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The Supervisory Roles of School Heads in Guided Vs. Free-Play: A Comparative Study of Play-Based Approaches Among Kindergarten Educators

Ma. Teresa Blando Andrada
Laguna State Polytechnic University Sta. Cruz Laguna 4009 PHILIPPINES
Email address: materesa.andrada@deped.gov.ph

Abstract*—This study aimed to determine the relationship of supervisory roles of school heads among kindergarten teachers of two of the most frequent play-based approaches -guided and free play in Bay and Calauan District, Division of Laguna. Specifically, it sought to assess the extent of school heads' supervisory roles in instruction support, performance monitoring, resource provision, professional feedback, and mentoring guidance; the extent of implementation of the guided play approach among kindergarten educators; and the extent of implementation of the free-play approach among kindergarten educators. Also, this study showed whether there is a significant difference in the influence between the supervisory role of the school head and the implementation of the guided and free play approach among kindergarten educators, and whether there is a significant relationship between the supervisory role of the school head and the implementation of the guided and free play approach among kindergarten educators. The study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design. A total of 50 teachers were selected through simple random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that school heads' supervisory roles in guided and free play-based learning among kindergarten educators were generally high. Instruction support got a very high score. In a guided play-based approach, teacher modeling and skill development dimensions received very high scores, indicating they were strongly enacted in kindergarten classrooms. Under the free-play approach, all kindergarten teachers were rated Very High. The study revealed a minor difference in how the supervisor role influenced the guided versus free play approaches, but indicated a significant positive correlation between school heads' supervision and these two play-based approaches. The study concludes that there is no significant difference in the influence of kindergarten educators on the implementation of these two play-based approaches in kindergarten classes. The significant relationship between the two play-based approaches was rejected because there were strong correlations across supervisory dimensions. The increased supervisory role of school heads was associated with a more guided and free-play approach. It is recommended that school heads strengthen performance monitoring and resource a cross-modality supervision playbook outlining core leadership practices applicable to both guided and free play. Kindergarten Teachers may adopt practices that intentionally support both guided and free play. Future researchers may replicate this study in secondary schools or across multiple divisions and consider using longitudinal or mixed-methods research designs to further examine how leadership practices shape the quality of teachers' play-based implementation and children's developmental outcomes over time.*

Keywords*—Supervisory roles, school heads, play-based approaches, kindergarten educators, coaching, resource provision.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Play-based learning is an approach where children learn by actively and creatively interacting with their environment, classmates, and learning materials. Play is one of the most natural and effective ways for children to learn because it helps develop curiosity, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills. According to the Educational Thought of Friedrich Fröbel (Dar & Reeyes, 2018),"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood." In the Philippines, Republic Act No. 10157, or the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012, supports the use of developmentally appropriate and child-centered teaching methods, including play-based learning, to promote children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. Common types of play-based learning include free play, in which children initiate activities on their own, and guided play, in which adults support and guide children while keeping learning fun and engaging.

There has been a long debate in Early Childhood Education (ECE) about whether free play or direct instruction is more effective for children's learning and development (Yu et al., 2018). The success of these approaches does not depend only on teachers. School heads also play an important role as instructional leaders and supervisors. They help ensure that play-based learning aligns with national standards, supports teachers, and meets learners' needs. Their responsibilities include conducting classroom observations, mentoring, providing resources, and implementing policies to improve the quality of play experiences in kindergarten classrooms. In line with RA No. 10157, school heads are expected to support child-centered and age-appropriate learning experiences that promote holistic development among young learners.

This study aims to determine the importance of school heads' supervisory roles in implementing play-based approaches while balancing curriculum goals and children's freedom to express themselves through play. Play can help improve children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

This study explores the effects of school heads' supervisory roles in guided and free play. It aims to contribute to the discussion on play-based learning leadership by connecting classroom practices with educational management.

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The findings may help improve instructional supervision, strengthen teachers' competence, and promote equitable, child-centered learning environments in kindergarten education, consistent with the goals of the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Problem/s which were addressed by the research

The purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between the school head's supervisory role and the guided and free-play-based approaches among kindergarten educators.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of the school head's supervisory role as perceived among kindergarten educators in terms of:
   1.1 Instruction Support;
   1.2 Performance Monitoring;
   1.3 Resource Provision;
   1.4 Professional Feedback; and
   1.5 Mentoring Guide?
2. What is the level of implementation of the play-based approach as compared to the guided approach as perceived among kindergarten educators in terms of:
   2.1 Structural Activities;
   2.2 Teacher Modeling;
   2.3 Goal Alignment;
   2.4 Prompted Instruction; and
   2.5 Skill Development?
3. What is the level of implementation play – based approach as compared to a free play approach, as perceived among kindergarten educators in terms of:
   3.1 Child Choice;
   3.2 Peer Interaction;
   3.3 Exploratory Learning;
   3.4 Imaginative Expression; and
   3.5 Problem Solving?
4. Is there a significant difference in the influence of the supervisor role of the school head on guided play and free play approach among kindergarten educators?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the guided play approach among kindergarten educators?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the free play approach among kindergartens?

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive-correlational quantitative research design. A total of 50 teachers were selected through simple random sampling. Data were gathered using a validated, researcher-developed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation were used to analyze the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part presents, analyzes, and interprets data gathered to answer the specific questions relevant to the main purpose of this study. The findings are organized according to the three major areas of investigation: (1) the extent of school head's supervisory roles in terms of instruction support, performance monitoring, resource provision, professional feedback and mentoring guide; (2) the level of implementation of the play based approach as compared to the guided approach as perceived by kindergarten educators in terms of structural activities, teacher modeling, goal alignment, prompted instruction, and skill development; and (3) the level of implementation of the play-based approach as compared to a free play approach, as perceived by kindergarten educators in terms of child-choice, peer interaction, exploratory learning, imaginative expression, and problem solving. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were used to describe the variables above, while inferential analysis, specifically Pearson product-moment correlation, was conducted to assess correlations among these variables.

