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Preschool Teachers' Perceptions on Assessment Practices in Early Childhood Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated preschool educators' perspectives of assessment methodologies in early childhood classrooms within specific institutions in Cebu, Philippines, employing a descriptive-correlational research approach. Thirty preschool educators engaged in a researcher-developed and expert-validated questionnaire, which exhibited significant internal consistency. Data were examined utilizing descriptive-correlational statistics and Pearson's r correlation coefficient. The findings indicated that teachers consistently implemented assessment practices, including anecdotal records, learner portfolios, play-based assignments, and parent-teacher documentation. Teachers also expressed highly favorable perceptions of these practices, emphasizing their developmental relevance, practicality, efficacy in guiding instruction, and alignment with curriculum standards. Results showed a robust negative relationship between teachers' perceptions and their implementation level; the more teachers use evaluation tools, the better they recognize systemic barriers in terms of workload or required document production. This study highlighted the significance of teacher demographics, experiences, and qualification on type of assessments. These results highlight the importance of increased parent-school partnership, more efficient assessment approaches and ongoing professional learning. The research concludes that in order to guarantee meaningful, sustainable, and developmentally appropriate assessment in early childhood education, it is imperative to empower teachers' voices and enhance institutional support.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment in early childhood education is key to supporting developmental progress that goes beyond measuring milestones, and guides instruction, targets learning needs, and promotes growth (Albright & Kramer, 2021). Nevertheless, assessment is effective when it is well adapted to the development and differences typical of the young child (Bedel *et al.*, 2024). Conventional methods for assessment may not meet the wide range of ability, interests and learning styles in young children; these are often developed to assess older students (McAfee *et al.*, 2016). The result is the emergence of developmentally appropriate assessment tools; focusing on practices that are age-appropriate, personally relevant and culturally appropriate (NAEYC, 2020). Early childhood education sets the stage for lifelong learning, behavior and health. This is a critical time when young children are developing rapidly in their cognitive, social, emotional and physical learning (UNESCO 2021). Thus, assessment in early childhood settings needs to be sensitive to developmental levels and individual differences. Dissimilar to the mostly standardized testing commonly used in older grades, ECEC assessment must be flexible, observational, and instructional-embedded (Albright & Kramer, 2021) to inform children's development.

Despite the increased attention and policy recommendations for DAP, a gap persists with regard to tracking how assessment takes place in preschool

classrooms and teacher perceptions of its efficacy (OECD, 2021). Preschool educators are the frontline providers of assessment, and their decisions about which tools to use as well as how to adapt them for administration make these individuals critical figures in early childhood measurement (Shepard *et al.*, 2020). Their view, their experiences, and struggles somehow provide us more useful insights on assessment with which is applicable in the real world. Assessment tools that are developmentally appropriate should be created to catalog how young children learn in unique ways and what they know through authentic methods, play based activities, and child-centered (not test-driven) pedagogical foundations rather than narrow and inflexible measures of learning (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008). However, using such tools depends on the teacher engaging intuitively and reflectively with them. Although the importance of DAP is well documented in the literature, there is little empirical evidence about how preschool teachers view and practice these assessment tools within their classrooms (Bedel *et al.*, 2024).

This study is grounded in the need to explore preschool teachers' views on the assessment practices they use—specifically, how appropriate they believe these practices are in meeting the developmental needs of young children. By examining the current assessment practices and gathering teacher feedback, this study aims to highlight best practices, identify gaps, and suggest

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improvements to ensure assessments truly support early learning and development. In particular, the study aims to address the following questions: (1) What are demographic profile of teacher respondents in terms of age, gender, civil status, number of years in teaching and highest educational attainment? (2) What are the levels of use of developmentally appropriate practices assessment instruments such as observation checklists and anecdotal records and portfolio systems, play-based or performance assessments, and parent/teacher shared documentation? (3) What are teachers' perceptions of the use of developmentally appropriate measures in relation to expectations for developmental level and the ease of administering and interpreting, usefulness for supporting instruction, and alignment with curriculum standards? (4) To what extent are there significant differences between the degree of implementation and teachers' perceptions of using developmentally appropriate assessment tools? and (5) What suggestions can be recommended based on the results?

