

Effectiveness of Play-Based Learning Strategy in Teaching Filipino for Grade Two Pupils

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Abstract

This study determined the effectiveness of a play-based learning strategy in teaching Filipino among Grade Two pupils at Pagkalinawan Elementary School, Jalajala Sub-Office, Division of Rizal, during the School Year 2025–2026. Anchored on child-centered and experiential learning principles, the research employed an experimental method utilizing a parallel group design. Two sections of Grade Two pupils participated in the study: nineteen (19) pupils in the experimental group were exposed to play-based learning strategies, while twenty (20) pupils in the control group were taught using the traditional method. Respondents were described according to sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation. Pretest and posttest assessments were administered to both groups to measure their level of performance in Filipino. Findings revealed that both groups demonstrated a Fairly Satisfactory level of performance in the pretest. After the intervention, the experimental group achieved a Very Satisfactory level, while the control group attained a Satisfactory level in the posttest. Statistical analysis showed significant improvements within both groups based on pretest and posttest results. Moreover, a significant difference was found between the posttest performances of pupils exposed to play-based learning and those taught through the traditional approach, favoring the experimental group. However, no significant differences were noted in pupils' performance when grouped according to their personal and family-related characteristics. The study concluded that play-based learning is an effective strategy in improving the Filipino language competencies of Grade Two pupils. Although both instructional approaches led to performance gains, play-based learning yielded higher achievement outcomes. It is recommended that teachers continuously integrate play-based and other interactive strategies in Filipino instruction, collaborate with parents to reinforce learning at home, and implement the proposed action plan. Further parallel studies considering additional variables are likewise encouraged.

Keywords: play-based learning, Filipino instruction, Grade Two pupils, experimental research, academic performance

1. Introduction

Education is widely recognized as the foundation of individual and societal development. It equips learners with essential knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal growth and national progress. In the Philippines, the right to quality education is firmly established in the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1, which mandates the State to protect and promote accessible and quality education at all levels. This constitutional provision underscores the responsibility of educational institutions to provide relevant curricula, competent teachers, and learner-centered pedagogies that respond to the diverse needs of Filipino learners. Complementing this mandate, DepEd Order No. 10, s. 2024 institutionalizes the MATATAG Curriculum as a blueprint for aligning content standards, pedagogies, and assessments to achieve desired learning outcomes. The policy highlights the importance of varied, developmentally appropriate, and engaging instructional strategies in fostering meaningful learning experiences.

Play-based learning has emerged as a promising pedagogical approach anchored on constructivist principles, particularly those advanced by Jean Piaget, emphasizing that children actively construct knowledge through interaction and exploration. International studies (Khalil, 2021; Mickelson, 2021; Bedzakin, 2021; Ogolo, 2021; Heidecker, 2021; Irizarry, 2021; Evans, 2021) consistently affirm the positive influence of play-based learning on learners' academic performance, engagement, and socio-emotional development. These studies, however, predominantly focus on kindergarten settings and rely largely on descriptive or qualitative designs examining teachers' perceptions and implementation challenges. Locally, studies such as Lucero (2024), Omega (2021), Pagaduan (2021), Austria (2021), Padillo (2021), and Jimenez (2021) similarly highlight the benefits of play in early childhood education but remain concentrated on kindergarten learners or teacher-respondents.

Despite the growing body of literature, a notable research gap exists in experimental investigations examining the effectiveness of play-based learning in upper primary levels, particularly in teaching Filipino among Grade Two pupils. Moreover, limited local empirical evidence directly measures its impact on learners' actual academic performance using controlled group comparisons. In Pagkalinawan Elementary School, the researcher observed that Filipino consistently registers among the lowest results in the Learning Outcomes Assessment. While pupils can decode and read texts, many struggle with comprehension and critical thinking. Classroom engagement is often hindered by short attention spans and low motivation. These observations, coupled with the identified gaps in literature, prompted the conduct of this study to determine the effectiveness of play-based learning strategy in improving the Filipino performance of Grade Two pupils and to contribute empirical evidence supporting innovative, learner-centered instruction within the MATATAG framework.

2. Materials and methods

2.1 Research Design

Experimental method of research utilizing parallel group design were used. Pretest and posttest were administered to both groups.

2.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted at Pagkalinawan Elementary School. This is one of the public elementary schools in Jalajala District, Schools Division Office of Rizal. This school offers complete elementary education from kindergarten to grade six level.

