and team-based games in play-based environments also encourages collaborative problem-solving. Teachers reported that shy or socially isolated children particularly benefit from these interactive opportunities, which help them build confidence and friendships. Pellegrini (2009) also highlighted that pretend play, where children play imaginary characters from different social roles, promotes communication and conflict resolution, which are vital for developing lifelong social skills. Teachers explained that making small, purposeful changes in activities helps maintain excitement and engagement, ensuring that children continue to check their learning progress and remain motivated. Every time you can make small, purposeful changes in the activities, it helps keep all students engaged. From Pyle et al. (2020), same statement is presented: that in play-based activities, repetition with slight changes helps children internalize concepts and skills over time, enhancing their ability to apply what they've learned in different contexts. Play-based learning is, all things considered, a good approach for children's overall development. By blending cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development within a fascinating and dynamic environment, project-based learning guarantees that children gain academic information as well as key life skills like creativity, social interaction, and emotional regulation.

Theme 3: Challenging to Integrate with Play-Based Learning

Since play-based learning fosters cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development, it is well known to be an effective strategy for advancing young children's holistic development. Nevertheless, despite its potential, there are a number of important obstacles to overcome when incorporating play-based learning into early childhood education.

Teachers face challenges in harmonizing academic standards with play-based activities and often face stress to incorporate children in meaningful play between. For instance, some

teachers admitted that certain lessons cannot be effectively merged with play-based learning. We get similarity in Sarker and Rahman's (2021) article, a study in selected preschools in Dhaka; this challenge is echoed in the literature, where Sarker and Rahman (2021) note that while play-based learning is engaging, its solo integration into a rigid academic framework often proves difficult. Teachers must navigate the tension between the developmental benefits of play and the pressure to meet formal curriculum objectives.

Teachers expressed that it is difficult to incorporate play-based learning because we have to finish a lesson within 40 minutes or a defined time frame. This issue is well-documented in the literature, with Pyle and DeLuca (2017) explaining that time limitations often hinder the full potential of play-based learning in classrooms. Kaufman et al. (2023) added that while PBL requires more time, its effectiveness is high in the early learners' learning process.

Teachers noted that while some parents are supportive of play-based learning, others are more focused on academic performance and have concerns about the effectiveness of play in achieving educational goals. Teachers remarked, in play-based learning, not all parents are equally cooperative. However, sometimes when we give homework, parents eagerly help their children. This resistance from some parents is often rooted in the perception that play is less valuable than traditional academic instruction. Whitebread et al. (2012) identify this cultural resistance as an important barrier to the widespread adoption of play-based learning, particularly in regions where academic achievement is the primary goal. Teachers stated the challenge of evaluating academic progress in a play-based setting. Traditional assessment tools, which are designed to measure academic performance in subjects like math, language, and literacy, often fail to project the developmental benefits of play, such as creativity, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. Bodrova and Leong (2017), in their book 'Play and Learning in Early Childhood Education: Connecting Theory and Practice,' expressed that play-based learning requires more qualitative, observational assessments, such as portfolios

and developmental checklists, which help to project the broad spectrum of a young learner's growth in areas like creativity, social-emotional skills, and problem-solving.

Conclusion

Play-based learning in early childhood education faces challenges like academic standards, time constraints, stakeholder support, and assessment methods, necessitating a cultural shift, professional development, and adequate resources.

Teachers overwhelmingly agree that play-based learning plays a pivotal role in supporting children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Through exploration, experimentation, and hands-on activities, young learners engage in learning experiences that are not typically offered in more traditional, teacher-centred classrooms.

Play-based learning helps children to interact with concepts in a way that fosters creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and emotional management, skills that are essential for their lifelong learning and personal growth.

Despite the clear benefits of play-based learning, teachers also face several challenges. The primary obstacle is the lack of professional development opportunities for teachers, which makes it difficult for them to implement PBL (play-based learning) effectively and confidently in the classroom.

Teachers also feel constrained by a curriculum that focuses on quantifiable results, often at the expense of fostering creativity and social-emotional growth. Next, societal attitudes that emphasize academic excellence and standardized testing can create a barrier to fully embracing PBL (play-based learning), as there is a prevalent belief that traditional academic methods are more effective at preparing children for academic assessments.

Cultural attitudes, particularly from parents and administrators, can also obstruct the widespread acceptance of play-based approaches. In many contexts, there is a perception that play is not a legitimate form of learning, and some parents may worry that their children are not receiving a rigorous enough education if it's based on play. These cultural hurdles reject the use of PBL in favour of more regimented, traditional instruction approaches.

Teachers are certain in their conviction that play-based learning is a useful tool for offering a well-rounded, interesting, and significant learning environment despite these obstacles.

Teachers view PBL as not only a way to make learning more enjoyable but also as an essential method to nurture children's holistic development.

The full advantages of play-based learning may be fully realized by highlighting the challenges to its implementation, such as the need for additional professional development, curriculum redesign, and changing social attitudes. This will help young learners flourish academically and grow personally.

