



Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Early Childhood Education Assessment in Langsa City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze teachers' perceptions of the implementation of assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Langsa City. The research focuses on teachers' understanding of assessment, the objectives of conducting assessments, the techniques used, the alignment of assessments with children's characteristics, the utilization of assessment results, the extent of training attended, the challenges faced, institutional support, methods of documenting assessment results, and efforts to improve assessment practices in ECE. This study employed a qualitative approach, involving three teachers in Langsa City as respondents. Data were collected through open-ended questionnaires and analyzed descriptively, complemented with tables and graphs to visualize the findings. The results indicate that most teachers perceive assessment as a process of gathering information and evaluating children's development holistically to support the learning process. The most frequently used assessment techniques were observation, anecdotal records, interviews with children, and communication with parents. Teachers sought to align assessments with children's characteristics through direct observation, positive interactions, and targeted questioning. Assessment results were used to adapt learning materials, design activities, and identify children's strengths and weaknesses. However, most teachers reported insufficient training on assessment. Challenges encountered included limited time, resources, learning media, and supporting technology. Nevertheless, educational institutions were considered to provide support through supervision, provision of media, and facilities.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a fundamental and strategic stage in establishing a comprehensive foundation for a child's development, encompassing cognitive, socio-emotional, language, motor, and moral aspects. In the ECE learning process, assessment plays a crucial role, not only in identifying the developmental achievements of children but also as a basis for designing learning experiences that meet each child's individual needs (Kemendikbud, 2020). Ideally, assessment in ECE should be conducted holistically, continuously, and contextually, in accordance with the characteristics of young children. The assessment instruments used should be authentic, such as direct observation, anecdotal records, portfolios, and documentation of children's work.

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However, in practice, the implementation of assessment is often suboptimal. Some teachers tend to have a limited understanding of assessment, perceiving it merely as an administrative task or a formality for reporting children's development (Suparno, 2022).

In Langsa City, as one of the regions continuously developing its ECE services, the implementation of assessment by teachers has become an important focus in improving the quality of early childhood education. Teachers' perceptions of assessment largely determine how assessments are carried out in practice. Teachers with positive perceptions and a good understanding of assessment are more likely to implement assessments accurately and meaningfully, which directly impacts the development of children's potential. Nevertheless, there have been few studies specifically examining the perceptions of ECE teachers in Langsa City regarding the implementation of assessment. Therefore, this study is important to explore how teachers understand, evaluate, and implement assessment in daily learning activities. The objectives of this study are to analyze the perceptions of ECE teachers in Langsa City toward assessment implementation, to identify the assessment techniques used by teachers in learning practices, and to describe the challenges faced by teachers in conducting assessments in the field. By understanding teachers' perceptions, it is expected that a more comprehensive picture of current assessment practices can be obtained, serving as a basis for developing strategies to enhance teachers' capacity and strengthen the assessment system in ECE.

1.2 Literature Review

Teacher's Perceptions

Perception is an internal process that enables individuals to understand and interpret their surrounding environment based on experiences and stimuli received through the senses. In the context of education, teachers' perceptions refer to their views, understanding, and interpretations of the learning process or educational components, such as assessment. According to Robbins (2015), perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment. Similarly, Gibson et al. (2012) explain that perception is influenced by a person's background, experiences, and knowledge. In this regard, teachers' perceptions of assessment are shaped by their formal education, training, and teaching experience in early childhood education.

Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the process of systematically collecting and analyzing information to gain a comprehensive understanding of children's development. Assessment is used not only to measure learning outcomes but also to provide insights into children's learning processes and experiences. According to Wortham (2012), assessment is an important tool for documenting children's developmental progress and for designing appropriate learning experiences. As Wortham (2012, p. 3) states, "Assessment in early childhood is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child." In the context of ECE, assessment is a systematic process used to understand children's development as a whole through observations of their behaviors and activities in play-based environments. Wortham (2019) emphasizes that assessment in ECE should be continuous, authentic, and holistic, aligned with the characteristics of early childhood development. Assessment is not intended to assign grades, but rather to determine the extent of children's development, identify their needs, and guide teachers in supporting their learning more effectively. In ECE, assessment serves as: (1) A reflective tool for teachers; (2) A basis for designing appropriate learning experiences; (3) A means of communicating with parents about children's development.