Extent of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

In this study, the extent of school heads' supervisory role, as perceived by kindergarten educators, refers to instruction Support, performance Monitoring, resource provision, professional feedback, and mentoring guidance.

The role of school heads is critical in ensuring that kindergarten educators receive the guidance, resources, and professional direction necessary to implement high-quality play-based learning. When school heads provide clear instructional support and consistent supervisory presence, teachers are better equipped to design, facilitate, and refine their play-based classroom practices. The following tables present the statements, means, standard deviations, remarks, and verbal interpretations based on respondents' perspectives.

Table 1 presents the extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of instruction support.

Table 1. Extent of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Instruction Support

Statements The school head…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…provides clear instructional support for play-based learning.	4.22	1.00	Strongly Agree
…regularly monitors the performance in implementing play-based activities.	4.17	0.98	Agree
…ensures that there are adequate resources to facilitate play-based learning.	4.26	0.96	Strongly Agree
…gives constructive professional feedback on my play-based teaching strategies.	4.18	1.04	Agree
…reviews lesson plans to confirm integration of structured play aligned with curriculum standard.	4.28	0.99	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.22		
SD	0.96		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Respondents strongly agree that the school head reviews lesson plans to confirm integration of structured play aligned with curriculum standards (M = 4.28, SD = 0.99), yielding the highest mean. Ensuring adequate resources to facilitate play-based learning obtained a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.96), and providing clear instructional support for play-based learning obtained a mean of 4.22 (SD = 1.00). Items indicating that the school head gives constructive professional feedback on play-

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based teaching strategies (M = 4.18, SD = 1.04) and regularly monitors performance in implementing play-based activities (M = 4.17, SD = 0.98) were rated Agree.

The extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of instructional support yielded an overall weighted mean of 4.22, with a standard deviation of 0.96, which, when interpreted verbally, indicates Very High. This indicates that school heads demonstrate a very high level of instructional support for kindergarten educators' play-based implementation. This further implies that lesson plan review and resource assurance are the most consistently enacted forms of instructional guidance, while direct monitoring of live classroom play implementation is comparatively less frequent.

In summary, the findings suggest that school heads' instruction support is most visibly expressed through planning-level guidance. Strengthening supervisory presence in live play-based classroom settings would further deepen the developmental impact of instructional support on kindergarten educators' practice.

Table 2 presents the extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of performance monitoring.

Table 2. Extent of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Performance Monitoring

Statements The school head…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…ensures teachers to design and implement structured play activities aligned with curriculum standards.	4.10	1.04	Agree
…provides guidance in organizing classroom routines and transitions.	4.08	1.01	Agree
…observes and coaches teachers on the effective modelling of behaviors, academic, language, and strategies.	4.10	1.02	Agree
…ensures clearly defined instructional goals are embedded within play-based learning activities.	4.10	0.97	Agree
…monitors the use of prompts and questioning techniques of teachers.	4.06	1.04	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.09		
SD	0.99		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

Three items — ensuring teachers design and implement structured play activities aligned with curriculum standards, observing and coaching teachers on effective modeling of behaviors and academic language, and ensuring clearly defined instructional goals are embedded within play-based activities — each attained the highest mean of 4.10.

The extent of school heads' supervisory role in performance monitoring was rated as High, with an overall weighted mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.99. This indicates that school heads maintain a high level of engagement in monitoring kindergarten educators' play-based teaching practices. This further implies that structural curriculum alignment is the most consistently monitored dimension, while the direct observation of teachers' prompting and questioning behaviors during live play receives comparatively less supervisory attention.

In summary, the findings indicate that performance monitoring by school heads is strong in curriculum alignment oversight, but that developing more systematic observation of teachers' discourse practices during play would further enhance the depth and developmental impact of performance monitoring in kindergarten settings.

Table 3 presents the extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of resource provision.

Table 3. Extent of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Resource Provision

Statements The school head…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…provides age-appropriate instructional kits, manipulatives, and thematic materials that support structured play.	4.16	0.98	Agree
…supplies demonstration tools, visual aids, and exemplar lesson guides to support teacher modelling.	4.16	1.00	Agree
…ensures resource directly connect play activities to curriculum standards and developmental competencies.	4.16	0.93	Agree
…equips me with resources that encourage questioning, dialogue, and collaboration.	4.22	0.91	Strongly Agree
…prepares provision of art supplies, outdoor play equipment, and fine-motor tools.	4.20	0.97	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.18		
SD	0.92		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

The highest-rated item, equipping teachers with resources that encourage questioning, dialogue, and collaboration, was interpreted as Strongly Agree. Four items-the provision of art supplies, outdoor play equipment, and fine-motor tools, providing age-appropriate instructional kits and manipulatives, supplying demonstration tools and visual aids, and ensuring resources directly connect play activities to curriculum standards- were interpreted as agreed.

The extent of school heads' supervisory role in resource provision indicates that they demonstrate a high level of commitment to providing materials to support play-based instruction. This further implies that resources enabling collaborative dialogue are most consistently provided, whereas more specialized play materials, such as thematic kits and manipulatives, are constrained by budgetary and institutional limitations common to Philippine public elementary schools.

In summary, the findings reveal that resource provision is a well-established supervisory practice among school heads. Expanding the diversity and developmental appropriateness of play materials — through creative resource mobilization strategies — would further enrich both guided and free-play environments.

Table 4 presents the extent of school heads' supervisory role regarding professional feedback.

The highest-rated item, which suggested strategies for encouraging collaboration and communication through play, had a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.96). Guiding teachers in adapting play approaches to support diverse learners obtained a mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.99). Highlighting strengths in classroom routines and encouraging modeling of socio-emotional skills, each attained a mean of 4.12. The lowest-rated item, reviewing lesson plans to ensure instructional goals are embedded in play, registered a mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.00).

