PRIMARY EDUCATION OF BANGLADESH: EFFECTIVE USE OF PLAY SECURING EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION OF THE PRE-PRIMARY CHILDREN

Md Firoz Kabir[1] and Kamrul Qader Chowdhury[2]

[1]*Assistant Project Director, Directorate of primary Education, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh.*
[2]*Education Officer, Directorate of primary Education, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

ABSTRACT

Young children like nothing but play. Learning through play-based activities develops children's critical thinking skills. The multiple aims of the study and the critical literature review of the study also gain an understanding about play with it's social, emotional, intellectual, physical and pedagogical advantages, considering the barriers to play and review the policy content of Bangladesh curriculum in pre-primary educational setting in order to decide regarding play in pre-primary educational setting of Bangladesh. Bruce and Meggitt (2002) state, ''Through play, children begin to gain a sense of control over what happens to them''. So, children's development cannot be expected without playful learning. Moreover, we want to greatly incorporate play and play-based activities in pre-primary education (PPE).

The findings indicate the differences in conception and practicing of play from the western views, such as actively participation with playful materials, classroom environment and different types of barriers to promote play.

However, it was found in the study that the issue of playful teaching-learning encounters problems for education providers. In spite of unfavorable educational environment and classroom management it confirms applying of play in appropriate way accelerates children's learning and academic skills as well as physical, mental and socio-emotional development.

Their confidence is incompatible with the concept due to some challenges and shortcomings foremost among them, lack of training, lack of support workers and lack of space. To accelerate pre-primary schooling (PPS) with play-based learning, some recommendations are made at the last chapter for pre-school related professionals.

Key Words: *Primary Education, Bangladesh, Effective, Use, Play, Securing, Educational Foundation, Pre-Primary, Children.*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers always try to make the lesson more easily understandable, time savable, attractive, joyful, optimal learning and as well as holistic development of their students. But there is a question; is there any magic for doing it? It is very important to know the answer of the questions. What kind of technique or approach is optimal for children's learning? As we work with teachers and children in primary education of Bangladesh. In the field of primary education. we always hear that Play is child's work as a part of children lives and children always like do something for enjoyment, simply this is play

Education is a prime factor of addressing the challenges of over-all development. Though Bangladesh has obtained some significant achievements in different aspects of education, recently it has put much important

on PPS including playful learning (Ranjan et al. 2014). As a field level education officer, we render our services to impart and ensure quality primary education.

According to visionary psychologist D.W. Winnicott (cited in Wilson 2009) play is a very much debated issue and it is significant for cognitive development and learning for a child. From our experience in the field of primary education, everybody hopefully believes that play has many purposes and advantages; play-based curriculum is the perfect practice for pre-primary educational setting. In our experience, when we observe in pre-primary class room, we found that children prefer to learn through play. Therefore, if it is known what play is, what play is appropriate, what children like to participate in, what play-based curriculum is; then it will be accepted that play based curriculum is appropriate and it is needed. But play is not for only enjoyment, it has various advantages. It may also use as a pedagogical approach for early child education and it performs important role for social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of children.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

Primary schools in Bangladesh are not only a first source of educational experience but are also a central social environment apart from family learning where social skills are shaped and constructed for the first time. Accordingly, Bangladesh has achieved tremendous success in the primary education sector in terms of quantity and school environments for children in areas such as enrollment, increased cycle completion rates, reduced dropout rate, recruitment of quality teachers, improved training, activity based curriculum development, the involvement of IT facilities, and needs-based infrastructure.

Despite these, the country is still facing challenges in securing quality learning environments, especially in terms of classroom activities due to the less frequent involvement of children in pre-school play and activities to build social skills.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the last few years, there has been much idea about play which uses in the classroom. But there is a question has been arisen, whether to should apply the playful curriculum or firmly traditional/academic curriculum (Nicolopoulou, 2010 and Almon, 2003). According to Warner (2008) many practitioners and parents don't see the vital relation between a time of teaching-learning and time of play. According to Ashaibi (2007) in recent years' academic focus is more emphasized in early childhood setting. So, it is the opinion in the favor of academic focus, the major play-based curriculum should be emphasized in the early childhood program. But in this case, teachers are very unconscious about the importance of the role of play in early year's educational setting. Nicolopoulou (2010) and Englebright (1996) support that children learn and understand their surrounding world, exploration and imagination through play.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings reveal that play and play-based activities are used in PPS but not in very properly in accordance with the existing educational curriculum due to some initial constraints like lack of experiences, lack of supports and support workers etc. (Ranjan et al. 2014). The study shows that playthings available at PPS are insufficient though a variety of playful strategies are tried to apply. However, there is also insufficiency in the confidence of teachers supporting children's playful learning. Most of the professionals in this study confirmed that they badly needed training. Lack of training on play and playful structure leave poor impression on their confidence. On the contrary, meaningful and effective training on play helps them render effective teaching and care. The findings of this study also reveal that play and play-based activities create a good relationship between adults and young people, which seems to be key to developing resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem.

The study can play a vital role to the understanding of supports and resources available, provided and expected within and for PPSs. The findings of this study address the issue of low confidence among adults in providing learning with play. This study also addresses some specific challenges which shall be overcome by improving practice as well as whole pre-school policy. And so, there are some suggestions and recommendations through this study to remove these constraints. Lastly, it upholds the necessity for up to date effective and meaningful training for PSTs and for those who are in positions of PPS management.

Types of play

Play of children evolves as they grow and improve. For this, different kinds of play and games are played by them, namely co-operative play, independent play, associative play, onlooker play, parallel play, dramatic play, unoccupied play, symbolic play, guided play (games), physical play, familiarization play, manipulative play, expressive play, role play, pretend play, phantasy play (Pyle and Danniels, 2017; Bruce and Meggitt, 2002). Therefore, a wide range of play are available to children. All these plays develop different kinds of capacities of children and engage children in negotiating between inner and outer worlds,

which we can find out in the question of Winnicott (1971) ***"If play is neither inside nor outside, where is it?"***

However, types of play differ from country to country within educational curriculum. For example, Japan focuses on three layers of activities combining free play, guided play and teacher-instructed play (Wall, Litjens and Taguma, 2015) whereas Bangladesh focuses two types of play - free play or informal play, and guided play or formal play (NCTB, 2011). Rules of play are different from rules of games and children frame rules in play (Piaget, 1962) though both of them are for joyful learning.

