

## **Teachers' Perceptions about Group Learning and Role Play in Early Childhood Education in District Narowal**

### **Abstract**

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*The purpose of this research was to explore teachers' perceptions about role play and group learning in early childhood. The main objectives of the study were to identify the difference among teachers' demographic variables like (gender, qualification, experience). Data was collected through survey method and study was quantitative in nature. Population of the study was primary school teachers of district Narowal. 250 teachers were selected as sample of the study in district Narowal. Research administrated self-developed instruments for data collection. The questionnaire was consisted on two parts. First part was consisted on demographic variables (gender, qualification, experience) and second part was consisted on teachers' perceptions about role play and group learning in early childhood education. The data was collected from teachers of District Narowal. In inferential statistics was used for data analysis.*

Key word: Group learning and play role

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## INTRODUCTION

From early childhood education through higher education, the impact of globalization on educational systems has been subject to intense demand for change. In order to develop new pedagogy that fits these patterns, several nations experiencing educational reform have looked to worldwide research findings and trends. Regardless of their strength, problems, mental health, social background, or upbringing, children in literate and illiterate cultures play. An ideal early childhood classroom must include play. There has been an upsurge in studies over the last ten years demonstrating the advantages of play-based learning for kids. However, in the global community, playtime in American kindergarten classes, for example, continues to be steadily declining (Freeman, & Greenacre, 2011). In play research, two apparently incompatible tendencies have become more prominent. An increasing body of research indicates that accelerates a variety of societal, mental, bodily, and language developments (Macintyre, 2017).

Through social play, children may handle a variety of symbol systems more skillfully, express themselves more creatively and effectively verbally, and feel more at ease attempting new things (Aukrust, 2004). While keeping the crucially important elements of play, such as children's natural desire to play, teachers in school settings gently direct play by employing play-based teaching and learning activities to meet curriculum goals (Prendiville, & Toye, 2007). Second, and strangely, the amount of time kindergarten students spends playing has steadily decreased over the past few years despite the many benefits of play acknowledged by academics (Piker, 2013). The difficulties kindergarten instructors in public school's encounter in integrating play into their lessons and the move toward kindergarten instruction that is more academically oriented have been widely documented in previous studies. Early infancy is a unique opportunity to engage in social and cognitive development, but it is also the period of life most prone to development stunting of all kinds if holistic development is not promoted (Pellegrini, 2009). According to Froebel (2016), children's play is one of the primary ways they engage with one another and the outside world. It is also their natural activity before responsibilities and formal schooling take over. Philosophers and educators have recognised and paid attention to children's play and teachers participating in play activities for ages (Froebel, 2016). In kindergarten, play is an essential activity for children's growth. Due to demands to meet state and federal standards and obligations to adhere to laws like "No Child Left Behind," teachers are gradually limiting the quantity of play-centered activities in kindergarten classes (Lee et al., 2006). Play must be a part of the curriculum if we are to promote children's development. Play is a crucial activity for kids' development in kindergarten (Gass & Mackey, 2014). Due to demands to meet state and federal standards and

obligations to adhere to laws like "No Child Left Behind," teachers are gradually limiting the quantity of play-centered activities in kindergarten classes (Lee et al., 2006). Play must be a part of the curriculum if we are to promote children's development.

The many types and stages of play that occur in early childhood classrooms, as well as the advantages of play for cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic development, have all been well studied and discussed in the literature. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) acknowledge that play is a crucial component of early childhood education (Bentley, Hutchings, & Reid, 2004). Children learn best via play, according to the theories of Piaget (cognitive and physical development) and Vygotsky (socio-cultural experiences) (Bruner, 2009). Brain research confirms the importance of play for the brain's development throughout the crucial preschool years (Blum-Kulka, & Snow, 2004). (2005) Barkley, Cross, and Major In addition to supporting symbolic thought in the play environment, language is considered as a tool for the development of self-control, cognition, and social competence. Since teacher-directed learning is seen to be more successful than play in preparing children to perform well on standards-based tests, play seems to be waning in favour in kindergarten these days. Graue (2009) provided the following justification: "It seems that demands have increased without a clear knowledge of their goal or the needs of students. "Effort has been focused on what is tested rather than what is learned due to the current emphasis on standards and success" (p. 30). Today, most kindergartens follow these standard operating protocols (Beebe & Masterson, 2003).

The Universal Free and Compulsory Basic Education will ultimately include kindergarten education, claims the text. One recommendation from the government's white paper on educational changes is this one. Before starting first grade, all Ghanaian children are required to undergo two years of Early Childhood Development (ECD) teaching. Early childhood is the first eight years of a child's existence, when they are growing and developing. The first lady at the time, Mrs. Bush, said this in a speech.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objective of the study was:

1. Identify the difference between teachers' perceptions about role play and group learning in early childhood education according their demographic variables (gender, qualification and experience)

## Method and Procedure

The study was quantitative in nature. Population was consisted all public primary school teachers in district Narowal. Random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Primary schools' teachers in District Narowal was selected as a sample of the study. 250 PST were selected as sample of the study. Researcher administrated self-developed instruments for data collection. The instrument was divided into two section. First was consisted on demographic and second part was consisted on teachers' perceptions about role play and group learning in early childhood education. The data was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Packages for social Sciences). In inferential statistics was used for data analysis.