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Table 4. Extent of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Professional Feedback

Statements The school head, as a professional mentor …	Mean	SD	Remarks
…highlights strengths in classroom routines and transitions, and suggest improvements where needed.	4.12	1.04	Agree
…encourages modelling of socio-emotional skills and provide examples of best practices.	4.12	0.98	Agree
…reviews lesson plans and classroom practices to ensure instructional goals are embedded in play.	4.06	1.00	Agree
…suggests strategies for encouraging collaboration and communication through play.	4.18	0.96	Agree
…guides teachers in adapting play approaches to support diverse learners.	4.14	0.99	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.12		
SD	0.97		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

The highest-rated item, which suggested strategies for encouraging collaboration and communication through play, had a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.96). Guiding teachers in adapting play approaches to support diverse learners obtained a mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.99). Highlighting strengths in classroom routines and encouraging modeling of socio-emotional skills, each attained a mean of 4.12. The lowest-rated item, reviewing lesson plans to ensure instructional goals are embedded in play, registered a mean of 4.06 (SD = 1.00).

The extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of professional feedback yielded an overall weighted mean of 4.12 with a standard deviation of 0.97, which, when interpreted verbally, is considered High. This indicates that school heads consistently provide professional feedback that acknowledges teachers' strengths and offers targeted improvement suggestions. This further implies that collaborative strategy feedback and inclusive differentiation guidance are the most consistently delivered forms of professional feedback, while systematic feedback explicitly connecting lesson plan review to play-goal alignment represents a relatively underemphasized area where greater supervisory emphasis would further bridge curriculum planning and classroom play practice.

In summary, the findings indicate that professional feedback is a well-practiced supervisory behavior, with particular strength in collaborative strategy suggestion and inclusive play adaptation. Developing more systematic feedback routines that link lesson-plan analysis to play-based goal alignment would enhance the professional growth impact of school heads' feedback for kindergarten educators.

Table 5 presents the extent of school heads' supervisory role as defined by the mentoring guide.

The highest-rated item, mentoring teachers in documenting and assessing skill development through play, attained a mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.89) and was interpreted as Strongly Agree. Coaching teachers on using prompts and open-ended questions effectively obtained a mean of 4.20 (SD = 0.99). Items covering demonstrating effective classroom routines and transitions, guiding teachers in modeling expected behaviors and problem-solving strategies, and mentoring teachers in aligning observed outcomes with curriculum competencies each attained means between 4.16 and 4.18. The extent of school heads' supervisory role in terms of mentoring guidance attained an overall weighted mean of 4.19, with a standard deviation of 0.91, which, when verbally interpreted, is considered High.

Table 5. Extent of School heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Mentoring Guide

Statements The school head…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…demonstrates effective classroom routines and transitions.	4.18	0.92	Agree
…guide teachers in modelling expected behaviors, language, and problem-solving strategies.	4.18	0.92	Agree
…mentors teachers in aligning observed outcomes with curriculum competencies.	4.16	0.96	Agree
…coaches teachers on using prompts and open-ended questions effectively.	4.20	0.99	Agree
…mentors teachers in documenting and assessing skill development through play.	4.24	0.89	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.19		
SD	0.91		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

This indicates that school heads demonstrate a high level of mentoring engagement, most particularly in supporting play-based assessment documentation and coaching effective questioning practices. This further implies that, while consistently practiced, mentoring in live classroom modeling of language and problem-solving strategies is perceived as slightly less uniformly implemented, reflecting the real-world constraints of time and competing administrative responsibilities.

In summary, the findings affirm that the mentoring guide is a well-established and valued dimension of school heads' supervisory role. Deepening the relational, practically grounded, and in-classroom dimensions of mentoring — through co-planning and live-play facilitation coaching — would further elevate the impact of professional development for kindergarten educators.

Table 6. Composite of School Heads' Supervisory Role as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

Indicators	**Weighted Mean**	**SD**	**Verbal Interpretation**
instruction Support	4.22	0.96	Very High
performance Monitoring	4.09	0.99	High
resource provision	4.18	0.92	High
professional feedback	4.12	0.97	High
mentoring guide	4.19	0.91	High
Grand Mean	4.16		
SD	0.95		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

Table 6 presents the composite of the school heads' supervisory role. Instruction support received the highest weighted mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.96), indicating Very High. Mentoring guide (M = 4.19, SD = 0.91) and resource provision (M = 4.18, SD = 0.92) followed closely, with professional feedback (M = 4.12, SD = 0.97) and performance monitoring (M = 4.09, SD = 0.99) completing the composite, all interpreted as High.

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The composite supervisory role attained a grand mean of 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.95, which, when verbally interpreted, is considered High. This indicates that school heads consistently perform their supervisory responsibilities at a high level across all five dimensions as perceived by kindergarten educators. This further implies that instruction support stands out as the most impactful and visible supervisory dimension, while performance monitoring presents the greatest opportunity for deepening through more frequent, play-specific, and discourse-focused classroom observation. The relatively tight SD indicates a consensus among educators about strong instructional backing from heads, which aligns with literature showing that visible instructional leadership is associated with richer classroom practices and professional dialogue in early childhood settings. While still categorized as High, this item has a slightly lower mean than Instructional Support, Resource Provision, and Mentoring Guide, suggesting that while feedback is generally strong, it may be somewhat less consistent across all teachers or less immediate in impact than resource or instructional supports

In summary, the composite findings affirm that school heads in the study schools are perceived as effective and committed supervisors across all five measured dimensions, creating a supervisory environment that is supportive, resource-oriented, and professionally nurturing for kindergarten educators.

Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

In this study, the level of implementation of the play-based approach relative to the guided approach, as perceived by kindergarten educators, encompasses structural activities, teacher modeling, goal alignment**,** prompted instruction**,** and skill development.

The guided play approach is characterized by adult-framed learning experiences that preserve children's agency while advancing curricular objectives. When school heads actively support this approach through supervisory guidance and professional development, kindergarten educators are better equipped to design and implement guided play that is both joyful and academically purposeful. The following tables present the statements, means, standard deviations, remarks, and verbal interpretations from the respondents' perspectives.

Table 7 presents the level of implementation of the guided play-based approach across structural activities.

