

# Investigating Teachers' Implementation and Perspectives of Use of Developmentally Appropriate Tools

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the implementation and perspectives regarding the use of developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) tools among preschool teachers in selected institutions in Cebu, Philippines, utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design. Thirty preschool teachers participated through a researcher-developed survey questionnaire, which underwent validity and reliability testing and demonstrated strong internal consistency. Data were analyzed using descriptive-correlational statistics and Pearson's  $r$  correlation. The findings revealed that teachers consistently applied DAA tools, particularly observation checklists, anecdotal records, child portfolios, play-based assessments, and parent-teacher shared documentation. Teachers also conveyed highly positive perspectives regarding the tools' relevance to developmental stages, ease of classroom use, and alignment with curriculum standards and instructional guidance. Nonetheless, a moderate negative correlation emerged between the extent of implementation and teacher perspectives, suggesting that while educators recognize the pedagogical value of DAA tools, their perceptions are tempered by documentation workload and time constraints. Results further highlighted the influence of demographic factors, years of teaching experience, and educational attainment on assessment practices. This underscores the importance of providing continuous professional development, manageable documentation systems, and stronger home-school collaboration. To address these issues, the study proposes an action plan that incorporates ICT-based innovations, enhanced parent-teacher engagement, expanded professional growth initiatives, and reinforced DepEd-aligned standards to strengthen the effective and sustainable use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools in Cebu's preschool classrooms.

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

## 1. Introduction

Assessment is an essential element of early childhood education, as it provides the basis for comprehending the learning of children and assisting instructors in the development of responsive instruction. In contrast to standardized testing, which is frequently rigid and uniform, assessment in early childhood must be developmentally sensitive, holistic, and flexible in order to accommodate the requirements of young learners. Developmentally appropriate assessment tools, such as portfolios,

anecdotal records, observation questionnaires, and play-based assessments, have been acknowledged for their ability to accurately and effectively document the development of children (Bredekamp, 2019). These tools prioritize play, context, and child-centered practices, allowing educators to document not only cognitive skills but also social, emotional, and physical development (Epstein, 2021). However, their efficacy is significantly contingent upon the manner in which instructors implement them in practice and their perception of their usefulness in addressing the realities of the classroom (McAfee & Leong, 2022). This emphasizes the necessity of evaluating the professional perspectives and practical applications of educators with respect to these instruments.

Republic Act No. 10157, also known as the Kindergarten Education Act, stresses the significance of child-centered and appropriate assessment in early education in the Philippines. The implementation of developmentally appropriate tools and the perspectives of teachers on their effectiveness are frequently impacted by challenges that teachers encounter, despite the policy mandate. Proper implementation may be impeded by inadequate training, scarcity of resources, and discrepancies between curriculum standards and classroom realities (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2020). Teachers are the primary agents who select, adapt, and apply these tools, making their voices essential in determining whether assessment practices genuinely support developmental growth and align with educational objectives. International literature emphasizes the importance of developmentally appropriate practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2020; NAEYC, 2021), but there isn't much empirical data that particularly reflects how teachers in the Philippine context use these resources and assess their usefulness and worth. This discrepancy underscores the necessity of a study that encompasses perspectives and implementation in order to offer an extensive knowledge.

This study aims to investigate teachers' implementation and perspectives on the use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools in early childhood classrooms in Cebu, Philippines. It seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the demographic profile of the 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 implemented as perceived by the respondents in terms of observation checklists, anecdotal records and portfolios, play-based or performance assessments, and parent-teacher shared documentation? What are the teachers' perspectives on the use of these tools in terms of their relevance to children's developmental stages, ease of implementation and interpretation, effectiveness in guiding instruction, and alignment with curriculum standards? Is there a significant relationship between the extent of developmentally appropriate assessment tools implementation and the perspectives on their use? Finally, based on the findings, what action plan can be proposed?

This study offers a two-dimensional analysis that integrates perspectives and implementation, reflecting the practical actions of teachers and their interpretation of the value of the instruments they employ. This dual focus guarantees that the results not only capture the professional judgments and lived circumstances of teachers, but also identify the extent of use. However, this research is situated at the critical intersection of classroom action and teacher insight, where previous studies have frequently focused on either the theoretical benefits of developmentally appropriate practices or policy directions. This positions it in a unique position to disclose whether the tools are being implemented as intended, how teachers adapt them to classroom realities, and what perceptions they hold regarding their effectiveness.

