

Evaluating the Efficacy of Performance-Based Assessments for Kindergarten Teachers

Maochilin A. Palcone

Publication Date: 2025/09/25

Abstract: This phenomenological study examined the effectiveness of performance-based assessments from the perspectives of kindergarten teachers. It focused on the factors that shape their implementation and acceptance, as well as the coping strategies teachers employ when facing challenges. Using a qualitative design, in-depth interviews were conducted to capture rich narratives of teachers' lived experiences. Thematic analysis revealed two main challenges: Understanding Developmental Appropriateness and Addressing Individual Differences. The latter further branched into two subthemes: Language and Communication and Motor Skills and Coordination, reflecting the natural variations in children's readiness levels and learning progress. To manage these challenges, teachers relied on coping strategies such as Peer Collaboration and Technology Integration. From these experiences, valuable educational management insights emerged. Teachers emphasized the need for Developmentally Appropriate Training to strengthen their assessment practices and highlighted the importance of Collaborative Assessment Design to ensure inclusivity and fairness. Overall, this study aimed to enhance the effectiveness of performance-based assessments by grounding them in teachers' lived experiences. The insights not only address existing challenges but also provide practical guidance for improving assessment practices in early childhood education, underscoring the importance of systems that are responsive to young learners' developmental needs.

Keywords: *Evaluating The Efficacy, Performance-Based Assessments, Kindergarten Teachers.*

How to Cite: Maochilin A. Palcone (2025) Evaluating the Efficacy of Performance-Based Assessments for Kindergarten Teachers. *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 10(9), 1454-1456.
<https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25sep887>

I. INTRODUCTION

Kindergarten marks the beginning of formal education and serves as a crucial stage in shaping young learners. It is during this period that children develop fundamental skills and officially embark on their lifelong journey of learning. At the center of this process are kindergarten teachers, who carry the responsibility of guiding children into becoming curious, imaginative, and knowledgeable individuals. For years, educators and policymakers have explored different ways to evaluate and strengthen the competence of these teachers. Traditional approaches, such as standardized testing and classroom observations, have often proven insufficient in capturing the full complexity of teaching young children. To respond to these limitations, performance-based assessments have been introduced as a more effective method, emphasizing how teachers apply their skills and knowledge in real classroom settings.

On a global scale, performance-based assessments (PBAs) are increasingly recognized as a more genuine and holistic way of evaluating learners compared to conventional tests. In countries like the United States, PBAs have gained ground, especially in early childhood education. These assessments, sometimes called authentic, naturalistic, observation-based, or work sampling assessments, require teachers to observe and document children's growth and

abilities over time in natural classroom situations. Policymakers and schools across different nations have acknowledged that standardized exams often fall short in measuring higher-order thinking and practical problem-solving skills. As a result, there is a growing movement toward adopting PBAs to encourage creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration among students.

In Ghana, Gyamfi, et.al. (2023) emphasized that Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) is one of the modern approaches to evaluation now being strongly promoted by assessment experts. The reason behind this is its ability to close the gap between knowledge and application. Unlike traditional assessments that often limit students to choosing predetermined answers, PBAs encourage learners to apply what they have learned in addressing real-life problems. This approach not only enhances creativity but also allows students to think critically in generating practical solutions.

In the Philippines, higher education institutions are likewise embracing performance-based assessments, such as portfolios, presentations, and active participation. This transition is part of ongoing reforms aimed at aligning teaching methods with the competencies required in the 21st century. According to Evardo (2023), Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) has recently been integrated into the national curriculum as a framework for improving teaching

and learning. Its central goal is to produce graduates who are globally competitive and equipped to meet both international academic benchmarks and labor market demands.

In Davao City, particularly within the Talomo district, kindergarten teachers implement PBAs that are closely aligned with the Department of Education (DepEd) learning standards. The purpose of this study is to add to the growing conversation on effective teacher assessment practices in early childhood education. By carefully examining the effectiveness of PBAs, the research seeks to generate insights that can support policy reforms, guide professional development, and highlight best practices that would benefit kindergarten educators.

