

**RESEARCH TITLE**

# A professional development programme for Ghanaian kindergarten teachers to implement an indigenous play-based pedagogy

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**ABSTRACT**

*The focus of this study was on the development and implementation of a professional development programme to equip kindergarten teachers with relevant competencies that could enable them to implement the kindergarten curriculum effectively through an indigenous play-based pedagogy. In Ghana, the introduction of the 2004 play-based kindergarten curriculum required teachers to adapt their teaching and children's learning in order to ensure a successful implementation of the curriculum. However, a 2012 report on the operational plan to scale up kindergarten education in Ghana revealed that kindergarten teachers were struggling to implement the curriculum. They were found to be employing the traditional teacher-centred approaches, with the focus on numbers and shapes. These approaches were neither child-centred nor activity-based, which resulted in low-quality kindergarten teaching and learning. The present study firstly sought to answer the research question how Ghanaian indigenous Anansi stories and games could be employed to develop an indigenous play-based professional development programme that would provide opportunities for enhancing teachers' knowledge of, skills in and attitudes towards implementing a play curriculum. Secondly, the study examined whether the indigenous play-based pedagogy ultimately improves the learning and development of kindergarten children in different kindergarten settings. A qualitative research approach was used involving the socio-constructionist methodology with a participatory action research design within an interpretive paradigm to investigate the indigenous play-based pedagogical practices of eight purposively selected kindergarten teachers. The qualitative research approach was used because it provided in-depth understanding and rich descriptions of the views, experiences and practices of the kindergarten teachers as they engaged with their classroom practices. Data were obtained from different sources, which included visual and written narratives, observation and individual semi-structured interviews over a period of three months for the purpose of triangulation. The data were thematically analysed and the results were categorised into themes and sub-themes. The overarching findings showed that analysis and application of the Anansi stories in the implementation of the indigenous play-based professional development programme enhanced teachers' knowledge of, skills in and attitudes towards the implementation of the kindergarten curriculum.*

**Keywords:** Anansi stories, early childhood education, indigenous play, indigenous play-based pedagogy, indigenous play-based professional development programme, kindergarten education, kindergarten curriculum, kindergarten teacher, professional development programmes

The full thesis can be found at <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/69988>