While there are challenges to implementing play-based learning in early childhood education, its benefits in fostering a well-rounded and developmentally appropriate learning environment for children are undeniable.

By focusing on the cultural, professional, and institutional obstacles, play-based learning can become a primary theme of early childhood education, as it assists children to develop the obligatory skills to obtain success in both their academic and personal lives.

Recommendation

Encouragement of children's cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth has found great success with play-based learning. Many steps have to be taken to guarantee that play-based learning realises its full potential and starts to be a regular component of early

childhood education. These tactics concentrate on helping teachers, developing courses, involving parents and communities, and pushing legislative reforms. Seven main suggestions below will help educational institutions use play-based learning successfully.

- Teachers should receive ongoing professional development to successfully integrate play-based activities into their classrooms. Training in interactive teaching approaches, classroom management techniques, and child-centred learning environments. Effective play-based learning implementation depends on well-trained teachers making sure students gain from top-notch learning opportunities.
- Curricula must be designed to incorporate both academic goals and play-based activities. Structured learning must be balanced with plenty of unstructured play and creative activities that advance cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Flexible courses let students accomplish learning goals while also allowing them to participate in hands-on inquiry and discovery.
- A supportive classroom environment is vital for PBL. Teachers should provide physical play spaces, encourage sensory activities, and offer a variety of educational toys and materials that stimulate children's curiosity and creativity. A well-designed, interactive, and safe classroom encourages children to explore, experiment, and actively engage in learning.
- Reviewing the time set for academic courses helps one to make sure young learners have adequate time for free play and guided activities. Improving social skills, problem-solving, and creativity depends on this harmony. Giving young learners enough time for play helps them acquire crucial life skills, which enhances the value and enjoyment of education.
- Community-based programs, for instance, playgroups and after-school activities, can extend the effectiveness of play-based learning beyond the classroom. These initiatives

provide young children more chances to participate in play-based learning in various settings, therefore promoting socializing and cooperation as well as the skills acquired during the school day.

- Teacher education programs should integrate play-based learning principles to prepare future educators for successful implementation. By teaching new educators how to incorporate play into their teaching strategies, they will be better equipped to create learning environments that support creativity, critical thinking, and emotional development in young learners.
- Longitudinal research should be promoted on the long-term consequences of play-based learning to provide proof of how it affects children's mental health, social skills, and academic performance. Play-based learning needs to be added to national early childhood education plans. Furthermore, it guarantees that it becomes a primary method in educational systems. Therefore, it pleads for general acceptance and support.

Using these ideas will guarantee proper integration of play-based learning into early childhood education and assist in maximizing its advantages. By supporting teachers, creating engaging learning environments, and fostering community involvement, play-based learning can play a pivotal role in the holistic development of young children, leading to better academic and social outcomes in the future.

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Appendix A

In-Depth Interview and Focus Group Discussion

Research Title: Teacher's Perspectives on Play-Based Learning for Children Aged 4-6 in Early Education

Research Questions:

1. How do teachers define and understand the concept of play-based education with in their class room?
2. How can teachers design meaningful play scenarios to incorporate holistic development of the young students age 4-6?
3. What specific academic objectives are most challenging to integrate with play-based learning?

In-Depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guidelines (English):

Section A: Demographic Information

Name:

Age Range:

Education Qualification:

Years of Teaching Experience:

Gender:

Teaching Subject/Grade Level:

Section B: Understanding of Play-based Learning

1. In your own words what does play-based learning means to you? Can you share with us an example that shows your understanding of play-based learning?

2. Is play-based learning important for children?

   a) If yes, why?

   b) If no, why not?

3. Can you provide an example of a situation where a play-based curriculum was successfully implemented?
4. In your opinion, what does a play-based curriculum classroom look like? Can you provide an example of a situation where a play-based curriculum was successfully implemented?

Section C: Play-based approaches for holistic development

5. In what ways does play-based learning contribute to the emotional well-being of children?
6. How does engaging in play-based activities foster social skills and collaboration among children?
7. Can you share examples of how play-based approaches support physical development, such as motor skills and coordination?
8. What long-term benefits have you observed in children who actively participate in play-based learning environments?

Section D: Challenges that teacher's face while implementing play-based learning

9. What specific challenges do you face when integrating play-based activities with mandatory academic standards?
10. In what ways do time constraints affect your ability to balance play-based learning with meeting curriculum requirements?
11. What difficulties do you encounter in securing support from parents or administrators for implementing a play-based learning approach?

12. How do you evaluate and measure academic progress in a play-based learning environment?

Appendix B

In-Depth Interview (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guidelines (Bengali):

অধ্যায় A: জনমিতিগত তথ্য

নাম:

বয়স পরিসর:

শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা:

শিক্ষাদানের অভিজ্ঞতার বছর:

লিঙ্গ:

শিক্ষাদানের বিষয়/শ্রেণির স্তর:

অধ্যায় B: খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার বোঝাপড়া

১. আপনার নিজের ভাষায় খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার অর্থ কী? আপনি কি আমাদের সাথে একটি উদাহরণ ভাগ করতে পারেন যা খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার প্রতি আপনার বোঝাপড়া প্রকাশ করে?