The findings will also propose a data-driven action plan for enhancing assessment practices, as well as generating evidence that can inform teacher training, curriculum alignment, and policy development. This study contributes to the literature by providing a localized, context-driven comprehension of assessment implementation in Philippine early childhood education, an area in which empirical data is still deficient. In conclusion, the objective of this research is to eliminate the disparity between classroom realities and policy, guaranteeing that developmentally appropriate assessment tools are not only implemented but also effectively integrated into teaching practices that promote the holistic development of young children.

## 2. Review of Related Literature and Studies

The role of assessment in early childhood education has been widely recognized across global literature, as it functions not only as a tool for measuring developmental milestones but also as a foundation for curriculum planning, instructional improvement, and child development support. Shepard, Penuel, and Pellegrino (2018), explains that assessment should serve as a guide for teachers in designing learning opportunities that reflect the holistic needs of young children. Moreover, standardized assessments and paper-pencil tests were employed to evaluate learning outcomes; however, these approaches were often inappropriate for preschool-aged children, who learn primarily through play, sensory exploration, and social interaction (Pyle & DeLuca, 2017; McLeod, 2018). Instead, developmentally appropriate assessments such as anecdotal records, observation checklists, portfolios, and performance-based tasks are increasingly recognized as more valid and reliable in capturing children's abilities and progress (McAfee, Leong, & Bodrova, 2016; Dunn & Sebastian, 2020). These methods align with the holistic nature of early childhood development, addressing cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains simultaneously. Carr and Lee (2012) emphasize that assessment in early childhood should not be reduced to mere quantification but should celebrate children lived experiences, supporting their confidence as learners in ways numbers alone cannot.

Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (1936) provides an essential foundation for understanding the necessity of age-appropriate assessments in preschool classrooms. Piaget (1952) described the preoperational stage (ages 2–7) as one where children's thinking is intuitive, symbolic, and egocentric making abstract reasoning and standardized tests clearly inappropriate. Research by Berk (2018) confirms that during this stage, authentic assessments such as play-based tasks, storytelling, and interactive activities yield more accurate insights into children's developmental progress. Similarly, Ginsburg (2007) argues that observation-based evaluations reveal children's mathematical and problem-solving abilities in ways traditional tests simply cannot. Thus, Piaget's framework underscores the necessity of designing assessment practices that align with children's natural cognitive processes ensuring that they not only measure learning but also enrich it.

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1934) complements Piaget's framework by emphasizing that learning is inherently social and deeply shaped by cultural contexts. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which suggests that assessments should not only identify what children can do independently but also highlight their potential when guided by teachers or peers. This view supports dynamic assessments, which focus on learning potential rather than static performance (Lidz & Elliott, 2000). Chaiklin (2003) stresses that sociocultural assessments should account for interactions with parents, teachers, and classmates' interactions that, in fact, form the very core of

development. Current research also shows that parent-teacher collaborations and documentation of joint activities lead to richer, more meaningful data (Fleer & Veresov, 2018). Therefore, preschool assessment practices must reflect not only the child but also their social worlds, scaffolding opportunities, and cultural norms to be effective.

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) further broadens the perspective by acknowledging that children's development is influenced by multiple systems, the microsystem of family and school, the mesosystem of their interconnections, the exosystem of external environments, and the macrosystem of broader societal policies (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, and Knoche (2009) argue that assessment tools that incorporate home and school contexts, such as portfolios and parent-teacher conferences, provide a more holistic view of child development. In the Philippine setting, cultural practices and family involvement play a critical role in shaping children's learning (Tuazon, 2019); thus, ecological perspectives reinforce the importance of context-sensitive, multi-layered assessments that extend beyond the classroom.

Philippine legislation also provides strong support for implementing developmentally appropriate assessment practices. Republic Act No. 8980, or the ECCD Act of 2000, institutionalized a comprehensive system of early childhood programs, highlighting the need for age-appropriate and culturally relevant assessments (Philippine Congress, 2000). Republic Act No. 10410, the Early Years Act of 2013, emphasizes the importance of authentic and formative evaluations during the "first crucial years of life" (Official Gazette, 2013). Republic Act No. 10157, or the Kindergarten Education Act of 2012, makes kindergarten compulsory and underscores the necessity of child-centered, play-based assessments to ensure readiness for lifelong learning (Department of Education, 2012). These laws align with international recommendations from UNESCO (2017), which highlight that assessments in early childhood should promote inclusivity, equity, and holistic development. Yet, as Reyes and Gregorio (2019) stress, legal mandates must always be translated into classroom practices; otherwise, they risk remaining as policies on paper rather than lived realities for children and teachers.

