

Developmentally Appropriate Assessment in Early Childhood Education: Practices, Perspectives and Challenges among Preschool Teachers

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Abstract:

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the practices, challenges, and perspectives of preschool instructors in specified early childhood institutions in Cebu, Philippines, regarding the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) tools. A researcher-developed survey questionnaire, which underwent validity and reliability testing and exhibited strong internal consistency, was utilized by thirty preschool instructors. The data were examined utilizing descriptive statistics and Pearson's r correlation. Results indicated that teachers implemented DAA tools extensively, including portfolios, anecdotal recordings, observation checklists, play-based assessments, and parent-teacher shared documentation. The developmental appropriateness, simplicity of use, effectiveness in guiding instruction, and alignment with curriculum standards of the tools were all highly regarded by teachers. However, the results suggested a moderate negative correlation between the extent of implementation and teacher perspectives, which is indicative of obstacles such as time constraints, extensive documentation requirements, and burden. The study also emphasizes the impact of teacher demographics, professional experience, and training on assessment practices. The study recommends an action plan that emphasizes the integration of ICT innovations, the reinforcement of DepEd standards, the strengthening of parent-teacher collaboration, and the enhancement of teacher training in order to promote more sustainable, efficient, and child-centered assessment practices in Cebu's preschool classrooms. This plan is designed to address the aforementioned challenges.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education, Perceptions Developmentally Appropriate Evaluation Tools, Descriptive Correlational Method, Cebu, Philippines.

I. Introduction

Assessment is a fundamental component of early childhood education, serving as a tool for discovery of learning requirements, guidance for instruction, and the promotion of holistic growth, in addition to measuring developmental milestones (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2020). The efficacy of assessment in early childhood education primarily depends on its alignment with the developmental phases, learning modalities, and distinctive characteristics of young children (Bredenkamp, 2021). The multifaceted abilities, interests, and authentic learning expressions of young children are at risk of being overlooked by conventional assessment methods, which are frequently modeled after practices used for mature students (Neuman & Roskos, 2022). Developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments have been

developed to overcome these constraints, with an emphasis on age-appropriateness, cultural responsiveness, and personalized methods of assessing children's learning (Copple & Bredekamp, 2020).

Despite the advocacy for developmentally appropriate practices in education, there is a substantial disparity in the comprehension of how these tools are implemented in actual classroom contexts. Teachers, who are the primary implementers of assessment strategies, are responsible for the selection, adaptation, and interpretation of these instruments (Flewitt & Cowan, 2021). Their insights into the practicality, challenges, and efficacy of DAA tools are invaluable in bridging the divide between theory and practice. However, there is a scarcity of empirical evidence that encapsulates the perspectives of teachers, particularly in the Philippine context, where the educational experience is influenced by policy-practice misalignments, resource limitations, and diverse classroom realities (Francisco & Gabriel, 2023).

The significance of inclusive and equitable quality education is emphasized by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which emphasizes the necessity of assessment methods that promote meaningful learning from the outset (UNESCO, 2023). In this context, DAA tools are essential instruments for guaranteeing that assessments do not merely measure learning outcomes but actively promote the cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical development of children. However, the lack of systematic studies that focus on instructors' perceptions on using these tools indicates a significant research gap. Although international scholars such as Liou and Literat (2020), Pickard (2022), and Sloam et al. (2022) have investigated educational practices that are responsive to developmental needs, there is a dearth of research that is specific to early childhood assessment in the Philippine context, particularly in terms of how teachers perceive, adapt, and optimize DAA tools in their daily practice.

This study therefore investigates preschool teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges of developmentally appropriate assessment tools in selected schools in Cebu, Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the demographic profile of teacher respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment? To what extent are developmentally appropriate assessment tools—including observation checklists, anecdotal records and portfolios, play-based or performance assessments, and parent-teacher shared documentation—implemented in classrooms? What are the teachers' perspectives regarding these tools in terms of relevance to children's developmental stages, ease of implementation and interpretation, instructional effectiveness, and alignment with curriculum standards? Is there a significant relationship between the extent of tool implementation and teachers' perspectives on their use? Finally, what action plan can be proposed based on the findings?

