HAYEF: Journal of Education, 23; 1-12

DOI: 10.5152/hayef.2026.25141

Received: December 29, 2025
Revision Requested: June 18, 2026
Last Revision Received: July 23, 2026
Accepted: July 28, 2026
Publication Date: September 14, 2026

HAYEF: Journal of Education

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Preschool Teachers' Approach to Assessment and Evaluation Tools: A Mixed-Methods Study on Usage Frequency and Competencies

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What is already known on this topic?

- *Assessment and evaluation in preschool education have a multifaceted and process-oriented structure, encompassing monitoring child development, evaluating the program, and teacher self-assessment. While preschool teachers can utilize various assessment tools, their use is often limited in practice due to factors such as time constraints, paperwork, and crowded classrooms.*

What does this study add on this topic?

- *This study examined both the frequency of use and perceived competence of preschool teachers in assessment tools, revealing a moderately positive correlation between the two variables.*
- *Teachers reported the highest competence in development reports and the highest frequency of use in monthly plan evaluations; standardized tests showed the lowest competence and usage, with the most pronounced correlation between the two variables.*

Abstract

This study aimed to determine preschool teachers' frequency of use and competencies regarding assessment tools. A concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 124 preschool teachers selected through simple random sampling, while qualitative data were obtained from 15 teachers selected through maximum variation sampling using a phenomenological approach. Data were collected via researchers-developed questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, and analyzed using descriptive, correlation, and content analyses. Quantitative findings revealed that teachers felt most competent in using developmental reports, whereas monthly plans were the most frequently used tools. The greatest discrepancy between competence and usage frequency occurred in standardized tests, which showed a statistically moderate relationship. Qualitative results indicated that while teachers primarily use these tools for developmental tracking, they face significant barriers such as time constraints and paperwork burdens. Additionally, teachers often create their own informal assessment tools. The study recommends diversifying assessment resources, ensuring adequate supervision, and updating curricula to reflect practical implementation needs.

Keywords: Assessment and evaluation, assessment and evaluation in preschool education, assessment tools, preschool education

Introduction

The early childhood years are undoubtedly among the most critical periods of an individual's development. This is because the foundations for skills that will emerge and develop throughout an individual's life are established during early childhood. Supporting individuals in all areas of development, while taking individual differences into account during this crucial period, is of great importance in the educational process (Stern, 2017; Türkoğlu, 2017). These critical years, which correspond to the preschool period, are instrumental in shaping personality, acquiring basic habits, learning knowledge and skills, and internalizing societal values (Dalbudak, 2006). Moreover, they have a profound impact on shaping subsequent developmental stages. Recognizing this, preschool education must be systematically planned and purposefully delivered. During the implementation phase, preschool teachers carry significant roles and responsibilities (Guerrero & Camargo-Abello, 2023). However, the successful implementation of these educational programs is inherently tied to how teachers perceive and apply assessment processes.

In the preschool education process, the role of teachers is to create environments that facilitate the acquisition of desired skills in children during this critical developmental stage. Teachers should not only prepare learning environments that align with the developmental stages of children when implementing educational programs (Özcan, 2020) but also possess competencies in assessment and evaluation to understand and assess children effectively. Such competencies require teachers to have received training in the field of assessment and evaluation and to be able to transfer this knowledge into practice as a result of their education. In this way, teachers can carry out the assessment and evaluation process in accordance with established principles, with objectivity and reliability (Baustad et al., 2025; Durukan & Şahin, 2015; Ersal Üncü & Özer Özkan, 2025; Özcan, 2020). Current international data confirms the strategic importance of assessment and evaluation processes in ensuring the quality of education (EACEA & Eurydice, 2025; OECD, 2024)

In preschool education, the process holds greater importance than the outcomes, making a multidimensional approach to process evaluation highly significant. In the curriculum, the evaluation process is carried

This study is derived from a master's thesis.