In Bangladeshi pre-primary schooling, there are four corners for free play: imaginary corner; block, touch and moveable corner; water and sand corner; and book and drawing corner where a lot of play materials like earthen jars, earthen pots, masks, bottoms, ropes, paper flowers, clay fruits, clay birds, etc. are available (NCTB, 2011).

There are 22 games for guided play, which are set up from easy play to complex play such as, railcar moving with jhikjhik sound, birds flying etc. (NCTB, 2011). Though rules are must in games (Piaget, 1962), all games are playable and learnable to pre-school students. As play appears in many forms with varied interest and learning, young children take part in all games and play depending on their needs, situation and environment.

Research questions

The objective of the study is to answer the following questions:

- How to best introduce play-based pre-school education in Bangladesh?
- To what extent does the effectiveness of a play-based curriculum model rely on a collective partnership between and among parents, teachers and other stakeholders?
- What is the perception of practitioners of play-based pre-school education in Bangladesh?

Theoretical Framework and Rationale of the Study

Very little research has been done on the relationships between pre-school play, social skills, and academic outcomes in the context of primary education in Bangladesh. My study will address this gap and will bring forward new ideas and policy initiatives based on examples from various developed countries in the world.

Fundamental questions around play have spawned fervent debates among academics, and the concept has become a growing concern for scholars and researchers who have observed an "alarming disappearance of play from preschool to Kindergarten (Nicolopoulou 2010, 1). Scholars such as Sundsdal and Øksnes 2015 have emphasized the significance of spontaneous and free play for school preparedness and early learning for children in their investigative studies.

I will review a recent case study by Diamond et al. (of University Columbia), which concluded that kindergarten curriculum along with play enhances "children's joy in learning and teachers' enjoyment of teaching, and reduced bullying, peer ostracism, and teacher burnout."

The case study of Ontario elementary schools in Canada by Fesseha and Pyle (2016), for example, will play a significant role in my study. They concluded that elementary school systems where play-based learning is available leads to more successful academic outcomes. Fesseha and Pyle also find there are a number of difficulties around the integration of play in pre-school curriculum. Their findings are relevant to my proposed study with regards to Canadian practitioners who have focused on pre-primary play as an important tool to promote learning. Thus, many pre kindergarten and early elementary "classrooms have replaced playful experiences with scripted curricula that directly link to national education standards and assessments" (Miller& Almon, 2009; Pellegrini, 2009).

A recent study reported views on play from parents and early childhood educators in semi-rural Bangladesh (Chowdhury and Rivalland, 2012). Here, the researchers found that the early childhood educators were more likely than the parents to view play as a learning strategy and a way to prepare children for school work. This research is very relevant to my proposed study as it provides insights from Bangladesh.

Using these studies as a foundation, I will establish this notion that without play and play-based activities, improvements to Pre-Primary Schooling (PPS)in Bangladesh will be rather very challenging.

Contribution of the study

The study is expected to benefit primary school teachers, communities, parents, children, education planners as well as policy makers. Awareness should be raised about the rights of children to indoor and outdoor play in support of their development, as well as their learning, social skills and academic outcomes (Bento and Dias, 2017). Despite the results of many studies, providers and parents in Bangladesh remain preoccupied by narrow thinking that suggests, ''*School is a place for learning not to play*'' (Ranjan et al., 2014, p. 83).

The research will make a significant contribution to the academic literature on this topic and will reveal that play and play-based activities lead to a good relationship between adults and young people, which seems to be key to developing resilience, self-confidence and self-esteem.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study will look at several theories of pre-school play which originate from a variety of perspectives, including relationships between pre-school play, social skills, and academic outcomes. My literature review will examine various bodies of comparative research to adopt new perspectives including curriculum based on pre-school play and social skills in the primary education sector in Bangladesh.

There is a substantial body of empirical research on the connections between play and learning, and scholars have advanced theoretical contributions by employing various methodologies considering the perceptions and views of various sectors ranging from policy makers, parents, children and other stakeholders engaged in the educational process. As such, Avornyo and Baker (2018) concluded the role and importance of play in children's learning is perceived differently by different stakeholders and across different contexts in Ghana. For example, head teachers and teachers perceived play as a form of learning more so than parents. Play is the highest expression of early development (Madray and Catalano, 2010), and a child should be afforded play and free time. Through play and play-based learning activities, young children improve and are better able to manage their state of emotion, mental well-being, intelligence, and societal role (Luntley, 2018, Einarsdottir et al., 2015 and Bruce and Meggitt, 2002).

The priority for a better life is in education and it is a basic need of human beings (Sen, 1999) and a fundamental right for every child (DPE, 2017; UNESCO, 2008). Educational institutions are the cornerstone of over-all development of present era and pre-primary schooling (PPS) is the starting stage of education. Despite having a great deal of help and cooperation from other institutions, a society of equals cannot be created without an educational system (Ray and H. Poonwassie, 2017). So, educational endeavours are important to greatly transform the nature of society, and appropriate endeavours through schools can be conducted to demonstrate new possibilities for the society (ibid). Similarly, PPS is one of such institutions which helps young children develop socially and it is a must for every young child because their access to PPS is the foremost step in building a concrete foundation of a nation (Ranjan et al. 2014). But children do not like reading. They prefer playing to reading, especially very young children do so. They make everything playful and learn more through play and games. As play is the highest expression of early development (Madray and Catalano, 2010), a child should have play and time of its own. Through play and play-based learning activities, young children improve in the state of emotion, mind, intelligence and society, and play makes learning learnable and possible (Luntley, 2018). Play is one of the best means of inclusion and it teaches children to be considerate and to show brotherhood and moral capacities. In the play-ground or in the playful environment, children's absolute patience and sympathy are noticed when they lose or win. They embrace each other or shake hands forgetting any disparity of cast, creed and colour. Through play, children can rearrange their lives, get their feelings, thoughts, relationships, emotions under their control and can identify their own capability and potentiality in a sense on the reflection of past, continuity of present and rehearsal of future (Einarsdottir et al., 2015 and Bruce and Meggitt, 2002). Children who may be good at drawing in future show eagerness to draw earlier, who may be good at singing show eagerness to sing and who may be a great artist show genius in their childhood. For example, when songs are sung to children, they learn the rhythms of the songs, rhythms of their culture and language of their culture (Bruce and Meggitt, 2002). It is like the proverb that morning shows the day. After all, play is nothing but a part of young children's daily life.