Globally, scholars emphasize that assessments should be non-threatening, flexible, and integrated into everyday classroom interactions. Miller and Almon (2009) advocate for performance-based evaluations that foster creativity and problem-solving while giving teachers practical insights. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2020) similarly recommends observational and narrative assessments in natural contexts, as these capture genuine behaviors and abilities. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) add that effective assessment should not only serve accountability purposes but also inform instruction and highlight student strengths. Locally, Fajardo (2023) warns that rigid and inappropriate assessment tools may compromise children's confidence and motivation, undermining the very developmental appropriateness that Philippine laws promote.

Despite the abundance of theoretical frameworks and legal provisions, a gap remains in exploring how preschool teachers themselves perceive and implement these practices. Teachers' perspectives are critical, as they bridge theory, policy, and practice (Shepard, 2019). For example, Pyle and DeLuca (2017) found that while teachers value play-based assessments, they often feel pressured to use more formalized tools due to institutional or parental expectations. In the Philippine context, however, there is still limited research on how teachers balance policy mandates with classroom realities; especially in diverse regions

like Cebu, where schools vary in resources, training, and support. This is precisely where the current study positions itself: examining both implementation and perceptions, while anchoring them in the Philippine early childhood context.

By incorporating Philippine legal provisions (RA 8980, RA 10410, RA 10157) with Piaget's cognitive framework, Vygotsky's sociocultural insights, and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems, this study makes a unique contribution to the literature. The discussion is not merely theoretical or policy-oriented; it emphasizes the perspectives of educators, who are the ones who directly influence the assessment experiences of children. This approach bridges the gap between theory and practice, as well as between law and the experienced classroom realities, by providing evidence-based insights that can inform training, curriculum alignment, and future policies in early childhood education.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Method**

This study employed a descriptive–correlational design to investigate both the implementation and the perspectives of preschool teachers on the use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools in selected early childhood education institutions in Cebu, Philippines during the 2025–2026 school year. The descriptive component was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to present an accurate picture of how teachers integrated these tools into their daily classroom practice, while the correlational aspect enabled the identification of possible relationships between teachers' implementation and their perceptions. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) point out, such a design is especially relevant when the goal is not only to describe educational practices but also to explore associations between variables that shape those practices.

#### **3.2 Participants**

The participants of the study were thirty (30) preschool teachers purposively selected from Cebu, Philippines. They were purposely chosen due to their active role in implementing developmentally appropriate assessment strategies and their ability to articulate professional perspectives on these tools. The purposive sampling method was seen as the most suitable since it ensured the inclusion of teachers whose expertise and direct classroom engagement could provide both authentic accounts of implementation and insightful reflections on practice. Moreover, this purposeful selection strengthened the study's aim of connecting actual classroom use of assessment tools with teachers' views about their relevance and effectiveness.

#### **3.3 Data Collection Tools**

A structured questionnaire; developed by the researcher, was used to gather quantitative data on teachers' implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools and their perspectives regarding their pedagogical application. The instrument was carefully designed in alignment with the principles of developmentally appropriate practice to ensure both theoretical soundness and contextual relevance. It consisted of three main sections:

**Part I. Respondent Profile.** This section gathered demographic data such as age, gender, civil status, years of teaching experience, and highest educational attainment. These variables were considered essential for understanding how teachers' backgrounds may influence their implementation and perspectives.

**Part II. Extent of Implementation.** This part focused on the frequency and extent of teachers' use of four core assessment domains: (a) observation checklists, (b) anecdotal records and learner portfolios, (c) play-based and performance tasks, and (d) collaborative documentation with parents. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree/Not Implemented) to 5 (Strongly Agree/Extensively Implemented), was used to ensure precise and consistent responses.