Assessment is used to monitor children's progress, adjust teaching strategies to meet individual needs, provide parents with information on their child's development, and identify children who may require further intervention. Teachers with a strong understanding of assessment principles and techniques are better able to design adaptive and responsive learning experiences that align with children's developmental stages. Assessment in ECE is guided by specific principles that distinguish it from assessment in other educational levels. According to NAEYC (2009) and Kemendikbud (2020), these principles include: (1) Continuous – Conducted on an ongoing basis rather than in a single test or moment; (2) Authentic – Data are gathered from real learning situations, not from simulations or formal examinations; (3) Holistic – Addresses all areas of development (cognitive, socio-emotional, motor, language, arts, as well as religious and moral values); (4) Individualized – Respects the uniqueness and learning pace of each child; (5) Meaningful – The results must be used to design learning experiences that meet children's needs; (6) Collaborative – Involves teachers, children, and parents in the process of collecting and interpreting assessment data.

Several techniques are commonly used in early childhood assessment. These techniques should be adapted to the developmental characteristics of young children, including: (1) Direct Observation – Teachers observe children's behavior during play and learning activities and record key information; (2) Anecdotal Records – Short narrative notes describing specific events involving the child; (3) Developmental Checklists – Lists of developmental indicators used to document children's abilities; (4) Child Portfolios – Collections of children's work and documentation that track progress over time; (5) Interviews or Discussions – Conducted with children, parents, or other stakeholders involved in the child's development; (6) Visual Documentation – Photographs, videos, or recordings of children's activities as authentic evidence of development. According to McAfee, Leong, and Bodrova (2015), effective assessment techniques should prioritize narrative, descriptive, and in-depth approaches to help teachers fully understand children's thinking processes and learning experiences.

Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment Implementation in ECE

Teachers' perceptions of assessment implementation are crucial as they influence how teachers design, carry out, and evaluate the assessment process. Teachers with positive perceptions of assessment tend to be more consistent and reflective in applying it in the classroom. According to Suparno (2022), teachers' perceptions of assessment are closely related to several aspects, namely: understanding the purpose of assessment, the ability to apply appropriate techniques, institutional or principal support, and the availability of time and resources. Several factors influence teachers' perceptions of assessment in ECE, including: level of education and academic background, teaching experience, participation in assessment training or workshops, administrative workload, and the availability of assessment tools and documentation. Putri and Suryana (2020) state that teachers who have participated in ECE assessment training tend to have more positive perceptions and are able to implement assessment more effectively.

2. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to explore in depth teachers' understanding, experiences, and practices in implementing assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The focus of the research was on the meanings constructed by teachers regarding assessment, rather than on numerical or statistical data. The study was conducted in two ECE institutions in Langsa City, selected purposively. The research subjects were ECE teachers with a minimum of one year of teaching experience and active involvement in the implementation of child assessment. Data were collected through several methods: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly examine the assessment process in the classroom, teacher-child interactions, and the techniques used. In-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out to explore teachers' understanding

and assessment practices. Documentation review was conducted to examine assessment documents such as anecdotal records, child portfolios, and developmental reports.

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher (human instrument). The researcher used interview guides and observation sheets as supporting tools. The guides were developed based on assessment understanding indicators, which included: understanding the concept and purpose of assessment, assessment implementation techniques, principles of authentic assessment, utilization of assessment results, and institutional support for assessment. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability before being widely used. Data analysis followed the model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which involves three stages: (1) Data Reduction – selecting, simplifying, and focusing on relevant data; (2) Data Display – presenting data in narrative form, tables, or matrices to facilitate interpretation; (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification – deriving meaning from the collected data and rechecking the findings. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation (by source, technique, and time), member checking (confirming results with informants), referential adequacy (comparing with theories or other supporting data), and audit trails (systematic documentation of the research process). The study was conducted in accordance with research ethics, including obtaining written informed consent from participants, maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities, and avoiding data manipulation.

3. Results

3.1. Findings

Based on data obtained from three ECE teacher respondents, the participants came from two ECE institutions: TK Nurul Ala (1 teacher with 2 years of teaching experience) and TK Putri Nahrisyah (2 teachers with 3 and 4 years of teaching experience, respectively). This indicates that the respondents had relatively short to medium teaching experience, which could potentially influence the depth of their understanding of assessment. Nevertheless, it was found that all teachers possessed a basic understanding of assessment as a process of gathering information on the development of young children. This understanding generally encompassed purposes such as identifying children's overall development, providing support according to their needs, and assisting those who require special attention. This suggests that the teachers recognized assessment not merely as a tool for evaluating learning outcomes, but also as an instrument for supporting children's development.