As an educationist, we firmly believe that playful techniques are more effective ways for teaching pre-school students. Without playful activities in PSCs, proper and positive interactions can never be expected and even learning cannot be stable. So, I am interested in highlighting play, uses of play, usefulness of play, limitations of play-based teaching-learning and other play related issues in my study.

Understanding of play

There is no unique and specific universal definition of play in educational setting. It is very difficult to define play as like trying to define love (Gordon Sturrock cited by Wilson, 2009). According to Johnson, Christie and Wardle (2005) it is difficult to define play for its unclear and inconsistent characteristics. Many scholars have given their different ideologies about play. Wilson (2009) also thinks play is a set of freely chosen, personally directed and essentially irritated behaviors. Winter (2009) uses a very important quote for play "Play is the SPICE of life"- here SIPCE means children's Social, Physical, Intellectual, Cultural and Emotional development. According to Play Scotland (1998) play is a natural and intentional doing for all; children and adults are benefited through engaging it. Recently Hedges and Cooper (2017) representation as play is an intrinsically motivational activity which involves some creativity and imagination as a result child earn a significant outcome through it.

Moreover, Curtis (1994) & Wardle (1987) define play as self-directed, enjoyable and not pragmatic activities. Armstrong (2011) refers to play is a multisensory, interactive, innovative, imaginative and always

changeable self-motivated process. According to Schwartz (2008) and Samuelson & Carlsson (2008) viewpoint of play, there is no specific difference between play and work for children, it is an essential part of their lives and all children participate in it. Almon (2003) stated though cultural and language differences country to country, worldwide play is universal language, unites children and understandable. Xu (2010) stated play is a pleasurable practice as well as a vital approach for children learning; it builds social affiliation and understandings.

Sutton-Smith (1997) explained the nature of play is wide, complex and meaningless. Similarly, Englebright (1996) and Xu (2010) stated that though the nature of play is wide and complex, it is significant for enhancing learning and development for a child as well as recognized by early childhood teachers. Ceglowski (1977), Scarlett, Naudeau, Salnius-Paspernak and Ponte (2005) agreed and said that play help to develop social, emotional, physical and cognitive growth of children. Johnson, Christie and Wardle (2005) show the historical relationship between play and education from the enlightenment period of the nineteenth century. They concluded that it has positive effect on children's learning and development and it is a crucial performs for early year's education.

So, it is said that worldwide play is effective tools of early year's education. A study was conducted by Nahar Chowdhary and Corine Rivalland (2011) about play as pedagogy in the context of Bangladesh. The study has found that play is recognized as a part of pedagogy in the operational framework for Pre-primary education of 2008, also pre-primary curriculum developed in 2011 in Bangladesh and important tools to accelerate learning and development of early childhood.

The role of play

The role of play is well researched. Many researchers work on play and give valuable theories, ideas and opinion about play. It is undoubtedly proven that play has many advantages. Here are reviewed some advantages.

Play has many academic advantages

Ceglowski (1997) mentioned play is a child's work. Wanner (2000) proved positive the relation between play and academic success. According to Mastrangelo (2009) children achieve knowledge about their surrounding world by questioning and quiring ideas.

The research conducted by Madray &c atanalo (2010) indicated play enhances physical, social, moral, creative and motor skills of children, if the teacher ensures the proper environment. They found that curriculum materials can accelerate learning through play, such as water play, block play, cards game, musical chairs, groups game, hide and seek, board games help to teach math concepts; Basic scientific instruments and game help to learn natural world and science and occur playful learning, such as sample of rocks and minerals, shells, all types thermometers, microscope, telescope, block game, water game, board and electronic gameetc. Role play, guided music, board game, model, electronic game, toys can effective method for world cultures, social study, history, geography, economics, criminal justice, and psychology, physical and special education teaching; paper games/ books (bingo) are helpful for foreign language teaching. They also comment proper choosing and assessing of games and toys to use in the classroom can be stimulated and excited children for learning.

Above these studies show different academic advantages of play. However, the study of Nahar Chowdhary and Corine Rivalland (2011) in the context of Bangladesh indicates some playful activities in pre-primary classroom; such as working with learning apparatus (rejected pens, beads, bamboo sticks, stones, leaves, bangles or clay-made shape for teaching shape of triangle/circles/ squares); Rhymes regards in curriculum and text book; Curriculum prescribed physical exercises, games, song and acting, stories, drawing, some outdoor plays, instructed sports. They comment that all playful activities were aimed for developing children's specific socio-emotional, cognitive and physical aspects according to their age and these activities to accelerate their numeracy and literacy learning. These teaching-learning techniques are also helpful for teacher as an effective pedagogy.

Play has many social advantages

Taylor, Samuelson and Rogers (2008) commented that the children who are empowered through play can be coping skillfully with everyday life. Mabry and Fucigna (2009) stated classroom are the most important place for learning, where children play with each other, that expand their self-direction and self-control, a symbolic representation understanding capacity, confidence and communication, problem-solving capacities, and thoughtful cultural rule and social behavior. Goldstein (2012) points out the social benefits of play; such as play increases empathy, compassion, and sharing; creates options and choices; models relationships based on inclusion rather than exclusion; improves nonverbal skills; increases attention and attachment.

Play has many advantages for physical and mental health

Burdette (2006) examined that play reduce anxiety, depression, aggression and sleep problems and improves aspects of emotional well-being. Power (2000) stated plan may be a solution of obesity problem by reducing excess calories. O'Connor (2011), Pelligrini (1997), Panksepp (2003) show play reduces disruptive and hyperactivity disorder. Goldstein, J (2012) argues play nourishes the development of child. He mentions some physical health's benefits of play; such as positive emotions increase the efficiency of immune, endocrine, and cardiovascular systems; decreases stress, fatigue, injury, and depression; increases range of motion, agility, coordination, balance, flexibility, and fine and gross motor exploration.

Psychologist Peter Gray (2011) comments that play promote the mental health of children and mention some psychopathological contribution of play; such as play develops intrinsic interests and competencies of children. They learn how to make decisions, solve problems, exert self-control, follow rules and regulate their emotions through play; make friends and learn to get along with others as equals and experience of joy. Above these studies shows different advantages of play in physical mental health. However, generally Bangladesh context there is no specific reference to the advantages of play to the policy thus identifying a gap the required to be explored further.