II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenology, to explore the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in relation to performance-based assessments. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with teachers who had direct experience in adopting and implementing such assessments within their professional practice. The gathered responses were thoroughly analyzed to identify recurring words, phrases, and patterns, which were then organized into clusters of meaning to construct a shared understanding of how teachers perceive and experience performance-based evaluations.

The participants of this study consisted of eight (8) kindergarten teachers from the Talomo District, Davao City. All had taught kindergarten during the school year 2022–2023 and had a minimum of three years of teaching experience. Selection was based on their professional background and direct involvement with performance-based assessments, without regard to age, sex, or marital status. Since the research involved kindergarten teachers sharing their professional experiences with performance-based assessments, steps were taken to ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality.

Participants' anonymity was protected by omitting personal identifiers and using pseudonyms or codes in reporting. The researcher also explained the study's purpose clearly and emphasized that participants could withdraw at any stage without penalty. These measures fostered trust, minimized risks, and ensured that the research adhered to recognized standards of responsible qualitative inquiry. In qualitative research, smaller sample sizes are common since the aim is not statistical generalization but rather the collection of rich, meaningful insights. The number of participants was deemed sufficient to reach data saturation, as no new themes or significant information emerged despite additional data collection.

The primary tool for data collection was the in-depth interview, designed to gather detailed accounts of kindergarten teachers' experiences with performance-based assessments. This method allowed participants to share their perspectives, reflections, and challenges in a flexible yet structured format, encouraging authentic narratives. The use of in-depth interviews aligned well with the

phenomenological approach, as it enabled the researcher to uncover the lived experiences and deeper meanings underlying teachers' responses.

The analysis followed the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006), who describe thematic analysis as a flexible yet rigorous method for identifying patterns within qualitative data. Their model was particularly suited to this study because it allows themes to emerge directly from participants' accounts while still providing a systematic process for organizing and interpreting the data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the answers to the research questions based on the responses of the participants. The findings highlight the lived experiences of kindergarten teachers in evaluating the efficacy of performance-based assessments. From the interviews with the participating kindergarten teachers, two major themes were identified: Understanding Developmental Appropriateness and Individual Differences. In addition, two subthemes emerged under the challenges experienced by the teachers, namely: Language and Communication Skills and Motor Skills and Coordination. These themes and subthemes capture the complexities of assessing young learners and provide a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive the efficacy of performance-based assessments in the kindergarten context.

➤ *Understanding Developmental Appropriateness*

Participants raised concerns about the difficulty of balancing the cognitive demands of performance-based tasks with the developmental capacities of young learners. They pointed out the challenge of avoiding assignments that are too advanced, as these could overwhelm children and negatively affect their self-confidence. Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) argued that developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education not only enhance learning outcomes but also reduce anxiety among young learners during assessments. Such practices are grounded in tailoring instruction and evaluation to children's age, needs, and developmental stages.

➤ *Individual Differences*

The responses underscore the importance of recognizing and adapting to individual differences among kindergarten learners. They pointed out challenges linked to uneven development in language and motor skills, which directly influenced children's performance and assessment outcomes. Raranta and Tando (2022) highlighted that effective educators must understand the unique qualities and characteristics of each pupil and apply this understanding in the learning process. By doing so, teachers can tailor their approaches to address learners' differences in ways that are accessible and meaningful. Wahyuni et al. (2021) further explained that individual differences arise from both hereditary and environmental factors, leading to diverse learning styles. Hence, teachers are expected to recognize and accommodate these differences to foster equitable learning opportunities.

Meanwhile, teachers cope with the challenges in implementing performance-based assessments. From the narratives gathered in this phenomenological study, key themes were Peer Collaboration and Technology Integration.:

➤ *Peer Collaboration*

One of the primary coping strategies identified was collaboration with peers. Teachers relied on their colleagues to exchange ideas, resources, and strategies related to performance-based assessments. This collective effort enabled them to pool their diverse expertise and experiences, leading to more innovative and practical solutions to classroom challenges. The responses of the participants highlight the collaborative and beneficial aspects of working within a team environment in an educational setting. Scholarly literature supports these insights. Nasir and Mydin (2023) argued that cooperation among educators significantly improves the quality of instruction, enabling teachers to create more productive learning environments and contribute meaningfully to student development.

