

Competencies on Classroom-Based Assessment among Non-Early Childhood Education Major Teachers of Labuan District: Basis for Instructional Development Plan

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Abstract

This study examined the classroom-based assessment competencies of non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers in Labuan District as a basis for developing an instructional development plan. It was anchored in Assessment for Learning Theory, Teacher Competence Theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was employed involving 19 non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers. Data were gathered using a researcher-made 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, classroom observation guide, semi-structured interview guide, and focus group discussion guide. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and the Mann-Whitney U test, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. Findings showed an overall classroom-based assessment competence of 4.47, interpreted as High Extent. Educational Assessment obtained the highest rating at 4.65, followed by Progress Monitoring at 4.51, Instructional Decision-Making at 4.49, and Identification of Learners with Special Educational Needs at 4.23. No significant differences in assessment competence were found according to sex, specialization, years in teaching, or related training attended. Qualitative findings showed that teachers used varied and developmentally appropriate assessment strategies, assessment-based differentiated instruction, continuous progress monitoring, and curriculum-aligned practices. However, limited formal preparation in Early Childhood Education, diverse learner needs, time constraints, and classroom management demands posed challenges, particularly in identifying learners with special educational needs. Professional experience, mentoring, collaboration, curriculum alignment, and continuous learning strengthened teachers' competence. The study recommends sustained professional development, coaching, mentoring, Learning Action Cell activities, and training in inclusive and developmentally appropriate assessment. The study supports SDG 4: Quality Education by strengthening teacher competence, inclusive learning, and responsive classroom assessment. Its sustainability impact lies in supporting educational, institutional, social, and policy improvements through continuing teacher development, evidence-based instructional support, and more inclusive assessment practices.

Keywords: Assessment Competence, Classroom-Based Assessment, Early Childhood Education, Educational Assessment, Inclusive Education, Instructional Decision-Making, Kindergarten Teachers, Progress Monitoring

1. Introduction

Early childhood education develops children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical foundations for lifelong learning. Teacher quality is central to this process, particularly because early childhood teachers must provide developmentally appropriate instruction and assessment. Classroom-based assessment allows teachers to observe learning, identify needs, monitor progress, and adjust instruction. However, teacher shortages and out-of-field assignments may place non-ECE-major teachers in kindergarten classrooms without specialized preparation. This study therefore examines the classroom-based assessment competencies of non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers in Labuan District and uses the findings as a basis for an instructional development plan.

Quality education depends greatly on teachers' professional competence. This is consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which promotes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2025). In early childhood education, teacher competence includes pedagogy, classroom management, assessment literacy, professional judgment, and responsiveness to children's developmental needs. Teachers also face changing expectations involving classroom management, critical pedagogy, and learner assessment (UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024). Metsäpelto et al. (2022) emphasized that teacher competence combines cognitive, social, professional, and context-dependent skills. Classroom-based assessment is especially important in early childhood because children demonstrate learning through play, interaction, observation, and performance. Teachers must therefore be capable of planning, implementing, interpreting, and using assessments to improve instruction. However, many teachers still experience difficulties with assessment literacy and formative assessment practices (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022). Globally, teacher shortages remain significant, with UNESCO (2024) estimating that 44 million additional teachers are needed by 2030. In the Philippines, qualification requirements emphasize appropriate preparation in Early Childhood Education and related fields (Department of Education, 2024). Wasi and Saeed (2024) further identified differences in the pedagogical and classroom practices of teachers with and without formal ECCE preparation.

Teacher specialization, years of service, training, and school assignment may influence classroom-based assessment competence. Teachers assigned within their fields of preparation generally demonstrate stronger confidence, pedagogy, and assessment practices (Roxas, 2022; Co et al., 2022). Experience may improve professional judgment, but it does not automatically ensure assessment competence without continuing professional development (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022). Professional development has been associated with improved early childhood classroom practices and learner outcomes (Yang et al., 2022). Likewise, Yang et al. (2022) showed that structured professional learning can strengthen teachers' knowledge and instructional practices. Assessment literacy involves not only understanding assessment principles but also ethically using assessment evidence to improve teaching and learning (UNESCO & Operti, 2022). In early childhood settings, assessment relies heavily on observation, documentation, and interpretation of children's performance (NAEYC, 2022). Teachers must use evidence for instructional decision-making (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022), apply developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive assessment practices (NAEYC, 2022; Moses, 2023), and recognize learners who may require additional educational support (Husain et al., 2022; Stein & Steed, 2024). Progress monitoring is equally important because it enables teachers to track development and make timely instructional adjustments (Yan & Chiu, 2023). International literature further associates assessment competence with professional preparation and continuing learning opportunities (Metsäpelto et al., 2022; Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022). However, time constraints, large classes, workload, and inadequate institutional support can limit teachers' use of assessment evidence (Obée et al., 2023). Yang et al. (2022) showed that combining coursework with classroom coaching can help teachers apply professional learning in actual practice. Assessment competence also includes ethical and social responsibilities (UNESCO & Operti, 2022), although differences in its conceptualization and measurement remain evident (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022). Effective teacher assessment is particularly important for inclusive practice and early identification (Stein & Steed, 2024). (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022) also noted that teachers may understand assessment principles but still experience difficulty analyzing and applying assessment data systematically.