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Cite this article as: Tülek, Z. B., & Türkan, A. (2026). Preschool teachers' approach to assessment and evaluation tools: a mixed-methods study on usage frequency and competencies. *HAYEF: Journal of Education*, *23*, 0141, doi:10.5152/hayef.2026.25141.

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- *Qualitative findings indicated that teachers primarily used assessment tools to monitor children's development; however, time constraints and paperwork complicated the process.*
- *In preschool assessment practices, it is necessary to increase practical support resources for teachers to use tools more effectively, to strengthen guidance/supervision, and to conduct studies that will improve teacher competence, especially in tools requiring expertise such as standardized tests.*

out through three different approaches: evaluating the development of children, evaluating the implemented program, and self-evaluation by teachers (Balcı et al., 2012).

First, the evaluation of children involves systematically recording and monitoring their development throughout the process. To achieve this, developmental observation forms are completed to track and document progress, which is then used to prepare developmental reports provided at the end of the term. Additionally, a developmental portfolio containing activities demonstrating the child's progress over the year is prepared and shared at the end of the school year (Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020a). Meaningful evaluation of children enhances the effectiveness of educational programs. Teachers who use appropriate methods and techniques to assess their students can more easily identify shortcomings in the educational process and increase the success rate of the program (Kan, 2007).

Second, program evaluation involves a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of the program. This includes examining the alignment between the set objectives, desired behaviors, and the implemented educational practices to identify discrepancies and determine new requirements. The data obtained from these evaluations are used in designing the next phase of the program (Şıvgın, 2005).

Third, teacher self-evaluation is a process where educators assess their own performance throughout the educational activities conducted with children. In addition to evaluating children and programs, teachers must reflect on their personal and professional attributes and assess themselves throughout the process. As a result, teachers strive for self-improvement and, when necessary, seek support from administrators (Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020a).

Throughout these evaluation processes, teachers utilize various assessment tools and methods tailored to the developmental levels of children. This enables the identification of children's readiness levels, resolution of learning difficulties, assessment of program effectiveness, and monitoring of children's development more effectively (Bayrak & Durukan, 2013). Consequently, assessment and evaluation are essential components of preschool education, and teachers' competencies and frequency of use regarding assessment tools and methods are of critical importance. Current literature indicates a contradiction where teachers' high self-competence perceptions often diverge from their actual implementation levels, particularly in developmentally appropriate tasks. This is mirrored by a tension between pedagogical preferences for contemporary tools and the practical dominance of traditional methods driven by administrative requirements. Moreover, chronic systemic issues such as time constraints and paperwork continue to hinder effective assessment, suggesting that individual proficiency requires structural support. A review of the literature in this field reveals that studies have primarily focused on teachers' attitudes toward assessment and evaluation, their perceptions of self-efficacy, and the systemic barriers they face (Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020c; Kılınç, 2019; Ulusoy, 2019). Current trends indicate that, although teachers find contemporary assessment tools more pedagogically effective, traditional methods still predominate in practice due to structural issues such as a heavy paperwork burden and time constraints (Durukan & Şahin, 2015; Yılmaz-Topuz, 2015). Furthermore, it has been observed that methodological preferences in the literature are primarily centered on single research designs (either purely quantitative or purely qualitative), and that the relationship between the frequency of use of traditional and contemporary tools and the levels of proficiency is rarely examined in a comprehensive manner (Çelik & Demirbaş, 2023; Sezer, 2010; Uzun, 2013). Although there are many studies in the literature that examine teachers' views and attitudes toward assessment (Aybar-İnce, 2022; Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020a; Gürsoy, 2018; Ulusoy, 2019) or the challenges they face separately (Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007; Kılınç, 2019), research that distinguishes between traditional and contemporary tools and simultaneously integrates both frequency of use and proficiency levels using a mixed-methods design is quite limited. Most existing studies have focused either solely on quantitative methods (Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020a; Sezer, 2010; Uzun, 2013) or solely on qualitative methods (Aybar-İnce, 2022; Balcı, 2022; Çelik & Demirbaş, 2023) methods, and have generally been limited to formal institutions. This study aims to fill this methodological and conceptual gap in the literature by thoroughly examining the correlation between teachers' perceptions of competence and their frequency of use, specifically with regard to traditional and contemporary tools. Considering these factors, the aim of this study is to determine the frequency of use and competencies of preschool teachers in utilizing assessment and evaluation tools.