This research significantly contributes to the discourse on early childhood assessment by addressing these questions both theoretically and practically. This theoretically underscores the importance of aligning assessment strategies with the holistic and developmental character of early learning, thereby enriching the body of literature on DAA practices. Practically, it offers actionable recommendations for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educational institutions, identifying gaps, highlighting best practices, and providing insights into the lived experiences of instructors. This research promotes a deliberate, educator-informed, and developmentally appropriate assessment approach that assesses growth while fostering lifelong learning from early childhood.

II. Review of Related Literature and Studies

The significance of assessment in preschool education has been emphasized by the recognition of early childhood as the foundation for lifelong learning. Assessment in early infancy necessitates meticulous consideration of contextual realities, individual learning differences, and developmental appropriateness, in contrast to later educational stages. Preschool teachers are obligated to interpret the learning of children holistically and communicate their findings to parents, administrators, and policymakers. Consequently, assessment is not merely a technical task, but also a reflection of their professional judgment. Teachers' perceptions, practices, and the obstacles they encounter in reconciling classroom realities with developmental theory and policy frameworks are consistently cited in the literature as significant factors in the efficacy of assessment in early childhood education (McAfee, Leong, & Bodrova, 2016; Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Internationally, researchers underscore that educators frequently regard authentic, play-based, and observational assessment tools as more developmentally appropriate than conventional standardized tests. Miller and Almon (2009) argue that paper-and-pencil evaluations are not in accordance with the requirements of young learners, whereas authentic methods offer more comprehensive insights into children's capabilities. Carr and Lee (2012) also emphasize that narrative-based assessments, such as Learning Stories, enable educators to document the cognitive and socio-emotional development of children in a manner that appreciates both the experiences of the children and the reflections of the teachers. These practices are consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC, 2020) recommendations, which emphasize the importance of performance-based approaches, documentation, and observation in early childhood assessment. Nevertheless, despite the favorable perceptions of authentic assessment by teachers, obstacles persist in its implementation, including insufficient resources, hefty workloads, and systemic demands for measurable outputs (Flewitt & Cowan, 2021).

The theoretical foundations of developmentally appropriate assessment strongly correspond with educators' perspectives. Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (1936, 1952) posits that preschoolers, who are in the preoperational stage, learn most effectively through symbolic play, concrete activities, and hands-on experiences. Teachers who adopt this perspective acknowledge that authentic, play-based assessments are more effective at documenting genuine learning progress than abstract measures (McLeod, 2018). Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1934, 1978) provides additional evidence to substantiate educators' support for collaborative and dynamic assessment methodologies. Teachers reinforce the necessity of context-sensitive and socially embedded tools by perceiving assessments as opportunities to capture both independent skills and potential growth with guidance, thereby acknowledging the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Chaiklin, 2003). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979, 1994) expands this knowledge by situating assessment within a variety of spheres of influence, including the home, school, community, and policy. This approach corresponds with the educators' apprehensions that evaluation must be contextually pertinent and personalized. In addition to validating teachers' perceptions, these theories collectively underscore the importance of their voices in the development of meaningful assessment practices.

In the Philippine context, policy mandates also influence teachers' perceptions of assessment practices. The Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act of 2000, also known as Republic Act No. 8980, prioritizes holistic development and necessitates assessment strategies that are culturally pertinent and

age-appropriate (Philippine Congress, 2000). Republic Act No. 10157, the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012, mandates compulsory kindergarten education and emphasizes play-based, child-centered pedagogies, thus reinforcing the role of teachers in the application of authentic evaluation methods (DepEd, 2012). The role of teachers in the implementation of formative, observation-driven assessments that correlate with developmental milestones is underscored by Republic Act No. 10410, the Early Years Act of 2013, which institutionalizes systematic developmental monitoring from birth to age eight (Official Gazette, 2013). The significance of assessment is acknowledged by the state through these legislative frameworks; however, teachers frequently encounter difficulties in implementing these principles in the classroom as a result of resource constraints, inadequate training, and systemic pressures.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) contend that assessments should be primarily used to support instructional development, a perspective that is widely shared by preschool teachers who prefer to use evaluations as tools for guiding instruction rather than solely for accountability. In the Philippine context, Fajardo (2023) observed that teachers frequently rely on checklists and anecdotal recordings, appreciating their practicality but also expressing concerns about oversimplification and time constraints. Jang et al. (2019) and Helsper (2021) observe that resource inequalities, particularly in rural areas, impede the consistent use of comprehensive assessment instruments, emphasizing the challenge of equity in preschool assessment practices. These results indicate that, despite the fact that educators are conscious of developmentally appropriate practices, their implementation is frequently influenced by external factors.

