

## Teachers' Understanding of Play-Based Learning Implementation on Students' Achievement

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### ABSTRACT

This study explored the integration of play-based learning strategies within teaching practices, examining the types of activities, their frequency, and alignment with the curriculum. A single public primary school in Gasabo District was purposefully selected for its unique approach to implementing play-based learning, which had not been examined in previous research. The participants included all 26 teachers at the school, consisting of 18 women and 8 men. Employing a qualitative approach, the study utilized semi-structured interviews to investigate into the dynamics of play-based learning. Data analysis involved thematic coding to identify core themes, with participant responses triangulated across various sources and validated through member checking. The findings have shown a different array of play-based activities, with role-playing and storytelling standing out as the most frequently utilized. While some teachers readily incorporated these strategies into their daily lessons, others struggled due to time limitations and curriculum weights. Despite these challenges, the teachers acknowledged the significant benefits of play-based learning in enhancing student engagement, motivation, and socio-emotional development. These insights highlighted the potential of such strategies to transform classroom practices and raise a more interactive and supportive learning environment. To address the identified challenges, the study recommends sustained professional development programs and increased support for teachers to integrate play-based learning effectively. It emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts between policymakers and teachers to reduce barriers such as rigid curricula and time constraints. By aligning policy and practice, the study advises for the optimization of play-based approaches, ensuring their positive impact on Rwandan classrooms is maximized.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, educational paradigms worldwide have undergone a significant shift towards more student-centered and holistic approaches (Cappiali, 2023; Li, 2023). Among these, play-based learning stands out as a pedagogical methodology that raises creativity, critical thinking, and socio-emotional development in children (Adams et al, 2024). In the context of primary education in Rwanda, where traditional rote learning methods have historically dominated, the exploration of play-based learning represents a promising avenue for educational improvement (Kwok, 2021).

Rwanda, like many developing nations, faces the challenge of ensuring quality education for all its children amidst resource constraints and different socio-economic backgrounds (Taka, 2023). While strides have been made to improve access to education, there remains a gap in addressing the quality of learning experiences provided within classrooms.

At the heart of this study concentrated on the recognition of teachers as pivotal agents of change within the educational process. Their understanding, beliefs, and practices profoundly influence the learning environments they create and, consequently, the academic trajectories of their students (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). By focusing on teachers' perspectives and practices related to play-based learning, this study targeted to reveal the facilitators and barriers to its effective implementation in Rwandan primary school.

The motivation driving this study came from the potential of play-based learning to address multifaceted educational challenges in Rwanda (Abu-Ghaida & Silva, 2021; Kwok, 2021). Beyond its cognitive benefits, play-based learning has been shown to promote inclusivity, equity, and cultural relevance in educational settings (Danniels & Pyle, 2023; Kangas et al, 2023). By empowering teachers with the knowledge and skills to integrate play-based approaches into their teaching range, this study pursued to harness the transformative power of education to uplift marginalized communities and foster holistic child development.

The expected solution predicted through this study was twofold: firstly, to generate empirical evidence on the relationship between teachers' understanding of play-based learning and students' academic achievement in Rwandan primary schools; and secondly, to inform policy and practice by identifying effective strategies for promoting the uptake of play-based pedagogies within the local context. By bridging the gap between research and practice, this study aspired to catalyze sustainable improvements in educational quality and equity across Rwanda, laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and child-centered approach to primary education (Kwok, 2021).

## RELATED LITERATURE

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory provided a theoretical foundation for understanding the role of play in learning. According to Vygotsky, play serves as a zone of proximal development (ZPD), wherein children engage in activities that promote cognitive growth with the guidance of more knowledgeable peers or adults. Play-based learning environments create opportunities for scaffolding, enabling teachers to provide tailored support to students as they explore new concepts and skills (Veraksa et al, 2022). This theoretical framework highlighted the importance of teachers' understanding on play as a tool for academic advancement.

Play-based learning is a pedagogical approach that has gained significant attention in recent years due to its potential to enhance students' academic achievement and overall development (Lunga, Esterhuizen, & Koen, 2022). Educational environments must prioritize inclusive pedagogical approaches over ability grouping to encourage growth mindsets, ensure equitable opportunities, and promote inclusive education for all students (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Niyibizi, 2024).