Pedagogical advantages/ Play-based approach in teaching-learning activities

There are many research evidences which focuses play may be used important pedagogy in early child education. Many scholars and theorists give their valuable opinions about relationship between play and learning. According to Weston (2000) and Saracho (2010) the first kindergarten was begun by Forebel in 1839 and there, play was implemented as a method of educational process. Various materials and activities were used for in the classroom for gaining ideas and meaning to understand (Platz & Arellano, 2011). Weston (2000) concluded that the childhood experiences play a vital role for child's education. Similarly, Fraser (2006) showed that play is an essential component of early childhood classroom and it gives freedom to express students.

In another recent study was conducted by Vogt et al. (2018) about the use of a playful approach for teaching numeracy in the early year's classroom in Switzerland. They found that the playful approach was very much enjoyable, effective and appropriate for children learning with various needs.

Researchers found that the play-based approach is enjoyable, effective, time and labor savable and suitable for children learning with diverse needs. Despite play as pedagogy, play has also many advantages of physical, intellectual and social-emotional growth.

The barriers to play and Bangladesh pre-primary educational setting

The implementation and promotion of children's play is the overarching objective now. White bread (2012) states the major barrier of children's play is lack of understanding about the importance of play. White bread also suggests freely chosen and self-determined play programs need to be time and space where children can access independently, such as schools, public libraries, community centers, play parks, children's hospitals, etc. Unsupervised free plays have many risk opportunities.

According to Heidemann and Hewitt (2010) Classroom environment and space arrangements are very significant factors to promote children's play in the classroom.

Classroom context

lack of infrastructure and logistic support in the pre-primary class room the studied schools. Usually, some pre-primary classes ware conducted under the open sky without facilities of facilities, such as black board, bench-table or sheds to protect from rain and heat of the sun. Some schools have changed the place because no fixed class room and class arrange outside. Some schools have available classroom but it was conducted in unfavorable classroom environment.

Teacher's role

Due to over enrollment (30 per class 5 years old) in most of the school's playful curriculum cannot be implemented. However, these barriers are challenging problem to implement pre-primary education in Bangladesh. This study also tries to find out the barriers to play from field level investigation. These barriers will help to policy makers, teachers, educators with new understanding on how play implement by families and early childhood educators in Bangladesh pre-primary education.

Policy Review and Recommendations of Play

Consideration the role of play in education UNCRC firmly embedded that play is a fundamental right for all children. Scotland has contributed the first national play strategy and the right to play based on the Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). All children and young people should have play experiences as part of their daily lives which supports the key concept of "Getting it Right for Every Child" approach (Gov. scot, 2018).

It is controversial issue the time of play and which play is healthy, gives positive emotions, and promotes long-term health. Goldstein, J (2012) emphasizes the time of play, regularly two hours' active play in a day is helpful for reducing attention deficiencies and hyper activity. Goldstein believes that children are always benefited from free play. So, their plays, toys and instruments should be suitable for them.

It is very important to use variety of toys for implementing of play, such as electronic and digital toys, the blocks, ball, mailbox, puppy etc. Goldstein (2004, 2011); Plowman (2004) emphasizes to use of toy for play. They sate toy is not only fun to play; it reflects the most modern developments in science and technology. Technology of toys can support children with severe physical impairments'' (Fabregat, 2004 cited in Goldstein, 2011).

European play organizations suggest for promoting quality for play, as well as safety and well-being. They also suggest to use of natural materials in playground designs and establish funding agencies that promote play and play research.

Bangladesh has taken a goal of primary education- 'to ensure the quality education for all children'. So, 100% enrollment and completion of primary education of all school going children must be ensured. Bangladesh has to take step or preparation for fulfillment of the purpose that's why policy should be adopted. Bangladesh already has announced "the National Education Policy 2010". Bangladesh has taken many initiatives for developing and implementing pre-primary education through PEDP-2 & 3 programs of primary education and included it in School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) (Bangladesh pre-primary education & School Level Improvement Plan, published by UNESCO, 2015). Bangladeshi primary schools arrange yearly annual sports and cultural program by the Governments instructions and pre-primary education includes some plays in the class room basis. However, there is no specific strategy or policy for play based learning in school level. All the research findings further emphasize on importance the policy of play, thus identifying a gap the required to be explored further.

In the past in Bangladesh there was conceptions that play held a significant role in children lives as they grow and develop. More recently, play has been acknowledged as an approach to influence learning within an educational setting. In the review of literature there are different theoretical viewpoints, but all practitioners are agreed play has the vital role for development of physical, social, emotional and mental health as well as holistic development of a child on the other hand that helps to achieve optimal educational goal by providing quality education for all children (Xu, 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper will employ qualitative meta-synthesis 'to develop new knowledge based on the rigorous analysis of existing qualitative research findings' (2004, 1343) on pre-school play, social skills and academic outcomes.

Meta-synthesis is integrative rather than interpretative (Saini and Shlonsky2012) and aims to offer a coherent description or explanation of a target event or experience' (Thorne et al. 2004, 1358). As in qualitative methodology "in general, some of its central elements are the extraction of concepts or themes, their comparison and contrast as well as the synthesis of results across studies in the form of conceptual taxonomies". It will include a concrete and detailed procedure for data collection and data analysis.

Questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions will be used as data collection tools. Data will be collected from primary sources through the use of interviews, questionnaires and group discussion as parts of this process. Closed questions will be used in surveys for rapid and numerical data analysis (Menter et al., 2011). Among them, the first few questions will be on teachers' experiences about play and activities, while a second section will focus on teachers' views on the benefits of play, a third section will include questions relating to accessing support for the teaching of play, and finally a last section will concentrate on the challenges of play-based activities and how to meet these issues (Dowson, 2009, Menter et al., 2011 and Newby, 2014).

Approach and Design

The approach of quantitative and qualitative questionnaire appeared.

The researcher had set seven closed questions for quick data collection. Among them, first two of the questions were on teachers' experiences about playful structure and activities, next two were on teachers' views on benefit of play, third two were on getting support for teaching playful structure and last one was on challenges of play-based activities.