➤ *Technology Integration*

The integration of technology into the design and implementation of performance-based assessments significantly enhances both their effectiveness and efficiency. Digital tools such as e-portfolios, online rubrics, and assessment management systems provide teachers with practical means to monitor student progress, deliver timely and constructive feedback, and ensure fair and consistent grading practices. The integration of digital tools within educational settings has transformed teaching and learning practices in significant ways. Research supports these findings. Turner, Hicks, and Zucker (2020) demonstrated that technology integration in assessment practices significantly increases student engagement and motivation, particularly in performance-based tasks. Their study found that digital tools, such as interactive software and online platforms, not only made assessments more engaging but also improved students' motivation to participate and perform.

Furthermore, this study explored the insights and lessons learned by kindergarten teachers in evaluating the effectiveness of performance-based assessments. These reflections emphasize the value of specialized training and collaborative practices in strengthening assessment approaches in early childhood education. One key lesson drawn from teachers' experiences is the importance of targeted training that focuses on developmentally appropriate practices. Another key insight drawn from the participants' experiences is the value of collaborative approaches in designing and implementing performance-based assessments in kindergarten settings.

Overall, the findings also carry strong theoretical implications. In line with Jean Piaget's (1970) theory of cognitive development, the results emphasize the importance of tailoring assessments to children's developmental stages. Since kindergarten learners are in the preoperational stage, they benefit most from hands-on, meaningful tasks that foster symbolic play, language, and problem-solving. Similarly, the study resonates with Lev Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural

theory, particularly his emphasis on social interaction, scaffolding, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The reliance on peer collaboration and the use of technology reflect the ways in which both teachers and students benefit from shared expertise and scaffolded support. Performance-based assessments, therefore, not only measure individual abilities but also encourage cooperative learning, communication, and social interaction.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- [2]. Brown, C., & Poortman, C. (Eds.). (2018). *Networks for learning: Effective collaboration for teacher, school and system improvement*. Routledge
- [3]. Evardo, M. (2023) Outcomes-Based Education Implementation: Knowledge, Skills and Academic Performance. *Eur. Chem. Bull.* 12 (7) 6244-6250. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/378302702_Outcomes-Based_Education_Implementation_Knowledge_Skills_and_Academic_Performance
- [4]. Gyamfi, A., Langee, P., Yeboah, A. & Aboagye Adu, I. (2023). Performance-Based Assessment in Contemporary Classroom Assessment: The Forms and Nature. *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences*, 19(4), 1-7. <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2023/v19i4431>
- [5]. Nasir, M. & Mydin, A. (2023). The influence of teacher collaboration on the teaching effectiveness in the Maldives. *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development*, 8(56). Retrieved from <https://academicinspired.com/jised/article/view/1741>
- [6]. Piaget, J. (1970). Piaget's Theory (G. Gellerier & J. Langer, Trans.). In: P.H. Mussen (Ed.), *Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology* (3rd Edition, Vol. 1). New York: Wiley.
- [7]. Raranta, J.E., & Tando, D. (2022) Educator Strategies for Addressing Individual Differences in the Learning Process. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*. 5(4) 29622-29632. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v5i4.7114>
- [8]. Turner, K. H., Hicks, T., & Zucker, L. (2020). Connected reading: A framework for understanding how adolescents encounter, evaluate, and engage with texts in the digital age. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 55(2), 291-309.
- [9]. Wahyuni, H. D., Nura, S. A., & Magdalena, I. (2021). "Individual Differences in Students in the Elementary School Environment." *Progres Pendidikan*, vol. 2, no. 3, 24 Sep. 2021, pp. 159-164, doi:10.29303/prospek.v2i3.151.
- [10]. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.