One key aspect of play-based learning is its ability to engage students in active, hands-on learning experiences. Teachers who implement play-based learning often believe that it enhances students' motivation and interest in learning. For example, Mostafa (2023) found that teachers reported an increase in students' eagerness for learning when play-based activities were incorporated into the curriculum.

Moreover, play-based learning is believed to raise the development of important skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration (Ekeh, 2023). Teachers perceive that these skills are essential for students' academic success and future career readiness. By engaging in play-based activities, students have the opportunity to explore, experiment, and make decisions, which lead to deeper learning and understanding of concepts (Callahan, 2023).

Despite the benefits of play-based learning, some teachers have difficulties about its implementation. For example, teachers were concerned those play-based activities take time away from traditional instruction or that they are not aligned with academic standards (Lesniak, 2023). However, research suggests that play-based learning can be integrated into the curriculum in a way that complements and enhances academic learning (Geletu, 2023).

Teachers' perceptions of play-based learning also had influenced by their own beliefs and attitudes towards teaching and learning. For example, teachers who value student-centered approaches to education were more likely to see the benefits of play-based learning in promoting student engagement (Callahan, 2023; Ceballos, 2024). On the other hand, teachers who prefer more traditional, teacher-directed methods of instruction may be more skeptical of the effectiveness of play-based learning (Johnstone, 2022).

In addition to teachers' perceptions, the implementation of play-based learning also had influenced by contextual factors such as school policies, resources, and support systems. For example, schools that prioritize standardized testing and academic achievement may be less likely to adopt play-based learning approaches (Burson, 2021). Similarly, teachers who lack training or support in implementing play-based learning may struggle to incorporate it effectively into their classrooms (Beuilby, 2023).

Despite these challenges, investigation suggests that play-based learning has a positive impact on students' academic achievement. For example, a study conducted by Taylor and Boyer (2020) found that play-based learning interventions were associated with significant improvements in students' academic outcomes.

Overall, teachers' views of play-based learning implementation on students' achievement were complex and multifaceted. While some teachers held play-based learning as a valuable pedagogical approach, others had reservations or face challenges in implementing it effectively. Further study was needed to explore how teachers understood play-based learning can be supported and enhanced to promote positive student outcomes.

The study was guided with the following research objective: To investigate how teachers incorporate play-based learning strategies into their teaching practices, including the types of activities used frequency of implementation, and integration with the curriculum.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research approach**

A qualitative approach evidenced to be an effective method for exploring the complex dynamics of play-based learning and its influence on student achievement in Rwandan primary school. This approach allowed for an in-depth understanding of the various factors influencing the implementation and effectiveness of play-based learning within the local educational context. Through semi-structured interviews, the researchers were able to engage with teachers and gain valuable insights into their

perceptions and experiences with play-based learning. This method provided a platform for teachers to reflect on their practices, challenges, and the perceived impact on students' academic performance, offering a comprehensive view of the educational process.

### **Research participants**

A public primary school in Gasabo District was selected for this study due to its distinct use of Play-based learning, a practice not previously explored in prior research. This school's approach presented a unique opportunity to investigate the effectiveness of such methods in the context of Rwandan education, where limited research on the subject has been conducted. The study involved all twenty-six teachers at the school, including eighteen women and eight men, who were labeled T01-26. After being briefed on the objective of the study, they expressed a strong willingness to participate; highlighting their attention for contributing to research that might enhance educational practices within their institution.

### **Data collection tools**

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the main data collection method to allow for a flexible and in-depth investigation into teachers' perspectives on play-based learning. This approach enabled the researchers to investigate teachers' experiences and insights while maintaining a structured framework to ensure consistency across interviews. The open-ended nature of the questions also provided room for participants to express their views freely, offering rich qualitative data. This method facilitated a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive the effect of play-based learning on students' academic performance. It allowed for the exploration of not only teachers' knowledge and attitudes but also the challenges and successes they have encountered during its implementation. The semi-structured format ensured that key topics were addressed while still allowing for the emergence of unexpected themes and insights.

### **Data analysis**

To analyze the data from interviews, thematic coding was utilized as the primary method. This approach allowed for a systematic breakdown of the data, helping to identify key themes and patterns that emerged from the participants' responses. Each interview was examined to pinpoint recurring ideas and significant observations related to the integration of play-based learning. Thematic coding enabled a deeper understanding of the different perspectives on play-based learning. By categorizing the data into distinct themes, the analysis highlighted critical insights into how play-based learning is perceived and implemented. This method ensured that the findings were organized in a way that lightened the benefits, challenges, and potential strategies for incorporating play into educational practices.

