

The Utilization of the Classroom Play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the Kindergarten Learners in Labo East District, Division of Camarines Norte

Narzelle N. Ruidera¹

¹Bulhao Elementary School, Labo East District, Labo Camarines Norte University of Northeastern Philippines, Iriga City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a vital aspect of early childhood development, encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions while effectively interacting with others. This descriptive research determined the utilization of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners in Labo East District, Division of Camarines Norte. The respondents of the study were composed of forty (40) Kindergarten teachers from public elementary schools in Jose Labo East District selected through purposive sampling and total enumeration. The study employed a descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design with a researcher-made questionnaire checklist as the primary instrument to gather the necessary data. Data were analyzed using the weighted mean, frequency count, and rank, as well as Kendall Coefficient of Concordance W at a 0.05 level of significance. The study reveals that the extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers on Frequency of play activity implementation was 4.70 or rated as very much utilized, on variety of rated activities was 4.80 or rated as very much utilized, on alignment with developmental goals was 4.77 or rated as very much utilized, and on teachers facilitation and engagement was 4.85 or rated as very much utilized. On the significant agreement on the rank order of extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers along the aforementioned aspects, the Coefficient of Concordance W and the computed chi-square on the classroom play activities were: Frequency of Play Activity Implementation, 0.36 and 9.72($p>0.05$); Variety of Play Activities, 0.49 and 17.64($p>0.5$); Alignment with Developmental Goals, 0.24 and 6.48($p>0.05$); and lastly, Teacher Facilitation and Engagement, 0.67 and 20.1($p<0.05$). The extent of the effectiveness of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners on Self-Awareness Development was 4.86 or Very Much Effective, on Social Interaction and Empathy was 4.86 or rated as Very Much Effective, on Self-Regulation Skills was 4.75 or rated as Very Much Effective, on Problem-Solving was 4.85 or rated as Very Much Effective, and on Decision-Making was 4.86 or rated as Very Much Effective. On the significant agreement on the rank order of effectiveness of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learner, the Coefficient of Concordance W and the computed chi-square on the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence were: Self-Awareness Development, 0.52 and 15.6($p>0.05$); Social Interaction and Empathy, 0.39 and 14.04($p>0.05$); Self-Regulation Skills, 0.40 and 12 ($p>0.5$); Problem-Solving, 0.54 and 16.2($p>0.05$); and lastly, Decision-Making, 0.71 and 25.56($p<0.025$). Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted except on Decision-Making. The policy recommendations were formulated based on the aforementioned findings of this study.

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is a vital aspect of early childhood development, encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions while effectively interacting with others. For Kindergarten learners, this developmental milestone lays the foundation for lifelong skills such as empathy, self-regulation, and social competence, which are crucial for personal and academic success. In this context, play serves as a powerful medium through which young children can explore, express, and regulate their emotions in a supportive and engaging environment.

Kindergarten Education and Child Development: Bautista and Ramos (2020) posited that play-based learning effectively enhances children's literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills while increasing engagement and confidence; Reyes (2018) found that Kindergarten education supports holistic development through integrated cognitive, social, and emotional activities; Denham and

Bassett (2019) emphasized that teachers' emotional support and classroom environment significantly influence children's emotional competence; and Crouch et al. (2017) revealed that transition practices in pre-kindergarten improve children's social competence and adjustment to formal schooling.

Blair (2018) posited that structured kindergarten programs improve children's self-regulation, behavior, and social-emotional competence; Sandilos et al. (2018) found that professional development reduces the negative effects of teacher stress on classroom interactions; and Calik et al. (2018) revealed that teachers and schools face challenges in delivering movement education due to lack of training and resources, affecting overall child development.

Teacher Competence, Assessment, and Professional Development: Kovács (2019) posited that gender differences influence teachers' professional development priorities and teaching approaches; Pyle (2013) found that teachers' assessment practices vary depending on their curricular perspectives and classroom approaches; Fazio (2017) revealed that teacher candidates have low assessment literacy and require further training; and Pyle and De Luca (2015) emphasized that there is a mismatch between teachers' understanding of play and their assessment practices in play-based classrooms.