The questionnaire of qualitative research enabled participants to disclose their attitudes, express their belief, values and past behaviours, and explain activities that assisted the researchers to know insights, and the questionnaire of quantitative research supported the researchers to be acquainted with the general patterns (Dowson, 2009, Menter et al., 2011 and Newby, 2014). Both approaches of questionnaire were used in this study though using questionnaire as a data tool has drawbacks.

Data collection tool

While considering methodology to this study, the quantitative approach with a mixture of closed and open-ended question seemed to be the best choice for the researcher. The data was gathered through e-mail. The data collection tool of this study was questionnaire and we used this tool as it was flexible, rapid and short time process (Menter et al., 2011).

We used a mixture of quantitative and qualitative questions to consider the "multiplicity of meanings, representations and practices" (Smith 2001: 24) of play in pre-school education.

Sample

The group we intended to research was early education providers (EEP). Therefore, EEP was sample and we used a purposive sample (Cohen et al. 2013) working at Dhaka district in Bangladesh A remainder about survey email was firstly sent to them with the link. Then after 10 days, the participants were remaindered through the final email. Although the survey had been e-mailed to one hundred potential EEP, thirty-one of professionals participated and completed the survey.

Data Analysis

In the questionnaire we set seven closed questions and we analysed them using statistical description (ibid). we also set three open-ended questions which were analysed thematically and to be familiarised with that data of these question and to be well-instructed, we had gone through the answer repeatedly (ibid). we found out and marked the main points related to our topic of the study, that was our codes and by utilising that codes in all transcripts, we affixed other new codes for new points making together into themes (Creswell, 2015 and Menter et al. 2011). The data was also indexed and charted after the themes had been identified (Pope et al. 2000).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

 Materials/resources used in pre-school classes

Responses are shown in the following table.

Table 1. Available resources for play in pre- school

| Items	Frequencies	Percentage
Building sets	8	14
Physical things like horse riding	6	10
Musical instruments like piano	4	7
Role play like using stethoscope	2	3
Alphabet and number-based toys	25	42
Pictures	14	24

The above table shows that most of the schools had alphabet and number-based toys that are frequently used as play items and every pre-school had one or more of mentioned 6 items of materials/resources. The highest number of schools had alphabet and number-based toys (42%) and the lowest proportion had role play things (3%). Of the other materials, pictures were used in 24% of the pre-schools, building sets 14%, physical things in 10% and musical instruments in 7% of the schools. This result indicates that most of the pre-school teachers use different items of instruments and toys for play.

Usefulness of play and play-based activities

The purpose was to seek pre-school teachers' thinking and attitudes towards play in consisting curriculum. However, most of the respondents considered play and play-based activities as the medium of inclusive education.

Figure 1. Usefulness of Play-based activities
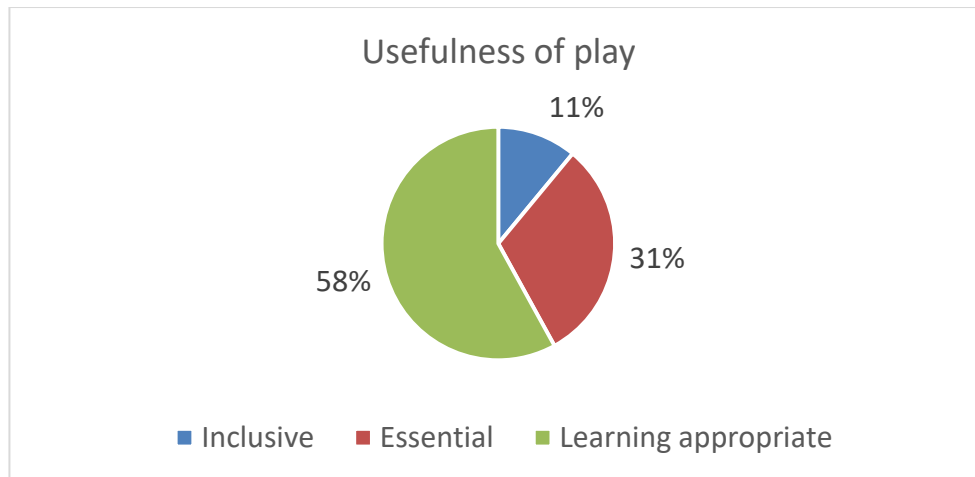
The above figure shows that majority of responses are in favour of play as it fascinates children of all class family. When specifically wanted to know about how play and play-based activities were, most of the respondents (58%) said that these were inclusive, 31% were in essentiality and 11% were in learning appropriateness.

Beneficiaries of play
The aim was to hunt after pre-school teachers' view on benefit and beneficiary of play.

Table 2. Beneficiaries of play

Beneficiaries	Frequencies	Percentage
Students	1	3
Teachers	0	0
Community	3	10
Both students, teachers & community	27	87

The table presents that beneficiaries of playful learning are not less. Twenty-seven respondents (87%) expressed their views that both students, teachers and community benefited from playful learning activities. Three respondents (10%) said that only community were beneficiaries and one respondent (3%) was in favour of students only. No responses came from the respondents that only teachers benefitted from play.

Benefits of play and playful activities
Findings are depicted in the below figure.