2.3 Respondents

Two sections of grade two pupils in Pagkalinawan Elementary School were included as respondents. The experimental group consisting of 19 pupils was exposed to play-based learning strategy in teaching. The control group consisting of 20 pupils was taught using the traditional method of teaching Filipino. They were described in terms of a sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation.

2.4 Research Instruments

The study utilized a researcher-made test as the primary instrument for data gathering. The instrument consisted of two sets of 30-item tests in Filipino constructed based on a Table of Specifications to ensure alignment with the Grade Two first-quarter competencies. The same test served as both the pretest and posttest to measure pupils' level of performance before and after the intervention. The instrument also included a questionnaire-checklist that gathered socio-demographic data such as sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation. Pupils' scores were interpreted using the following scale: 30 (Outstanding), 22–29 (Very Satisfactory), 15–21 (Satisfactory), 8–14 (Fairly Satisfactory), and 0–7 (Did Not Meet Expectations). To establish validity and reliability, the instrument underwent content validation by experts in the field, including the thesis adviser, dean, statistician, professorial lecturers, master teacher, and school principal. It was also pilot-tested among Grade Two pupils who were not part of the actual study. Reliability was determined using the split-half method, yielding an r-value of .83 for the half test and .89 for the whole test, indicating high reliability of the instrument.

2.5 Data Collection

The conduct of the study followed a systematic process guided by a Gantt Chart of Activities. Initially, the researcher prepared and submitted three proposed titles for screening and approval, with the final title confirmed during the title defense. Upon approval, relevant literature and necessary data were gathered to complete the research proposal. A pretest was developed and pilot-tested among 20 Grade Two pupils who were not part of the actual respondents. The test papers were checked, scored, and analyzed using the split-half method to establish reliability. After validation, permission to conduct the study was secured from concerned authorities, and all procedures complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Following the selection of respondents, the validated pretest was administered to both the experimental and control groups. The researcher identified the Grade Two Filipino lessons to be covered during the intervention period. The experimental group was taught using the play-based learning strategy, while the control group received instruction through the traditional teaching method. After completing the lessons for the quarter, the posttest was administered to both groups. The collected data were encoded, tallied, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), with the assistance of a statistician. Based on the results, the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations were formulated. The study underwent final defense, plagiarism checking, revisions, and submission of hardbound copies to the Office of the Dean of the Graduate Studies Program and other concerned offices.

2.6 Data Analysis

Appropriate statistical tools were employed to analyze and interpret the data gathered in the study. To describe the profile of the respondents based on selected variables such as sex and family background, frequency, percentage, and

rank distribution were used. To determine the level of performance in Filipino of the two groups—those exposed and unexposed to the play-based learning strategy—as reflected in the pretest and posttest results, the mean and standard deviation were computed. To examine whether there was a significant difference in the performance of each group before and after the intervention, the dependent (paired) t-test was applied. Meanwhile, to determine if a significant difference existed between the posttest performances of the experimental and control groups, the independent t-test was utilized. Lastly, to assess whether significant differences in posttest performance among pupils exposed to play-based learning existed when grouped according to their profile variables, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The study ensured the protection of the rights and welfare of all respondents. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of all information provided were strictly maintained, and data were used solely for research purposes. The researcher ensured that the respondents were treated with respect and that no harm, whether physical, emotional, or psychological, would result from their participation in the study.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Two Groups of Respondents in Terms of the Selected Variables

As shown in the table, for both groups, there are more male respondents than females with 57.9 % males for the experimental group and 75 % males for the control group. In terms of sibling position, most of the pupils in the experimental group are second and third born child with 36.8 % and 26.3 %. For the control group, 45 % are second born child and 40 % are first born child. With regard to the number of children in the family, most of the respondents in the experimental and control group belong to families with 2-3 number of children with 57.9 % and 75.0% respectively. As to their monthly family income, for both groups, majority of the pupils belong to families with monthly income below ₱20,000 with 52.6 % and 50% respectively. In terms of parents' educational attainment, most of the fathers and mothers are non-college degree holders. As regards the parents' occupation, most of the fathers and mothers are unemployed and self-employed.

