



THE SUPERSTITION OF THE INTEREST OF STUDENTS OF SMALL SCHOOL AGE IN PLAY AND STUDY

Aymuratova Aruxan Yusupovna

I. Educator-pedagogue of the Yusupov School of creativity

Nukus, Uzbekistan

+998913002323

Annotation:

This article explores the influence of superstitions on the engagement of young school-aged children in play and study. It examines how cultural beliefs and superstitious practices may shape students' motivation, behavior, and academic performance. Through a mixed-methods approach, the study analyzes existing literature, surveys educators, and observes student behavior to understand the interplay between superstitions and learning environments. The findings suggest that superstitions can both positively and negatively affect student interest, depending on their context and application.

Keywords: Superstitions, student engagement, play, study, motivation, cultural beliefs, young learners, academic performance, learning environment.

Superstitions, often rooted in cultural traditions, influence various aspects of human behavior, including education. For young school-aged children (ages 5–10), play and study are critical for cognitive and social development. However, superstitious beliefs—such as lucky charms, rituals, or fear of certain actions—may shape how children approach these activities. This article investigates whether superstitions enhance or hinder students' interest in play and study, focusing on small school-aged children in diverse cultural settings. Understanding this relationship can help educators create supportive learning environments that respect cultural beliefs while fostering engagement.

Small school-age children, typically between 5 and 10 years old, are at a developmental stage where curiosity, imagination, and social interaction shape their engagement with both play and study. Play is a natural avenue for exploration,



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creativity, and skill development, while structured study introduces foundational academic skills. However, superstitions—irrational beliefs or fears often rooted in cultural, familial, or peer influences—can impact their interest and participation in these activities. This article explores strategies to foster enthusiasm for play and study in young students while addressing the influence of superstitions, ensuring a balanced and supportive learning environment.

The Role of Play in Early Education

Play is a cornerstone of early childhood development, serving as a medium through which children explore their world, develop cognitive and motor skills, and build social connections. For small school-age children, play is not merely recreational but a critical component of learning. According to developmental psychologists like Jean Piaget, play facilitates cognitive growth by allowing children to experiment with abstract concepts, practice problem-solving, and develop emotional resilience.

Types of Play and Their Benefits

Imaginative Play: Role-playing games, such as pretending to be a doctor or a chef, enhance creativity and empathy. These activities allow children to process emotions and understand social roles.

Physical Play: Activities like running, climbing, or dancing improve motor skills, coordination, and physical health, while also boosting mood and reducing stress.

Structured Play: Board games, puzzles, or group activities teach turn-taking, strategy, and collaboration, laying the groundwork for academic skills like math and logic.

Constructive Play: Building with blocks or crafting fosters spatial awareness, planning, and perseverance.

To maintain interest, educators and caregivers should align play activities with children's developmental needs and interests. For example, a 6-year-old might enjoy a treasure hunt that incorporates counting, while an 8-year-old might prefer a collaborative storytelling game that encourages narrative skills.

Challenges with Superstitions in Play

Superstitions can interfere with a child's willingness to engage in play. For instance: A child might avoid certain games due to beliefs like "playing with a black cat toy brings bad luck."



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Peer-driven superstitions, such as “stepping on a crack breaks your mother’s back,” can create anxiety during outdoor play.

Cultural superstitions, like avoiding certain numbers or colors, might limit a child’s participation in group activities.

These beliefs can disrupt the joy of play, making children hesitant or overly cautious. Teachers and parents should observe for signs of reluctance and gently explore the underlying causes, addressing superstitions with sensitivity to avoid dismissing cultural values.

Fostering Interest in Study

Study, in the context of small school-age children, involves structured activities designed to build foundational skills in reading, writing, math, and critical thinking. At this age, children’s attention spans are limited (typically 15–20 minutes), and their motivation is driven by curiosity, rewards, and a sense of accomplishment. Effective study environments leverage these traits to make learning engaging and accessible.

Strategies to Enhance Study Engagement

Interactive Learning: Use hands-on tools like manipulatives (e.g., counting beads for math) or digital apps with gamified elements to make abstract concepts tangible.