The highest-rated items — the school head fosters collaboration and problem-solving rather than just compliance, and ensures that activities accommodate diverse learners — each attained a mean of 4.20. Giving clear instructional objectives embedded within structured play tasks obtained a mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.89), and establishing rules or instructions that allow variation and creativity obtained a mean of 4.14 (SD = 0.93). The lowest-rated item, giving samples of activities explicitly connected to curriculum standards or developmental milestones, recorded a mean of 4.12 (SD = 1.00).

Table 7. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Structural Activities

Statements In guided play-based approach, the school head...	Mean	SD	Remarks
…gives samples of activities that are explicitly connected to curriculum standards or developmental milestones.	4.12	1.00	Agree
…gives clear instructional objectives are embedded within structured play task	4.16	0.89	Agree
…establishes rules or instructions that allow variation and creativity.	4.14	0.93	Agree
…fosters collaboration and problem-solving, not just compliance.	4.20	0.90	Agree
…ensures that activities accommodate diverse learners.	4.20	0.95	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.16		
SD	0.91		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

The level of implementation of structural activities was 4.16, with a standard deviation of 0.91, which is verbally interpreted as High. This indicates that school heads demonstrate a high level of effectiveness in supporting the structural design of guided play activities. This further implies that promoting inclusive and collaborative play structures is the most strongly enacted form of structural support, while the explicit and consistent connection of specific play tasks to curriculum standards or developmental milestones is an area where more targeted supervisory coaching would further strengthen implementation fidelity.

In summary, the findings suggest that structural activities in the guided play approach are well supported by school heads. Strengthening the explicit alignment between specific play tasks and identifiable curriculum competency codes — through targeted supervisory coaching in curriculum-to-play translation — would further enhance the developmental coherence and curriculum fidelity of guided play implementation.

Table 8 presents the level of implementation of the guided play-based approach in terms of teacher modeling.

Table 8. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Teacher Modeling

Statements Guided play-based approach, the school head...	Mean	SD	Remarks
…shows how to use materials before inviting children to explore.	4.18	0.94	Agree
…uses rich vocabulary during play and encourages children to repeat or extend it.	4.24	0.94	Strongly Agree
…shows enthusiasm and curiosity to encourage similar attitudes in children.	4.18	0.87	Agree
…joins play as a co-player while subtly steering toward learning goals.	4.26	0.90	Strongly Agree
…verbalizes thinking processes (“I’m counting these blocks to see how many we need”).	4.22	0.91	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.22		
SD	0.89		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The highest-rated item, the school head joins play as a co-player while subtly steering toward learning goals, attained a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.90) and was interpreted as Strongly

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Agree. Using rich vocabulary during play and encouraging children to extend it (M = 4.24, SD = 0.94) and verbalizing thinking processes during play (M = 4.22, SD = 0.91) were also rated Strongly Agree. Items concerning showing enthusiasm and curiosity, and showing how to use materials before inviting children to explore each obtained means 4.18.
The level of implementation of teacher modeling was 4.22, with a standard deviation of 0.89, which is verbally interpreted as Very High. This indicates that school heads demonstrate a very high level of effectiveness in coaching language-rich, goal-directed co-play strategies within the guided play approach. This further implies that co-playing as a modeling strategy is the most strongly enacted form of teacher modeling, affirming educators' understanding that joining children's play as an active participant is the most developmentally powerful demonstration of guided play facilitation.

Table 9 presents the level of implementation of the guided play-based approach in terms of goal alignment.

Table 9. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Goal Alignment

Statements Guided play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…ensures that play tasks reinforce intended learning outcomes (e.g., literacy, numeracy, socio-emotional).	4.20	0.88	Agree
…applies a guided play-based approach with clear learning goals in mind.	4.20	0.97	Agree
…guides children to connect play experiences with real-world situations.	4.22	0.93	Strongly Agree
…revisits and reinforces learning goals across different play sessions.	4.20	0.93	Agree
…play activities integrate multiple domains of learning (cognitive, social, emotional, physical).	4.20	0.93	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.20		
SD	0.90		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

The highest-rated item, guiding children to connect play experiences with real-world situations, attained a mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.93) and was interpreted as Strongly Agree. The remaining four items — ensuring that play tasks reinforce intended learning outcomes, applying a guided play-based approach with clear learning goals in mind, revisiting and reinforcing learning goals across different play sessions, and integrating multiple domains of learning within play activities — each attained a mean of 4.20.

The level of implementation of goal alignment attained an overall weighted mean of 4.20, with a standard deviation of 0.90, which is verbally interpreted as High. This indicates that school heads demonstrate a high level of effectiveness in supporting kindergarten educators to embed curriculum learning goals within guided play activities. This further implies that connecting play experiences to real-world contexts is the most strongly enacted form of goal alignment, while the systematic reinforcement of specific learning goals across repeated play sessions is an area where more sustained supervisory coaching would deepen curriculum coherence.

In summary, the findings suggest that goal alignment in the guided play approach is consistently well supported by school heads. Deepening multi-session and multi-format goal alignment — through specific supervisory guidance on curriculum competency mapping — would further strengthen the developmental continuity and curriculum impact of guided play implementation.

Table 10 presents the level of implementation of the guided play-based approach in terms of prompted instruction. The highest-rated item, encouraging children to reflect on their play experiences through guided questions, attained a mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.87) and was interpreted as Strongly Agree. Prompts used to balance group participation and ensure all voices are heard obtained a mean of 4.20 (SD = 0.95). Asking open-ended questions to extend children's thinking and inviting quieter children to join play through gentle prompts each attained a mean of 4.18. The lowest-rated item, prompts that encourage prediction, explanation, or reflection, recorded a mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.99).

The level of implementation of prompted instruction was 4.18, with a standard deviation of 0.93, which, when interpreted verbally, is Very High. This indicates that school heads demonstrate a very high level of effectiveness in coaching kindergarten educators to use reflective, inclusive, and participatory prompting strategies during guided play. In summary, prompted instruction is a notable strength of school heads' supervisory support in the guided play approach. Expanding coaching to encompass predictive and metacognitive prompting strategies would further elevate the cognitive depth and developmental richness of teacher-child interactions during guided play sessions.