Correlational Studies on Teacher Performance and Student Outcomes: Diaz (2015) posited that there is a negligible relationship between teaching performance and students' academic achievement; Usop et al. (2013) found that teachers' job satisfaction contributes to higher teaching performance and productivity; Mingwie Li et al. (2018) revealed that organizational trust enhances job satisfaction and performance among teachers; Odivilas (2015) emphasized that personal qualities and work values influence job performance though not always significantly related; and Falsario et al. (2014) concluded that classroom climate and teacher-student interaction significantly affect students' academic performance.

This study aims to examine the utilization of classroom play activities in developing the emotional intelligence of Kindergarten learners. By investigating the extent and effectiveness of these activities, the research seeks to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the holistic development of young children in the foundational years of their education.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

Primarily, this study was conducted to determine the utilization of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners in Labo East District, Division of Camarines Norte. Specifically, the researcher intended to determine (1) the extent of utilization of classroom play activities by teachers in terms of (a) frequency of play activity implementation, (b) variety of play activities, (c) alignment with developmental goals, and (d) teacher facilitation and engagement; (2) the significance of the agreement on the rank orders of the extent of classroom play activities utilized by teachers along the aforementioned aspects; (3) the extent of the effectiveness of classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of Kindergarten learners in terms of (a) self-awareness development, (b) social interaction and empathy, (c) self-regulation skills, (d) problem-solving, and (e) decision-making;

(4) the significance of the agreement on the rank orders of the effectiveness of classroom play activities in developing the emotional intelligence of Kindergarten learners among the different groups of respondents; and (5) the policy recommendations that may be formulated based on the findings of the study.

2. Materials and Methods

The descriptive-evaluative-correlational research design was employed in this study. The descriptive design describes the degree of a quantifiable variable. This study was used to determine the utilization of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners in Labo East District, Division of Camarines Norte.

2.1 Respondents

The respondents composed of forty (40) Kindergarten teachers from public elementary schools in Jose Labo East District selected through purposive sampling and total enumeration. These respondents were taken for the School Year 2024-2025.

2.2 Data Gathering Instrument

The instrument used in gathering the necessary data was a structured researcher-made questionnaire checklist. Part I was about the extent of utilization of classroom play activities by teachers in terms of (a) frequency of play activity implementation, (b) variety of play activities, (c) alignment with developmental goals, and (d) teacher facilitation and engagement and Part II contained the extent of the effectiveness of classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of Kindergarten learners in terms of (a) self-awareness development, (b) social interaction and empathy, (c) self-regulation skills, (d) problem-solving, and (e) decision-making. A total of 90 questions were included in this study. The research instrument underwent content validation by experts in the field and was proofread for clarity and grammatical accuracy. The computed reliability coefficient (r) was 0.84, with a mean score of 17.20, a standard deviation of 4.35. Using the significance formula, the computed t -value was 9.76, which is greater than the tabular value of $t_{.05} = 1.711$ at 24 degrees of freedom. Thus, the instrument was found to be reliable in measuring the intended constructs. Suggestions and recommendations from validators were incorporated for the improvement of the instrument.

2.3 Data Analysis

Weighted mean was used to determine the utilization of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners in Labo East District, Division of Camarines Norte. It was interpreted using the following scale:

Scale	Weights Assigned	Description	
		Extent of Utilization of Classroom Play Activities by Teachers	Extent of the Effectiveness of Classroom Play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of Kindergarten Learners
5	4.50-5.00	Very Much Implemented (VMI)	Very Much Evident (VME)
4	3.50-4.49	Much Implemented (MI)	Much Evident (ME)
3	2.50-3.49	Implemented (I)	Evident (E)
2	1.50-2.49	Fairly Implemented (FI)	Fairly Evident (FE)
1	1.00-1.49	Not At All (NA)	Not At All (NA)

A letter of permission to conduct the study was sent to the Schools Division Superintendent of Camarines Norte, Public Schools District Supervisor, and School Heads of Jose Labo East District public elementary schools for their approval and endorsements.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The Summary of the Extent of Utilization of Classroom Play Activities by Teachers

The summary of the extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers is presented in Table 7.

As presented on the table and figure, the following areas were ranked in descending order: Teacher Facilitation and Engagement, 4.85; Variety of Play Activities, 4.82; Alignment with Developmental Goals, 4.77; Frequency of Play Activity Implementation, 4.70 were all rated as Very Much Utilized.