Short, Focused Sessions: Break lessons into brief segments to match attention spans. For example, a 20-minute reading activity could include 10 minutes of storytelling and 10 minutes of discussing the story.

Positive Reinforcement: Offer praise, stickers, or small rewards for effort and progress to build confidence and motivation.

Thematic Integration: Connect study topics to children’s interests. For instance, a child fascinated by animals could practice reading with books about wildlife or solve math problems involving zoo animals.

Collaborative Learning: Group activities, such as peer reading or team projects, foster social bonds and make study feel less isolating.



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Superstitions and Study

Superstitions can undermine a child's focus or confidence in academic tasks. Common examples include:

Performance Anxiety: Beliefs like “using a red pen curses your grades” or “failing a test on Friday the 13th is inevitable” can heighten stress.

Ritualistic Behaviors: A child might insist on carrying a lucky charm or performing specific actions (e.g., tapping a desk three times) before starting a task, which can delay or distract from learning.

Avoidance: Superstitions about certain subjects (e.g., “math is unlucky for girls”) may lead to disengagement or self-doubt.

Such beliefs can create unnecessary barriers to learning, particularly if reinforced by family or cultural norms. Educators should approach these issues with care, encouraging critical thinking while respecting the child's background.

Addressing Superstitions in the Classroom

Superstitions, while often harmless, can become problematic when they disrupt a child's engagement or emotional well-being. Addressing them requires a balance of fostering critical thinking, maintaining cultural sensitivity, and creating a supportive environment.

Strategies for Managing Superstitions

Open Dialogue: Create a safe space for children to share their beliefs without fear of judgment. For example, a teacher might ask, “Does anyone have a special habit they do before a test?” to spark discussion.

Critical Thinking Exercises: Introduce age-appropriate activities that encourage questioning irrational beliefs. For instance, a science experiment could demonstrate that a “lucky” object has no measurable effect on outcomes.

Positive Reframing: If a child relies on a lucky charm, acknowledge their feelings while emphasizing effort. For example, “Your hard work is what makes you do well, and your charm can be a fun reminder of that!”

Cultural Sensitivity: Understand the cultural or familial origins of a superstition before addressing it. Collaborate with parents to find solutions that respect their values while supporting the child's learning.



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Modeling Rational Behavior: Teachers can model confidence and logical decision-making, subtly countering superstitious tendencies. For example, casually dismissing a “bad luck” event (e.g., “Oops, I spilled salt, but that’s just a mess to clean!”) can normalize rational responses.

When to Involve Caregivers

If a superstition significantly impacts a child’s participation or emotional health—such as refusing to engage in activities due to fear of bad luck—it may be necessary to involve parents or caregivers. A collaborative approach can help identify the belief’s source and develop strategies to address it. For example, if a child avoids writing with a red pen due to a family superstition, the teacher might suggest using a different color while discussing the belief’s impact with the parents.

Creating a Balanced Learning Environment

To maximize interest in both play and study, educators and caregivers should create an environment that blends structure with flexibility, encourages curiosity, and minimizes the disruptive effects of superstitions. Key principles include:

Personalization: Tailor activities to children’s interests and developmental stages to maintain engagement.

Consistency: Establish predictable routines for play and study to build confidence and reduce anxiety, which can exacerbate superstitious thinking.

Inclusivity: Ensure activities are accessible to all students, regardless of cultural or personal beliefs, by offering alternatives when superstitions create barriers.

Emotional Support: Foster a classroom culture where children feel safe expressing fears or concerns, allowing educators to address superstitions before they escalate.

Conclusion

Small school-age children thrive in environments where play and study are engaging, interactive, and emotionally supportive. While superstitions can occasionally hinder their enthusiasm, these beliefs can be managed through open dialogue, critical thinking, and collaboration with caregivers. By fostering curiosity, building confidence, and addressing irrational fears with sensitivity, educators can



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help young students develop a lifelong love for learning and exploration. A balanced approach ensures that play remains a joyful avenue for growth and study becomes a rewarding journey, free from the constraints of superstition.

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