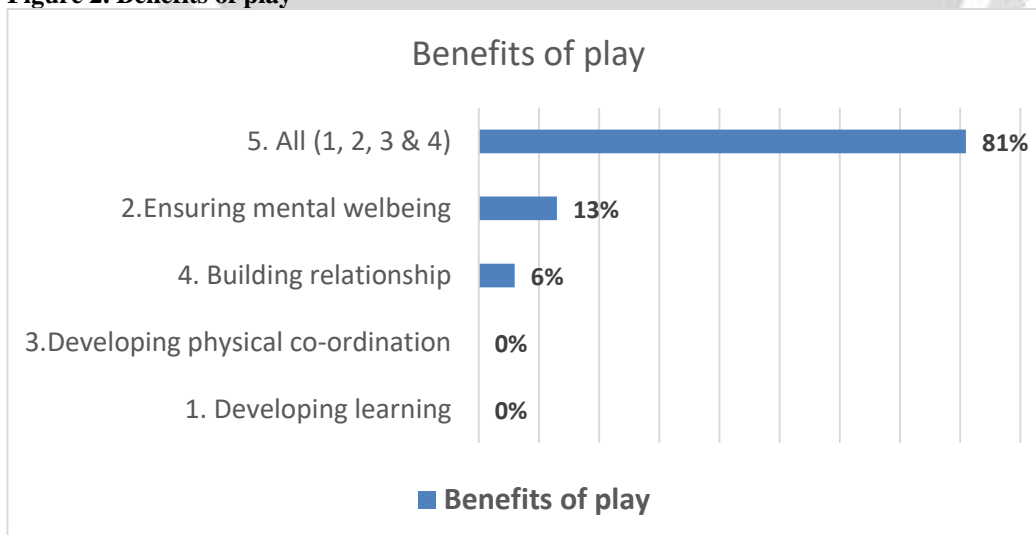**Figure 2. Benefits of play**

Figure 2 presents that there are a lot of benefits of play. Through play and play based activities young children acquire some special knowledge that help them become skilled in developing quality. Twenty-five respondents (81%) gave their consent that play built positive relationship among children and adults children, children and adults, developed physical co-ordination and learning, and ensured mental health wellbeing. Three respondents (13%) thought that play helped young children not only to learn but also to

ensure their mental wellbeing, and two respondents (6%) were in favour of building relationship. No responses supported that play only developed learning and physical co-ordination.

Necessary support for teaching playful structure

Findings are presented below in accordance with the responses.

Figure 3. Necessary support for teaching playful structure
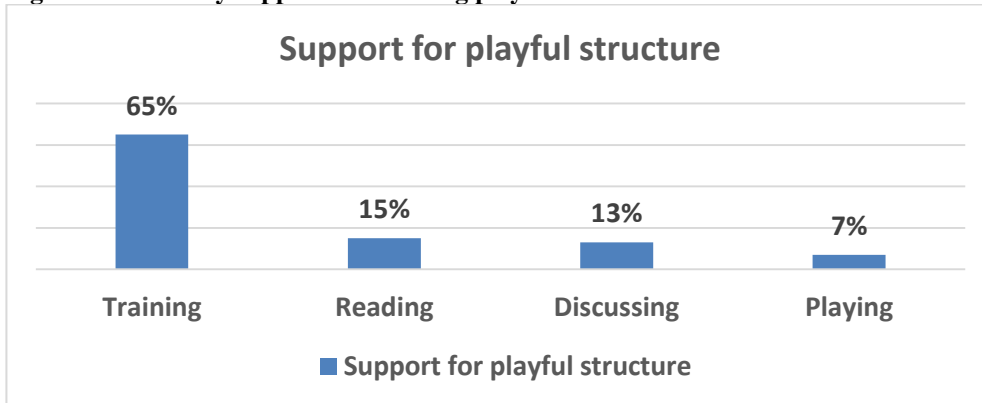
As a teacher of modern era, s/he must be up to date of present happenings in teaching and will be skilled and perfect for teaching. But a teacher cannot be perfect with his own alone efforts and for this, s/he needs training, reading text and articles, discussing with others about techniques of play and playthings. A young child's learnings and development depend on him/her. So, s/he needs different kinds of supports and efforts. When the respondents were asked how they could professionally develop, two-third of them (65%) argued for training. Reading was supported by 15% respondents, discussion by 13% and playing by 7% of the respondents.

Support providers

Supports are something that can make or break one's career. So, to build a good career as a skilled pre-school teacher, and teach students effectively, s/he is badly in need of supports from head teacher, community, government, students and higher authority. are exhibited in the following figure.

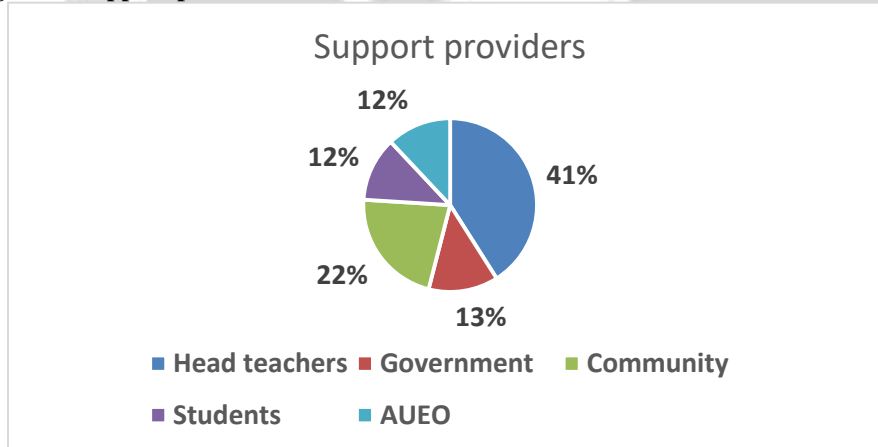**Figure 4. Support providers**

Figure 4 presents that different kinds of people provide support to a pre-school teacher. When specifically asked regarding the most support providers in developing classroom environment, 40% of the respondents were in favour of support from head teachers, support from community was in 22%, support from government was in 13%, support from students and AUEO was in both 12% (figure 4) This result shows that pre-primary teachers mostly get support from head teachers.

Challenges

Teaching is a noble profession, but it has always some challenges too. Pre-school teachers also cannot go without it, rather they have to face multiple challenges in teaching playful structure. It was wanted to identify challenges of play and find out the way of overcoming them. Responses are shown in the following figure.