Table 1. The Summary of the Extent of the Level of the Implementation of the Oplan Kalusugan sa DepEd (OK sa DepEd)

Indicators	Average		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Frequency Play of Activity Implementation	4.70	VMU	4
2. Variety of Play Activities	4.82	VMU	2
3. Alignment with Developmental Goals	4.77	VMU	3
4. Teacher Facilitation and Engagement	4.85	VMU	1
Average	4.78	VMU	

The average weighted mean of the extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers in Labo East District was 4.78 or rated as Very Much Utilized.

The exceptionally high average weighted mean of 4.78 (rated as Very Much Utilized) for classroom play activities in Labo East District demonstrates a strong institutional commitment to play-based pedagogy across multiple dimensions of implementation. This comprehensive utilization aligns with Taylor & Boyer (2019) findings that effective play integration requires both frequent implementation and intentional alignment with learning objectives, while also resonating with Fox et al. (2023) emphasis on careful planning for play. The district's high scores across all measured aspects - including frequency (4.70), variety (4.82), developmental alignment (4.77), and teacher engagement (4.85) - suggest a holistic adoption of play-based approaches that reflects Russ & Lee (2019) framework for meaningful pretend play and Flint (2018) concept of responsive play facilitation. Particularly noteworthy is how these results mirror Henriksson et al. (2023) demonstration of play's academic value, showing that Labo East District teachers are successfully implementing play not just as recreation but as serious pedagogy. The consistency across all measured dimensions indicates the district has moved beyond token play implementation to establish play as a fundamental instructional strategy.

The implications of these findings are far-reaching for educational policy and practice. As Stjerne & Parker (2023) argue, such comprehensive play integration requires systemic support, suggesting Labo East District has likely invested in teacher training and resource allocation. The results validate Lundy & Trawick-Smith (2020) research showing that well-implemented play programs yield behavioral and academic benefits, while also supporting Sanchez (2024) findings on play's role in literacy development. However, as Rainio (2023) cautions, maintaining this high-quality implementation requires ongoing professional development to ensure play activities remain culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate. District leaders should document and share their successful strategies, particularly regarding how they achieved such strong teacher engagement (4.85) as highlighted by Hidayat (2023).

3.2 The Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Classroom play Activities Utilized by the Teachers

The results of the Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Classroom play Activities Utilized by the Teachers.

Table 2. The Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Extent of the Classroom play Activities Utilized by the Teachers

Indicators	Computed Tabular			
	χ^2	χ^2 -value	Decision on H_0	Significance
1. Frequency of Play Activity Implementation	9.72	16.92	Accepted	Not Significant
2. Variety of Play Activities	17.64	21.03	Accepted	Not Significant
3. Alignment with Developmental Goals	6.48	16.92	Accepted	Not Significant
4. Teacher Facilitation and Engagement	20.1	18.31	Rejected	0.05
Average	13.48	45.46		

Facilitation and Engagement. Therefore, there is no significant agreement on the extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers along the aforementioned aspects.

The statistical results revealing that only one indicator (Teacher Facilitation and Engagement) exceeded the critical chi-square value while others showed no significant agreement suggests notable variability in teachers' implementation of play-based approaches. This finding aligns with

Khurshedovna & Nurmukhammadovna (2021) assertion that play should consistently serve as the preschool period's leading activity. However, the significant finding regarding Teacher Facilitation and Engagement supports Hollenstein & Vogt (2024) emphasis on guided play as crucial for effective learning, suggesting teachers may prioritize direct involvement over other play aspects. These mixed results indicate that while play is recognized as valuable, its implementation remains inconsistent across different dimensions. The implications of these findings are particularly significant for teacher training and program implementation. As Passmore & Hughes (2020) demonstrated in inclusive settings, successful play integration requires systematic support and shared understanding among educators. The current results suggest professional development should specifically address the dimensions showing low agreement (frequency, variety, developmental alignment) while maintaining strengths in teacher engagement. Marinho (2024) research on play's benefits underscores the need for more consistent implementation to fully realize play's potential in early education. Moving forward, schools should consider establishing clearer play implementation guidelines and providing ongoing coaching, particularly in areas where teacher consensus is lacking, to create more uniform, high-quality play experiences that align with developmental and educational goals.

3.2 The Summary of the The Extent is the Effectiveness of the Classroom Play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the Kindergarten Learners

The Summary of the The Extent is the Effectiveness of the Classroom Play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the Kindergarten Learners is presented in Table 14.