. Table 1: Profile of the Respondents in Terms of the Selected Variables

Profile	Experimental			Control		
Sex	f	%	Rank	f	%	R
Male	11	57.9	1	15	75.0	1
Female	8	42.1	2	5	25.0	2
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Sibling Position						
First	3	15.8	3	8	40.0	2
Second	7	36.8	1	9	45.0	1
Third	5	26.3	2	2	10.0	3
Fourth and above	4	21.1	4	1	5.0	4
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Number of Children in the Family						
4-5	6	31.6	2	2	10.0	3
2-3	11	57.9	1	15	75.0	1
1	2	10.5	3	3	15.0	2
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Monthly Family Income						
₱40,000 and above	1	5.3	4	2	10.0	4
₱30,000 - ₱39,999	3	15.8	3	3	15.0	3
₱20,000 - ₱29,999	5	26.3	2	5	25.0	2
below ₱20,000	10	52.6	1	10	50.0	1
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Fathers' Educational Attainment						
College Graduate	1	5.3	3	2	10.0	3
College Undergraduate	15	78.9	1	12	60.0	1
High School Graduate	3	15.8	2	6	30.0	2
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Mothers' Educational Attainment						
College Graduate	5	26.3	2	3	15.0	3
College Undergraduate	3	15.8	3	10	50.0	1
High School Graduate	11	57.9	1	7	35.0	2

Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Fathers' Occupation						
Employed	6	31.6	2	5	25.0	3
OFW	2	10.5	4	1	5.0	4
Self Employed	8	42.1	1	8	40.0	1
Unemployed	3	15.8	3	6	30.0	2
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	
Mothers' Occupation						
Employed	3	15.8	3	7	35.0	2
OFW	1	5.3	4	2	10.0	4
Self Employed	7	36.8	2	3	15.0	3
Unemployed	8	42.1	1	8	40.0	1
Total	19	100.0		20	100.0	

3.2. Level of Performance in Filipino of the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Pretest and Posttest Results

As reflected in the table, in the pretest, both groups obtained Fairly Satisfactory level of performance with computed means of 14.18 and 14.05 respectively. With regard to the posttest results, the experimental group have a Very Satisfactory level of performance with obtained mean of 22.42. On the other hand, the control group obtained a mean performance of 17.65 interpreted Satisfactory. The obtained standard deviations of 4.458 and 4.019 in the pretest and 3.963 and 5.194 in the posttest indicate that the scores of the pupils in the test are averagely dispersed which means that the learners in each group are of heterogeneous ability. Findings indicate that the two groups of respondents have the same level of competencies before the conduct of the experiment This means that the learners involved in the study have the prerequisite skills which are essential in the next lessons. On the other hand, the posttest results reveal that the learners exposed to play-based learning strategy performed better than those learners exposed to traditional method of teaching Filipino Findings imply that the two groups of respondents are started with similar levels of competencies prior to intervention. Findings further imply that both groups possessed the prerequisite competencies needed for the lesson. Moreover, findings imply that the utilization of play-based learning in teaching Filipino is effective in developing the needed competencies among the learners. This relates with the discussion of Collins (2021) that highlights the benefits of play-based learning, which enables children to engage actively and creatively with their environment, people, and objects, providing a stimulating and enjoyable approach to learning that allows children to learn naturally and have fun.

Table 2: Level of Performance in Filipino of the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Pretest and Posttest Results

Test	Experimental Group			Control Group		
	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Pretest	14.18	4.458	Fairly Satisfactory	14.05	4.019	Fairly Satisfactory
Posttest	22.42	3.963	Very Satisfactory	17.65	5.194	Satisfactory

3.3. Significant Difference on the Level of Performance in Filipino of the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Pretest and Posttest Results

The results revealed a significant improvement in the level of performance in Filipino among pupils in the experimental group after exposure to the play-based learning strategy. The computed mean difference of 8.24 yielded a t-value of 10.911 with a probability value of .001, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the Grade Two pupils exposed to play-based learning. Similarly, the control group also showed significant improvement, with a mean difference of 3.6, a t-value of 7.185, and a probability value of .003, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. Although both groups demonstrated progress, the higher mean gain in the experimental group suggests that play-based learning contributed more substantially to the development of pupils' competencies in Filipino. These findings imply that the utilization of play-based learning is an effective instructional strategy in enhancing pupils' academic performance. The results further highlight the crucial role of teachers in facilitating meaningful learning experiences that promote skill development. The outcome supports the assertion of Ocampo (2023) that play enhances children's mental, physical, social, and emotional well-being while strengthening cognitive abilities such as problem-solving, creativity, imagination, and logical thinking. Through play, learners are better able to grasp essential concepts and develop deeper understanding, thereby improving overall academic achievement.