Theoretical Framework

Curriculum and Its Elements

Curricula are designed based on societal norms, student characteristics, and subject areas, comprising objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessment (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2014). Objectives define goals to meet specific needs, guiding curriculum development (Balaş & Torkos, 2025). Content includes tools and materials to achieve these objectives (Avar-Vayvay, 2020). Learning experiences involve methods and techniques for effective content delivery (Balaş & Torkos, 2025). Assessment evaluates whether objectives are met by asking, "How much was taught and learned?" (Liu et al., 2012). As a critical component, assessments provide insights into program effectiveness and guide improvements. With the recent updates in the 2024 Turkish National Early Childhood Education Curriculum, assessment areas have been restructured

to include holistic developmental tracking, further emphasizing the need for teacher proficiency in diverse assessment tools (MEB, 2024). Current approaches place pedagogical documentation—which makes learning visible—and process-oriented assessment methods at the center of education (Baustad et al., 2025; Riquelme-Arredondo et al., 2025).

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment helps identify students' characteristics and provides objective information, facilitating the preparation of effective learning environments (Koul, 2023). Evaluation compares assessment results against criteria to determine achievement levels and the effectiveness of educational processes (Akdağ, 2011; Erkuş, 2020). It plays a critical role in understanding and guiding students, focusing on their current knowledge, understanding, and capabilities to plan future learning (Elden, 2019).

In preschool education, assessment and evaluation are vital for supporting developmental and learning processes. While numerous techniques exist, not all tools are equally relevant in early childhood education (García-Campos et al., 2022). These tools help assess children's developmental levels and meet their needs effectively.

This study examines tools including anecdotal records, observation records, systematic observation forms, developmental checklists, standardized tests, developmental reports, portfolios, and daily and monthly plan evaluations. These tools provide a structured approach to evaluating children's growth, enabling teachers to track progress and create supportive learning environments. By focusing on process-oriented evaluations, teachers can gain deeper insights into children's developmental trajectories and tailor their teaching to foster growth.

The Role and Importance of Assessment and Evaluation in Preschool Education

The assessment and evaluation process in preschool education is multidimensional and occurs in three main forms: evaluating children's development, assessing the program, and self-evaluation by teachers. These evaluations are interdependent, with analyses derived from one informing and enhancing the others. Moreover, the evaluation process is integral to planning and implementation (Riquelme-Arredondo et al., 2025).

When assessing children, teachers should analyze their development throughout the educational process and draw meaningful conclusions. Children should not be evaluated based on a single activity; instead, they should be observed across various activities during the day, and these observations should be systematically recorded on relevant forms (Işıkoğlu Erdoğan & Canbeldek, 2017). During program evaluations, daily assessments guide monthly plan evaluations, while monthly evaluations contribute to the overall annual evaluation process (Ünver, 2016).

Teachers should set clear objectives before the process, review whether these objectives have been achieved, and perform self-assessments while seeking support from experts when necessary (Karagöz, 2019). In this context, assessment and evaluation play a vital role in determining goals and taking the necessary steps to achieve them during the foundational stage of education. The positive or negative experiences gained by students during this period can significantly influence the paths they take in the future (Wang & Eccles, 2013). The choice of assessment and evaluation tools used in this process may vary, reflecting the diverse needs and dynamics of the educational environment (Tai et al., 2023). These tools and methods are essential for ensuring that the educational goals set for preschool children are effectively met.