In terms of assessment techniques, most teachers reported using observation, anecdotal records, interviews or conversations with children, and the assignment of tasks. Observation appeared to be the most dominant method, consistent with the authentic nature of assessment in ECE. Adjustments to assessment according to children's characteristics were made by building positive interactions, understanding individual learning styles, and communicating with parents, reflecting an awareness that assessment in ECE must consider individual differences among children. With regard to the use of assessment results, teachers reported utilizing them to analyze children's strengths and weaknesses, adapt learning materials, and design learning activities. This practice aligns with the principle of continuous assessment.

However, all respondents stated that they had not received adequate training in assessment, and therefore felt that their skills still needed improvement. This gap has the potential to affect the quality of assessment implementation in the classroom. The main challenges faced included limited time and a lack of resources such as books, teaching aids, and supporting technology. Nevertheless, most institutions provided support in the form of assessment media or supervision, although such support had not yet fully met teachers' needs.

Teachers documented assessment results through anecdotal records and sequential photographs, which align with the principles of authentic assessment in ECE. They expressed the need for better assessment planning, improved teacher skills in assessment, and more effective parental involvement. The following is a simple chart presenting the results of the analysis of teachers' perception scores regarding the implementation of ECE assessment in Langsa City:

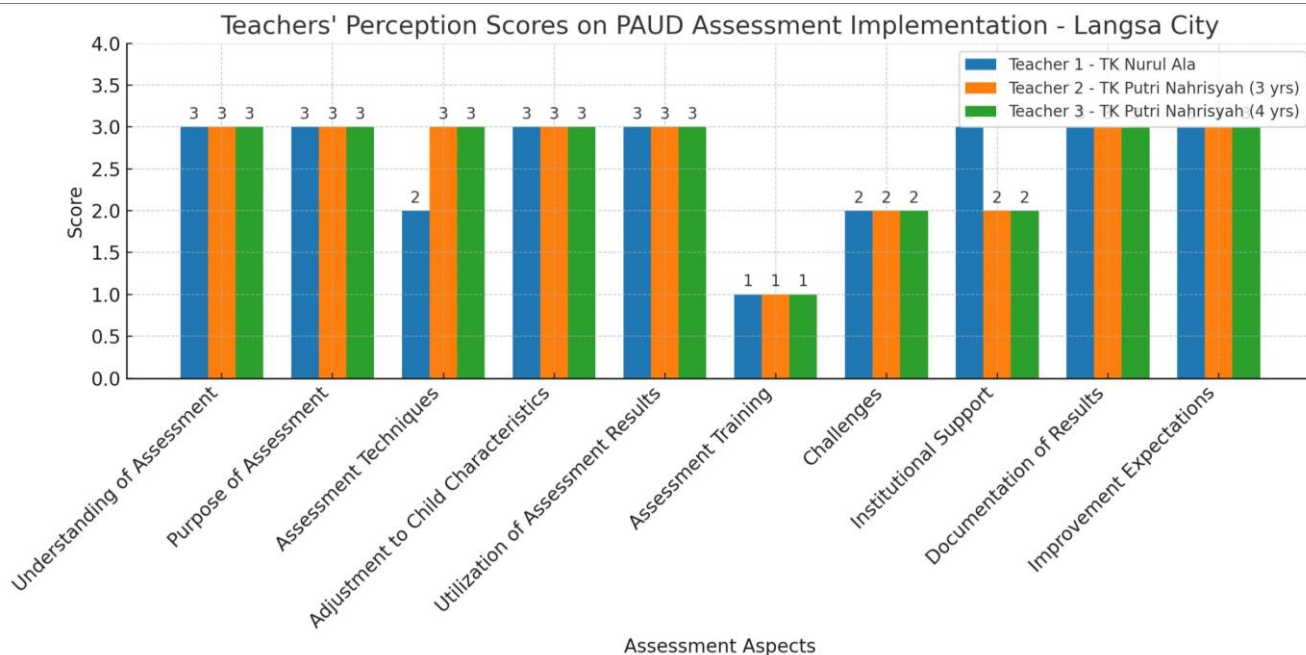


Figure 1. Results of the Analysis of Teachers' Perception Scores on the Implementation of ECE Assessment in Langsa City