Figure 5 Challenges of teaching playful activities

Challenges
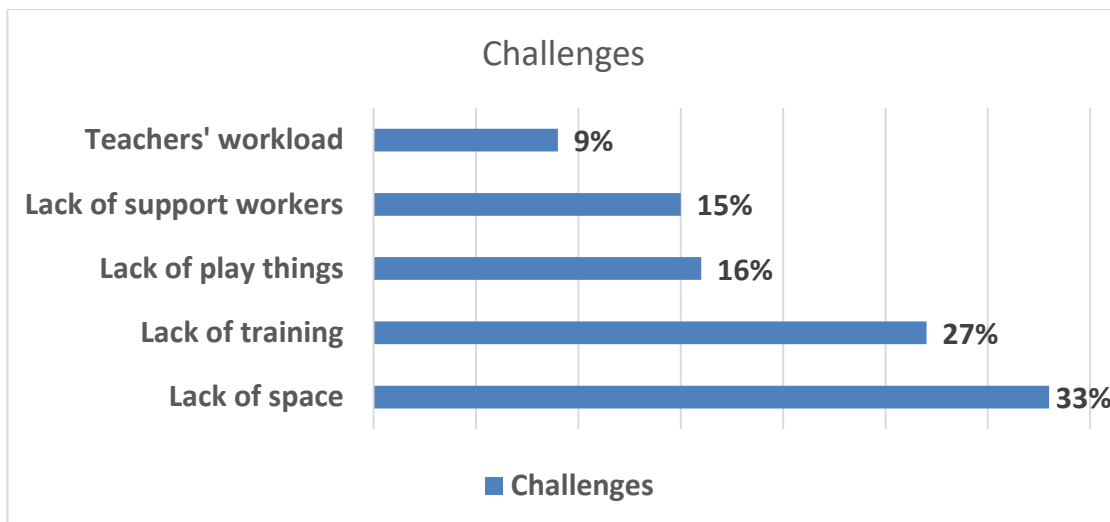
Findings of the figure 5 demonstrates that teaching playful structure is not an easy task. Its goal is hard to achieve. Here, we found that 33% respondents faced the scarcity of space for play, 27% for lack of training, 16% for lack of playthings, 15% for lack of support workers and 9% for their workload.

The most common challenge

Through the responses of the previous question, it is found that there are a few challenges which must be taken into an account to overcome. The responses are categorised into five shown in the following table.

Table 3. Most common challenge of teaching playful activities

Challenges	Frequencies	Percentage
Lack of space	18	58
Lack of training	2	7
Lack of support workers	1	3
Teachers' workload	4	13
Lack of play things	6	19

The purpose of the question was to find out the main challenge of playful activities and focus on some appropriate solutions. The highest number of responses (58%) were in favour of lack of space which was the most common challenge in implementing playful activities. The responses showed that lack of play things was marked by the second highest (19%) of the respondents, teachers' workload was in 13%, lack of training was in 7% and lack of support worker was in least (3%).

Solutions to challenges

Challenges in the way of teaching-learning through play must be overcome to make a learning appropriate environment. To find out the probable solutions and valuable opinions from the experienced respondents regarding challenges, Respondents mentioned a few numbers of ways which have been categorised into six enablers shown in the figure below.

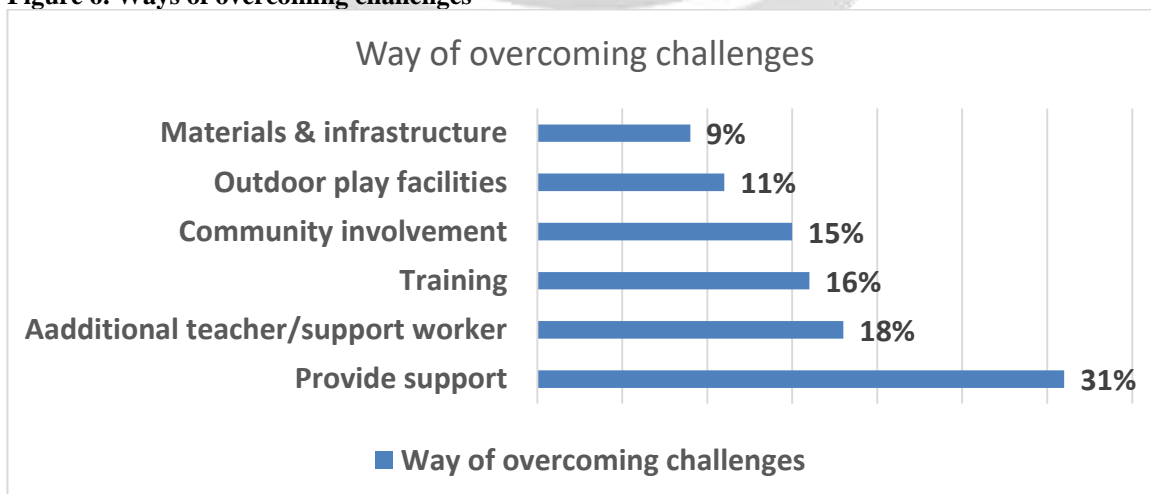**Figure 6. Ways of overcoming challenges**

Figure 6 exhibits that the respondents illustrated some solutions which are important to overcome the mentioned challenges. 31% of the respondents said that supports from every stakeholder like students, parents, teachers, community etc. might be helpful to outdo each of the challenges. The second highest respondents (18%) stated that additional teachers or support workers were important. 16% of the respondents thought that adequate training could be very useful to overcome challenge. 15% of responses were in support of community involvement and 11% were in favour of outdoor facilities like play grounds, gardens, park play things etc. Again, 9% of the respondents asked for materials and infrastructure including play things, well-furnished classroom and playful environment so that they could confront the challenges.

Supports expected by PPT to ensure playful activities

Some challenges like lack of SRM, TLM can be overcome by the PPT themselves or with the help of others e. g. students can do clay dolls making, paper letter making. are categorised into six supports which are displayed in the following table.

Table 4. Prospective supports for ensuring playful activities

Item of support	Frequencies	Percentage
Play materials	10	25
Decorated classroom	6	15
Playground facilities	4	10
Support for outdoor activities	3	8
Training and professional development	9	23
Support from community	8	20

The above table focuses on some important requirements for the PPT with what they can render teaching effectively. They asked for some different types of supports which are classified into six terms. Among all these supports, play materials was on the highest demand (25%) meaning that majority of schools need attractive and age appropriate safe play materials. 23% respondents longed for adequate subject related training through which they could develop professionally and 20% of the respondents expected supports like additional teachers, part-time teachers, support workers and cooperation from community. Well-furnished, colourful and standard sized classrooms were expected by 15% of the respondents. Playground facilities like swing materials, seating materials etc. were asked for by 10% of the respondents, and 8% of them needed supports for outdoor facilities like safe playful learning environment, ways of movement, field ride, jump and run etc.