**Part III. Teachers' Perspectives.** This section assessed teachers' views on developmentally appropriate tools across four dimensions: (a) relevance to children's developmental stages, (b) practicality and classroom application, (c) effectiveness in guiding instruction, and (d) compliance with curriculum standards. Items were also rated using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire underwent validation by early childhood education experts to ensure clarity, relevance, and alignment with best practices. Reliability was confirmed through internal consistency measures, while Pearson's  $r$  was used to establish construct validity by linking implementation patterns with teachers' perspectives.

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The survey questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher after coordinating with school administrators in Cebu. Teachers were fully informed about the objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations of the study prior to participation. Informed consent was obtained, and strict adherence to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173) ensured the confidentiality of responses and identities. Immediate retrieval of the questionnaires minimized missing data and ensured the accuracy of the results. This careful process supported the study's goal of authentically capturing both the practical implementation and the personal perspectives of teachers regarding assessment tools.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The responses were organized, encoded, and analysed using appropriate statistical methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations were employed to describe teachers' demographic profiles, the extent of implementation, and their perspectives on developmentally appropriate tools. To examine the connection between the degree of implementation and teachers' perspectives, Pearson's  $r$  correlation coefficient was applied and utilized. This provided insights into both the magnitude and direction of the relationship, directly addressing the study's aim of investigating how teachers' use of tools aligns with their perceptions; a significance level of 0.05 was adopted, and all statistical procedures were reviewed by a licensed statistician to ensure reliability and integrity of the findings.

#### 4. Results

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

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
21-30	2	6.67	0	0	2	6.67
31-40	3	10.00		10.00	3	6.67
41-50	15	50.00	3	10.00	18	60.00
51 above	5	16.67	2	6.67	5	23.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>83.34</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>26.67</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 shows that the preschool teaching force in this institution is predominantly female, with 25 teachers (83.34%) compared to 5 male teachers (16.67%). In terms of age, the majority were in the 41–50 age group (18 or 60.00%), followed by 51 years and above (5 or 16.67%), and 31–40 years (3 or 10.00%). The smallest group was those aged 21–30, with only 2 teachers (6.67%). This age distribution indicates that the teaching staff is largely composed of mid-career and senior educators, reflecting stability, maturity, and extensive experience in handling preschool learners.

**Table 2**  
**Civil Status**

Civil Status	f	%
Single	7	23.33
Married	23	76.67
Separated	0	0
Widow	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 2 shows that the majority of preschool teacher respondents were married (23 or 76.67%), while 7 (23.33%) were single. No respondents were separated or widowed. This distribution indicates that most teachers balance professional responsibilities with family roles, which may contribute to their sense of stability and maturity in handling learners.

**Table 3**  
**Years of Teaching Experience**

Years of Teaching Experience	f	%
1-5	3	10.00
6-10	5	16.67
11-15	15	50.00

16-20	5	16.67
20 and beyond	7	23.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3 shows that half of the preschool teacher respondents (15 or 50.00%) had 11–15 years of teaching experience, while 7 (23.33%) had 20 years and beyond, and 5 (16.67%) had 16–20 years. Only a small number had less than 10 years of experience, with 3 (10.00%) in the 1–5-year bracket and 5 (16.67%) in the 6–10-year bracket. This distribution indicates that the majority of teachers are mid- to late-career professionals, bringing substantial expertise, stability, and maturity to the classroom.

**Table 4**  
**Highest Educational Attainment**

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

Table 4 shows that all thirty (30) preschool teacher respondents were college graduates (100.00%), with none holding master’s or doctorate degrees or graduate-level units. This finding indicates that while teachers meet the minimum qualification required for teaching, there is a lack of advanced academic preparation among the faculty.

**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.	5.00	Strongly Agree
2	I align checklist items with developmental milestones.	4.50	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