These findings indicate that teachers' perceptions of assessment in ECE in Langsa City are generally aligned with an accurate understanding; however, implementation remains constrained by limited resources and a lack of training. This suggests the need for interventions through programs aimed at strengthening assessment competencies, providing adequate learning media, and ensuring continuous guidance from relevant stakeholders. The following table presents the analysis and interpretation of the research findings on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of ECE assessment in Langsa City:

Table 1. Analysis and Interpretation of the Research Findings

Aspek yang Dianalisis	Hasil Temuan	Analisis/ Interpretasi
Understanding of Assessment	All teachers interpret assessment as the process of collecting information on children's development.	The understanding aligns with the basic concept of assessment in early childhood education, but remains general and has not yet led to a detailed technical understanding.
Purpose of Assessment	Teachers emphasize the purpose of assessment as understanding children's development and providing support.	The stated purpose aligns with the principles of formative assessment in early childhood education, showing an orientation toward child development.
Assessment Techniques	Dominant techniques: observation, anecdotal notes, conversations with children, structured tasks.	Teachers already use authentic assessment techniques, but their variety remains limited to common methods.
Adaptation to Child's Characteristics	Teachers adjust assessments based on children's needs and learning styles.	This shows application of responsive assessment principles, although adjustment strategies are not yet explained

		in detail.
Utilization of Assessment	Results Assessment results are used to adapt learning materials and methods.	This practice aligns with the function of assessment as the basis for individualized learning planning.
Assessment Training	All teachers feel assessment training is insufficient.	Indicates the need to improve teachers' competence through technical assessment training in early childhood education.
Challenges	Limited time, resources, and understanding of child development.	These challenges are commonly faced by early childhood teachers, especially in institutions with limited facilities.
Institutional Support	Most teachers state that institutional support exists, mainly in media and supervision.	Existing support needs to be expanded, for example by providing resources and continuous training.
Documentation of Results	Teachers use anecdotal records, photo series, and detailed behavioral notes of children.	Documentation already includes portfolio techniques, but needs further development in structured reporting systems.
Hopes for Improvement	Teachers want better assessment planning, improved teacher skills, and more parental involvement.	These hopes align with the trend of participatory assessment involving teachers, children, and parents collaboratively.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that all respondents understood assessment as the process of gathering information or evaluating the development of young children. This understanding is consistent with the definition of assessment stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Permendikbud) No. 137 of 2014, which defines assessment as the process of collecting and processing information to measure the achievement of children's developmental milestones. According to Wortham (2019), teachers' understanding of assessment is crucial as it forms the foundation for determining the appropriate methods, techniques, and instruments. Although the definitions provided by the teachers were correct, the variation in their emphases revealed differences in perspectives—some focused on supporting children's development, while others emphasized intervention for children requiring special attention. This suggests that teachers' perceptions are influenced by their classroom experiences and the needs of their respective students.

Most respondents stated that the purpose of assessment was to understand children's development holistically, provide appropriate support, and assist children who need special attention. This aligns with McAfee and Leong's (2018) assertion that ECE assessment aims to monitor children's development, identify special needs, and design appropriate learning experiences. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with the principles of authentic, child-centered assessment, in which the collected data are used not only for formal evaluation but also as a basis for individual learning planning. Teachers reported using several assessment techniques, including observation, anecdotal records, conversations or interviews with children, task assignments, and communication with parents. These techniques correspond with the recommendations of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2020), which suggests that authentic assessment for young children should be based on observation in natural contexts, complemented by documentation such as notes and photographs.

However, the findings also revealed that teachers had not yet employed more varied assessment

instruments such as developmental checklists, portfolios, or project-based evaluations, indicating that assessment practices were still limited to more traditional methods. Teachers adjust assessments through a personal approach, building positive interactions, tailoring methods to children's learning styles, and communicating directly with both children and parents. This approach aligns with the principle of adaptive assessment (McMillan, 2014), in which evaluation is adapted to the child's background, abilities, and interests. Such adjustments are crucial, considering that early childhood development varies greatly, and overly rigid assessments may reduce the validity of the data obtained. The assessment results are used by teachers to analyze children's strengths and weaknesses, adjust learning materials, and design appropriate activities. This is consistent with the theory of reflective practice (Schön, 1983), which emphasizes that teachers utilize assessment data to improve the next lesson plan. However, in practice, the process of analyzing assessment results remains simple and is not yet systematically documented, thus limiting the potential use of data for long-term planning.