Table 10. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Prompted Instruction

Statements Guided play-based approach...	Mean	SD	Remarks
…asks open-ended questions to extend children's thinking.	4.18	0.94	Agree
…prompts encourage prediction, explanation, or reflection ("What do you think will happen if…?").	4.10	0.99	Agree
…invites quieter children to join play through gentle prompts.	4.18	1.02	Agree
…prompts are used to balance group participation (ensuring all voices are heard).	4.20	0.95	Agree
…encourages children to reflect on their play experiences through guided questions.	4.24	0.87	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.18		
SD	0.93		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

This further implies that post-play reflective questioning and participation-balancing prompts are the most consistently enacted forms of prompted instruction, while higher-order predictive and explanatory prompts represent an area where additional supervisory coaching would deepen children's metacognitive engagement during guided play.

Table 11 presents the level of implementation of the guided play-based approach in terms of skill development.

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Table 11. Level of Implementation of Play-Based Approach as to Guided Approach as perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Skill Development

Statements Guided play-based approach...	Mean	SD	Remarks
…materials are designed to encourage safe physical exploration.	4.18	0.94	Agree
…supports imaginative extensions of play themes.	4.18	0.87	Agree
…activities support fine motor development through manipulation of materials	4.22	1.00	Strongly Agree
…engages in gross motor activities that promote coordination and movement.	4.24	0.96	Strongly Agree
…practices empathy and conflict resolution during guided play.	4.24	0.92	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.21		
SD	0.91		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The highest-rated items — engaging in gross motor activities that promote coordination and movement, and practicing empathy and conflict resolution during guided play — each attained a mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.96 and 0.92, respectively), both interpreted as Strongly Agree. Activities supporting fine motor development through manipulation of materials obtained a mean of 4.22 (SD = 1.00). Items concerning materials designed for safe physical exploration and supporting imaginative extensions of play themes each attained a mean of 4.18. The level of implementation of skill development attained an overall weighted mean of 4.21, with a standard deviation of 0.91, which, when interpreted verbally, indicates Very High.

This indicates that school heads demonstrate a very high level of effectiveness in supporting kindergarten educators to facilitate guided play activities that develop children's cognitive, physical, social, and emotional competencies. This further implies that gross motor development and socio-emotional skill building through guided play are the most strongly supported skill development outcomes, while supporting imaginative extensions of play themes represents an area where additional supervisory guidance would broaden the developmental scope of guided play.

In summary, skill development in the guided play approach is a clear strength of school heads' supervisory support. Providing more targeted supervisory coaching to support imaginative and creative skill development would further complete the holistic developmental profile of guided play implementation across kindergarten classrooms.

Table 12 presents the composite implementation of the guided play-based approach.

Table 12. Composite of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach and the Guided Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

Indicators	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
structural activities	4.16	0.91	High
teacher modeling	4.22	0.89	Very High
goal alignment	4.20	0.90	High
prompted instruction	4.18	0.93	High
skill development	4.21	0.91	Very High
Grand Mean	4.19		
SD	0.91		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

Teacher modeling obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.89), interpreted as Very High, followed closely by skill development (M = 4.21, SD = 0.91), also Very High. Goal alignment (M = 4.20, SD = 0.90) and prompted instruction (M = 4.18, SD = 0.93) were interpreted as High. Structural activities obtained the lowest weighted mean of 4.16 (SD = 0.91), also High.

The composite implementation of the guided play approach attained a grand mean of 4.19 with a standard deviation of 0.91, verbally interpreted as High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a consistently high level of implementation quality across all five guided play indicators. This further implies that teacher modeling and skill development are the most robustly enacted dimensions of guided play, while structural activities — though still high — represent the relative area of greatest development opportunity within the guided play composite.

In summary, the composite findings affirm that the guided play approach is well implemented across all indicators in the study schools. Targeted supervisory support to strengthen the curriculum-alignment specificity of structural activities — building on existing strengths in teacher modeling and skill development — would further elevate the overall coherence and developmental impact of guided play implementation.

Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

In this study, the level of implementation of a play–based approach, as perceived by kindergarten educators, refers to child choice, peer instruction, exploratory learning, imaginative expression, and problem-solving.

The free-play approach is distinguished by its emphasis on child autonomy, intrinsic motivation, and self-directed engagement. When school heads provide the organizational conditions, play materials, and supervisory affirmation necessary to enable genuine free play, kindergarten educators are better positioned to facilitate rich and developmentally diverse free-play experiences. The following tables present the statements, means, standard deviations, remarks, and verbal interpretations from the respondents' perspectives.

Table 13 presents the level of implementation of the free play-based approach in terms of child choice.

Table 13. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Child Choice

Statements Free play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…teachers show respect in children's decisions about preferred play tasks.	4.30	0.96	Strongly Agree
…materials given are accessible and arranged to encourage independent choice.	4.26	0.90	Strongly Agree
…supports peer choice while ensuring inclusivity.	4.30	0.89	Strongly Agree
…allows flexibility in transitions between play tasks.	4.34	0.85	Strongly Agree
…encourages children to make independent decisions and reflect on them.	4.28	0.90	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.30		
SD	0.88		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

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All five items were rated Strongly Agree. The highest-rated item, allowing flexibility in transitions between play tasks, attained a mean of 4.34 (SD = 0.85). Showing respect for children's decisions about preferred play tasks (M = 4.30) and supporting peer choice while ensuring inclusivity (M = 4.30) were closely aligned. Encouraging children to make independent decisions and reflect on them obtained a mean of 4.28. The lowest mean, providing accessible, well-arranged materials to encourage independent choice, was 4.26 (SD = 0.90).

The level of implementation of child choice attained an overall weighted mean of 4.30, with a standard deviation of 0.88, which is verbally interpreted as Very High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a very high level of support from the school head for genuine child autonomy during free play. This further implies that transition flexibility and respect for children's play preferences are the most consistently enacted expressions of child choice, while the physical organization of materials for maximum independent accessibility represents an area where additional supervisory guidance on classroom arrangement would further deepen authentic child autonomy.