Table 3: Result of the t-test on the Level of Performance in Filipino of the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Pretest and Posttest Results

Group	Test	Mean	Mean diff	df	tcomp	p-value	Ho	VI
Experimental	Pretest	14.18	8.24	18	10.911	.001	Rejected	Significant
	Posttest	22.42						
Control	Pretest	14.05	3.6	19	7.185	.003	Rejected	Significant
	Posttest	17.65						

3.4. Significant Difference on the Level of Performance in Filipino of the Grade Two Pupils in the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Posttest Results

The table depicts that the obtained mean difference on the performance in Filipino of the two groups of respondents is 4.77. This yields a computed t-value of 2.997 and a probability value of .004. This rejects the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference on the level of performance in Filipino of the grade two pupils exposed and unexposed to play-based learning strategy as revealed in the posttest results. Findings indicate that pupils exposed to play-based learning strategy perform better than those pupils taught using the traditional method of teaching. This means that the utilization of play-based learning strategy is effective in developing the needed competencies of the learners. This implies that play-based learning strategy made the teaching learning process enjoyable and meaningful which is a very effective tool for improving and enhancing instruction and learning experiences in developing the essential skills and competencies. This further implies that the utilization of play-based learning strategy enables the learners to understand better the presented lessons. This conforms with the ideas of Arrow (2022) that play-based learning is vital for children's social and emotional development that fosters healthy peer relationships. Through play, children can engage actively and creatively with their environment, people, and objects, with symbolic representation being a key aspect. Play-based learning enhances various skills, including social abilities, learning motivation, language, and numeracy.

Table 4: Result of the t-Test on the Level of Performance in Filipino of the Grade Two Pupils in the Experimental and Control Group as Revealed in the Posttest Results

Respondents	Mean	Mean diff	df	tcomp	p-value	Ho	VI
Experimental	22.42	4.77	37	2.997	.004	Rejected	Significant
Control	17.65						

3.5. Significant Difference on the Performance in Filipino of the Grade Two Pupils in the Experimental Group as Revealed in the Posttest Results in Terms of Their Profile

The table depicts that in terms of the different personal variables of the respondents, the F-test results reveal probability values greater than .05. This fails to reject the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference on the level of performance in Filipino of the grade two pupils as revealed in the posttest results in terms of their profile. Findings indicate that sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation are not significant on the level of performance in Filipino of grade two pupils. Findings imply that the level of performance in Filipino of grade two pupils is not influenced by gender and by their birth order. Likewise, number of children in the family and monthly family income are not predictors of their level of performance. Furthermore, parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation are not contributory on their performance. This is parallel with the study of Lucero (2024) which show that personal characteristics of learners such as sex, sibling position, number of children in the family, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment and parents' occupation are not predictors of their level of performance.

Table 5: Results of the F-test on the Performance in Filipino of the Grade Two Pupils in the Experimental Group as Revealed in the Posttest Results in Terms of Their Profile

Profile	f-value	p-value	Decision	Verbal Interpretation
Sex	.912	.339	Accepted	Not Significant
Sibling Position	.721	.543	Accepted	Not Significant
Number of Children in the Family	1.424	.212	Accepted	Not Significant
Monthly Family Income	.412	.798	Accepted	Not Significant

Fathers' Attainment	Educational	1.288	.432	Accepted	Not Significant
Mothers' Attainment	Educational	.716	.511	Accepted	Not Significant
Fathers' Occupation		.523	.792	Accepted	Not Significant
Mothers' Occupation		.237	.811	Accepted	Not Significant

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the performance of Grade Two pupils in Filipino significantly improved after exposure to the play-based learning strategy. Although pupils taught using the traditional method also showed improvement, the gains were greater among those in the experimental group, indicating that play-based learning is a more effective instructional approach in developing learners' competencies. Furthermore, the study found that pupils' personal characteristics such as sex, sibling position, family size, monthly family income, parents' educational attainment, and parents' occupation did not significantly influence their academic performance. In view of these findings, it is recommended that teachers continuously integrate play-based learning strategies and other interactive approaches in teaching Filipino to enhance learner engagement and achievement. Collaboration between teachers and parents should also be strengthened to support learning at home. The proposed action plan may be implemented to institutionalize the strategy, and future studies may be conducted to explore additional variables and further validate the effectiveness of play-based learning in different contexts.

Compliance with ethical standards

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