

# **Preschool Teachers' Perceptions on Developmentally Appropriate Evaluation Tools**

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## **Abstract:**

This study investigated the application and viewpoints of the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments among preschool educators at a selected institution in Cebu, Philippines, employing a descriptive-correlational research approach. Thirty preschool educators participated in a researcher-created survey questionnaire, which was subjected to validity and reliability assessments, exhibiting significant internal consistency. The acquired data were examined utilizing descriptive statistics, and Pearson's  $r$  correlation. The results show that instructors usually often used DAA resources, especially portfolios, play-based evaluations, anecdotal reports, observation checklists, and parent-teacher shared documentation. Teachers also expressed highly favorable perspectives on the tools' relevance, practicality, and efficacy in aligning with curriculum standards and guiding instruction. However, a strong negative correlation was identified between the extent of implementation and the perspectives of teachers. This suggests that, despite the fact that teachers appreciate the tools, their perceptions of practicality may be tempered by the burden and documentation requirements. The results underscore the impact of teacher demographics; professional experience, and educational qualifications on assessment techniques. This suggests that the effectiveness of DAA tools is significantly enhanced by sustained support through professional development, streamlined documentation systems, and stronger parent collaboration. This study would suggest an action plan that integrates ICT innovations; strengthens parent-teacher partnerships, expands professional growth opportunities, and reinforces DepEd standards in order to improve the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessments in the selected school in the Division of Cebu.

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

## **INTRODUCTION**

Assessment serves as a critical component of early childhood education, supporting instruction and tracking developmental progression that extends beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge. Early childhood methodologies must be flexible, based in routines and everyday activities and consistent with developmental trajectories of young learners as opposed to assessments designed for older learners (Moses, 2023) Montoya-Fernández et al. (2024) have just completed a systematic review, focusing on the growing need of play-based developmental assessment tools that cover cognitive, psychomotor and socioemotional areas and help educators in adopting developmentally appropriate practices.

Although digital assessment in early childhood is starting to gain attention even in the Philippine context, there is still limited literature on studies that discuss teachers' perception on how they use their gadgets as an assessment tool. One regional study about the ICT proficiency of preschool teachers in the Philippines and Hong Kong highlights such trend, which paves way for more interest on how (new) assessment is utilized by teachers (Valdez & Mendoza, 2024).

Educators are also incorporating digital tools, such as e-portfolios, into early childhood settings on a global scale. According to recent qualitative research, e-portfolios offer comprehensive, child-centered documentation and encourage reflective practice. However, they continue to face challenges such as increased teacher burden and ethical concerns (Bedel, et.al., 2024). In addition, validated play-based assessments such as the Spain's BELADI battery have good psychometric properties and are promising example of authentic and play-based assessment models (Montoya-Fernández et al., 2024).

This study therefore investigates preschool teachers' perceptions of developmentally appropriate evaluation tools in selected schools. 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?

By addressing these questions, this study guarantees to provide a comprehensive understanding of the real-world experiences of teachers through the use of developmentally appropriate evaluation instruments by addressing these questions. It will disclose the current strengths, and challenges; such as resource constraints or policy misalignment, and offer suggestions for policymakers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators. In conclusion, the research endeavors to bolster assessment practices that not only quantify learning but also promote developmentally sound, meaningful growth in early childhood education.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Early childhood identification practices have typically relied on developmental theories grounded in conceptualizations of unique learning progressions for learners. Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1936) has been one of the most influential views by drawing attention to how children learn in stages that are separate and related. Piaget (1952) categorized the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational stages. Young preschoolers (2–3-year-old) are predominantly in the preoperational stage. By this associational stage, children are already thinking symbolically and playing imaginatively, yet relying on concrete experience for constructing meaning and limited by egocentrism and intuitive reasoning. It follows that testing procedures should be in keeping with the developmental readiness of children and thus avoid premature instigation of abstract or

standardized measures. Traditional paper-and-pencil tests are less valid for assessing young children's progress than authentic measures such as play-based tasks, anecdotal records, and observation checklists (McLeod, 2018). Hence; Piaget's model stresses the need for assessment that is both in response basic to learning and measurement rather than designed around conventional pragmatic imperatives.