In summary, child choice is very highly supported in the study schools' free-play environments, reflecting the clear value that school heads and educators place on children's autonomous decision-making. Strengthening material accessibility arrangements through targeted supervisory coaching on classroom organization would further consolidate the authentic child-centered free-play environment.

Table 14 presents the level of implementation of the free play-based approach in terms of peer interaction.

Table 14. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Peer interaction

Statements Free play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…teachers prompt support positive peer conflict resolution when needed	4.18	0.98	Agree
…demonstrates empathy and perspective-taking in peer interactions	4.20	1.01	Agree
…children listen and respond appropriately to peers' ideas.	4.24	0.98	Strongly Agree
…children adapt roles flexibly based on group dynamics	4.20	0.99	Agree
…children willingly share materials and resources during free play.	4.26	1.05	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.22		
SD	0.98		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The highest-rated item, children willingly share materials and resources during free play, attained a mean of 4.26 (SD = 1.05) and was interpreted as Strongly Agree. Children who listened and responded appropriately to peers' ideas obtained a mean of 4.24 (SD = 0.98). Items assessing children's empathy and perspective-taking in peer interactions (M = 4.20) and children's role flexibility based on group dynamics (M = 4.20) were both Agree. The lowest-rated item, teachers' prompting support for positive peer conflict resolution when needed, recorded a mean of 4.18 (SD = 0.98).

The level of implementation of peer interaction was 4.22, with a standard deviation of 0.98, which, when verbally interpreted, indicates Very High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a very high level of peer social exchange quality during free play. This further implies that children's spontaneous sharing behaviors and responsiveness to peers' ideas are the most consistently observed peer interaction outcomes, while teacher-initiated conflict-resolution prompting is slightly less consistently enacted, reflecting the pedagogical tension between preserving children's autonomous conflict navigation and providing timely adult mediation.

In summary, peer interaction in the free-play approach is richly implemented in the study schools. Developing teachers' capacity to calibrate conflict-resolution prompting — supporting peer mediation with a light touch — would further enhance the social-learning dimension of free play while preserving children's autonomous development of conflict resolution.

Table 15 presents the level of implementation of the free play-based approach in terms of exploratory learning. All five items were rated Strongly Agree.

Table 15. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as to Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Exploratory Learning

Statements Free play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…gives way children show curiosity by asking questions during free play.	4.24	0.94	Strongly Agree
…allows children experiment with different ways of using materials	4.24	0.98	Strongly Agree
…allows children persist in solving problems encountered during play.	4.22	0.89	Strongly Agree
…allows children independently choose pathways for exploration.	4.30	0.89	Strongly Agree
…allows children set personal challenges or goals during play.	4.28	0.97	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.26		
SD	0.91		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The highest-rated item, which allows children to independently choose pathways for exploration, had a mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.89). Allowing children to set personal challenges or goals during play obtained a mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.97. Allowing children to show curiosity by asking questions and allowing children to experiment with different ways of using materials each attained a mean of 4.24. The lowest-rated item, allowing children to persist in solving problems encountered during play, recorded a mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.89).

The level of implementation of exploratory learning attained an overall weighted mean of 4.26, with a standard deviation of 0.91, which, when interpreted verbally, indicates Very High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a very high level of quality in the free-play environment in supporting children's independent inquiry, curiosity-driven experimentation, and self-directed discovery. This further implies that the freedom to independently choose exploration pathways and to set personal challenges are the most strongly enacted forms of exploratory learning, while sustained

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persistence in problem-solving during exploration is slightly less frequently observed, reflecting the tensions between time-management demands and the need to protect extended, uninterrupted exploration.

In summary, exploratory learning is richly supported in the study schools' free-play environments. Protecting extended, uninterrupted exploration time through deliberate scheduling decisions by school heads would further deepen the persistence and metacognitive dimensions of children's exploratory engagement.

Table 16 presents the level of implementation of the free play-based approach in terms of imaginative expression.

Table 16. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Imaginative Expression

Statements Free play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…allows children to take on roles (e.g., parent, doctor, superhero) during play.	4.24	0.94	Strongly Agree
…combines materials to represent imaginative scenarios.	4.26	0.94	Strongly Agree
…hinders children invent storylines or plots during play.	3.90	1.30	Agree
…not integrate fantasy with real-life experiences.	3.88	1.24	Agree
…Do not invent imaginative worlds or settings.	3.86	1.32	Agree
Weighted Mean	4.03		
SD	1.04		
Verbal Interpretation	High		

Among the five items, combining materials to represent imaginative scenarios attained the highest mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.94), followed by allowing children to take on roles during play (M = 4.24, SD = 0.94), both of which were interpreted as Strongly Agree.

Three negatively framed items — hindering children from inventing storylines (M = 3.90, SD = 1.30), not integrating fantasy with real-life experiences (M = 3.88, SD = 1.24), and not inventing imaginative worlds or settings (M = 3.86, SD = 1.32) — were rated Agree, indicating educators generally do not perceive these as characteristic of their free-play environments.

The level of implementation of imaginative expression attained an overall weighted mean of 4.03, with a standard deviation of 1.04, which, when verbally interpreted, is considered High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a high level of support for imaginative play during free play. The weighted mean — lower than all other free-play indicators — and the greater response variability on negatively framed items suggest that imaginative expression quality is more context-dependent and variable across classrooms than other free-play dimensions.

In summary, imaginative expression is well supported in the study schools but presents the most variability among all free-play indicators. This variability likely reflects differences in classroom material richness, available open-ended play resources, teachers' beliefs about facilitating and extending children's imaginative play worlds, and the extent to which teachers have received targeted mentoring from school heads in this regard.

Table 17 presents the level of implementation of the free-play-based approach in problem-solving.