The disparity between the classroom realities and the knowledge of the teacher is another recurring motif in the literature. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes the necessity of high-quality assessments to promote lifelong learning opportunities, inclusivity, and equity. However, McAfee et al. (2016) warn that the misrepresentation of children's actual abilities is a real risk when developmental benchmarks and assessment practices are not in alignment. This tension is frequently expressed by teachers themselves, who perceive authentic assessments as more significant while simultaneously being constrained by systemic imperatives for standardized measures. This challenge is indicative of the "policy-practice gap," as defined by Flewitt and Cowan (2021), in which educators are required to reconcile their professional judgment with institutional expectations.

Limited inquiry into the perceptions and experiences of teachers, particularly within the Philippine context, persists, despite the significant increase in research on assessment in early childhood. The perspectives of preschool teachers who are at the center of practice are not systematically captured in existing studies, which frequently concentrate on the implementation of policies or general appraisal strategies. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the perceptions of assessment practices among teachers in designated Cebu preschools. It emphasizes the challenges they encounter in balancing developmental appropriateness, policy compliance, and classroom realities, as well as their favored strategies.

By incorporating the legislative frameworks of Republic Acts 8980, 10157, and 10410 with Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this study establishes an effective theoretical and legal framework within which teachers' perspectives can be understood. The following frameworks collectively underscore the importance of assessment being policy-aligned, socially and culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate. In conclusion, perceiving teachers' perspectives regarding assessment practices offers essential insights for

bridging the divide between theory, policy, and classroom implementation, thereby improving the quality of preschool education and the professional agency of teachers.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine and describe the practices, perspectives, and challenges of preschool teachers in the use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools in several early childhood education institutions during the 2025–2026 school year in Cebu, Philippines. The descriptive design was considered suitable because it enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of teachers' assessment practices in their natural classroom environments without the introduction of external manipulation. This method also allowed for a deeper understanding of the extent to which developmentally appropriate tools were implemented, how teachers perceived their usefulness, and what challenges they encountered, by emphasizing description over experimentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.2 Participants

This study involved thirty (30) preschool teachers from Cebu during the 2025–2026 academic year. They were intentionally chosen due to their active role in the implementation of assessment practices in preschool classrooms and their direct involvement in early childhood education. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate for this research, as it explicitly required participants with relevant expertise and practical experience in the use of developmentally appropriate assessment strategies. This ensured that the data gathered authentically reflected teachers' actual practices, their perspectives on assessment, and the challenges they encountered in aligning these practices with the principles of developmentally appropriate education.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The study utilized a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to collect quantitative data on the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools, as well as teachers' perspectives on their pedagogical value and challenges in application. The instrument was organized into three major sections, each addressing key aspects of the research focus. It was constructed in accordance with the established principles of developmentally appropriate practice, ensuring both theoretical grounding and contextual relevance.

Part I: Respondent Profile. This section gathered demographic data, including age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. These variables were important in analyzing variations in teachers' perspectives, practices, and the challenges they faced in assessment.

Part II: Extent of Implementation of Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Tools. This section examined the frequency and extent to which teachers applied various practices in four domains: (a) observation checklists, (b) anecdotal records and learner portfolios, (c) play-based and performance tasks, and (d) collaborative documentation with parents. A five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree, Not Implemented) to 5 (Strongly Agree, Extensively Implemented) was used to rate the items. The descriptors were carefully formulated to minimize ambiguity and ensure consistency in interpretation.

Part III: Teachers' Perspectives on Developmentally Appropriate Assessment. This section assessed teachers' perspectives across four dimensions: (a) the relevance of tools to children's developmental stages, (b) their practicality and ease of classroom use, (c) their effectiveness in guiding instructional decisions, and (d) their compliance with curriculum standards. The same five-point Likert scale was

employed. Teachers were also encouraged to indicate the challenges they encountered in applying these assessment tools.