 However, details will be illuminated in the discussion chapter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Available resources/materials for play in pre-primary schools

Young pupils do not require costly props or items for play and so, teachers should plan and supply props for children, which help them (c) play deeply (Bruce and Meggitt, 2002).   Information from collected data on the use of materials in PPC has been categorised into the following six groups: building set; physical things; musical instruments; role play things; alphabet and number-based toys; and pictures. Building set included puzzle game, making robot, making toy train, making pyramid etc.; physical things included cock horse riding, merry-go-round, see-saw, cradle rocking etc.; musical instruments included piano, harmonica, etc.; role play things included stethoscope, acting dress etc.; alphabet and number-based toys included letter card made of hard paper, plastic and wood, number card indicating number of birds, fruits etc.; and pictures included different types of pictures of fishes, cars, birds, animals etc. These play materials are appropriate for both indoor and outdoor play which enhance children spirit of group work and make their learning real. This result concurs with the previous literature that the learning and care provider facilitates indoor and outdoor play, free play and guided play by using instruments and materials with the young learners for achievement of the best outcomes (Spier et al., 2018).

Usefulness of play-based activities

A common phenomenon of play is that it fascinates every child, even adults also. This result indicates that playful activities draw the attention of every child regardless cast, creed, colour and physically challenged towards schools, that foster learning and development. Previous literature suggests that improvement of learning development of each individual child must always be present in PPS activities (Einarsdottir et al. 2015). Play-based activities assist young learners to do advanced things which can be managed by them in their real life (Vygotsky, 1978)

Beneficiaries of play

In the light of responses (table 2) it can be said that students, teachers and community get benefit from play as all of them are stakeholders of education, especially primary and pre-primary education. As play makes

children active learners and they develop most through play, schools fulfil their target with play-based activities and parents get maximum potentials from their children. This finding is supported by Pyle and Daniel's' (2017) findings as playing more of formal and informal play, children must be more socialized, competitive and competent and they can serve for themselves and for the nation.

Benefits of play

Play suggests the pathways to explore possible identities and it is a way of staying fit by blowing steam off (Elkind, 2008). The results (figure 2) focus that play has multiple benefits for early years' education: developing learning; ensuring mental health and wellbeing; developing intelligence and physical co-ordination; building relationship with adults and making learning accessible are significant. This finding concurs with the findings of Luntley (2018) where the author states that play help young children to be developed in mind, emotional activities, and it makes learning learnable and possible.

Necessary support for teaching playful structure

To teach playful structure effectively in PPC, teachers need different kinds of supports. The most important component in providing support to the PPT is training which creates skilled and tactful persons. Though the teachers get support from other sources such as, reading related books, articles, discussing with colleagues and seniors, observing class of experienced teachers and online sources etc., a great number of fruitful techniques are taught to teachers in training. It can be said that there is no alternative to training in professional development. However, the result of figure 3 is similar with the findings of Osgood et. al (2017) where they stated that training for pre-school teachers offers a course content and it provides support for playful teaching activities, by which pre-school teachers can make themselves confident.

Support providers

Success of a pre-school mostly depends on pre-education provider and it is next to the head teacher because pre-primary is one out of the six classes in a Bangladeshi primary school. There is a wise saying that as is the head teacher, so is the school. So, without the supports from a head teacher, a beautiful and effective pre-school environment can hardly be expected though there are several sources to provide supports to pre-school teacher. The previous research shows that head teachers provide support to early years' teachers about play based activities as for early years' foundation (Roberts- Holmes, 2012). Besides this, community also helps a PPT by providing funds and materials though these are not enough. Government also helps by providing five thousand takas only for pre-primary classes per year and arrange different kinds of training for PPT (MoPME, 2015). Students also provide resources and AUEO helps pre-school teachers by sharing and showing techniques and class demonstration.

Expected support for ensuring playful activities

The respondent teachers claimed that they badly needed supports for outdoor play like visiting seashore, children park etc. Besides this, they expected furnished and colourful classroom and modern and attractive play materials to ensure play and play-based activities. This finding concurs with the findings of Aktar (2013) that many primary schools including pre-schools need an age appropriate curriculum, adequate teaching-learning materials, playful activities and joyful teaching-learning environment to ensure quality pre-primary education.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore the role of play in the pre-primary classroom environment. To do so, this study investigated about the three key themes, such as understanding of play, benefits of play and barriers/policy to promote play. Also, this study attempted to identify the challenges which are faced to implement play according to the respondents' experiences (mentioned in appendix table no 1).This chapter discusses briefly achievement of the research objectives and aims based on the chapter 4(research findings and analysis) and the findings of literature review in chapter 2.Finally, this chapter presents a summary of the qualitative data findings from the field investigationsand recommendations that can be helped to establish the necessity of play in early year's education and enhance the field of research in the role of play in early year's education.

RECOMMENDATION

According to respondents' responses there is no strategy or policy about early year's play and they do not aware about it. So, it is necessary to adopt policy for applying playful teaching learning activities in the classroom. It is very important for creating awareness about children's play among practitioners and beneficiaries and to ensure eliminating of all discriminations and implementation of inclusion by ensuring equity and justice during play. It will make awareness of teacher to apply latest playful teaching-learning method.

It is needed to arrange short time training for the teacher about early year's play. It will make teacher perfect for easily applying of play and conscious for friendly, avoiding non-playful, non-purposive and anxiety behavior with students.

 According to respondents, it is needed to supply available play related materials because supplied materials are not sufficient. They suggest ensuring their involvement when those materials are purchased according to necessity.

we think that, in the modern civilization period, the opportunity of children play is losing day by day and in some cases already disappeared only for growing the using of modern technology and varying of the academic loads. So, not for only understanding, obviously play is a need for children's holistic development. Therefore, the recommendations for educational settings are:

a. To support teachers in conducting play-based teaching-learning activities through classroom observations.

b. To provide professional development for colleagues and teachers through training sessions and feedback of academic supervision.

c. To create awareness towards teachers, parents and community with the emphasis on child's play during mother-guardian's meeting and open discussion monthly head teachers' co-ordination meeting.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can mention an important quote of George Bernard Shaw, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." I think as a practitioner of primary education, I have professional responsibility to arrange and ensuring a rich environment which furnish the optimal opportunities children to grow. Therefore, I must ensure the availability of appropriate amount of play related materials, freely moveable play-oriented classroom which help children to acquire learning and develop values, skills for becoming a good citizen. Mardary and Catalano (2010) state that play is known as child's work which express what is in a soul of child. Baines and Slutsky (2009) comment that play and time both are need for children because give relaxation, make creative energetic and give the opportunity to interact with others. Finally, this is my final thought of the study, doing something for enjoyment is play, play is the vital factor for teacher as pedagogy, play is needed for children to be a perfect human, practitioner should facilitate related play then learning occurs automatically through it.

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