Table 17. Level of Implementation of the Play-Based Approach as Compared to the Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators in terms of Problem Solving

Statements Free play-based approach…	Mean	SD	Remarks
…allows children show curiosity about how to overcome barriers.	4.26	0.99	Strongly Agree
…children should not adjust strategies when initial attempts fail.	4.04	1.14	Agree
…children seek help or input from peers.	4.30	0.91	Strongly Agree
…children demonstrate patience and perseverance in finding solutions	4.28	1.01	Strongly Agree
…children explain or demonstrate their reasoning behind solutions.	4.28	0.99	Strongly Agree
Weighted Mean	4.23		
SD	0.92		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

The highest-rated item, children seeking help or input from peers, had a mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.91), indicating Strongly Agree. Children demonstrating patience and perseverance in finding solutions, and those explaining or demonstrating their reasoning behind their solutions, were also rated Strongly Agree. Allowing children to show curiosity about how to overcome barriers obtained a mean of 4.26 (SD = 0.99). The lowest-rated item, children's adjusting strategies when initial attempts fail, recorded a mean of 4.

The level of implementation of problem-solving attained an overall weighted mean of 4.23, with a standard deviation of 0.92, which, when interpreted verbally, indicates Very High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a very high level of child-initiated and peer-supported problem-solving during free play. This further implies that children's spontaneous peer collaboration in problem-solving and their willingness to demonstrate reasoning are the most strongly observed behaviors, while the encouragement of flexible strategy adjustment after initial failures is a developmental dimension where more explicit facilitation through school head coaching would strengthen the metacognitive depth of free-play problem-solving.

In summary, problem-solving is richly observed in the study schools' free-play environments. Developing teachers' capacity to facilitate productive failure experiences — supporting children in flexibly adjusting their strategies — would further deepen the metacognitive and resilience dimensions of free-play problem-solving.

Table 18 presents the composite implementation of the free play-based approach.

The composite implementation of the free play approach yielded a grand mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.94, which, when verbally interpreted, indicates Very High. This indicates that kindergarten educators perceive a very high level of implementation quality in free play across all five indicators. This further implies that child autonomy, self-directed exploration, and peer-supported problem solving are

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the most richly enacted dimensions of free play, while imaginative expression displays greater variability across classrooms, reflecting the context-dependent nature of creative play facilitation.

Table 18. Composite of Implementation of the Play–Based Approach and Free Play Approach as Perceived among Kindergarten Educators

Indicators	Weighted Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
child choice	4.30	0.88	Very High
peer instruction	4.22	0.98	Very High
exploratory learning	4.26	0.91	Very High
imaginative expression	4.03	1.04	High
problem solving	4.23	0.92	Very High
Grand Mean	4.21		
SD	0.94		
Verbal Interpretation	Very High		

Child choice obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.88), followed by exploratory learning (M = 4.26, SD = 0.91), problem solving (M = 4.23, SD = 0.92), and peer interaction (M = 4.22, SD = 0.98), all interpreted as Very High. Imaginative expression obtained the lowest weighted mean of 4.03 (SD = 1.04), interpreted as High

In summary, the composite findings affirm that the free play approach is highly implemented across the study schools, with child choice, exploratory learning, and problem-solving as consistent strengths. Addressing variability in imaginative expression through targeted supervisory support — in open-ended material provision and imaginative play facilitation coaching — would further strengthen the consistency and developmental richness of free-play implementation.

Test of Difference in the Influence of the Supervisor Role of School Head on Guided Play and Free Play Approach among Kindergarten Educators

To test for a significant difference in the influence of the school head's supervisory role on the guided play and free play approaches among kindergarten educators, the data were statistically analyzed using Real Statistics Data Analysis Tools with the independent-samples t-test.

Table 19 presents the results of the t-test examining whether the school head's supervisory role influences the implementation of guided play versus free play among kindergarten educators.

Table 19. Difference in the Influence of Supervisor Role of the School Head on Guided Play and Free Play Approach among Kindergarten Educators

	guided play		free play					
	M	SD	M	SD	df	t	p	Cohen's d
Supervisor role	4.195	0.801	4.206	0.797	50	-0.264	.396	-.013

The guided play approach had a mean of 4.195 (SD = 0.801), while the free play approach had a mean of 4.206 (SD = 0.797). The independent-samples t-test yielded a non-significant result, t(50) = -0.264, p = .396. The near-zero effect size (Cohen's d = -.013) confirms that any difference between the two approaches in terms of supervisory influence is negligible.

The primary hypothesis — that the guided play approach would yield results significantly similar to those of the free play approach in terms of school head supervisory influence — was supported by these findings. The data indicate that respondents do not distinguish between guided and free play when assessing how a school head's supervisory role shapes implementation. This equivalence suggests that school heads' leadership and supervisory actions are perceived as equally supportive for both play configurations within the measured construct and sample.

In summary, the non-significant difference confirms that school heads' supervisory practices exert a uniform influence across both play-based modalities. Focusing on general supervisory quality — encompassing clear communication, collaborative coaching, and comprehensive resource provisioning — is the most efficient and impactful approach to promoting high-quality play-based implementation across both guided and free-play approaches.

Test of the Association between the Supervisory Role of School Heads and the Implementation of the Guided Play Approach among Kindergarten Educators

To test the significant relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the guided play approach among kindergarten educators in terms of structural activities, teacher modeling, goal alignment, prompted instruction, and skill development, the data were statistically analyzed using Real Statistics Data Analysis Tools with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Table 20 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients and significance values for the relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the five dimensions of guided play implementation.

Table 20. Significant Relationship between the Supervisory Role of School Heads and the Implementation of the Guided Play Approach among Kindergarten Educators

Supervisory Role of School Heads		Guided Play Approach				
		Structural Activities	Teacher Modeling	Goal Alignment	Prompted Instruction	Skill Development
Instruction Support	Pearson Correlation	.955**	.919**	.958**	.963**	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Performance Monitoring	Pearson Correlation	.815**	.816**	.816**	.824**	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Resource Provision	Pearson Correlation	.914**	.918**	.927**	.913**	.909**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Professional Feedback	Pearson Correlation	.889**	.894**	.896**	.908**	.890**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Mentoring Guide	Pearson Correlation	.974**	.940**	.963**	.961**	.954**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50

All correlations across all five supervisory dimensions and all five guided play indicators are very strong and highly significant ($p < .001$). Among supervisory dimensions, the mentoring guide demonstrated the strongest individual associations, with r values ranging from .940 (teacher modeling) to .974 (structural activities). Instruction support

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followed closely, ranging from .919 (teacher modeling) to .967 (skill development). Resource provision yielded r values between .909 and .927, professional feedback between .889 and .908, and performance monitoring between .812 and .824. A significant positive correlation was observed between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the guided play approach among kindergarten educators ($r(50) = .52$, $p < .001$). This indicates that kindergarten educators who experience stronger supervisory support tend to implement the guided play approach with greater quality across all five dimensions. The highest individual association — mentoring guide with structural activities ($r = .974$) — supports the conclusion that sustained mentoring is most closely linked to teachers' capacity to design intentional, curriculum-aligned, structured play activities. The strong link between instruction support and skill development ($r = .967$) further confirms that direct instructional guidance from school heads directly enables the breadth and quality of skill development outcomes during guided play.