### Anecdotal Records and Portfolios

6	I document children’s learning through anecdotal records.	5.00	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.	5.00	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.	5.00	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.	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>4.75</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 extent to which preschool educators have implemented developmentally appropriate assessment (DAA) instruments. The results indicate a very high level of overall implementation, suggesting consistency among respondents, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.75 (Strongly Agree) and a standard deviation of 0.34. The daily use of observation checklists in classroom activities, as well as the simplicity of application and regular updating based on student progress, was strongly supported by teachers, who gave them the highest rating (WM = 5.00). This implies that educators are actively involved in the monitoring of children's development and the alignment of instruction with observed milestones. Teachers also reported effective practices in the area of anecdotal records and portfolios, with perfect ratings (WM = 5.00) for documenting children's learning and maintaining individual portfolios. However, they recorded slightly lower scores (WM = 4.00) for frequently updating portfolios. This implies that educators are meticulous in documenting the progress of their students, although some subjects necessitate greater consistency. Performance and play-based assessments were also highly rated, with a strong emphasis on the integration of evaluation within play (WM = 5.00) and the use of real-life tasks (WM = 5.00). The highest level of consensus was attained by parent-teacher shared documentation, which received multiple perfect scores (WM = 5.00) for valuing parental input, collecting feedback, and communicating assessment insights. This reinforces school-home partnerships by emphasizing a strong commitment to collaborative assessment.

**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.	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.	5.00	Strongly Agree
13	The tools guide the differentiation of instruction.	4.50	Strongly Agree
14	Assessment outcomes contribute to curriculum improvement.	5.00	Strongly Agree
15	I modify my teaching based on assessment findings.	4.50	Strongly Agree

**Alignment with Curriculum Standards**

16	Assessment tools align with national early childhood standards.	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>4.66</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>0.34</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 reveals that preschool teachers in this chosen institution held strongly positive perspectives regarding the use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools, with an aggregate weighted mean of 4.66 (Strongly Agree). This indicates that teachers not only value these tools but also view them as highly relevant, practical, effective, and aligned with curriculum standards. In terms of **relevance to children’s developmental stages**, teachers strongly agreed (WM = 4.00–5.00) that assessment tools matched learners’ age and abilities, supported individualized instruction, and provided holistic perspectives on development. Regarding **ease of implementation and interpretation**, results (WM = 4.00–5.00) suggest that teachers found the tools practical and user-friendly, though some noted time challenges in implementation. In **guiding instruction**, teachers strongly agreed (WM = 4.50–5.00) that assessment results inform lesson planning, differentiation, and curriculum improvement. Lastly, **alignment with curriculum standards** also scored highly (WM = 4.50–5.00), indicating consistency with DepEd requirements and school policies. The findings imply that teachers view developmentally appropriate assessment tools as essential in promoting holistic child development and ensuring instructional effectiveness. Institutional support through continuous professional training is necessary to maintain these positive perspectives while addressing practical challenges.

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

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

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

Table 7 shows the test of relationship between the extent of implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools and teachers’ perspectives on their use. The correlation result yielded an **r-value of 0.698**, interpreted as a strong positive correlation, with a **p-value of 0.000**, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant. This finding indicates that as teachers do increasingly implement developmentally appropriate assessment tools, their perspectives toward these tools also become more favorable. In other words, greater application of observation checklists, anecdotal records, portfolios, play-based assessments, and parent-teacher shared documentation is strongly associated with stronger beliefs in their relevance, ease of use, instructional effectiveness, and alignment with standards.

## 5. Discussion

The results confirm that preschool teaching remains a profession dominated by women, which is consistent with recent global findings that early childhood education has a significant connection with women due to persistent gendered expectations around care and teaching (Couse & Recchia, 2022; Taguma et al., 2021). The preponderance of teachers in their forties and older indicates that the sector is primarily sustained by experienced and mid-career educators. This is in line with recent studies that have underscored the stability of older professionals in the face of ongoing challenges such as low entry by younger teachers and turnover (OECD, 2023; Whitebook & Austin, 2021). Austin et al. (2020) and UNESCO (2021) have both noted that the absence of younger teachers may suggest that there are obstacles to recruitment and retention. This is due to the fact that research has shown that new graduates are discouraged from remaining in the field due to constraints such as burden, compensation, and limited career pathways. However, the active involvement of elder educators underscores the benefit of accumulated experience, which enhances their capacity to implement developmentally appropriate tools in classroom settings (Ibrahim et al., 2022). The presence of these demographic patterns indicates that teachers' perspectives and assessment practices are significantly influenced by age and gender. This underscores the necessity of policy frameworks and sustained professional development that promote inclusivity, intergenerational continuity, and equitable opportunities in early childhood education (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021).

Sims and Waniganayake (2020) emphasize that the teaching profession is frequently intertwined with family-oriented responsibilities, particularly in early childhood education, where nurturing and caregiving qualities are highly regarded. This is highlighted by the predominance of married teachers. Ibrahim et al.