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1934) contributes to this discourse by contextualizing learning within the dynamics of social interaction and cultural context. Vygotsky (1978) proposed that knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration with "more knowledgeable others," including parents, instructors, and peers. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is a fundamental concept in his theory, as it defines the boundary between the capacities of a learner to achieve independently and those that can be achieved with assistance. This notion underscores that evaluations must examine not only the competencies children have acquired but also their potential for development when provided with help. Dynamic assessments, anecdotal documentation, and collaborative evaluation tools are in alignment with this theory; because they capture learning in action rather than in isolation (Chaikli, 2003). Vygotsky's perspective enhances the justification for assessment instruments that are culturally grounded; contextualized, and responsive, providing a more comprehensive comprehension of the developmental potential of children.

These perspectives are complemented by Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which posits that a child's development is influenced by a variety of interconnected environmental strata. Among these are the microsystem (family, school, peers), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), exosystem (indirect influences such as parental workplaces), macrosystem (cultural values, societal norms, and laws), and chronosystem (temporal dimensions) (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Within this framework, assessment must consider the broader socio-cultural and institutional environments that influence development in addition to the child's immediate abilities. Collaborations among parents; and teachers, portfolios, and ecological documentation practices highlight assessment methodologies aligned with this model. Additionally; assessments are conducted in accordance with national cultural and policy frameworks; as educational policies like the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Act are in alignment with the macrosystem level. Bronfenbrenner's theory supports the necessity of comprehensive; multi-layered assessment practices that are reflective of the lived experiences of children in family, school, and community environments.

Overall, these three theoretical views establish a strong basis for early childhood evaluation. Piaget underscores the developmental suitability of tools; Vygotsky accentuates the social and cultural context of learning, and Bronfenbrenner positions children within intricate ecological systems. This integration offers a compelling rationale for assessment practices that are not only child-centered, but also socially contextualized and systemically aligned.

In the Philippine context, national laws that mandate developmentally appropriate and equitable practices also significantly influence early childhood education and assessment. Republic Act (RA) 10410 also known as the Early Years Act of 2013, institutionalizes the government's dedication to the comprehensive development of children aged zero to eight. The National Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) System; which consolidates education, health, nutrition, and social services, is required to be

established. This legislation emphasizes the necessity of exhaustive; formative, and age-appropriate assessment, which is consistent with international best practices. The law also underscores the necessity of methodically monitoring developmental milestones; positioning assessment as both a diagnostic, and instructional tool.

Similarly, a systematic and integrated approach to child development that covers children from birth to age six was established by RA 8980; also often known as the ECCD Act of 2000. It emphasizes that child development is multifaceted, and necessitates intersectoral collaboration among education; health, and social care institutions. This law stipulates that evaluation instruments must be age-appropriate and culturally relevant; acknowledging the variability in the developmental circumstances of Filipino children. RA 8980 ensures that children are assessed on socio-emotional, and physical well-being, in addition to academic readiness by mandating that preschool educators employ authentic; holistic, and context-sensitive assessment tools, including portfolios, observational notes, and play-based activities. The Kindergarten Education Act of 2012, also known as RA 10157, reinforces this policy framework by mandating compulsory kindergarten education for all five-year-old Filipino children. It establishes kindergarten as the initial phase of formal education and requires that teaching and evaluation be child-centered, developmentally appropriate, and play-based (DepEd, 2012). This law explicitly opposes premature formal testing and instead advocates for authentic evaluation tools; including checklists, performance tasks, and portfolios, which more accurately reflect the learner's holistic development. In this way; RA 10157 ensures the continuity of developmental assessment practices as children transition into the school system by connecting early childhood care and formal education.

In addition; McAfee, Leong, and Bodrova (2016) contend that effective assessments should incorporate developmental benchmarks; systematic documentation, and instructor observations to offer a holistic view of learning. Observational methods persist to be essential in natural contexts, because they capture authentic behaviors, providing educators with insights that standardized testing frequently fails to reveal (NAEYC, 2020).