The questionnaire was subjected to expert validation by specialists in early childhood education to ensure content and face validity. Reliability was tested using internal consistency measures, while inferential validity was established through Pearson's r correlation, which provided precise indications of the strength and direction of associations between classroom assessment practices, teachers' perspectives, and identified challenges.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through the personal administration of the researcher-designed survey questionnaire to ensure clarity, precision, and active engagement with the participants. The researcher coordinated with school administrators in Cebu to facilitate the process. Before distribution, the thirty preschool teachers were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical safeguards. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), participants were assured that all responses and identities would remain strictly confidential. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after completion to prevent missing data and ensure accuracy.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data were systematically organized, encoded, and processed to maintain accuracy and integrity. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations, were used to evaluate the extent of implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment practices and to analyze the demographic profiles of the respondents. Pearson's r correlation coefficient was employed to determine the relationship between assessment practices, teachers' perspectives, and the challenges encountered. This statistical approach enabled the study to measure both the strength and direction of relationships between variables. All analyses were performed at the 0.05 significance level, and the computations were reviewed by a licensed statistician to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Table 1- Age and Gender of the Teachers

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
21-30	0	0	0	0	0	0
31-40	15	50.00	0	0	15	50.00
41-50	15	50.00	0	0	15	50.00
51 above	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	100.00	0	0	30	100.00

IV. Results

Table 1 shows that all 30 preschool teacher respondents were female, with no male participants. Half of the respondents (50%) were between 31–40 years old, while the remaining 50% were between 41–50 years old.

**Table 2
Civil Status**

Civil Status	f	%
Single	0	0
Married	30	100.00
Separated	0	0
Widow	0	0
Total	30	100.00

Table 2 reveals that all 30 preschool teacher respondents (100%) were married, with no representation from single, separated, or widowed individuals. This result suggests that the majority of teachers in the sample are in a stable family structure, which may influence their perspectives and practices in the classroom.

Table 3- Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	f	%
1-5	0	0
6-10	15	50.00
11-15	0	0
16-20	15	50.00
20 and beyond	0	0
Total	30	100.00

Table 3 shows that half of the preschool teacher respondents (50%) had 6–10 years of teaching experience, while the other half (50%) had 16–20 years of experience. None of the respondents had less than five years or more than 20 years of teaching. This distribution suggests that the teaching force in the study is composed of mid-career professionals who have already gained significant classroom experience.

Table 4- Highest Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	f	%
Doctorate Graduate	0	0
With Doctorate Units	0	0
Master's Graduate	0	0
With Master's Units	30	100.00
College Graduate	0	0
Total	30	100.00

Table 4 reveals that all preschool teacher respondents (100%) were college graduates, with none having pursued master's or doctoral units or degrees. This finding suggests that while all respondents met the

minimum qualification required for teaching in early childhood education, there is limited representation of advanced academic training among the group.

Table 5- Extent of developmentally appropriate assessment tools implementation in terms of:

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Observation Checklists			
1	I use observation checklists during daily classroom activities.	4.00	Strongly Agree
2	I align checklist items with developmental milestones.	4.00	Strongly Agree
3	I regularly update checklists based on student progress.	4.00	Strongly Agree
4	I use checklist data to plan instructional strategies.	4.50	Strongly Agree
5	I find checklist-based assessments easy to use.	4.00	Strongly Agree
Anecdotal Records and Portfolios			
6	I document children’s learning through anecdotal records.	4.50	Strongly Agree
7	I maintain individual portfolios for each child.	4.50	Strongly Agree
8	I use student work samples to demonstrate progress.	4.50	Strongly Agree
9	I reflect on anecdotal notes to inform teaching.	4.50	Strongly Agree
10	I update portfolios on a regular basis.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Relevance To Children’s Developmental Stages			
11	I assess learning during structured play activities.	4.00	Strongly Agree
12	I use real-life tasks to measure children’s understanding.	5.00	Strongly Agree
13	I document learning during role-play or group tasks.	4.00	Strongly Agree
14	I integrate assessment within play-based learning.	4.50	Strongly Agree
15	I use rubrics or criteria during performance tasks.	4.00	Strongly Agree
Parent-Teacher Shared Documentation			
16	I communicate assessment insights with parents regularly.	4.00	Strongly Agree
17	I collect parent feedback to support assessment.	4.00	Strongly Agree