### **Trustfulness**

Participants' responses experienced careful triangulation across various data sources and rigorous member checking to ensure both accuracy and consistency. Thorough verification was conducted through triangulation of data sources and member checking to establish the accuracy and consistency of participants' responses.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Completely, ensuring participant consent, maintaining confidentiality, and transparently communicating data usage support the fundamental interpretations of informed consent and privacy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated how teachers incorporate play-based learning strategies into their teaching practices. Through semi-structured interviews, data were gathered from 26 teachers regarding the types of activities used, frequency of implementation, and integration with the curriculum. Additionally, data were analysed through themes. The findings provided valuable insights into the role of play-based learning in enhancing students' academic achievement.

### Theme 1: Types of Play-Based Activities

The interviews shown a various range of play-based activities utilized by teachers, including role-playing, games, storytelling, and creative arts. Role-playing emerged as a particularly popular method, allowing students to engage themselves in various scenarios and develop problem-solving skills in a playful environment. Storytelling was also prevalent, raising imagination and language development among students. One teacher reported,

*Role-playing became widely embraced as an effective approach, offering students immersive scenarios to hone their problem-solving skills in a fun and engaging manner (T01).*

The interview results highlighted the different use of play-based activities in teaching, emphasizing their role in raising active learning and skill development. Role-playing stood out as a favored method, enabling students to immerse themselves in scenarios that encourage critical thinking and problem-solving within a dynamic and engaging context. Similarly, storytelling was frequently employed, promoting creativity and enhancing language skills by sparking imagination. These findings highlight the effectiveness of integrating varied play-based strategies to create an interactive and supportive learning environment.

### Theme 2: Frequency of Implementation

The frequency of play-based activities varied among the teachers interviewed. While some incorporated such activities on a daily basis, others used them less frequently, refer to time constraints and curriculum demands. However, it was evident that teachers recognized the importance of play in learning and made efforts to integrate it into their teaching whenever possible. One teacher stated,

*It is unfortunate that play-based activities often get sidelined due to time constraints and the pressure to adhere to the curriculum. I recognize the value they bring to a students' development and find ways to integrate them more consistently into my daily practices (T09).*

The interview responses highlighted a different approach to incorporating play-based activities in teaching, reflecting varying practices among teachers. While some teachers integrate these activities daily, others face challenges such as time constraints and curriculum demands, limiting their frequency of use. Despite these differences, a common understanding emerges among teachers regarding the significance of play in enhancing learning. This shared recognition highlights their efforts to include play-based methods whenever feasible, demonstrating a commitment to fostering engaging and effective learning environments.

### Theme 3: Integration with the Curriculum

A key theme that arisen from the interviews was the integration of play-based activities with the curriculum. Many teachers discussed aligning play-based learning with specific learning objectives and content areas, ensuring that it complemented rather than weakened from the academic curriculum. This

integration was perceived as vital in maximizing the educational benefits of play-based approaches. One teacher highlighted,

*Absolutely, integrating play into education is not about weakening the curriculum; it is about enriching it. Play-based activities serve as powerful tools for reinforcing key concepts and skills, making learning more tangible and meaningful for students. When done thoughtfully, this approach bridges the gap between structured education and the joy of exploration, laying a solid foundation for future academic success (T21).*

The integration of play-based activities with the curriculum, as highlighted by the interview responses, highlights a strategic effort by teachers to balance engagement with academic rigor. By aligning play-based learning with specific objectives and content areas, teachers ensure that these activities enhance rather than reduce from curricular goals. This approach reflects an understanding of the dual role of play in raising both cognitive and social development, maximizing its educational benefits while maintaining alignment with formal learning standards.