Play-based and performance assessments are particularly emphasized in contemporary research as both instructionally valuable, and developmentally appropriate. Miller and Almon (2009); play-based evaluations are in accordance with the developmental requirements of young children; as they simultaneously generate comprehensive assessment data and foster creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. In addition; Carr and Lee (2012), introduce the concept of "Learning Stories," a narrative-based assessment framework that delves into the cognitive, social, and emotional development of children by capturing their lived experiences. These methods underscore the importance of assessment as a mechanism for facilitating and extending learning, rather than solely as an assessment tool.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) underscore the importance of high-quality assessments as instructional development tools that transcend accountability, identifying both learners' strengths and areas of need, at the policy level. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes a global perspective by asserting that early childhood evaluations must promote diversity, equity, and opportunity for lifelong learning. These insights align closely with Philippine legislation, confirming that developmentally appropriate assessments must embody the nation's cultural values and educational priorities.

The integration of Philippine policies such as; RA 10410, RA 8980, and RA 10157 with Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory establishes an adequate theoretical and legal foundation for early childhood assessment. These frameworks individually underscore the necessity of developmentally appropriate; socially and culturally embedded, and national policy directive-aligned preschool evaluation strategies. Furthermore; global research emphasizes that authentic and play-based assessments are the most reliable method of documenting the holistic development of children, while also enabling instructors to develop responsive instruction.

However; the translation of theory and policy into practice continues to be a challenge; despite the existence of these substantial foundations. In other resource-constrained settings where standardized or inadequate tools persist, the literature continues to highlight disparities between prescribed examination frameworks and classroom practices. Empirical evidence regarding how preschool educators in the Philippines adapt to mandated assessment practices is limited, as well as on the challenges they encounter in attempting to reconcile theory-policy-practice. This void calls for the present study, which investigates preschool teachers' assessment practices and recommends a course of action to improve the use of developmentally appropriate assessment methods.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **3.1 Research Method**

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine and describe the assessment practices of preschool teachers in the use of developmentally appropriate evaluation tools in several early childhood education institutions during the 2025–2026 school year in Cebu, Philippines. The descriptive design was classified as suitable because it enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive and accurate representation of the assessment practices of teachers in their natural classroom environments without the introduction of external manipulation. This method offered a comprehensive understanding of the extent; to which developmentally appropriate tools were implemented in early childhood education, as well as the perspectives of teachers, by emphasizing description over experimentation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **3.2 Participants**

This study involved thirty (30) preschool instructors from Cebu during the 2025–2026 academic year. They were intentionally chosen due to their active participation in the implementation of assessment practices in preschool classrooms and their direct involvement in early childhood education. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate for the study, as it explicitly necessitated participants who possessed relevant expertise and practical experience in the use of developmentally appropriate assessment materials. This guaranteed that the data collected accurately reflected authentic classroom practices, and provided valuable insights into the extent of the implementation of appropriate assessment strategies in early childhood education.

### 3.3 Data Collection Tools

The study employed a structured questionnaire that was developed by the researcher in which to collect quantitative data on the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools by preschool teachers and their perspective on their pedagogical utility. The instrument was organized into three primary sections, each of which was designed to capture pertinent aspects of the research variables. It was constructed in accordance with the well-established principles of developmentally appropriate practice, which did guarantee both theoretical grounding and contextual relevance.

**Part 1. Respondent Profile.** The demographic data collected in this section includes age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and the highest educational attainment. These variables were crucial for the interpretation of variations in perspectives and implementation, particularly in the context of teachers' professional backgrounds.

**Part II. Extent of Implementation of Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Tools.** This section investigated the frequency and extent to which teachers implement assessment practices in four distinct domains: (a) observation checklists, (b) anecdotal records and learner portfolios, (c) play-based and performance tasks, and (d) collaborative documentation between parents and teachers. The Likert scale was used to rate the items, with a range of 1 (Strongly Disagree, Not Implemented) to 5 (Strongly Agree, Extensively Implemented). The descriptors were meticulously crafted to reduce ambiguity and to ensure that respondent interpretation was consistent.