Assessment and Evaluation Tools in Preschool Education

In early childhood education, teachers utilize formal, informal, and alternative assessment approaches in the process of getting to know and assessing children (Gullo, 2005; Işıkoğlu Erdoğan & Canbeldek, 2017). Formal assessment is defined as an approach that uses standardized tools and generally provides information focused on outcomes rather than the process (Gullo, 2005; Wortham & Hardin, 2012). During this process, tools such as achievement tests, aptitude tests, diagnostic tests, readiness tests, and developmental screening tests are used to identify children's developmental characteristics, academic competencies, or learning difficulties (Bayraktaoğlu & Ayekin-Dülger, 2020; Wright, 2010). Conducting assessment and evaluation in children's natural environments (home, school, and playgrounds) is of critical importance in terms of the validity and reliability of the data obtained (Işıkoğlu Erdoğan & Canbeldek, 2017; Mindes, 2003).

Informal assessment approaches, which are process-oriented, enable teachers to monitor children's development and learning processes throughout the day using techniques such as observation, interviews, rating scales, and rubrics (McAfee & Leong, 2012; Özyürek et al., 2022). While anecdotal records used in this context are based on the principle of objectively and descriptively documenting important and typical behaviors related to children's development, systematic observation records facilitate the tracking of children's individual developmental levels within a structured framework by observing them in their natural environments (Bredekamp, 2015; Ceyhan, 2011).

Among alternative assessment approaches that integrate both process- and outcome-oriented data, portfolios and progress reports stand out (Işıkoğlu-Erdoğan et al., 2021). Portfolios, recognized as dynamic assessment tools, are development files that systematically organize children's efforts, progress, and successful work (Kan, 2007; Wortham et al., 1998). The developmental reports prepared at the end of each term serve as key documents that provide a comprehensive overview of children's attitudes, skills, and progress across all areas of development, and through which the results are shared with families (Gelebek-Üstün & Uzun, 2020b; MEB, 2013). In short, the combined use of traditional and contemporary tools in the assessment and evaluation process enhances both the monitoring of individual development and the effectiveness of the educational program (Gürsoy, 2018; Taner, 2005). By understanding these formal and alternative assessment frameworks, this study seeks to identify the specific points where theoretical curriculum requirements meet practical classroom implementation, focusing on the discrepancy between teachers' perceived proficiency and their actual usage frequency.

The Significance of the Study

The knowledge and application of assessment and evaluation techniques hold significant importance in preschool education. These techniques enable the collection of information about students, help in recognizing their individual characteristics, enhance their abilities, identify children with special needs, and effectively plan and implement the learning process (Viscione, 2017). During the evaluation process, teachers should utilize methods and techniques appropriate to both the students and the activities, and the data obtained from these evaluations should guide the planning of the learning process (Flottman et al., 2011). Additionally, teachers should seek the support of families during the evaluation process and share the recorded forms with them at the end of the educational period (Rutland & Hall, 2013). The unique contribution of this study lies in its use of a mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design to bridge the gap between quantitative statistical trends and qualitative lived experiences. Unlike previous studies that examine attitudes or problems in isolation, this research provides a holistic validation of how competence directly influences the frequency of tool selection across both public and private institutional contexts.

This study is significant as it aims to determine how competent preschool teachers perceive themselves in this field and how frequently they use these techniques.

The research aims to provide insights into the following:

- The reasons behind preschool teachers' preferences for specific assessment techniques during the evaluation process,
- The extent to which teachers consider themselves competent in this area,
- The frequency of use of traditional and contemporary assessment tools,
- The advantages and disadvantages these tools offer to teachers,
- The types of information forms created by teachers during the process, and
- The challenges they encounter in the assessment and evaluation process.

The findings of this study will contribute to future research and provide a foundation for enhancing assessment and evaluation practices in preschool education.

Method

This section provides information on the research model, population and sample, data collection tools, validity and reliability, and data analysis.