#### **Theme 4: Teacher Beliefs and Attitude**

The interviews shed light on teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards play-based learning. While some incorporated it wholeheartedly, viewing it as a natural and effective way for children to learn, others expressed reservations, citing concerns about academic consistency and classroom management. These differing perspectives emphasized the need for ongoing professional development and support in promoting play-based approaches. One teacher reported,

*Implementation of play-based activity is not just about letting children have fun; it is recognizing the deep educational value essential in their natural inclination to play. By integrating play into learning environments, I tap into students' innate curiosity and creativity, raising holistic development that goes beyond mere academic achievement (T13).*

The interview responses highlighted a range of beliefs among teachers regarding play-based learning. While some teachers involved it as an intuitive and effective strategy for raising children's learning, others hesitated, voicing concerns about maintaining academic rigor and managing classroom dynamics. This divergence highlights the importance of targeted professional development to address misconceptions, equip teachers with effective implementation strategies, and build confidence in using play-based methods as a valuable pedagogical tool.

#### **Theme 5: Student Engagement and Motivation**

Teachers consistently reported high levels of student engagement and motivation during play-based activities. They observed that students were more ready to participate, demonstrated greater interest for learning, and demonstrated increased retention of content when lessons were delivered in a playful manner. This positive impact on student motivation was seen as a significant benefit of incorporating play into the classroom. One teacher described,

*It is remarkable how incorporating play into lessons transforms the classroom dynamic. Students visibly light up, eagerly headfirst into activities. Not only does it make learning enjoyable, but it also enhances their understanding and memory retention. It is a win-win situation; they're having fun, and I am seeing tangible academic benefits (T11).*

The interview results highlighted the substantial role of play-based activities in enhancing student engagement and motivation. Teachers consistently observed heightened eagerness and interest among students during these lessons, suggesting that playful teaching methods raise a more dynamic and interactive learning environment. Furthermore, the improved retention of content indicates that such approaches are not only enjoyable but also effective in supporting long-term learning. This reinforces the value of integrating play into classroom instruction as a tool for boosting both academic performance and enthusiasm for learning.

### **Theme 6: Social and Emotional Development**

Another important theme that occurred was the role of play-based learning in raising social and emotional development. Teachers noted that through collaborative play activities, students developed important social skills such as communication, cooperation, and empathy. Moreover, play provided a safe space for students to express themselves creatively and explore their emotions. One teacher informed,

*The significance of play-based activities lies in their profound impact on the development of crucial social competencies. By engaging themselves in collaborative play experiences, students freely improve vital skills such as communication, teamwork, and the ability to empathize with others (T26).*

The interview responses highlighted the significant role of play-based learning in raising social and emotional development among students. Teachers observed that collaborative play activities not only helped students develop essential social skills like communication, cooperation, and empathy, but also offered a safe environment for emotional expression and creativity. This approach encourages students to engage with others, build relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of their emotions, contributing to their overall personal growth and well-being.

### **Theme 7: Differentiation and Inclusion**

Several teachers highlighted the effectiveness of play-based approaches in providing to different learning needs and promoting inclusion in the classroom. By offering multiple entry points and allowing for individual expression, play-based activities enabled teachers to differentiate instruction and accommodate students with varying abilities and backgrounds. One teacher highlighted,

*Engaging in play-based activities, children are afforded the opportunity to explore concepts in a manner that resonates with their individual learning styles. This not only enhances comprehension but also encourages collaboration and mutual understanding among peers. Through play, teachers can effectively bridge gaps in understanding and ensure that every child has access to meaningful learning experiences (T19).*

The interview responses suggested that play-based approaches are highly effective in addressing various learning needs and promoting inclusion in the classroom. Teachers emphasized that these activities provide multiple entry points for students, allowing them to engage with content in ways that suit their individual abilities and backgrounds. This flexibility helps differentiate instruction, ensuring that all students, regardless of their level or background, can participate and benefit from the learning experience, raising an inclusive and supportive environment.

### **Theme 8: Assessment and Evaluation**

Challenges related to assessing and evaluating play-based learning were also discussed. Teachers expressed uncertainty about how to assess learning outcomes in a play-based context and the compatibility of such approaches with formal assessment methods. This raised important questions about the need for alternative assessment strategies that capture the multifaceted nature of play-based learning. One teacher stated,

*Implementation of play-based activities in education opens doors to creativity and exploration. However, one pressing concern lies in the uncertainty surrounding assessing learning outcomes within this context. This uncertainty calls for innovative assessment strategies modified to capture the outcomes of play-based learning (T05).*

The interview responses highlighted significant challenges in assessing and evaluating play-based learning, with teachers expressing uncertainty about aligning learning outcomes with traditional assessment methods. This underscores a gap in understanding and practice, as play-based learning often involves skills and knowledge that are not easily measurable through formal assessments. The discussion pointed to the necessity of developing alternative assessment strategies that account for the holistic and multifaceted nature of play-based learning, enabling teachers to effectively evaluate cognitive, social, and emotional growth fostered in such environments.