**Part III. Teachers' Perspectives on Developmentally Appropriate Assessment.** This section assessed teachers' perspectives on four critical dimensions: (a) the relevance of tools to the developmental stages of children, (b) the practicality and ease of classroom application, (c) the efficacy of the tools in guiding instructional decisions, and (d) the compliance with curriculum standards. Similarly, responses were evaluated on a five-point scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The instrument was subjected to expert evaluation by early childhood education specialists to ensure that it was in accordance with the most effective practices in the implementation of the curriculum and the assessment of content and face validity. The reliability of the findings was evaluated through internal consistency measures such as; inferential validity was guaranteed through the use of Pearson's  $r$ ; which provided accurate indications of the strength and direction of associations between curriculum implementation, teachers' perspectives, and early literacy outcomes.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data were collected by personal administration of a researcher-designed survey questionnaire to ensure precision, clarity, and genuine involvement with the participants. The researcher personally visited the selected institution in Cebu, Philippines and collaborated with school authorities to organize the administration. The thirty preschool teacher-respondents were provided with a comprehensive

explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations prior to distribution. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained to ensure ethical conformance. In compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173); respondents were guaranteed that their responses and identities would be kept scrupulously confidential. The questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to prevent incomplete responses and minimize data loss, so assuring the accuracy and efficiency of the collection process.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The data that was collected were meticulously organized, encoded, and processed to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the information. In order to evaluate the extent of the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment practices and to analyze the demographic profiles of the respondents, descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations, were employed. Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient was utilized to analyze the relationship between assessment procedures and teachers' perceptions of their effectiveness. This enabled the study to assess both the magnitude and orientation of relationships between the variables. All analyses were evaluated at the 0.05 significance level, with statistical procedures conducted and verified by a licensed statistician, assuring the reliability and integrity of the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### IV. Result

**Table 1-Age and Gender of the Teachers**

| Age (in years) | Female    |              | Male     |          | Total     |               |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------|
|                | f         | %            | f        | %        | f         | %             |
| 21-30          | 3         | 10           | 2        | 6.67     | 5         | 16.67         |
| 31-40          | 9         | 30.00        | 1        | 3.33     | 10        | 33.33         |
| 41-50          | 10        | 33.33        | 1        | 3.33     | 11        | 36.67         |
| 51 above       | 3         | 30           | 1        | 3.33     | 3         | 10            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>25</b> | <b>83.33</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Table 1 illustrates the age and gender distribution of the preschool teacher respondents from the selected environment in Cebu, Philippines. Among the 30 respondents, 25 (83.33%) were female, while only 5 (16.67%) were male, thereby confirming the preponderance of women in early childhood education. The age group of 41–50 years accounted for the largest number of instructors, with 11 (36.67%). The age group of 31–40 years was closely followed by 10 (33.33%). The youngest group consisted of 5 teachers aged 21–30 years, which accounted for 16.67% of the total. The smallest group consisted of 3 teachers aged 51 years and older, which accounted for 10.00%. These findings show that there are far more female

preschool instructors than male teachers, and that most preschool teachers are mid-career professionals with significant teaching experience.

**Table 2-Civil Status**

| Civil Status | f         | %             |
|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| Single       | 7         | 23.33         |
| Married      | 21        | 70.00         |
| Separated    | 0         | 0             |
| Widow        | 2         | 6.67          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Table 2 indicates that the majority of preschool teacher respondents were married (21 or 70%), with a smaller number who were single (7 or 23.33%) or widowed (2 or 6.67%). This demographic distribution is indicative of the high number of educators who are juggling both professional and familial responsibilities, a situation that has been associated with potential stress and increased burden pressures.

**Table 3-Years of Teaching Experience**

| Years of Teaching Experience | f         | %             |
|------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1-5                          | 2         | 6.67          |
| 6-10                         | 8         | 26.67         |
| 11-15                        | 19        | 66.33         |
| 16-20                        | 1         | 3.33          |
| 20 and beyond                | 0         | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>30</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Table 3 reveals that the majority of preschool teacher respondents (19 or 63.33%) had 11–15 years of teaching experience, followed by 8 (26.67%) with 6–10 years, 2 (6.67%) with 1–5 years, and only 1 (3.33%) with 16–20 years. None reported more than 20 years of service. This distribution implies that the teaching force is primarily composed of mid-career professionals, which suggests a high level of stability and an array of classroom experience.