This research has practical and theoretical implications for early childhood education. In a practical viewpoint, the results could inform teacher preparation programs, curriculum developers, and policymakers about how assessment is actually being implemented in preschool classrooms and its efficacy (Shepard *et al.*, 2020). Presenting the point of view from preschool teachers, the study would identify potential difficulties encountered (such as absence of trainings, scarce resources, inconsistency between policy and practice) (OECD 2021). The lessons also have implications for better provision of support systems, professional development and assessment standards that are sensitive to both the teacher needs and children's developmental realities. From a conceptual approach, the findings of this study support further our understanding of early childhood assessment linking developmental theory to classroom environment setting (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008). And promotes further investigation of teacher-driven and contextually relevant assessment approaches that honour the richness of early learning (Bedel *et al.*, 2024). This study supports the use of intentional assessment to promote and sustain high-quality early childhood education through valuing, respecting, and using developmentally appropriate tools for measurement that are based on observation by professionals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The framing of assessment in early childhood is evolving from a mere technical exercise to a practice that is informed by the professional judgment, beliefs, and classroom realities of the teachers. In preschool environments, assessment refers to the systematic collection of evidence to inform teaching, convey progress, and direct support (McAfee, Leong, & Bodrova, 2016; Wortham, 2012). Educators often view the traditional assessments as being in conflict with authentic development and are ready to promote isolated skills (Miller & Almon,

2009) so, modern practice promotes performance tasks within play; documentation and observation strategies that educators believe to be instructionally beneficial and authentic (Carr & Lee, 2012; NAEYC, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2021). Perceptions are of paramount importance in this teacher-centered approach, as a teacher's perspective on assessment significantly influences its implementation in the primary classroom.

These approaches are preferred by educators due to the influence of foundational theories. In 1952, Piaget emphasized that preoperational thinkers exhibit competence through symbolic play and concrete activity, which corroborates the belief of teachers that play-based tasks are legitimate evidence of learning. Vygotsky (1978) posits that learning is a process of guided interaction; which is consistent with the inclination of educators to document the abilities of children through scaffolding (Chaiklin, 2003). Bronfenbrenner (1994) further expands the perspective, proposing that educators perceive assessment in the context of familial influences, institutional regulations, and societal norms. In practice; these theories are converging in the belief of teachers that assessment should be responsive to context; socially situated, and dynamic (Carr & Lee, 2012; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020).

These perceptions are influenced by the policy frameworks in the Philippines. Developmentally appropriate; play-based assessment is formalized by RA 10157 (Kindergarten Education Act) while holistic, culturally responsive monitoring is mandated by RA 8980 (ECCD) and RA 10410 (Early Years Act) (Republic of the Philippines, 2000; Department of Education, 2012; Official Gazette, 2013). Teachers frequently interpret these laws as a validation of their professional judgment; however, they also experience the obligation to document for compliance (Espinosa, 2015; Sotto, 2017). DepEd's implementation guidelines (e.g., ELLN) promotes a shift of classroom practices to sustained formative assessment—a practice highly valued by many teachers yet one that is difficult to sustain because is it burden-laden (Department of Education, 2016; Ramos, 2022).

Global scholarship reflects this tension between feasibility and aspiration. Authentic assessment are highly regarded by teachers, however; teachers contend that it is frequently hindered by time constraints, training, and systemic obstacles (Albright & Kramer, 2021; Zhang & Ng, 2022). For instance; portfolio-based methods are believed to enhance parent communication and reflection, while also requiring frequent planning time and documentation skills (Kim & Lee, 2021). Despite the fact that accountability protocols vie for attention, many teachers endorse a stance that assessment should advance learning, rather than merely audit it, as evidenced by the learning sciences (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020; Shepard, Penuel, & Pellegrino, 2018; Shepard, 2000).

These perspectives are further elaborated upon by recent research conducted in the Philippines. However, play-based, observation-driven assessment is not consistently

being carried out because of administrative load and shortage of resources as well as class size despite teachers' positive attitudes (Espinosa, 2015; Molato, 2019; Sotto, 2017; Tizon, 2020). Ramos (2022) focuses on the overlapping concepts of graduate-study ambitions, burden, and access — factors that also shape confidence and regularity in assessment conduct. Teachers also recognize that the reading of evidence and the application are shaped by families and home-school communication; highlighting the value of sharing documentation with parents (Bautista *et al.*, 2021). However; system-level quality expectations may seem to be a world apart from the practice of classroom teaching, where educators are faced with navigating the gulf between what is pragmatically possible in their daily work and aforementioned policy ideals (Llego, 2018).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Method