### **Theme 9: Teacher Training and Support**

The interviews emphasized the importance of teacher training and support in promoting effective implementation of play-based learning. Many teachers expressed a desire for professional development opportunities focused on integrating play into their teaching practices and addressing common challenges. They emphasized the need for ongoing support from school administrators and education authorities. One teacher specified,

*I am really interested in professional development that helps me integrate play into my teaching. It is such a valuable approach, but I need support from administrators and education authorities to make it work long-term (T17).*

The interview responses highlighted the critical role of teacher training and support in successfully implementing play-based learning. Teachers expressed a strong interest in professional development opportunities tailored to integrating play into their instructional strategies and overcoming associated challenges. They highlighted the importance of consistent backing from school administrators and education authorities to sustain and enhance these practices.

### **Theme 10: Cultural Considerations**

Cultural factors were cited as influential in shaping teachers' approaches to play-based learning. Some teachers discussed how cultural beliefs and norms regarding education influenced their willingness to adopt playful teaching methods. Understanding and respecting these cultural dynamics were thought essential in successfully implementing play-based approaches in various contexts. One teacher itemized,

*To assert the cultural beliefs and societal norms significantly shaped the openness to implementation of playful pedagogical approaches (T24).*

The interview responses highlighted the significant role cultural factors play in shaping teachers' adoption of play-based learning methods. Teachers acknowledged that cultural beliefs and norms about



education often influence their openness to integrating playful teaching approaches. For instance, in cultures where traditional, formal methods are highly valued; there may be resistance to playful strategies perceived as less rigorous. This underscores the importance of understanding and respecting cultural dynamics when promoting play-based learning, as handmade approaches that align with local values and beliefs are more likely to gain acceptance and effectiveness in diverse educational settings.

### **Theme 11: Community Involvement**

Several teachers highlighted the role of the community in supporting play-based learning initiatives. They described how involving parents and community members in educational activities enhanced the effectiveness and sustainability of play-based programs. This collaboration was seen as a valuable resource for enriching students' learning experiences. One teacher detailed,

*Involving parents and community members in educational activities not only enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of play-based programs but also raises a stronger sense of community engagement and support (T02).*

The interview responses highlighted the pivotal role of community involvement in the success of play-based learning initiatives. Teachers noted that integrating parents and community members into educational activities enriched students' learning experiences by providing different resources and perspectives. This collaboration not only enhanced the effectiveness of play-based programs but also contributed to their sustainability, as shared ownership raised a supportive environment for learning. Engaging the community thus emerges as a key strategy for promoting holistic and meaningful educational outcomes.

### **Theme 12: Barriers to Implementation**

Despite the perceived benefits of play-based learning, teachers identified various barriers to its effective implementation. These included limited resources, large class sizes, and societal pressure to prioritize traditional teaching methods. Overcoming these barriers required a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and communities. One teacher described,

*It is obvious that limited resources, coupled with the awesome pressure to adhere to traditional teaching methodologies, create significant hurdles in integrating play-game learning. With large class sizes, I find myself constrained, unable to explore innovative teaching methods that greatly benefit students' engagement (T08).*

The interview results highlighted critical barriers to implementing play-based learning, such as limited resources, large class sizes, and societal preferences for traditional teaching methods. These challenges emphasize the need for a multi-faceted approach involving policymakers, teachers, and communities to create an enabling environment. Addressing these issues may include increasing funding for educational resources, training teachers to manage large classes effectively while integrating play-based strategies, and raising awareness about the benefits of this approach to shift societal attitudes. Collaborative efforts can bridge the gap between theoretical benefits and practical application, ensuring the successful adoption of play-based learning.

### **Theme 13: Professional Collaboration**

Collaborative practices among teachers emerged as a facilitator of effective play-based implementation. Teachers who engaged in peer collaboration and shared resources and strategies reported greater confidence and success in incorporating play into their teaching. This highlights the

importance of raising a culture of collaboration within schools and educational networks. One teacher highlighted,

*As a teacher dedicated to enhancing learning through play, I view my role as a facilitator. By continuously collaborating with my colleagues, we pool our resources and expertise to maximize the effectiveness of play-based strategies in our classrooms (T16).*

The interview responses indicated that collaborative practices among teachers play a crucial role in the successful implementation of play-based learning. Teachers who collaborated with peers, exchanged resources, and shared strategies felt more confident and effective in integrating play into their teaching. This underscores the value of fostering a collaborative culture within schools and educational networks, as it not only enhances teachers' professional growth but also improves the overall quality of play-based learning experiences for students.