Internationally, teacher preparation and professional learning influence teachers' confidence and competence in classroom assessment. In the Philippines, classroom-based assessment is formally integrated into the K to 12 Basic Education Program and emphasizes formative, learner-centered assessment (Department of Education, 2023). Variera and Yun (2023) similarly highlighted the importance of using formative assessment data to identify learner needs and guide instruction. Teacher shortages have also resulted in some Filipino teachers being assigned outside their areas of specialization (Philippine Star, 2024). Such assignments may affect pedagogy and assessment competence (Roxas, 2022; Co et al., 2022). Villano-Ac (2024) and Hobbs & Porsch (2022) reported

challenges related to self-efficacy, workload, and out-of-field teaching. Similar concerns were identified by Castro, Asignado, and Recede (2023) and Beley R. October (2023), emphasizing the importance of appropriate training and professional support. Kindergarten teachers also experience challenges involving learner diversity, assessment demands, and classroom management (Lucero, 2023). Assessment enables teachers to monitor children's development and identify those who may require additional assistance (Variera and Yun (2023). In Labuan District, localized evidence is therefore needed to determine the actual classroom-based assessment competencies of non-ECE-major teachers and identify appropriate forms of professional support. Mazhar and Sylva (2025) further emphasized that professional development should be responsive to teachers' actual classroom needs.

The study is anchored in Assessment for Learning Theory, Teacher Competence Theory, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, and Constructivist Learning Theory. Assessment for Learning Theory views assessment as part of the teaching and learning process. Pastore (2023) emphasized using assessment evidence to adjust instruction and provide feedback, while (Pastore, 2023; Yan & Pastore, 2022) linked assessment literacy with effective instructional decision-making. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains how classroom, school, community, and policy environments influence teaching practices (Tong & An, 2024). Teacher competence may therefore be affected by school assignment, workload, training opportunities, and institutional support. Constructivist Learning Theory views learning as an active process shaped by experience and social interaction (Veraksa & Pramling Samuelsson, 2022). In early childhood education, assessment should therefore reflect children's play, interaction, behaviors, and authentic experiences while supporting developmentally appropriate learning (NAEYC, 2022). Conceptually, the study examines teachers' specialization, years of service, relevant training, and school assignment in relation to competence in instructional decision-making, educational assessment, identification of learners with special educational needs, and progress monitoring. The findings are intended to guide a context-responsive instructional development plan.

Although teacher competence and assessment literacy have been widely studied, limited evidence focuses specifically on the classroom-based assessment competencies of non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers in localized Philippine settings. Existing studies commonly address general teacher competence, assessment practices, or out-of-field teaching, but fewer examine specific assessment domains among non-ECE teachers in Labuan District. The study therefore addresses the need for localized evidence on teachers' professional profiles, classroom assessment competencies, actual practices, challenges, and strategies. The teacher-participants were considered capable of providing relevant information based on their teaching experiences (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). Findings may provide a basis for targeted professional development and instructional improvement in Labuan District.

The study directly supports SDG 4 - Quality Education by emphasizing teacher competence, inclusive learning, and developmentally appropriate assessment. Strengthening classroom-based assessment among non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers may improve instructional decision-making, learner monitoring, and early identification of educational needs. It also supports efforts to strengthen teacher capacity as part of sustainable quality education.