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine and describe preschool teachers' perceptions of assessment practices and their use of developmentally appropriate evaluation tools in selected early childhood education institutions in Cebu, Philippines during the 2025–2026 school year. The descriptive approach was seen appropriate as it enabled the researcher to present a comprehensive account of teachers live classroom practices and professional viewpoints without introducing external manipulation. Instead of testing interventions, this design emphasized a naturalistic description of teachers' perceptions and practices, thereby ensuring that the findings were grounded in authentic classroom realities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Participants

The study involved thirty (30) preschool teachers from Cebu during the 2025–2026 academic year. They were intentionally selected using purposive sampling because of their direct involvement in the assessment of young learners and their capacity to articulate perspectives on the appropriateness and practicality of various evaluation tools. This sampling approach ensured that participants possessed the expertise and practical experience necessary to reflect authentic classroom realities. The study guaranteed that the data represented both actual practices and the professional perceptions that shape assessment implementation.

Data Collection Tools

The primary instrument of the study was a structured researcher-designed questionnaire developed to cover both the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment practices and the perceptions of teachers toward their effectiveness. The questionnaire consisted of three sections, designed to reflect the research focus: Respondent Profile: This section gathered demographic information including age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment.

These variables were considered important in interpreting variations in perceptions and implementation across professional backgrounds.

Extent of Implementation of Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Tools. This section measured how frequently and extensively teachers used different assessment practices, specifically: (a) observation checklists; (b) anecdotal records and learner portfolios, (c) play-based and performance tasks, and (d) collaborative documentation with parents. Items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree/Not Implemented) to 5 (Strongly Agree/Extensively Implemented), indicated carefully phrased descriptors minimized ambiguity and supported consistent interpretation among respondents.

Educators' Perspectives on Developmentally Appropriate Assessment. This part analyzed educators' viewpoints on four dimensions: (a) the relevance of tools to child development; (b) the feasibility and accessibility of classroom implementation; (c) the utility of assessment outcomes in informing instruction; and (d) their alignment with curriculum standards. In order to guarantee consistency among sections, the responses were evaluated using the same five-point scale.

The instrument was subjected to expert evaluation by early childhood education specialists to guarantee content validity and compliance with industry standards. Reliability was determined by measuring internal consistency, and construct validity was verified by examining correlations between items.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through the actual administration of the researcher-designed questionnaire. The researcher coordinated with school administrators to schedule survey distribution and explained the objectives, procedures, and ethical safety to the participants. Teachers were assured that participation was voluntary and that informed consent would be secured prior to participation. In line with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), strict confidentiality of responses and anonymity of participants were guaranteed. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after administration to minimize data loss and ensure completeness.

Data Analysis

The data were systematically encoded and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. In line with descriptive statistics—frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations—were used to summarize respondents' demographic profiles and describe their reported assessment practices. Pearson's *r* correlation coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between teachers' reported practices and their perceptions of assessment, thereby identifying the degree and direction of association between the two variables. All statistical analyses were carried out at a 0.05 level of significance and were verified by a licensed

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	100.00	30	100.00

statistician to ensure accuracy, reliability, and integrity of findings

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that all preschool teachers at the chosen institution were female (30 or 100%), with no male teachers represented. In terms of age, the respondents were evenly divided: half (15 or 50%) were aged 31–40 years, while the other half (15 or 50%) were 41–50 years. This indicates a balanced distribution between mid-career and senior teachers, suggesting both energy and stability

within the teaching workforce. The absence of younger teachers (21–30) may limit the integration of new pedagogical approaches and technological innovations in assessment practices.

Table 2 reveals that the majority of preschool teachers were married (25 or 75%), while only 5 (25%) were single. None of the respondents were separated or widowed. The dominance of married teachers suggests that most of the teaching workforce balances both professional and family responsibilities.

Table 3 indicates that half of the preschool teachers (15

Table 2: Civil Status

Civil Status	f	%
Single	5	25
Married	25	75.00
Separated	0	0
Widow	0	0
Total	30	100.00

Table 3: Years of Teaching Experience

Years of Teaching Experience	f	%
1-5	0	0
6-10	10	33.33
11-15	15	50.00
16-20	5	16.67
20 and beyond	0	0
Total	30	100.00

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

or 50%) had 11–15 years of teaching experience, followed by 10 (33.33%) with 6–10 years, and 5 (16.67%) with 16–20 years of service. Notably, none of the respondents were novice teachers with 1–5 years of experience or beyond 20 years. This distribution highlights a teaching force largely composed of mid-career professionals, suggesting stability, competence, and practical expertise

in early childhood education.