The	18	I include parent observations in assessment reports.	4.00	Strongly Agree
	19	I involve parents in documentation of learning.	4.00	Strongly Agree
	20	I value parental input in understanding child progress.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Aggregate Weighted Mean			4.25	Strongly Agree
Standard Deviation			0.30	Agree

Legend: 4.25-5.00-Strongly Agree 3.50-4.24-Agree; 2.75-3.49-Neutral; 2.00-2.74-Disagree; 1.00-1.99-Strongly Disagree

weighted means (WM) of the observation checklist indicators were all interpreted as Strongly Agree, ranging from 4.00 to 4.50. Teachers consistently reported that they utilize checklists in their daily activities (WM = 4.00), align items with developmental milestones (WM = 4.00), and update them on a regular basis by monitoring pupil progress (WM = 4.00). They also expressed a strong consensus that checklist data serve as a guide for instructional strategies (WM = 4.50) and that such assessments are user-friendly (WM = 4.00). These findings suggest that observation checklists are effectively and extensively incorporated into classroom practice, with the primary focus on their use in the execution of instructional planning. The category of Anecdotal Records and Portfolios received uniformly high ratings, with a weighted mean of 4.50 across all five indicators, which was interpreted as Strongly Agree. Teachers confirmed that they maintain individual portfolios, use work samples to demonstrate progress, ruminate on anecdotal notes for instructional purposes, consistently update portfolios, and document learning through anecdotal records. These findings indicate that anecdotal records and portfolios are widely and consistently implemented, which is indicative of the strong dependence of instructors on these tools to monitor and illustrate student development. The ratings in this category for Relevance to Children's Developmental Stages also varied slightly, with weighted means ranging from 4.00 to 5.00, all falling within the Strongly Agree range. The following were strongly endorsed by teachers: the use of structured play for assessment (WM = 4.00), the use of real-life tasks to measure understanding (WM = 5.00), the documentation of learning in role-play or group tasks (WM = 4.00), the integration of assessment in play-based learning (WM = 4.50), and the applications of rubrics during performance tasks (WM = 4.00). Teachers have an excellent appreciation for authentic and practical assessments that are in alignment with the developmental phases of children, as evidenced by the highest rating (WM = 5.00) for the use of real-life tasks. The weighted means for Parent-Teacher Shared Documentation in this category were 4.00 to 4.50, which is interpreted as Strongly Agree. Teachers reported that they value parental input in understanding progress (WM = 4.50), include parent observations in reports (WM = 4.00), involve parents in documentation (WM = 4.00), collect feedback (WM = 4.00), and communicate insights with parents (WM = 4.00). Teachers emphasize the significance of parental contributions in the evaluation of child development, as evidenced by the highest mean. The overall weighted average of all categories was 4.25 (Strongly Agree), with a standard deviation of 0.30, suggesting that the responses of the participants were consistent. The findings indicate that developmentally suitable assessment instruments are widely utilized, particularly anecdotal records, portfolios, and authentic tasks that correspond with children's developmental phases, while also highlighting the collaborative involvement of parents in the assessment process.