**Table 4-Highest Educational Attainment**

| Educational Attainment | f  | %     |
|------------------------|----|-------|
| Doctorate Graduate     | 0  | 0     |
| With Doctorate Units   | 0  | 0     |
| Master's Graduate      | 3  | 10.00 |
| With Master's Units    | 27 | 90.00 |

|                  |           |               |
|------------------|-----------|---------------|
| College Graduate | 0         | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>30</b> | <b>100.00</b> |

Table 4 shows that the majority of preschool teacher respondents were college graduates (27 or 90.00%), while only three (10.00%) had completed a master's degree. None had doctoral qualifications or were currently pursuing advanced graduate units. This indicates that while most teachers met the minimum educational requirement for teaching, relatively few pursued postgraduate studies.

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

| S/N                                                 | Indicators                                                      | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| <b>Observation Checklists</b>                       |                                                                 |      |                    |
| 1                                                   | I use observation checklists during daily classroom activities. | 4.50 | Strongly Agree     |
| 2                                                   | I align checklist items with developmental milestones.          | 5.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| 3                                                   | I regularly update checklists based on student progress.        | 5.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| 4                                                   | I use checklist data to plan instructional strategies.          | 4.50 | Strongly Agree     |
| 5                                                   | I find checklist-based assessments easy to use.                 | 5.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| <b>Anecdotal Records and Portfolios</b>             |                                                                 |      |                    |
| 6                                                   | I document children's learning through anecdotal records.       | 4.50 | Strongly Agree     |
| 7                                                   | I maintain individual portfolios for each child.                | 5.00 | 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.                         | 4.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| <b>Relevance To Children's Developmental Stages</b> |                                                                 |      |                    |
| 11                                                  | I assess learning during structured play activities.            | 5.00 | Strongly Agree     |

|                                            |                                                            |             |                       |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| 12                                         | I use real-life tasks to measure children's understanding. | 4.50        | Strongly Agree        |
| 13                                         | I document learning during role-play or group tasks.       | 4.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| 14                                         | I integrate assessment within play-based learning.         | 5.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| 15                                         | I use rubrics or criteria during performance tasks.        | 4.50        | Strongly Agree        |
| <b>Parent-Teacher Shared Documentation</b> |                                                            |             |                       |
| 16                                         | I communicate assessment insights with parents regularly.  | 5.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| 17                                         | I collect parent feedback to support assessment.           | 5.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| 18                                         | I include parent observations in assessment reports.       | 4.50        | Strongly Agree        |
| 19                                         | I involve parents in documentation of learning.            | 5.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| 20                                         | I value parental input in understanding child progress.    | 5.00        | Strongly Agree        |
| <b>Aggregate Weighted Mean</b>             |                                                            | <b>4.70</b> | <b>Strongly Agree</b> |
| <b>Standard Deviation</b>                  |                                                            | <b>0.34</b> | <b>Agree</b>          |

**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 5 illustrates the degree to which preschool educators have implemented developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments. With an aggregate weighted mean of 4.70 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.34, the results indicate a very high level of overall implementation, indicating consistency among respondents. Teachers emphatically supported the frequent use of observation checklists, with the highest rating (WM = 5.00) given to the alignment of items with developmental milestones and the updating of checklists in accordance with student progress. This suggests that educators are actively engaged in the process of monitoring student progress and adjusting their instruction accordingly. Teachers reported effective practices in the area of anecdotal records and portfolios, with the maintenance of child portfolios (WM = 5.00) and the documentation of children's learning through records (WM = 4.50) emerging as critical strategies. This indicates that educators methodically document children's development over time. The results for performance assessments and play-based assessments also indicated a high level of implementation. Teachers emphasize the importance of authentic, hands-on evaluation of learning through items such as integrating assessment within structured play and using real-life tasks (WM = 5.00 and 4.50, respectively). Parent-teacher shared documentation achieved the highest level of consensus, with multiple perfect scores (WM = 5.00) in the

areas of valuing parental input, accumulating feedback, and communicating insights with parents. This indicates an unambiguous dedication to collaborative assessment, which fortifies school-home partnerships.