The study contributes primarily to educational, institutional, social, and policy sustainability. Educationally, improved assessment competence can support responsive and developmentally appropriate teaching. Institutionally, the findings may guide professional development, mentoring, supervision, and resource allocation. From a policy perspective, evidence on teacher specialization and assessment competence may support decisions concerning teacher deployment and training. Socially, stronger assessment practices may promote inclusive learning by helping teachers identify learner needs, monitor progress, and provide appropriate instructional support.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-method design. The quantitative phase first determined the respondents' profiles and classroom-based assessment competence in instructional decision-making, educational assessment, identification of learners with special educational needs, and progress monitoring. The qualitative phase then used semi-structured interviews and other qualitative evidence to explain and provide deeper context to the quantitative findings. Integration of both phases provided the basis for developing an instructional development plan for early childhood education teachers in Labuan District.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Labuan District, one of the twelve districts under the Schools Division of Zamboanga City. Located on the west coast of Zamboanga City, the district had nineteen public elementary schools. Data collection focused on selected public elementary schools offering kindergarten programs to ensure relevance to the study context and accessibility of respondents.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were 19 non-ECE-major teachers teaching kindergarten classes in public elementary schools in Labuan District. For the qualitative phase, selected non-ECE-major teachers participated by sharing their experiences to provide deeper explanations of the quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the qualitative phase. Eligible participants were currently teaching kindergarten or preschool in a public elementary school in Labuan District, had no formal specialization in Early Childhood Education, had at least one year of teaching experience in an early childhood classroom, and voluntarily agreed to participate. Teachers were excluded if they were not currently teaching kindergarten, worked outside the identified public schools, possessed a formal ECE specialization or degree, had less than one year of relevant teaching experience, did not provide informed consent, or were unavailable during data collection. Purposive sampling was appropriate because the qualitative phase required participants who could provide rich and relevant experiences to explain the quantitative findings.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used a researcher-made 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, classroom observation guide, semi-structured interview guide, and focus group discussion guide. The qualitative tools explored teachers' experiences in instructional decision-making, classroom-based assessment, identification of learners with special educational needs, progress monitoring, challenges, and strategies. These instruments provided additional context to the quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The instruments were developed from relevant literature and the objectives of the study and were evaluated for clarity, relevance, validity, and appropriateness. Validation was conducted by three doctorate degree holders consisting of one Master Teacher, one panel member, and the thesis adviser. Recommendations from the validators were incorporated into the instruments. The quantitative questionnaire was pilot-tested and obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91, indicating excellent internal consistency. Credibility was further strengthened through data triangulation, member checking, consistent procedures, and data collection under natural classroom conditions.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Before data collection, the researcher obtained approval from the Schools Division Office and permission from the school heads or principals. The survey questionnaire was administered face-to-face at convenient times, with clear instructions and sufficient time provided for completion. Accomplished questionnaires were collected immediately. Classroom observations were conducted under natural conditions to document assessment practices related to instructional decision-making, educational assessment, identification and referral of learners with special educational needs, and progress monitoring. Selected non-ECE-major teachers subsequently participated in a focus group discussion about their experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in classroom-based assessment. The discussion was conducted in a neutral setting, audio-recorded with permission, and lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Collected data were then organized, secured, and prepared for quantitative and qualitative analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed before the qualitative findings in accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed-method design. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe respondents according to sex, educational field of specialization, years in teaching, and related trainings attended. Mean scores were computed to determine competence in instructional decision-making, educational assessment, identification of learners with special educational needs, and progress monitoring. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine significant differences in classroom-based assessment competence according to profile variables because of the small sample size of 19 respondents and unequal group distributions. The profile categories included specialization, grouped as BEEd General Education and other non-ECE specializations; years in teaching, grouped as 2-10 years and 11 years and above; and related trainings attended, grouped as none and one training. The level of significance was set at 0.05. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, categorized, and synthesized through thematic analysis to identify teachers' actual classroom-based assessment practices and challenges. The qualitative findings were used to contextualize and enrich the interpretation of the quantitative results and contribute to the proposed instructional development plan.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without negative consequences. Written informed consent explaining the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study was obtained before data collection. Ethical clearance was secured from the Research Ethics Committee (RECS), followed by permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and the participating schools. In accordance with Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012), personal and identifying information was treated confidentially. Pseudonyms or codes were used in transcripts, field notes, and reports, while digital records were

password-protected and accessible only to the researcher. Research records were securely retained and subsequently disposed of according to institutional policies to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Profile of Non-ECE-Major Kindergarten Teachers