#### **Theme 14: Sustainability and Scalability**

Ensuring the sustainability and scalability of play-based learning initiatives was identified as a key consideration. Teachers emphasized the need for long-term planning, investment in teacher training, and institutional support to maintain and expand play-based programs beyond individual classrooms. One teacher reported,

*It is essential to highlight the importance of long-term planning, investment in teacher training, and institutional support to ensure the sustainability and growth of play-based programs beyond individual classrooms (T23).*

The interview responses highlighted the critical importance of long-term sustainability and scalability for play-based learning initiatives. Teachers emphasized that for these programs to thrive beyond individual classrooms, there must be strategic long-term planning, continuous investment in teacher training, and strong institutional support. These elements are essential for ensuring that play-based learning can be effectively integrated into broader educational systems and continue to benefit students on a larger scale. Without these foundational supports, the potential for widespread adoption and lasting impact may be limited.

#### **Theme 15: Impact on Student Achievement**

Ultimately, the study intended to explore the impact of teachers' understanding of play-based learning implementation on students' achievement. While direct correlations between play-based approaches and academic outcomes were challenging to establish, teachers observed positive changes in students' attitudes towards learning and overall well-being. This suggested that a holistic approach to education, which incorporates play-based learning alongside traditional methods, contributed to enhanced student achievement in Rwandan primary school. One teacher stated,

*Absolutely, it's evident that embracing a holistic approach to education yields remarkable results. By intertwining play-based learning with conventional methods, I am raising not just academic proficiency but also raising well-rounded individuals (T04).*

The interview responses highlighted that while establishing a direct correlation between play-based learning and academic achievement proved difficult, teachers observed significant improvements in students' attitudes towards learning and overall well-being. This suggests that integrating play-based learning with traditional teaching methods raise a more holistic educational experience. The findings

imply that such an approach may not only enhance students' academic performance but also support their emotional and social development, ultimately contributing to improved student achievement in Rwandan primary schools.

The themes revealed a different range of 'lay-based activities used by teachers, with role-playing and storytelling being particularly popular. While some teachers integrated these activities daily, others faced challenges due to time constraints and curriculum demands but still recognized their importance. The interviews also highlighted the need for ongoing professional development and support to effectively promote play-based learning, as well as the positive impact on student engagement, motivation, and social-emotional development. Therefore, the findings of this study highlighted the importance of play-based learning in promoting whole development and academic success among primary school students in Rwanda.

The results of the current study resonate with previous research, aligning with Mostafa (2023) who observed heightened student enthusiasm for learning through the integration of play-based activities in the curriculum. This correlation is further supported by Callahan (2023), indicating that engaging in such activities allows students to actively explore, experiment, and make decisions, raising deeper comprehension of concepts. Additionally, Ceballos (2024) emphasizes that teachers embracing student-centered approaches are more motivated to acknowledge the benefits of play-based learning in enhancing student engagement. Moreover, these findings are consistent with Taylor and Boyer (2020) discovery of significant academic improvements linked to play-based learning interventions, collectively underscoring the efficacy of incorporating playful pedagogical approaches in educational settings.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlighted the different ways in which teachers incorporate play-based learning strategies into their teaching practices in Rwandan primary school. The types of activities used, the frequency of implementation, and the integration with the curriculum vary among teachers, reflecting their understanding and beliefs about play-based learning. Despite facing challenges, teachers recognize the positive impact of play-based learning on students' achievement and advocate for its continued integration into the education system. With ongoing support and professional development, play-based learning has the potential to enhance students' learning experiences and improve educational outcomes in Rwanda.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that by understanding teachers' perspectives and experiences, policymakers and teachers work collaboratively to overcome barriers and maximize the potential of play-based approaches in Rwandan classrooms.

### **Conflict of interest**

We affirm our commitment to upholding research integrity and ethical publication practices throughout the study, assuming full accountability for the paper's content in any potential disagreement. There are no competing interests for us to relate.

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