**Table 6- Teachers' Perspectives on the Use of Developmentally Appropriate
Assessment Tools**

S/N	Indicators	WM	Verbal Description
Relevance to Children's Developmental Stages			
1	The tools I use are appropriate for the children's age and abilities.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2	Assessment practices reflect children's developmental needs.	4.00	Strongly Agree
3	Developmentally appropriate tools support individualized learning.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4	The assessments provide a holistic view of child development.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5	The tools promote accurate evaluation across learning domains.	5.00	Strongly Agree
Ease of Implementation and Interpretation			
6	I find it easy to use the tools during regular instruction.	5.00	Strongly Agree
7	The assessment tools are practical to apply in the classroom.	4.50	Strongly Agree
8	The tools do not require excessive time to implement.	4.00	Strongly Agree
9	Assessment results are easy to interpret and apply.	4.50	Strongly Agree
10	Instructions for using these tools are clear and user-friendly.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Effectiveness in Guiding Instruction			
11	Assessment results inform my lesson planning.	4.50	Strongly Agree
12	Assessment tools help identify areas where learners need support.	5.00	Strongly Agree
13	The tools guide the differentiation of instruction.	4.50	Strongly Agree
14	Assessment outcomes contribute to curriculum improvement.	5.00	Strongly Agree
15	I modify my teaching based on assessment findings.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Alignment with Curriculum Standards			
16	Assessment tools align with national early childhood standards.	4.50	Strongly Agree
17	The tools reflect the learning competencies in the curriculum.	4.50	Strongly Agree
18	The tools support both academic and developmental goals.	5.00	Strongly Agree
19	They help ensure learning objectives are being met.	4.50	Strongly Agree
20	Assessment practices are consistent with school policies.	4.50	Strongly Agree
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.68	Strongly Agree

Standard Deviation

0.29

Legend: 4.25-5.00-Strongly Agree 3.50-4.24-Agree; 2.75-3.49-Neutral; 2.00-2.74-Disagree; 1.00-1.99-Strongly Disagree

Table 6 illustrates the viewpoints of preschool educators regarding the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments. The aggregate weighted mean of 4.68, which is classified as "Strongly Agree," suggests that teachers have highly favorable opinions of these instruments. The appropriateness of tools for children's age and abilities, their role in supporting individualized learning, their holistic view of child development, and their accuracy in evaluating across learning domains were all given the highest ratings (WM = 5.00) in terms of Relevance to Children's Developmental Stages. The weighted means for Ease of Implementation and Interpretation ranged from 4.00 to 5.00, indicating that teachers generally find the tools to be practical, user-friendly, and not extremely time-consuming. Teachers expressed a strong consensus that assessment tools effectively inform lesson planning, identify learners' needs, differentiate instruction, and enhance curriculum, with weighted means ranging from 4.50 to 5.00, under the category of Effectiveness in Guiding Instruction. Finally, in Alignment with Curriculum Standards, teachers strongly affirmed (WM = 4.50–5.00) that assessment practices are in accordance with national standards, reflect competencies, support holistic objectives, and adhere to school policies.

Table 7- Test of relationship between the extent of developmentally appropriate assessment tools implementation and the perspectives on its use

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p - value	Decision	Remarks
Assessment Tools and Perspectives	-0.454	Moderate Negative	0.013	Reject Ho	Significant

*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)

Table 7 presents the test of relationship between the extent of implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools and teachers' perspectives on their use. The results show an r-value of -0.454, indicating a *moderate negative correlation*, with a p-value of 0.013, which is below the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that a significant relationship exists between the two variables.

V. Discussion

The findings suggest that preschool teaching in the sampled Cebu institutions is a profession that is primarily occupied by women, which is consistent with global and local trends that demonstrate that early childhood education is primarily practiced by women (Heisner & Lederberg, 2011; Sumsion, 2005). The persistent gendered perceptions that caregiving and early education are more appropriate for women are reflected in the absence of male teachers, a pattern that is also observed in Southeast Asian contexts (Peeters, Rohrmann, & Emilsen, 2015). The fact that all instructors were between the ages of 31 and 50 indicates a workforce that was relatively experienced in terms of age distribution. The capacity of teachers in this age group to implement developmentally appropriate assessment practices is positively influenced

by their professional maturity and stability, as demonstrated by research (Day et al., 2007; Katz, 2015). However, the scarcity of younger teachers (aged 21–30) may also indicate that the field is facing difficulties in attracting newcomers. This issue was identified by UNESCO (2017) in its appeal to enhance the recruitment and retention of early childhood teachers.