Most teachers reported not having received adequate assessment training, indicating a gap between policy and implementation. Research by Suryana & Nugraha (2021) demonstrated that continuous assessment training can enhance teachers' competence in selecting appropriate methods and instruments, thereby improving the quality of learning. Challenges faced by teachers include limited time, a lack of resources such as books, teaching aids, and technology, as well as difficulties in documenting assessment results. These findings are consistent with Pyle & DeLuca (2017), who state that administrative burdens and limited facilities often hinder early childhood teachers from conducting authentic assessments. From the institutional support perspective, most teachers perceive that schools have provided media, training, and supervision, although the implementation has not been optimal. According to Hargreaves & Fullan (2012), institutional support significantly influences teacher motivation in developing high-quality assessment practices. At present, teachers use anecdotal records, photo series, and detailed observation of children's behavior over a certain period. This method is in line with the authentic documentation principles of the Reggio Emilia approach, but it has not yet been integrated into an efficient digital system such as an e-portfolio.

As an improvement effort, teachers propose better-structured assessment planning, enhanced teacher skills through training, and more active parental involvement. This is consistent with the recommendations of NAEYC (2020), which emphasize that effective assessment requires close collaboration between teachers, parents, and institutions to ensure every child receives optimal developmental support.

4. Conclusions

Overall, early childhood education (ECE) teachers in Langsa City hold a positive perception of assessment and recognize its importance in supporting early childhood development. However, limitations in training, resources, and the variety of assessment techniques remain challenges that need to be addressed promptly. Enhancing teacher competence through continuous professional development, strengthening institutional support, and standardizing assessment documentation will be key to improving the quality of assessment practices in ECE. The majority of teachers understand assessment as a process of collecting information or evaluating early childhood development comprehensively. However, this understanding remains general and does not fully align with the principles of authentic assessment as recommended in the national ECE standards. The assessment purposes expressed by teachers include understanding child development, providing appropriate support, assisting children with special needs, and adapting the learning program. This indicates that teachers have a positive orientation toward assessment as a tool to support children's growth, rather than merely evaluating learning outcomes.

Teachers tend to use techniques such as observation, anecdotal records, interviews with children, and communication with parents. These methods are in line with the characteristics of assessment in ECE, yet other techniques such as portfolios, work samples documentation, and project-based assessments are still rarely applied. Teachers have made efforts to adapt assessments by considering the needs, learning styles, and interactions of each child. This approach aligns with the principle of individualization in ECE assessment. Assessment results are used by teachers to analyze children's strengths and weaknesses, design learning materials, and determine appropriate teaching strategies. This demonstrates that assessment has been

utilized as a foundation for instructional planning.

Most teachers reported that they have not received adequate training in assessment. This limitation affects their ability to apply more varied assessment techniques aligned with current developments. The main challenges faced by teachers include time constraints, lack of resources (books, teaching aids, technology), and difficulty in comprehensively understanding child development. Most teachers stated that their institutions provide support such as media, training, and supervision, although this level of support still needs improvement, particularly in terms of the availability of assessment resources. Documentation is carried out through anecdotal records, sequential photographs, and behavioral notes. However, the documentation system is not yet standardized, making it difficult to use for long-term evaluation. Teachers suggested improving assessment planning, providing more intensive training, increasing parental involvement, and ensuring sufficient resources to support effective assessment. Recommendations for ECE Teachers: Participate in continuous training on early childhood development assessment, including authentic assessment techniques such as portfolios, project-based assessment, and work sample documentation. Optimize the use of assessment results for more targeted instructional planning based on children's individual needs. Develop creativity in adapting assessment techniques to match children's characteristics and learning styles.

Recommendations for ECE Institutions: Provide adequate facilities and infrastructure to support assessment, such as teaching aids, learning media, and technological tools. Organize internal training and regular supervision to ensure teachers implement assessment in accordance with standards. Develop a structured and accessible assessment documentation system for long-term evaluation purposes. Recommendations for the Education Office: Organize regular capacity-building programs for ECE teachers focusing on child development assessment based on both national and international curricula. Facilitate collaboration among ECE centers to share best practices in assessment. Develop more practical and context-specific ECE assessment guidelines tailored to local conditions. Recommendations for Future Researchers: Conduct studies with a larger number of respondents to obtain a more representative picture. Examine the relationship between assessment quality and child development quantitatively. Explore strategies for parental involvement in early childhood development assessment.

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