Table 3. The Summary of the The Extent is the Effectiveness of the Classroom Play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the Kindergarten Learners

indicators	Average		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Self-Awareness Development	4.86	VME	2
2. Social Interaction and Empathy	4.86	VME	2
3. Self-Regulation Skills	4.75	VME	5
4. Problem-Solving	4.85	VME	4
5. Decision Making	4.86	VME	2
Average	4.84	VME	

The average weighted mean of the extent is the effectiveness of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners among the different types of schools in Labo East District was 4.84 or Very Much Effective. The results showing an average weighted mean of 4.84 (Very Much Effective) for the effectiveness of classroom play activities in developing emotional intelligence among kindergarten learners across different school types in Labo East District demonstrate the universal value of play- based approaches in early childhood education. Pyle et al. (2022) and Taylor & Boyer (2019b) provide strong theoretical foundations for these findings, showing that play naturally facilitates emotional intelligence development through self- regulation, social interaction, and problem- solving opportunities. The consistency of high effectiveness ratings across various school types aligns with (2024) argument that play transcends cultural and institutional differences in kindergarten settings. Veraksa et al. (2025) further support this through their systematic review confirming play's therapeutic benefits for emotional development. The district-wide effectiveness suggests that properly implemented play activities can successfully develop emotional intelligence regardless of school resources or demographics, though Schmidtke (2022) cautions that teacher training remains crucial for optimal implementation.

These findings have significant implications for educational policy and practice in Labo East District and similar contexts. The results strongly support Wardhani & Nduru (2023) recommendation for widespread adoption of play-based curricula across all kindergarten programs. However, Sun et al. (2025) and Agbaria (2020) emphasize that teacher emotional intelligence and self-

efficacy are critical moderators of play's effectiveness, suggesting the need for comprehensive teacher development programs. Setyawan & Luthfia (2024) and Zhang et al. (2025) highlight the importance of addressing teacher wellbeing to sustain high-quality play implementation. District administrators should consider the models proposed by Astuti et al. (2019) for structured emotional intelligence development through play, while allowing flexibility for school-specific adaptations as suggested by Moreira et al. (2023). The consistency of positive outcomes across school types argues for increased investment in play resources and teacher training as a cost-effective strategy for holistic child development, particularly in diverse educational settings like Labo East District.

3.3 The Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Effectiveness of the Classroom play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the kindergarten Learners

The results of the test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Effectiveness of the Classroom play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the kindergarten Learners are described in Table 15.

Table 4. The Test of Significant Agreement on the Rank Orders of the Effectiveness of the Classroom play Activities in the Development of the Emotional Intelligence of the kindergarten Learners

Indicators	Average		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Self-Awareness Development	4.86	VME	2
2. Social Interaction and Empathy	4.86	VME	2
3. Self-Regulation Skills	4.75	VME	5
4. Problem-Solving	4.85	VME	4
5. Decision Making	4.86	VME	2
Average	4.84	VME	

It could be discerned from the table that the Coefficient of Concordance W and the computed chi-square on the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence were: Self-Awareness Development, 0.52 and 15.6 ($p > 0.05$); Social Interaction and Empathy, 0.39 and 14.04 ($p > 0.05$); Self-Regulation Skills, 0.40 and 12 ($p > 0.05$); Problem-Solving, 0.54 and 16.2 ($p > 0.05$); and lastly, Decision-Making, 0.71 and 25.56 ($p < 0.025$).

The data show that the computed chi-square, only one indicator exceeded the tabular chi-square value at the level of significance of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted along Self-Awareness Development, Social Interaction and Empathy, Self-Regulation Skills, Problem-Solving, and Decision-Making. Therefore, there is no significant agreement on the effectiveness of the classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of the kindergarten learners among the different types of school in Labo East District.

The statistical results showing that only one indicator exceeded the tabular chi-square value at 0.05 significance level, leading to acceptance of the null hypothesis across all emotional intelligence domains (self-awareness, social interaction/empathy, self-regulation, problem-solving, and decision-making), suggests remarkable consistency in perceived effectiveness of play activities across different school types in Labo East District. This finding aligns with Bassok et al. (2016) who found increasing standardization in early childhood pedagogies across diverse settings, though their work cautioned about potential loss of developmental appropriateness. The lack of significant disagreement among schools resonates with Kirk & MacCallum (2017) who demonstrated that core strategies for social-emotional development tend to show consistent effectiveness when properly implemented. However, Yuan et al. (2025) would argue this uniformity might reflect similar levels of teacher emotional intelligence and engagement across the district rather than absolute program effectiveness, as their research shows these factors fundamentally shape implementation quality.