The discovery that all respondents were married is indicative of the stability that is frequently cherished in early childhood education institutions and the cultural norms of the Philippines. The professional attitudes, work-life balance, and affective engagement of teachers in the classroom can be influenced by their marital status, as demonstrated by prior research (Moam, 2015). The establishment of supportive learning environments and the promotion of developmentally appropriate assessment practices may be facilitated by the stability and nurturing qualities that married teachers may contribute (Eacott & Asuga, 2014). Nevertheless, the absence of diversity in civil status within this sample restricts the ability to comprehend the potential impact of diverse personal contexts—such as being single, separated, or widowed—on the perspectives and practices of educators. Research indicates that educators' personal situations and familial obligations influence their professional efficacy, stress regulation, and ability for reflective practice (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Shen et al., 2021). Therefore, this homogeneity underscores the necessity of incorporating a variety of teacher profiles into future research to acquire a more thorough comprehension of the ways in which civil status affects the assessment strategies of preschool teachers, despite the fact that it also underscores the stability of the workforce.

The distribution suggests that the majority of preschool teachers in the study are mid-career and veteran educators. This is indicative of a teaching workforce that possesses practical expertise and extensive classroom experience, which is essential for the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessments. Toropova et al. (2021) have demonstrated that teachers' capacity to implement reflective practices, manage diverse learners, and adapt assessment strategies to facilitate child-centered learning is significantly improved by their teaching experience. Additionally, experienced educators exhibit increased levels of pedagogical confidence and are more inclined to implement authentic assessment instruments, including portfolios, anecdotal records, and play-based evaluations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). However, the sample's lack of novice instructors (1–5 years) restricts the understanding of how early-career educators confront assessment challenges in preschool settings. Research underscores that novice educators frequently encounter challenges in reconciling curricular requirements and assessment protocols; however, they introduce innovative strategies that may serve as an adjunct to conventional methodologies (Kraft et al., 2020; Liu & Liao, 2019). Therefore, the results underscore the advantages of an experienced teaching body; however, future research should also incorporate the viewpoints of less experienced teachers to encompass the complete spectrum of practices, challenges, and developmental requirements in early childhood assessment.

The findings suggest that all preschool instructors in this investigation have pursued postgraduate education, with a particular emphasis on procuring units toward a master's degree. This discovery is indicative of the Philippines' growing emphasis on the professionalization of early childhood education, which frequently necessitates or promotes graduate-level coursework to facilitate career advancement and comply with national education standards (Commission on Higher Education, 2017). Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Tatto et al. (2019) have consistently demonstrated that teachers with higher levels of education are more likely to implement innovative and developmentally appropriate assessment practices. This is due to the fact that advanced training gives them a deeper grasp of pedagogical knowledge and reflective abilities. However, the absence of respondents who have earned a full master's degree or have a doctoral degree indicates that completion rates may be limited by financial constraints, workload, or institutional opportunities, even though professional development is being pursued (Avalos, 2011).

Furthermore, the variability of perspectives regarding the impact of educational attainment on assessment practices is restricted by the existence of all participants in the same educational category. Nevertheless, the consistency underscores a significant trend toward graduate-level qualifications among preschool instructors, thereby reinforcing the sector's pursuit of academic and professional excellence in developmentally appropriate assessment.

The results indicate that preschool teachers extensively employ developmentally appropriate assessment tools, with a particular emphasis on authentic performance-based tasks, portfolios, and anecdotal records. The high ratings in all categories indicate that teachers acknowledge the importance of formative, observation-based approaches in documenting the holistic development of children (Bagnato, 2017). Wortham and Hardin (2016) have emphasized the importance of anecdotal recordings and portfolios in providing longitudinal, authentic evidence of children's progress. This is consistent with the strong reliance on these sources. Moreover, the high rating for the use of real-life tasks emphasizes the growing trend toward authentic assessments, which more accurately reflect the skills of children in naturalistic and meaningful contexts (Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2014). The incorporation of assessment with play-based learning is also consistent with best practices that prioritize learning through play as a fundamental aspect of early childhood development. In addition, the significant involvement of parents in the documentation process is consistent with studies that underscore the significance of collaborative partnerships in assessment, as family input improves both the accuracy and contextual understanding of child development (Epstein, 2018). Overall, the findings confirm that educators implement comprehensive and developmentally appropriate methodologies, which align with global guidelines for collaborative, authentic, and child-centered assessment practices in early childhood education.