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

| S/N                                                 | Indicators                                                            | WM   | Verbal Description |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| <b>Relevance to Children's Developmental Stages</b> |                                                                       |      |                    |
| 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     |
| <b>Ease of Implementation and Interpretation</b>    |                                                                       |      |                    |
| 6                                                   | I find it easy to use the tools during regular instruction.           | 4.00 | 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.       | 5.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| <b>Effectiveness in Guiding Instruction</b>         |                                                                       |      |                    |
| 11                                                  | Assessment results inform my lesson planning.                         | 5.00 | 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.                    | 4.00 | Strongly Agree     |
| <b>Alignment with Curriculum Standards</b>          |                                                                       |      |                    |
| 16                                                  | Assessment tools align with national early childhood standards.       | 5.00 | 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.       | 4.50        | 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  |
| <b>Aggregate Weighted Mean</b> |                                                                | <b>4.63</b> | <b>Strongly</b> |
| <b>Standard Deviation</b>      |                                                                | <b>0.39</b> | <b>Agree</b>    |

**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 presents educators' viewpoints about the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments. The teachers' perception of these tools as highly pertinent, practical, and effective in early childhood classrooms is consistent with the overall aggregate weighted mean of 4.63 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.39. The highest ratings were given to items that were relevant to the developmental phases of children, including appropriateness for age and abilities (WM = 5.00) and the provision of a holistic view of development (WM = 5.00). This demonstrates the teachers' unwavering confidence that these tools effectively address the diverse developmental requirements of their students. The tools were rated as practical and user-friendly in terms of simplicity of implementation and interpretation, with the highest score being accorded to the clarity of instructions (WM = 5.00). This suggests that teachers find them to be manageable in daily instruction, despite intermittent time-related concerns (WM = 4.00). Assessment results were utilized to inform lesson planning and identify learner support areas, resulting in consistently high ratings in the domain of efficacy in guiding instruction (both WM = 5.00). This suggests that instructors regard assessments as essential for the refinement of the

**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<br>Correlation | p - value | Decision  | Remarks     |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Assessment<br>Tools and<br>Perspectives | -0.687  | Strong<br>Negative         | 0.000     | Reject Ho | Significant |

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

curriculum and the formulation of instructional decisions. Lastly, the alignment with curriculum standards received a high score (WM = 4.50–5.00).

Table 7 presents the correlation between the extent of implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools and teachers' perspectives on their use. The results show an r-value of -0.093, interpreted as a negligible negative correlation, with a p-value of 0.624, greater than the 0.05 significance level. Thus, the null hypothesis is not rejected, indicating that no significant relationship exists between implementation and perspectives. This finding suggests that although teachers strongly implemented developmentally appropriate assessment tools (see Table 6) and also held highly positive perspectives about their use (see Table 7), the two variables did not significantly influence one another.

## **V. Discussion**

The findings reinforce the feminization of early childhood education, as 83.33% of respondents identified as female. This is in line with both global and local trends that link preschool teaching to caregiving responsibilities, (Cameron, Moss, & Owen, 1999). The restricted male presence in the classroom raises concerns regarding role-model diversity; despite the fact that it fosters strong classroom care (Johnson, 2008). The age distribution indicates that the majority of instructors are mid-career professionals (31–50 years old); which implies that instructional quality is improved by stability and experience (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). However; the limited number of younger instructors suggests a necessity to attract new entrants, while the limited older group may be indicative of early attrition associated with the workload and reforms. The importance of these demographics is that the application of developmentally appropriate assessments in preschool settings is directly influenced by teacher experience and diversity. The preponderance of married teachers suggests that a significant number of educators are able to balance their professional, and familial responsibilities; a factor that is associated with improved relational skills and empathy when teaching young children (Zhang & Chen, 2021). However; the quality of instruction may be impacted by the increased tension that can result from managing both roles (Sonnetag & Fritz, 2022). Single teachers; who account for nearly one-fourth of the respondents, may have more time and flexibility for professional development, which is consistent with the discovery that reduced family obligations frequently facilitate deeper career engagement (Liu et al., 2023). Additionally; bereaved educators, although few; contribute valuable life experiences that may improve socio-emotional sensitivity in early childhood classrooms (García-Crespo et al., 2020). These findings emphasize that civil status, although not a direct determinant of pedagogy, indirectly influences the effective use of developmentally appropriate assessment practices and interacts with teacher well-being.