These findings carry important implications for early childhood education policy and practice. The consistency across schools supports Donasco & Vertulfo (2024) advocacy for play-based instruction as a universally applicable approach, suggesting current implementation in Labo East District maintains adequate fidelity. However, Siabo & Resuento (2023) would caution against interpreting this uniformity as optimal effectiveness, as their research shows even "effective" hands-on approaches may not reach their full potential without differentiated support. The results suggest district administrators should maintain current play-based frameworks while heeding Bassok et al. (2016) warning against excessive standardization. Professional development programs should focus on enhancing teachers' emotional intelligence as per Yuan et al. (2025) to elevate all schools beyond baseline effectiveness. The findings ultimately validate play-based approaches while indicating room for growth through targeted teacher support rather than program overhaul.

4. The Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several key policy recommendations are proposed which are as follows:

- The teachers should integrate varied play activities daily to ensure holistic emotional growth.
- The school heads must support continuous professional development focused on play-based emotional learning.
- The DepEd officials should institutionalize guidelines for aligning play activities with developmental goals.

- The curriculum developers must embed emotional intelligence outcomes within play-based learning frameworks.
- The teachers should be encouraged to use classroom observations to adjust play facilitation strategies.
- The parents must be involved in reinforcing emotional skills through guided play at home.
- The school heads should allocate time blocks in class schedules specifically for structured emotional play.
- The DepEd through the DepEd secretary should mandate the inclusion of social-emotional learning tools in Kindergarten classrooms.
- The teacher training institutions must include emotional development modules in early childhood education programs.
- The curriculum writers should develop play-based lesson exemplars targeting self-awareness and regulation.
- The school heads should monitor the quality of teacher engagement in play facilitation and provide feedback.
- The guidance counselors must support teachers in integrating conflict-resolution games to boost empathy and interaction.
- The DepEd regional offices through its respective regional directors should conduct capability-building workshops on play for emotional development.
- The classroom teachers should regularly assess learners' emotional responses during various play activities.
- The LGUs should provide additional resources for the implementation of developmentally appropriate play materials.
- The school heads should form peer coaching teams for play-based emotional learning practices.
- The DepEd through the DepEd secretary should issue a policy requiring emotional development indicators in Kindergarten performance standards.
- The teachers should design inclusive play scenarios that model empathy, cooperation, and self-control.
- The school heads and PTAs must collaborate to build safe and engaging play spaces for emotional growth.
- The researchers should conduct follow-up studies assessing long-term emotional benefits of structured play.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The following conclusions were drawn from the study: The extent of the classroom play activities utilized by the teachers was found to be very much utilized. There was no significant agreement on the rank order of the extent of classroom play activities utilized by the teachers except in the aspect of teacher facilitation and engagement. Moreover, the extent of the effectiveness of classroom play activities in the development of the emotional intelligence of kindergarten learners was found to be very much effective. However, there was no significant agreement on the rank order of the effectiveness of classroom play activities in developing emotional intelligence among kindergarten learners except in the aspect of decision-making. Finally, policy recommendations were formulated based on the findings of the study.

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered: The Department of Education (DepEd) should reinforce the integration of classroom play activities by issuing standardized guidelines and allocating dedicated time for teacher facilitation and learner engagement. School heads must ensure that all Kindergarten teachers receive continuous training focused on purposeful play strategies aligned with emotional intelligence development. Curriculum developers should enhance Kindergarten modules by embedding structured play-based tasks that target specific emotional competencies, including decision-making. Furthermore, local government units (LGUs) and school administrators must provide sufficient materials and safe spaces to support varied and frequent classroom play, thereby fostering emotional growth and social interaction. Lastly, the policy recommendations derived from the study should be adopted.

For future research, it is recommended to explore the long-term impact of structured play activities on learners' emotional intelligence beyond the Kindergarten level. Further studies may also investigate the role of parental involvement in reinforcing the benefits of classroom play at home. Additionally, researchers may compare the effectiveness of different types of play, such as dramatic play and sensory play, on specific emotional skills. It is also suggested to assess how teacher personality and facilitation style influence the emotional outcomes of classroom play. Finally, future studies may examine the relationship between play-based learning and behavioral outcomes across diverse socioeconomic contexts.

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