Table 4 shows that all thirty (30) preschool teachers were college graduates (100%), with none holding master’s or doctoral degrees or graduate-level units. This indicates that while teachers meet the minimum academic qualification required for teaching, there is a lack of advanced professional training within the faculty

Table5: 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.	5.00	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.	4.00	Strongly Agree
Anecdotal Records and Portfolios			
6	I document children’s learning through anecdotal records.	4.00	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
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.	4.50	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.	5.00	Strongly Agree
18	I include parent observations in assessment reports.	4.50	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		0.31	

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 perceive the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment instruments. The indicators' aggregate weighted mean was 4.25, with a standard deviation of 0.31, and a verbal description of "Strongly Agree." This indicates that the responses of the teachers were consistent. Teachers had a strong consensus on all five indicators of observation checklists, with a perfect weighted mean of 5.00 for the following: the use of checklists during daily classroom activities, the alignment of checklists with developmental milestones, and the frequent updating of checklists based on student progress. The utilization of checklist data to direct instruction was also highly rated (WM = 4.50), while the ease of use received the lowest rating in this cluster (WM = 4.00), despite being strongly agreed upon. This signifies that educators regard observation checklists as essential instruments, particularly for monitoring developmental progress and organizing instruction. Results indicated that there was substantial consensus regarding the use of work samples to demonstrate progress (WM = 4.50), the maintenance of individual portfolios (WM = 5.00), and the documentation of learning through anecdotal notes (WM = 4.00). Teachers also expressed a strong consensus regarding the importance of routinely updating portfolios (WM = 4.00) and reflecting on anecdotal notes (WM = 4.50). These results indicate that portfolio-based assessment is a widely used and highly regarded method for capturing authentic evidence of children's learning over time. Regarding the dimension of relevance to children's developmental stages, educators expressed strong agreement that they evaluate learning during structured play (WM = 4.00), employ real-life tasks (WM = 5.00), record role-play or group activities (WM = 4.00), incorporate assessment within play-based learning (WM = 4.50), and utilize rubrics for performance tasks (WM = 4.50). This underscores that educators acknowledge the significance of synchronizing assessment methodologies with the developmental characteristics of preschoolers,

especially through play and experiential learning activities. Lastly, concerning parent-teacher shared documentation, teachers expressed a strong consensus regarding the following: the importance of regularly communicating assessment results with parents (WM = 4.00), collecting feedback from parents (WM = 5.00), including parental observations in reports (WM = 4.50), involving parents in documentation (WM = 4.00), and valuing parental input in understanding child progress (WM = 4.50). These findings emphasize the importance of collaborative practices in fostering an extensive understanding of the development of children.

Table 6 illustrates the viewpoints of preschool educators regarding the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment instruments. The respondents' high consistency and positive perceptions are indicated by the overall aggregate weighted mean of 4.65, which is interpreted as "Strongly Agree" and has a standard deviation of 0.36. Teachers demonstrate substantial agreement regarding each of the four dimensions assessed: relevance to the developmental stages of children, ease of implementation and interpretation, efficacy in guiding instruction, and alignment with curriculum standards. The weighted means for relevance to developmental stages ranged from 4.00 to 5.00, suggesting that teachers believe the instruments they use are age-appropriate, individualized, and capable of providing a holistic view of children's growth. Teachers perceive the tools as user-friendly, practical, and manageable in their daily instruction, as evidenced by the scores that ranged from 4.00 to 5.00 in terms of simplicity of implementation. All indicators received significant agreement in terms of their effectiveness in guiding instruction, with weighted means ranging from 4.00 to 5.00. This underscores the fact that assessments inform curriculum improvement, differentiation, and lesson planning. Finally, the weighted means, which were also in accordance with the curriculum standards, ranged from 4.00 to 5.00. This indicates that teachers perceive these assessments as being in

accordance with national standards, competencies, and school policies.

Table 7 presents the test of relationship between the extent of developmentally appropriate assessment tools implementation and teachers' perspectives. The correlation analysis yielded an r-value of -0.687, indicating a strong negative correlation, with a p-value of 0.000,

which is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. This result leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirms that the relationship between the two variables is significant. The strong negative correlation suggests that as the extent of implementation of assessment tools increases, teachers' perspectives toward their use tend to decline.