The findings indicate that a substantial number of educators are in the mid-career stage; which is consistent with academic research that indicates that experienced educators frequently exhibit superior instructional adaptability, and assessment literacy in comparison to new instructors (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). Teachers with over a decade of experience tend to enhance their pedagogical abilities, which allows them to more effectively implement structured and child-centered curricula. Nevertheless; Zhu et al., 2023 also indicates that years of experience alone do not ensure that updated assessment practices are implemented, as professional development is essential for the preservation of effective classroom strategies. Accordingly; the respondents' ability to implement the MATATAG Curriculum is

strengthened by their lengthy teaching experience; however, ongoing training is still required to ensure that their methods are in accordance, with the changing literacy standards and the diverse requirements of their students.

The results suggests that preschool instructors in the study site that are highly dedicated to professional development, as evidenced by their pursuit of graduate education. This is consistent with the Department of Education's (DepEd) objective of promoting ongoing professional development to improve learner outcomes and the quality of instruction (DepEd Order No. 11, s. 2019). Kim et al. (2023); have emphasized that graduate-level training provides teachers with advanced pedagogical knowledge; and research-informed practices, which directly contribute to enhanced student literacy, and overall academic performance. The potential void in leadership preparation, and specialized expertise within early childhood education is underscored by the absence of doctorate-level qualifications. Research has demonstrated that curriculum innovation and enhanced literacy foundations are positively correlated with higher qualifications among teachers (Torres et al., 2022). As a result; the prevalence of teachers with master's-level education is an encouraging indicator. However; the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum could be enhanced by sustained support for doctoral studies; and advanced professional training, which could further enhance instructional practices and leadership.

The results confirm that preschool instructors have a strong dedication to authentic; child-centered evaluation practices, as evidenced by their extensive use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools. The prevalence of anecdotal records, and observation inventories is consistent with recent discoveries that these methodologies are among the most dependable for documenting the development of children in naturalistic environments, (Pyle & DeLuca, 2021). The increasing recognition that authentic learning occurs in contexts of play and performance; which provide a more comprehensive understanding of children's developmental trajectories; is also indicated by the high implementation of play-based assessments (Pascal & Bertram, 2022). The crucial importance of family engagement in assessment is underscored by the consistently high ratings for parent-teacher shared documentation. Alayyan et al., 2023; emphasizes that the integration of parent insights, not only improves the precision of evaluations but also cultivates more robust school-home partnerships, which in turn substantially improve the cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes of children. In general, the findings indicate that educators are not merely incorporating assessment tools as technical necessities; rather, they are incorporating them as essential components of their pedagogical practices. This finding echoes global guidelines that encourage assessment as an ongoing, collaborative, and formative process instead of a summative one (NAEYC, 2020). While the findings demonstrate that best practices are evident, results also reveal the need for continuous professional development to sustain this level of implementation and to adapt to new curricular demands as those specified in the MATATAG framework.