২. শিশুর জন্য খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখা কি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ?

a) যদি হ্যাঁ, কেন?

b) যদি না, কেন নয়?

৩. আপনি কি এমন একটি পরিস্থিতির উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন যেখানে সফলভাবে খেলার মাধ্যমে পাঠ্যক্রম কার্যকর করা হয়েছে?

৪. আপনার মতে, একটি খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার শ্রেণিকক্ষ কেমন দেখতে হবে? আপনি কি একটি সফলভাবে কার্যকরকৃত খেলার মাধ্যমে পাঠ্যক্রমের উদাহরণ দিতে পারেন?

অধ্যায় C: সামগ্রিক বিকাশের জন্য খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার পদ্ধতি

৫. খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখা শিশুদের মানসিক সুস্থতায় কীভাবে অবদান রাখে?

৬. খেলার মাধ্যমে সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণ শিশুদের সামাজিক দক্ষতা ও সহযোগিতা বৃদ্ধিতে কীভাবে সহায়তা করে?

৭. আপনি কি এমন উদাহরণ ভাগ করতে পারেন যেখানে খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার পদ্ধতিগুলো শারীরিক বিকাশ যেমন মোটর স্কিল ও সমন্বয়কে সমর্থন করেছে?

৮. আপনি কি দীর্ঘমেয়াদী সুবিধাগুলি পর্যবেক্ষণ করেছেন যা খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার পরিবেশে সক্রিয়ভাবে অংশগ্রহণকারী শিশুদের জন্য পাওয়া যায়?

অধ্যায় D: শিক্ষকরা যে চ্যালেঞ্জগুলোর সম্মুখীন হন খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার বাস্তবায়নের ক্ষেত্রে

৯. বাধ্যতামূলক একাডেমিক মানগুলোর সাথে খেলার মাধ্যমে কার্যক্রম সংযুক্ত করার সময় আপনি কী কী নির্দিষ্ট চ্যালেঞ্জের সম্মুখীন হন?

১০. সময় সীমাবদ্ধতা কীভাবে আপনার খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার কার্যক্রমের ভারসাম্য বজায় রাখার সক্ষমতাকে প্রভাবিত করে?

১১. অভিভাবক বা প্রশাসনিক কর্মকর্তাদের কাছ থেকে খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার পদ্ধতি বাস্তবায়নের জন্য সমর্থন অর্জনের ক্ষেত্রে আপনি কী কী অসুবিধার সম্মুখীন হন?

১২. আপনি কীভাবে একটি খেলার মাধ্যমে শেখার পরিবেশে একাডেমিক অগ্রগতি মূল্যায়ন ও পরিমাপ করেন?

Appendix C

Consent Form

Research Title: Teacher's Perspectives on Play-Based Learning for Children Aged 4-6 in Early Education

Researcher: Sultana Fauzia

Purpose of the study: This research is part of my Master's Degree requirements, as a student of the Institute of Educational Development (IED) at Brac University. Teacher's Perspectives on Play-Based Learning for Children Aged 4-6 in Early Education: A qualitative study the proposed research aims to explore how teachers regard play-based strategies and their efficacy in cultivating children developmentally, socially and academically. The results will fine-tune methods of teaching and provide recommendations for effective approaches to early childhood learning.

Expectation from you: If you agree, we expect you to share your perspective on 4-6 years Children's play-based curriculum in the classroom and the practices to handle the issues in order to build up their holistic development among pre-primary and grade-1 children. To that end, there will be a Focused Group Discussion (FGD) or In-depth Interview (IDI) having these dates (../ ../ ..). The FGD or IDI will last around 45 to 60 minutes, based on your response. Conversation about collecting authentic data is captured with your permission.

Risks and benefits: There is no risk for you in participating in this study, other than a frugal some time. Instead, some new details regarding the play-based curriculum condition of young kids will be surfaced by the study's findings. Teachers, school and district leaders, parents, youth and policymakers may also benefit from our study findings.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality: Your identity will not be revealed. The data will be utilized anonymously, and all information collected from you will be kept confidential. I would be glad to respond to any of your questions concerning the study in the future, and also, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.

Future use of information: Therefore, some of the information obtained from this study could be stored for further use. In such cases, however, the expert information and data supplied to other researchers will not contradict or have a negative impact on the organization of the privacy of information identifying participants, the anonymity and confidentiality of their information in any way. You may also hear from me, or someone else, in the future to solicit your valuable feedback about this issue.

Right not to participate and withdraw: You have the right to voluntary participation in the survey, and it is solely your decision whether to participate in this study or not. You may withdraw from the study at any time while you are participating without explanation. There is no penalty for declining to participate in the study. If you have read and agree to my suggestion to take part in the study, please sign the statement at the end of this letter.

Name of the teacher: _____ Name of the researcher: _____

I appreciate your cooperation. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out in my contact, +8801916100102, or you can email at sharnalyhaq@gmail.com.