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.	4.00	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.	4.50	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.	4.50	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.	5.00	Strongly Agree
10	Instructions for using these tools are clear and user-friendly.	5.00	Strongly Agree
Effectiveness in Guiding Instruction			
11	Assessment results inform my lesson planning.	5.00	Strongly Agree
12	Assessment tools help identify areas where learners need support.	4.00	Strongly Agree
13	The tools guide the differentiation of instruction.	5.00	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.	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.	4.00	Strongly Agree
20	Assessment practices are consistent with school policies.	5.50	Strongly Agree
Aggregate Weighted Mean		4.65	Strongly Agree
Standard Deviation		0.36	

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 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	-0.687	Strong Negative	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant

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

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that all preschool teachers were female; which further corroborates the fact that early childhood education is a highly feminized profession in which males are largely absent due to enduring cultural stereotypes about caregiving roles (Peeters *et al.*, 2022; UNESCO, 2023). The profile also shows that the number of 31–40 and 41–50 year-old teachers was not significantly different, thus evidence of middle-aged while seasoned professionals in both demographic and pedagogical terms. However, the few teachers who are below 30 is a concern when young people’s entry into the profession has been limited. This trend has been alongside recent findings which compose this reason with heavy workloads and low pays (OECD, 2022; Llego, 2024). The absence of teachers over 50 suggests early attrition or retirement, highlighting sustainability issues in maintaining seasoned educators (Gillece, 2023). Overall; this profile illustrates the ways in which mid-career female teachers’ perspectives shape preschool classrooms and how their professional judgment is a critical factor in shaping assessment.

The large number of preschool teachers suggests many that are balancing career with personal life. This perhaps will influence their perspective on assessment and childrearing based off of being a parent themselves (Cruz *et al.*, 2021; Bautista & Tan, 2022). The lower percentage

of single teachers perhaps implies that the majority of them may have family already and they consider their work in early childhood teaching as a steady source of permanent employment, confirming a report on the educational workforce pattern in Philippine (Llego, 2024). This demographic composition underscores the influence of personal contexts, particularly marital status, on the commitment, empathy, and relational approaches of teachers in classroom assessment practices (UNESCO, 2023).

The stability of this preschool teaching staff is emphasized by the prevalence of midcareer teachers who through their experience make assessment more coherent and assured. The literature suggests that experienced teachers, with more than ten years as a professional – who are using the developmentally appropriate tool, demonstrate better professional judgment and flexibility in comparison to student teachers (Garcia & Weiss, 2020; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2021). The absence of early-career teachers may be indicative of recruitment challenges in early childhood education, a trend that has also been observed in Philippine contexts, where entry and retention are influenced by workload and compensation (Manlangit, 2022). In the interim, the shortage of experienced teachers indicates that attrition can take place in later stages of a teaching career and highlights the need for ongoing professional learning to

maintain competence and avoid burnout (OECD, 2023). The data indicates that the majority of teachers in the sampled institutions are undergraduates. This meets the minimum teaching requirement; however, the absence of postgraduate training underscores a deficiency in advanced professional preparation that could enhance assessment practices. Recent research has reinforced the idea that higher qualifications from teachers enhance their ability to operationalize reflective, evidence-based instructional and assessment practices especially in early childhood education (Phillips *et al.*, 2020; UNESCO, 2022). In the Philippines, it is often access and affordability that limits their ability to pursue higher degrees even when professional development has been mandated (Bautista & Ocampo, 2023). This finding highlights the importance of systemic support through such means as school incentives and scholarships to encourage continuous professional development among teachers, which in turn ensures that they hold a deeper knowledge of assessment practices.

The findings suggest that preschool instructors are highly committed to the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment practices, with a particular emphasis on the use of observation checklists, portfolios, play-based tasks, and parent collaboration. This is indicative of a worldwide trend toward formative and authentic assessment methods that prioritize real-world learning contexts over standardized testing. Recent work has highlighted the reality that observational documentation allows for teachers to track developmental progress and respond with support (Albright & Kramer, 2021). Similarly, the robust implementation of anecdotal records and portfolios is consistent with research that emphasizes their importance in promoting reflection and offering longitudinal evidence of development (Zhang & Ng, 2022). The alignment of assessment with play-based and real-life tasks further supports the demand for experiential and developmentally suitable methods that capture the holistic learning of young children (Carr & Lee, 2012; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the high scores for parent-teacher relationship draw attention to increasing roles of families as crucial component in making assessment valid and share responsibility for children's success (Bautista *et al.*, 2021). Such findings suggest that teachers are not simply using and understanding assessments as a compliance mechanism, but perceiving assessment tools as resources for equity, growth, and communication in early learning settings even if they are the target of systemic pressures.