The 19 respondents were predominantly female, accounting for 78.9%, while 21.1% were male. Most were graduates of BEd General Education at 73.7%, while the remaining respondents specialized in Araling Panlipunan, HEKASI, Science, or Mathematics. Teaching experience ranged from 2 to 35 years. Regarding assessment-related professional development, 52.6% had attended one related training, while 47.4% had attended none. The findings indicate that most respondents were assigned to kindergarten despite having no formal specialization in Early Childhood Education and having limited assessment-related training. The UNESCO (2023) emphasized that teacher preparation and continuous professional development influence the quality of classroom assessment practices. Similarly, OECD (2023) found that continuous professional learning strengthens teachers' confidence in authentic and learner-centered assessment.

3.2 Classroom-Based Assessment Competence

3.2.1 Instructional Decision-Making

The respondents demonstrated a High Extent of competence in instructional decision-making, with a grand mean of 4.49. Evaluating instructional strategies based on assessment results obtained the highest mean of 4.58, followed by modifying instructional approaches using assessment scores at 4.53. Using observed learner performance or progress as a basis for instructional decisions received the lowest mean of 4.37, but remained within the High Extent category. The results show that respondents generally used assessment evidence to adjust instruction and identify appropriate teaching strategies. This agrees with Black and Wiliam (2021), who emphasized the use of assessment evidence in modifying instruction, and Yan & Chiu (2023), who explained that purposeful collection and analysis of learning evidence support instructional decisions. The comparatively lower rating for using observed performance suggests an area for further development, particularly because specialized knowledge of child development may be needed. UNESCO (2023) similarly emphasized the need for professional support among teachers working outside their expertise, while OECD (2023) highlighted continued professional learning in strengthening assessment literacy. The findings also support Yang et al. (2022), who stated that competence develops through sustained professional learning, reflective practice, and authentic classroom experience.

3.2.2 Educational Assessment

Educational Assessment obtained the highest competency rating, with a grand mean of 4.65 or Very High Extent. Using appropriate assessment tools for kindergarten learners received the highest mean of 4.79, followed by selecting suitable and quality assessment tools at 4.68. Developing assessments aligned with lessons received the lowest mean of 4.47, although it remained within the High Extent category. The findings indicate that the respondents were highly capable of selecting and applying classroom assessment tools despite lacking formal ECE specialization. This supports McAfee, Leong, and Bodrova (2022), who emphasized authentic and continuous assessment of children's development, and NAEYC (2022), which stressed developmentally appropriate and purposeful assessment integrated with daily instruction. The findings also support Yang et al. (2022), who explained that competence develops through continuous professional learning and experience. OECD (2023) likewise emphasized that effective assessment enables teachers to monitor learners and improve instructional decisions. However, the relatively lower rating for constructing lesson-aligned assessments suggests the need for continued professional development.

3.2.3 Identification of Learners with Special Educational Needs

Competence in identifying learners with special educational needs obtained a grand mean of 4.23, interpreted as High Extent. Documenting assessment results for learners needing additional support received the highest mean of 4.42, followed by following systematic assessment procedures at 4.21. Identifying early signs of learning or developmental difficulties obtained the lowest mean of 4.05. This domain had the lowest overall rating among the four competency areas. The comparatively lower result suggests that identifying developmental difficulties may require more specialized knowledge of child development and inclusive assessment. Stein & Steed (2024) emphasized the importance of early identification for timely intervention, while UNESCO (2023) highlighted specialized knowledge and continuous capacity-building for addressing diverse learner needs. OECD (2023) likewise associated assessment literacy with teachers' ability to respond equitably to learner differences. Kurbatfinski et al. (2024) further stressed that early identification improves opportunities for appropriate intervention, while UNESCO (2023) emphasized continuous professional development for effective inclusive practice.

3.2.4 Progress Monitoring

The respondents demonstrated a Very High Extent of competence in progress monitoring, with a grand mean of 4.51. Regularly tracking learners' progress through classroom assessment obtained the highest mean of 4.58. Using progress data for instructional planning and interpreting records, portfolios, and other progress information both obtained means of 4.47. The findings indicate that progress monitoring was regularly incorporated into classroom instruction. Yan & Chiu (2023) emphasized that continuous monitoring is an important component of formative assessment because it allows teachers to adjust instruction using evidence of learning. Similarly, McAfee, Leong, and Bodrova (2022) noted the importance of systematic observation and continuous assessment in documenting young children's development. OECD (2023) also reported that regular monitoring supports evidence-based instructional decisions and improved learning outcomes.