In summary, the findings confirm a very strong and significant positive relationship between all supervisory role dimensions and all guided play implementation indicators. School heads who provide stronger supervision across instruction support, mentoring, resource provision, feedback, and monitoring are associated with kindergarten educators who implement the full spectrum of guided play dimensions with greater fidelity, intentionality, and developmental impact. Hypotheses four and five were accordingly accepted.

Test of the Association between the Supervisory Role of School Heads and the Implementation of the Free Play Approach among Kindergarten Educators

To test the significant relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the free play approach among kindergarten educators in terms of child choice, peer interaction, exploratory learning, imaginative expression, and problem solving, the data were statistically analyzed using Real Statistics Data Analysis Tools with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Table 21 presents Pearson correlation coefficients and significance values for the relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the five dimensions of free-play implementation.

All correlations are positive and highly significant ($p < .001$), ranging from strong to very strong. The strongest individual associations include instruction support and exploratory learning ($r = .966$), instruction support and child choice ($r = .955$), and mentoring guide and exploratory learning ($r = .952$). The relatively lower — though still strong and significant — associations involve performance monitoring and imaginative expression ($r = .611$) and performance monitoring and peer interaction ($r = .723$). A significant positive correlation was observed between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the free play approach among kindergarten educators ($r(50) = .52$, $p < .001$).

Table 21. Significant Relationship between the Supervisory Role of School Heads and the Implementation of the Free Play approach among Kindergarten Educators

Supervisory Role of School Heads		Free-Play Approach Dimensions				
		Child Choice	Peer Instruction	Exploratory Learning	Imaginative Expression	Problem Solving
Instruction Support	Pearson Correlation	.955**	.894**	.966**	.744**	.916**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Performance Monitoring	Pearson Correlation	.806**	.723**	.800**	.611**	.764**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Resource Provision	Pearson Correlation	.934**	.892**	.901**	.740**	.879**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Professional Feedback	Pearson Correlation	.894**	.838**	.896**	.727**	.853**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50
Mentoring Guide	Pearson Correlation	.929**	.906**	.952**	.729**	.901**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	50	50	50	50	50

This indicates that kindergarten educators who experience stronger school head supervisory support tend to implement the free play approach with greater quality across all five dimensions. The particularly strong associations between instruction support and exploratory learning, and between child choice and autonomous choice-making during free play, affirm that school heads who provide clear instructional direction and resource-enabling guidance create the most powerful conditions for children's self-directed exploration and autonomous choice-making during free play. The relatively lower correlations involving imaginative expression suggest that imaginative expression is the free-play dimension most sensitive to contextual factors beyond direct supervisory influence.

In summary, the findings confirm that all five supervisory role dimensions are significantly and positively associated with all five free-play implementation indicators. School heads who provide comprehensive supervisory guidance — spanning instructional direction, resource provision, professional feedback, performance monitoring, and mentoring — enable kindergarten educators to implement the full spectrum of free-play experiences with greater richness and consistency across all developmental dimensions.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

There is no significant difference in the influence of the school head's supervisory role on the guided play and free play approaches among kindergarten educators. The null hypothesis Ho1 is accepted: there is no significant difference in the influence of the supervisory role of school heads on the guided play and free play approaches among kindergarten educators. The non-significant result confirms that educators perceive school heads' supervisory actions as equally supportive for both play modalities. This finding implies that the quality of general supervisory engagement — rather than modality-specific supervision — is the primary driver of implementation consistency across both play types.

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The guided play approach is implemented at a high-to-very high level among kindergarten educators in the study schools, with teacher modeling and skill development as the most robustly enacted dimensions. The null hypothesis Ho2 is therefore rejected: there is a significant positive relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the guided play approach. The very strong correlations across all supervisory dimensions and guided play indicators confirm that stronger supervisory support directly enables more intentional, curriculum-aligned, and developmentally rich implementation of guided play.

The free play approach is implemented at a very high level among kindergarten educators in the study schools, with child choice, exploratory learning, and problem solving as the most richly enacted dimensions. The null hypothesis Ho3 is therefore rejected: there is a significant positive relationship between the supervisory role of school heads and the implementation of the free play approach. The strong correlations across all supervisory dimensions affirm that school heads who provide comprehensive supervisory guidance enable kindergarten educators to create richer, more child-centered, and developmentally diverse free-play environments. The lower, more variable correlations involving imaginative expression indicate that this dimension is the most context-sensitive and most reliant on targeted mentoring support.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

School heads may develop a cross-modality supervision playbook outlining core leadership practices applicable to both guided and free play. They can also develop structured mentoring programs for kindergarten teachers to maximize the implementation of guided play.

Kindergarten Teachers may adopt practices that intentionally support both guided and free play through providing access to high-quality play materials, safe environments, and time allocated for both forms of play, and to collaborate with other stakeholders.

Future researchers may replicate this study in secondary schools or across multiple divisions and may consider using longitudinal or mixed-methods research designs to further examine how leadership practices shape teachers' play-based implementation quality and children's developmental outcomes over time. Qualitative investigations of school heads' mentoring conversations and classroom observation practices would further illuminate the specific mechanisms through which supervisory actions translate into improved kindergarten play-based learning experiences.

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