The results indicate that teachers have a highly favorable attitude toward the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments; which is a confirmation of their importance

in promoting the holistic development of early childhood. The substantial consensus regarding the tools' relevance to the developmental stages of children underscores the recognition by educators that assessment must be customized to the age, and ability of the child in which it is consistent with recent research that underscores the significance of developmentally aligned, individualized evaluations in early learning (Albright & Kramer, 2021; Bedel, İnce, & Başalev Acar, 2024). The consistently high ratings on ease of implementation, and interpretation indicate that instructors regard these tools as both practical, and manageable; which is crucial in light of the demanding nature of early childhood instruction. This is consistent with research that indicates that user-friendly assessments promote more consistent classroom application and enhance instructional responsiveness (Brouskeli et al., 2020). Additionally, educators expressed their strong confidence in the efficacy of DAA tools in directing instruction; suggesting that assessment results are not merely documented but also actively influence curriculum adjustments, differentiation, and lesson planning. These results serve to support the idea that assessment, when implemented in a formative manner; it is a critical factor in the advancement of learners and the quality of instruction (Shrestha & Pant, 2021). The high degree of agreement regarding the alignment with curriculum standards emphasizes the importance of these tools in the connection between pedagogy and policy; thereby, guaranteeing the coherence between classroom practices and national learning competencies. This is indicative of global trends; in which the alignment of curriculum and assessment enhances accountability, and guarantees equitable learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2022). These results collectively indicate that preschool instructors in Cebu City not only recognize but also optimize the pedagogical and policy relevance of DAA tools, thereby positioning them as essential instruments for the attainment of inclusive and responsive early childhood education.

The results of this study indicate that teachers are actively utilizing developmentally appropriate assessment tools; however, the increased usage of these tools may reveal practical challenges, such as time constraints, workload pressures, and documentation demands, which can diminish their overall favorable perception of these tools. Mesquita et al. (2024), also emphasized comparable findings, observing that extensive assessment practices, despite their effectiveness, may be cumbersome in the absence of sufficient institutional support. Katz and Porath (2023) also noted that educators frequently navigate the tension between acknowledging the pedagogical significance of assessment and contending with its labor-intensive requirements. The strong negative correlation underscores the necessity of professional development programs and systemic support to prevent the frequent implementation of assessment tools from eroding teachers' enthusiasm or perceptions of their utility. In contrast, the alignment of burden management, digital innovations, and collaborative practices can help maintain both positive teacher attitudes and high levels of implementation (Bedel, İnce, & Başalev Acar, 2024).

The research showed that early childhood education in Cebu is still primarily female-driven, which is indicative of the global feminization of the field. However, it also raised concerns about the limited diversity of role models. The majority of respondents were mid-career and held a master's degree, which suggests a strong professional commitment and stability. However; the scarcity of younger, and doctoral-

trained educators underscores deficits in leadership and succession preparation. The value of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments in authentic, child-centered, and curriculum-aligned instruction was recognized by teachers; who demonstrated high levels of implementation and positive perspectives toward them. However, the substantial negative correlation between the extent of use and perceptions indicates that, despite the pedagogical significance of these tools, their extensive requirements; including time, burden, and documentation may depress enthusiasm in the absence of sufficient systemic support. These results underscore the importance of maintaining teacher well-being, enhancing institutional support, and expanding professional development to guarantee that DAA tools continue to be not only widely used but also authentically empowering in the advancement of holistic early childhood learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

Findings from the study show that preschool teachers in Pili, Cebu; manifest a strong commitment to using DAA tools and believe in its significance in the realization of child-centered, holistic, and curriculum-based instruction. Favorable outlooks lend credibility to the tools' utility, reliability, and appropriateness to developmental needs; their higher education and mid-career experience are conducive to instructional quality. The significant negative correlation between teacher perception and use; however, can indicate that the pedagogical usefulness of the tools is at least partly counterbalanced by demands related to documentation, time restrictions, and burden. These findings point out that the sustainability of good assessment practice is fundamentally reliant on institutional, and systemic support, not merely on lecturer enthusiasm. To address these challenges, and improve the implementation of the DAA, this research proposes an Action Plan. This means maintaining practices and perspectives through reflection sessions, reducing documentation overload with ICT-supported reporting, fostering greater parent-teacher partnerships by facilitating quarterly dialogues, embedding assessment outcomes into lesson planning through targeted workshops, and broadening professional learning opportunities with scholarships and specialist training. Through the implementation of strategic interventions supported by school leadership; local stakeholders, and DepEd programs; DAA tools can move from being procedural tasks to powerful levers for inclusive-responsive-high-quality early years education.

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