Findings suggest that preschool teachers perceive DAAs as relevant, useful, and influential when making instructional decisions aligned with curriculum standards. This is in line with recent literature suggesting that developmental stage-matched assessment can provide a meaningful source of personalization for children and a broad coverage of their development (Pyle & DeLuca, 2020; Kim, 2021). Sönmez and Öztürk (2022) also argue that assessment tools need to meet the criteria of user-

friendliness and implementation extendibility for use in preschool classrooms, which may be demonstrated by the high level of agreement reached among teachers on ease of use. In addition, modern associations between formative assessment with responsive pedagogy and curriculum development are also supported by considering assessments as useful means to prepare lessons and improve curricula (Vuorinen *et al.*, 2021). The high level of alignment to national standards emphasizes the growing importance of assessments to reconcile between developmental appropriateness and accountability demands (UNESCO, 2024). These perspectives emphasize that teachers not only regard assessment as a compliance mechanism but also embrace it as a meaningful practice that promotes quality and equity in early childhood education.

The substantial negative correlation between perspectives and implementation reveals a subtle dynamic; educators who extensively implement developmentally appropriate assessment tools may cultivate more critical or discerning perspectives regarding their efficacy and obstacles. This pattern is consistent with recent research; which indicates that teachers' awareness of their limitations, labor demands, or contextual constraints is frequently enhanced by increased exposure to and utilization of assessment practices (Hernandez & Rankin, 2021; Pyle *et al.*, 2022). Simultaneously, the substantial correlation emphasizes that teachers' practices are intricately connected to their perceptions, thus corroborating the notion that classroom assessment decisions are directly influenced by beliefs (Kim & Lim, 2023). These results underscore the necessity of ongoing professional development and institutional assistance to align teachers' elevated standards with sustainable assessment techniques (OECD, 2024). In conclusion, this implies that effective policies and training should not only encourage the frequent use of assessment tools but also address the changing perspectives of instructors to ensure the long-term viability and meaningful application of these tools in early childhood settings.

This study emphasizes that preschool teachers in Cebu, who are primarily mid-career women with undergraduate qualifications, actively implement developmentally appropriate assessment practices and regard them as pertinent, practical, and effective. The global trend toward formative and authentic assessment is reflected in their heavy reliance on observation, portfolios, play-based tasks, and parent collaboration. However, the lack of postgraduate training, younger teachers, and seasoned educators highlights structural issues in maintaining workforce stability and professional development. The substantial negative correlation between perspectives and implementation implies that the frequent use of assessment tools increases teachers' critical awareness of their workload demands and limitations. These results reinforce the necessity of ongoing training, policy support, and institutional investment to guarantee that assessment remains both sustainable and meaningful

in the pursuit of quality and equity in early childhood education.

CONCLUSION

The importance of preschool instructors' perceptions in influencing assessment practices is emphasized in this study, which reveals the advantages and obstacles of incorporating developmentally appropriate approaches in early childhood classrooms. Teachers in Cebu exhibited a strong dedication to family engagement, play-based tasks, portfolios, and observation. However, their critical awareness of systemic barriers, such as workload constraints, limited professional preparation, and policy-practice gaps, reflects a global tension in early childhood education between aspirational frameworks and classroom realities. The robust negative correlation between perception and implementation implies that teachers' sensitivity to the intricacies of authentic assessment is enhanced by a more profound engagement with it, thereby confirming that assessment is not a neutral task but a profoundly contextual and pedagogical act. These findings contribute globally by emphasizing that significant evaluation in early childhood must transcend compliance and accountability to evolve into a transformative practice that promotes equity, quality, and comprehensive child development. The report emphasizes the importance of aligning standards with classroom environments and enhancing teacher capabilities through ongoing professional development and advanced educational opportunities. This validates the significance of family-inclusive, play-based, and reflective practices as effective instruments for advocacy and learning for practitioners. In conclusion, this research underscores that assessment transitions from a mere measurement to a tool for reimagining early childhood education systems worldwide in order to create more inclusive, responsive, and human-centered learning environments when teachers' voices and professional judgments are prioritized.

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