(2022) and Goisis et al. (2021) have both suggested that married educators frequently contribute stability and a long-term commitment to the profession by leveraging their family support systems to effectively manage personal and professional obligations. The lower percentage of single teachers may suggest that younger, unmarried individuals are hesitant to pursue long-term careers in early childhood education. This is indicative of broader workforce challenges, including low entry rates and retention difficulties (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). These findings underscore the fact that civil status, while not a determinant of competence, shapes the perspectives and methods of teachers in the implementation of developmentally appropriate assessment tools. This is due to the fact that family contexts can influence both professional outlook and classroom practices (Taguma et al., 2021; Couse & Recchia, 2022).

The results indicate that mid-career educators with over a decade of classroom experience are the primary source of support for preschool education in Cebu. This corresponds with recent research that indicates that experienced educators frequently remain in the field as a result of their professional identity, intrinsic motivation, and accumulated expertise in the application of developmentally appropriate practices (Sims & Waniganayake, 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2022). However, the restricted number of beginner teachers is indicative of the overall challenges faced by the global workforce, as early career educators frequently leave due to inadequate compensation, excessive workloads, and restricted opportunities for advancement (OECD, 2023; UNESCO, 2021). The quality of assessment and instruction in early childhood education is enhanced by the valuable institutional knowledge and pedagogical continuity that long-serving teachers, particularly those beyond 20 years, contribute (Goisis et al., 2021; Whitebook & Austin, 2021). Furthermore, the pressing necessity to recruit and retain younger generations to guarantee the sustainability of the workforce and avert future teacher shortages is emphasized by the prevalence of mid-career educators (Taguma et al., 2021; Couse & Recchia, 2022). This demographic information illustrates that teachers' perspectives regarding the utilization of developmentally appropriate assessment instruments are influenced by their years of teaching experience, in addition to their classroom practices.

The results indicate that all respondents had only completed an undergraduate degree, with no indication of advanced graduate or postgraduate qualifications. This is indicative of a recurring trend in early childhood education, in which a significant number of educators enter the field with inadequate qualifications. This is frequently the result of financial constraints, accessibility concerns, and inadequate incentives for pursuing higher education (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023). Although undergraduate training provides teachers with fundamental pedagogical skills, the absence of graduate-level attainment indicates a potential gap in advanced professional preparation, particularly in early education leadership, curriculum innovation, and assessment frameworks (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Sims & Waniganayake, 2020). Studies underscore the fact that educators who possess advanced qualifications are considerably more inclined to implement evidence-based strategies, implement developmentally appropriate assessment instruments, and engage in reflective practice (Goisis et al., 2021; Couse & Recchia, 2022). However, the extent of innovation and adaptability in assessment practices may be restricted by the exclusive emphasis on college-level preparation.

The effective implementation of developmentally appropriate assessments emphasizes the dedication of educators to relational, play-centered, and authentic approaches to early childhood evaluation. The recent evidence has shown that observational tools and anecdotal documentation provide nuanced, child-centered insights that standardized tests are unable to capture, which is consistent with the high ratings (Montoya-

Fernández et al., 2024). The current scholarship, which advocates for assessments that are embedded in natural learning contexts, emphasizes play-based and performance assessments, which promote cognitive and socio-emotional development (Rebelo et al., 2024). Ashfaq, Sami, and Yousaf (2024) have noted that the substantial engagement in parent–teacher documentation is consistent with emergent research that indicates that meaningful parental collaboration not only enhances assessment but also enhances child learning outcomes. The overall consistency of Cebu preschool teachers' utilization of developmentally appropriate tools to support holistic child development and cultivate strong school–home partnerships is indicative of their effective utilization of these tools. However, minor gaps in updating portfolios suggest areas for refinement.