3.2.5 Overall Classroom-Based Assessment Competence

Across the four domains, the respondents obtained an overall grand mean of 4.47, interpreted as High Extent. Educational Assessment ranked highest at 4.65, followed by Progress Monitoring at 4.51, Instructional Decision-Making at 4.49, and Identification of Learners with Special Educational Needs at 4.23. The results indicate that non-ECE-major teachers generally demonstrated strong classroom-based assessment competence despite their lack of formal ECE specialization. However, the lower rating for identifying learners with special educational needs indicates a need for greater support in inclusive and developmental assessment. This supports Yang et al. (2022), who emphasized continuous professional learning in developing teacher competence, and OECD (2023), which highlighted assessment literacy as essential to effective instructional decision-making.

3.3 Differences in Assessment Competence According to Profile Variables

The Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant differences in classroom-based assessment competence according to sex, specialization, years in teaching, or related training attended. Sex produced $U = 27.00$ and $p = 0.810$, specialization produced $U = 34.00$ and $p = 0.964$, years in teaching produced $U = 41.50$ and $p = 0.842$, and related training attended produced $U = 45.00$ and $p = 1.000$. Since all p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was not rejected. These findings indicate that respondents generally demonstrated similar levels of classroom-based assessment competence regardless of their profile characteristics. Their competence may have developed through shared classroom experiences, collaboration, school-based support, and actual involvement in kindergarten assessment practices. However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because of the small sample size and unequal group distributions.

3.4 Classroom-Based Assessment Practices of Non-ECE Teachers

3.4.1 Use of Multiple and Developmentally Appropriate Assessment Strategies

Fifteen of the 19 participants reported using varied assessment strategies, including observation, oral questioning, worksheets, performance tasks, portfolios, anecdotal records, play-based activities, and checklists. These practices showed that assessment was integrated into daily classroom activities and was not limited to written examinations. The findings indicate that participants viewed assessment as a continuous and child-centered process. This is consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2022), which supports authentic, observation-based, and play-centered assessment. Similarly, McAfee, Leong and Bodrova (2022) emphasized that portfolios, observations, anecdotal records, and performance tasks provide richer evidence of children's development than traditional written assessments.

3.4.2 Assessment as a Basis for Differentiated Instruction

Sixteen of the 19 participants reported using assessment results to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and modify instruction accordingly. Common practices included reteaching difficult concepts, providing individualized assistance, and preparing different learning activities according to learner performance. The findings show that assessment served as a basis for responsive and differentiated instruction. Tomlinson and Imbeau (2022) emphasized that differentiation begins with accurate assessment of learners' readiness, interests and learning profiles. OECD (2023) similarly reported that effective use of assessment evidence enables teachers to personalize instruction, increase learner engagement and improve educational outcomes.

3.4.3 Assessment for Monitoring Learner Progress

Seventeen of the 19 participants described assessment as an ongoing process for monitoring development, determining whether learning competencies had been achieved, documenting growth, and communicating progress to parents. Assessment information was also used to determine whether lessons needed to be revisited or continued. The results indicate that teachers considered formative assessment an integral component of instruction rather than merely a basis for grading. The results confirm the Yan & Chiu (2023), who argues that formative assessment provides continuous feedback that allows teachers to adjust instruction. At the same time, McAfee et al. (2022) state that continuous observation and record keeping provide important information about children's development.

3.4.4 Alignment with Curriculum and Assessment Standards

Fourteen of the 19 participants reported aligning their assessment activities with the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide, lesson plans, prescribed competencies, and DepEd assessment guidelines. These documents were used to ensure that assessment activities reflected intended learning outcomes and national educational standards. The findings indicate that curriculum documents helped non-ECE-major teachers maintain coherence between instruction, learning outcomes, and assessment. The findings are in support of the DepEd MATATAG Curriculum Framework (2023) that assessment should be directly aligned with intended learning outcomes and children's holistic development.

3.5 Challenges and Strategies in Classroom-Based Assessment

3.5.1 Limited Preparation in Early Childhood Assessment

Fifteen of the 19 participants reported limited formal preparation in Early Childhood Education. They experienced difficulty selecting developmentally appropriate assessment strategies and indicated that much of their assessment knowledge was acquired through classroom experience, mentoring, seminars, and professional development rather than formal ECE preparation. The results highlight the importance of specialized preparation in assessing young children. According to UNESCO (2023), teacher specialization strengthens teaching and assessment quality by providing competencies appropriate to children's developmental characteristics. The findings therefore indicate a continued need for professional learning among non-ECE teachers.