The consistently high ratings are a testament to the fact that preschool instructors regard developmentally appropriate assessment tools as highly relevant, effective, and in alignment with curriculum standards. These results substantiate the notion that a comprehensive comprehension of children's development is facilitated by authentic and developmentally appropriate assessment, particularly when it is combined with individualized and play-based learning (Bagnato, 2017). The strong consensus among teachers that assessment informs instructional planning is consistent with the belief that formative assessment is essential for responsive teaching and differentiation in early childhood classrooms (McLachlan, 2018). Furthermore, the simplicity and sustainability of these tools are consistent with the literature that underscores the significance of straightforward, user-friendly assessments in facilitating teachers' workloads and guaranteeing reliability (Wortham & Hardin, 2016). In addition to ensuring compliance with broader educational frameworks, the affirmation of alignment with national standards also emphasizes the role of assessment in guiding classroom instruction, which is consistent with international practices that promote developmental appropriateness and accountability (OECD, 2020). Overall, the results indicate an effective professional endorsement of DAA tools as contextually pertinent and pedagogically sound in preschool education.

The moderate negative correlation is significant, indicating that teachers acknowledge the significance of developmentally appropriate assessment tools. However, the challenges associated with greater implementation may also serve to mitigate their perspectives. This is consistent with the discovery that teachers may experience tensions when faced with increased assessment demands, particularly in the context of balancing their instructional time, documentation, and burden (Dawson, 2020). Additionally, research suggests that teachers appreciate authentic assessment for its developmental relevance; however, extensive implementation may disclose challenges such as administrative pressures, time constraints, and training requirements (Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018). These challenges could explain why superior implementation does not inherently result in more optimistic perspectives. Therefore, the findings

underscore the necessity of systemic support and professional development to guarantee that educators can maintain positive attitudes while effectively implementing assessment practices (Cumming & Tayler, 2019).

The study concludes that preschool teaching in Cebu is a profession that is primarily constituted of mid-career, married, and postgraduate-educated educators who are passionate about developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) practices. It is a female-dominated field. Their utilization of assessment methods that are authentic, play-based, and parent-inclusive underscores their commitment to the holistic developmental requirements of children and their alignment with global best practices. The efficacy of DAA tools in guiding instruction, supporting individualized learning, and ensuring alignment with curriculum standards is substantiated by the consistently high ratings on the use and perceived value of these tools. The practical challenges that educators encounter, particularly in terms of burden, time constraints, and systemic pressures, are emphasized by the moderate negative correlation between the extent of tool implementation and teachers' perspectives. The necessity of more diverse and younger instructors in early childhood education is underscored by these findings, which underscore the importance of targeted professional development, recruitment strategies, and stronger institutional support. In conclusion, the research emphasizes that, despite the exceptional capabilities and dedication of Cebu preschool teachers, the preservation of their positive perspectives and the optimization of their practices will necessitate both policy-level support and context-sensitive reforms to enhance the impact of DAA in early childhood classrooms.

VI. Conclusion

The research indicates that preschool teachers in Cebu have knowledge of the importance of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments in guiding instruction and employ them extensively. However, these practices are influenced by professional, experiential, and demographic factors. The profession's alignment with global best practices is underscored by the strong reliance of teachers on authentic, play-based, and parent-inclusive assessments. However, the omission of younger and male teachers suggests a lack of diversity and recruitment challenges in the field. Moreover, the results indicate that teachers perceive DAA tools as highly relevant, effective, and curriculum-aligned. However, they also indicate that increased implementation may disclose practical barriers, including workload demands, time constraints, and limited institutional support. This suggests that the pedagogical soundness of the instruments and the systemic conditions in which they are implemented influence the perspectives of teachers. The findings underscore the pressing necessity for targeted interventions, such as mentorship programs, supportive policies, and sustained professional development, that address the obstacles associated with the implementation of DAA practices. Early childhood education can progress toward a more sustainable, equitable, and reflective assessment culture by bridging the gap between the barriers of extensive application and the positive perceptions of teachers. Moreover, this study will suggest an action plan that is designed to improve the practical application of DAA tools in preschool classrooms by enhancing teacher capacity, ensuring that assessment practices promote meaningful, child-centered, and holistic learning experiences, and enhancing institutional support.

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