It is evident that teachers regard developmentally appropriate assessments as essential components of high-quality early childhood education, as evidenced by their overwhelmingly positive perspectives. This comprehensive endorsement of the tools' relevance to the developmental requirements of children is indicative of the global trend toward learner-centered, holistic evaluation, which transcends rote academic testing (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023). The results that teachers find these assessments to be both instructionally valuable and user-friendly are consistent with recent research that emphasizes the necessity of practical tools that not only document progress but also actively inform instructional adjustments (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Couse & Recchia, 2022). Additionally, the alignment of these practices with national and institutional standards reflects the growing demand for accountability in early childhood education, while simultaneously guaranteeing that assessments remain child-centered (Montoya-Fernández et al., 2024; Rebelo et al., 2024). Ashfaq et al. (2024) emphasize that the minimal reservations regarding time efficiency are indicative of a persistent obstacle in early childhood contexts, where educators must reconcile administrative obligations with their nurturing responsibilities. However, the broad consensus indicates that preschool instructors regard developmentally appropriate assessment tools as more than just evaluative instruments; they are also critical frameworks that influence curriculum, instruction, and family-school collaboration.

The moderate negative correlation observed implies a paradox in practice: despite the extensive implementation of developmentally appropriate assessments by teachers, their perspectives on these tools may not always reflect heightened positivity. This could be attributed to the obstacles that educators face in maintaining the practical application of these tools, including the need to balance instructional responsibilities with assessment duties, the documentation workload, and the time demands (Hashim et al., 2021; Kim & Pak, 2022). The relationship's importance suggests that teacher perceptions are not isolated, but rather are influenced by the frequency and intensity of implementation. Recent research has also emphasized comparable findings, demonstrating that educators' perspectives may become more critical when confronted with the realities of implementation, even when they acknowledge the theoretical value of assessment (Rohloff et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2024). However, the outcome emphasizes the necessity of continuous professional development and institutional support to enhance teachers' favorable perceptions and close the disparity between implementation and outlook (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023). Thus, a more sustainable and balanced approach to assessment in early childhood classrooms can be cultivated by enhancing teachers' perceptions through collaborative practices, reduced burden, and adequate resources, while implementation remains resilient.

The results of this study indicate that preschool teachers in Cebu are highly dedicated to the use of developmentally appropriate assessment tools; however, their perspectives are influenced by institutional, experiential, and demographic factors that both promote and restrict their practice. Yet, the profession's dependence on experienced practitioners is underscored by the predominance of female and mid-career educators, which also highlights the difficulties in recruiting younger entrants. In the same vein, despite the fact that teachers consistently employ observation, play-based, portfolio, and parent-shared documentation tools with a high degree of precision, the absence of advanced qualifications and the demands of a heavy workload disclose systemic obstacles to maintaining optimistic perspectives. The moderate negative correlation between perspectives and implementation implies that the extensive use of these tools, despite their effectiveness, may increase teachers' awareness of the burdens associated with their application. However, the research confirms that educators regard developmentally appropriate assessments as essential for fostering family-school collaboration and holistic, child-centered learning, which aligns with global trends toward authentic and inclusive evaluation. To guarantee that early childhood education remains sustainable, equitable, and transformative in practice, it is imperative to implement continuous professional development, supportive policies, and workforce renewal. These insights underscore the pressing need for these measures.

## 6. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that, while preschool teachers in Cebu consistently implement developmentally appropriate assessment tools such as observation checklists, anecdotal records, play-based evaluations, and parent-teacher documentation, their perspectives on these tools do not always reflect heightened positivity. Experienced and mid-career educators sustain the sector, highlighting the strength of accumulated expertise, yet the lack of younger entrants signals ongoing recruitment and retention challenges. Moreover, while teachers recognize the tools as relevant, user-friendly, and aligned with curriculum standards, the realities of heavy documentation, time demands, and limited advanced qualifications constrain their outlook. The moderate negative correlation between implementation and perspectives indicates that extensive use of assessment tools, though effective, often exposes educators to the burdens of application, underscoring the role of institutional and systemic pressures. This suggests that structural and contextual factors—such as workload, career pathways, and access to graduate-level training—play a greater role in shaping perspectives than the inherent pedagogical value of the tools. The results stress the urgent need for supportive policies, continuous professional development, and workforce renewal to close the gap between strong implementation and uneven perceptions. By ensuring that teachers are adequately resourced, mentored, and recognized, developmentally appropriate assessment can evolve from being a demanding classroom requirement into a sustainable framework for authentic, holistic, and collaborative early childhood evaluation. To address these gaps, this study further proposes an action plan designed to strengthen teacher capacity, enhance institutional support, and ensure that the use of developmentally appropriate tools continues to advance quality early childhood education.

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