3.5.2 Diverse Learner Needs

Seventeen of the 19 participants identified differences in children's developmental abilities, learning styles, communication skills, and readiness as major assessment challenges. Teachers responded by modifying assessment activities and using different approaches to allow learners to demonstrate learning according to their developmental levels. The findings demonstrate the complexity of assessing young learners in diverse classrooms. According to Stein & Steed (2024), developmentally appropriate assessment should recognize different developmental pathways and provide multiple opportunities for children to demonstrate learning. Flexible assessment practices are therefore necessary for fair and meaningful evaluation.

3.5.3 Time and Classroom Management Constraints

Fourteen of the 19 participants reported difficulty balancing classroom instruction, learner observation, documentation, and classroom management. Simultaneously teaching, monitoring individual learners, recording assessment results, and managing classroom routines reduced the time available for complete assessment documentation. The findings indicate that effective classroom-based assessment requires adequate time, organization, and institutional support. These findings are in line with the OECD (2023) which identified teacher workload, documentation requirements and limited instructional time as barriers to effective classroom-based assessment.

3.5.4 Continuous Learning, Collaboration, and Instructional Modification

Eighteen of the 19 participants identified continuous learning, collaboration, and instructional modification as their primary strategies for addressing assessment challenges. They sought assistance from experienced kindergarten teachers, attended seminars and Learning Action Cell sessions, collaborated with colleagues, and modified instruction according to assessment results. The findings indicate that professional collaboration and continuing development helped respondents strengthen their assessment competence despite the absence of formal ECE specialization. This finding aligns with Yang et al. (2022) conclusion that collaborative professional learning, mentoring and continuous professional development greatly enhance teachers' instructional competence and assessment literacy.

3.6 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings showed strong convergence. Quantitatively, respondents obtained an overall grand mean of 4.47 or High Extent. Educational Assessment received the highest rating at 4.65, supported qualitatively by 15 participants who reported using multiple developmentally appropriate assessment strategies. Progress Monitoring obtained 4.51, consistent with 17 participants describing continuous monitoring practices. Instructional Decision-Making obtained 4.49, supported by 16 participants who used assessment results to modify instruction. Identification of Learners with Special Educational Needs received the lowest rating at 4.23, while qualitative findings revealed limited formal ECE preparation and difficulties addressing diverse developmental needs. The integration of findings indicates that non-ECE-major teachers had developed generally effective classroom-based assessment practices through classroom experience, curriculum alignment, collaboration, mentoring, and continuous professional learning. However, specialized areas, particularly developmental screening, inclusive assessment, and identification of learners with special educational needs, require further capacity-building. The findings therefore support the development of focused professional learning interventions that strengthen developmentally appropriate and inclusive classroom-based assessment among non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that non-ECE-major kindergarten teachers demonstrated high competence in classroom-based assessment, particularly in educational assessment and progress monitoring, and effectively integrated developmentally appropriate, learner-centered assessment into instruction. They used assessment to differentiate teaching, monitor learner progress, and align classroom practices with prescribed competencies. However, limited formal preparation in Early Childhood Education, diverse learner needs, time constraints, and classroom management demands created difficulties, particularly in identifying learners with special educational needs. Their competence was strengthened through professional experience, curriculum alignment, mentoring, collaboration, continuous learning, and reflective practice.

The Department of Education, division and district officials, school administrators, and other concerned stakeholders should provide sustained professional development, coaching, mentoring, Learning Action Cell activities, and training focused on developmentally appropriate assessment, assessment literacy, inclusive education, developmental screening, progress monitoring, and instructional decision-making. Teachers should continue participating in professional learning opportunities and using varied assessment strategies, while curriculum and assessment developers should improve practical and user-friendly assessment resources aligned with the Kindergarten Curriculum Guide. Future researchers should examine similar concerns using larger samples, additional school divisions, intervention programs, and comparative or longitudinal approaches.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The study was conducted with due consideration of established ethical principles governing voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and responsible management of research data. Appropriate institutional permissions and ethical clearance were obtained prior to data collection, and measures were implemented to protect the rights and welfare of the participants throughout the research process.

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