## Results

Table 1

*Independent sample t test to identify the difference between male and female Teachers Perception about Group learning Early Childhood Education*

Gender	<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sign.</i>
Male	119	60.0336	4.16997	250	-.106	.000
Female	133	60.0902	4.26838			

The table shows that an independent sample t test was performed to compare male and female primary school teachers. Male ( $M=60.0336$ ,  $SD=4.16997$ ) and female ( $M=60.0902$ ,  $SD=4.26838$ ) differed significantly ( $t=-.106$ ,  $P=.000$ ). Thus, research demonstrates that there were gender differences in teachers' perceptions of group learning in early childhood education.

Table 2

*One Way ANOVA to identify Teachers Perception about Role Play in Early Childhood Education on the basis of qualification*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.656	27	.284	1.072	.375
Within Groups	59.245	224	.264		
Total	66.901	251			

The table shows that One Way ANOVA was used to compare instructors at the main level of Role Play in Early Childhood Education based on their educational backgrounds. According to the findings, there was no significant difference between instructors' degrees (B.A./B.Sc., M.A./M. Sc., and M. Phil.)  $F(251), 1.072, p=.375$ . As a result, it demonstrates that, based on qualifications, there were differences in male and female attitudes towards role play in early childhood education.

Table 3

*One Way ANOVA to identify Teachers Perception about Group learning Early Childhood Education on the basis of qualification*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.019	22	.274	1.029	.430
Within Groups	60.882	229	.266		
Total	66.901	251			

The table shows that One Way ANOVA was used to compare instructors at the primary level of group learning in early childhood education according to their educational backgrounds. According to the findings, there was no significant difference in teachers' degrees (B.A./B.Sc., M.A./M. Sc., and M. Phil.)  $F(251), 1.029, p=.430$ . As a result, it demonstrates that, based on qualifications, there were differences between male and female group learners in early childhood education.

Table 4

*One Way ANOVA to identify Teachers Perception about Role Play in Early Childhood Education on the basis of experience*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	21.614	27	.801	1.491	.053
Within Groups	120.239	224	.537		
Total	141.853	251			

The table shows that One Way ANOVA was used to compare the differences in experience between primary level instructors of early childhood education role play. According to the findings, there were significant differences among instructors' levels of experience (less than 5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, and more than 16 years)  $F(251),$

1.491,  $p=.053$ . As a result, it demonstrates that, based on experience, there were differences between male and female attitudes towards role play in early childhood education.

Table 5

*One Way ANOVA to identify Teachers Perception about Group learning Early Childhood Education on the basis of experience*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.006	22	1.000	1.911	.010
Within Groups	119.847	229	.523		
Total	141.853	251			

The table shows that One Way ANOVA was used to compare the differences in primary level group learning in early childhood education based on experience among instructors. According to the findings, there was a significant difference in teachers' experience levels (less than 5 years, 6–10 years, 11–15 years, and more than 16 years)  $F(251), 1.911, p=.010$ . As a result, it demonstrates that, based on experience, there were differences between male and female group learners in early childhood education.

## Discussion

According to the research's findings, play is crucial for children's development in all respects, according to preschool instructors. Children learn best in a setting with a variety of educational activities. Providing playthings for kids will benefit their learning in a variety of ways. Play improves learning and developmental domains in children; the more children play the more they learn. Children learn new abilities and concepts via play, which fosters their inventiveness. Through play, children may showcase their latent talent and learn how to use it to their benefit. Children are given the chance to engage with one another and their surroundings. These results support a study conducted by Olusola (2006), which found that instructors had a positive impression of play as a method of learning. Researchers Jennifer, Myae, and Martha's (2015) study found that instructors. It is generally accepted that play is important for children's development of both social and cognitive abilities. The results demonstrated that preschool instructors had knowledge of the importance of play in the early years. Randima (2015) looked into preschool.

Preschool instructors had a positive impression of the use of play-based activities for language development, according to the study's findings on teachers' perceptions of this topic. The researchers work harder to understand how instructors see the value of play based on gender. As there is no statistically significant difference between male and female

teachers' perceptions of the importance of play in children's development, the finding demonstrates that gender is not a factor of teachers' perceptions of its importance. This indicates that they have the same opinion about the value of play in a child's development. This backs up research by Sandberg (2005) and Olusola (2006) that found no gender-based differences in teachers' perceptions of the importance of play in children's development. The outcome also demonstrates that instructors who did not get formal education training are aware of the value of play in children's learning and development, demonstrating that this knowledge is not limited to professionals in the field of education. Therefore, regardless of their level of knowledge, they all share a good view. This conclusion is consistent with Olusola's conclusion (2006). Overall, the findings of this study indicated that preschool instructors had a positive understanding of the role that play plays in a child's development. This conclusion backs up the claims made by Sandberg (2005), Olusola (2006), Jennifer et al (2015), and Randima (2015) that play is important for children's development in all respects and that its importance cannot be overstated.

## Recommendations

The following suggestions are offered in order to reposition early childhood education in Nigeria for global competitiveness via play.

1. The primary form of instruction for young children should be play-based learning.
2. To develop leadership qualities and abilities in the young children they educate, preschool instructors should encourage them to take part in role-playing games.
3. Preschool teachers should be given enough playthings for kids to utilise at their leisure.
4. The arrangement of the preschool classroom should stimulate play activities.
5. Since children can show good or negative mood via play, preschool instructors should set aside time to watch the children while they play in order to identify whether a kid is emotionally distressed.

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