Research Model

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). The concurrent triangulation model was chosen, where data are collected simultaneously, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation, giving equal priority to both data types (Creswell & Clark, 2014). In the integration phase, the researchers compared the statistical results with the qualitative themes to determine the extent of convergence between the two data sets. This process aimed to validate and reinforce the findings through cross-validity comparison. In the quantitative aspect, a correlational survey model was used to examine the relationship between preschool teachers' frequency of using assessment tools and their perceived competency (Karasar, 2022). This model identifies relationships between variables and predicts one based on the other. The qualitative dimension utilized a phenomenological model, focusing on participants' lived experiences and interpretations to uncover the meanings behind their perspectives on traditional and contemporary assessment tools (Onat-Kocabıyık, 2015). The synergy between these models allowed for numerical patterns (e.g., usage frequency) to be interpreted alongside in-depth explanations (e.g., reasons for use and challenges), thereby enhancing the credibility of the overall results. By combining these models, the study effectively explores both statistical relationships and in-depth insights, offering a robust framework for understanding the research problem.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of preschool teachers working in private and public schools under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Siirt province during the 2022–2023 academic year. Following the receipt of ethical approval on March 6, 2023, and institutional permission from the Siirt Provincial Directorate of National Education on March 10, 2023, the data collection process was carried out over a 20-week period, starting in March 2023 and concluding in August 2023. Prior to data collection, all participants were informed about the purpose and scope of the study, and their informed consent was obtained. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and be used only for scientific purposes. The sample includes 124 (111 public, 13 private; 115 female, nine male; 109 bachelor's, three master's, 12 other degrees; 50 with 1–5 years, 26 with 6–10 years, and 31 with 11+ years of seniority) volunteer preschool teachers for the quantitative dimension and 15 (all public; all female; 12 bachelor's, three master's; two with 1–5 years, five with 6–10 years, and five with 11+ years of seniority) volunteer preschool teachers for the qualitative dimension.

For the quantitative dimension, the sample group was formed using the simple random sampling method, one of the probability sampling techniques, from preschool teachers working in Siirt. Simple random sampling is a method where all elements in the population have an equal chance of being selected (Baltacı, 2018). This method is preferred when an appropriate sampling framework is established, and the population is located within a limited area (Bryman, 2007). Accordingly, the sample group for this study was selected through a simple random sampling method using the sampling framework established in Siirt. Attempts were made to contact participants by randomly selecting them from a list compiled by the Ministry of National Education. This method helps increase methodological validity, particularly in cases where the sampling frame can be clearly defined, such as in populations limited to a specific region (Baltacı, 2018; Bryman, 2007). Regarding the quantitative data collection, 95 of the questionnaires were administered face to face, while 29 were collected online via Google Forms due to accessibility.

For the qualitative dimension, the study group was formed using the maximum variation sampling method, one of the purposive sampling techniques, from preschool teachers working in Siirt. Maximum variation sampling aims to reflect the diversity of individuals or groups that can contribute to the problem being studied (Demir & Özden, 2013). Through this method, volunteer participants with different ages, professional seniority levels, and educational backgrounds were selected to form a diverse study group based on the sampling framework. The qualitative data were gathered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 15 volunteer teachers to ensure in-depth insights.

This mixed approach ensures that the study captures a broad quantitative representation, as well as obtaining in-depth qualitative insights from a diverse group of participants. Ethical approval (06.03.2023/529) was obtained from Siirt University ethics committee for data collection.

Data Collection Tools

Data for this study were obtained from voluntary preschool teachers through a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview form, designed to align with the research objectives. The "Assessment and Evaluation Competence and Usage Frequency Questionnaire for Preschool Teachers," developed during the study, consists of two sections and thirteen questions, facilitating the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Surveys, which are applied to gather information from individuals in written or verbal form, are widely recognized tools for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Arıkan, 2018). The data collection tools used in the study were developed by the researcher and the advisor based on a review of the relevant literature. To determine the content validity of the forms, the opinions of a total of six experts—one professor, one associate professor, and four subject-area teachers—were sought; revisions were made to the items based on the feedback received from these experts.

The "Preschool Teachers' Views on the Frequency of Use and Competence in Assessment and Evaluation Tools Interview Form," also developed as part of the research process, comprises two sections and nine questions, enabling the collection of qualitative data. Interviews,

as conversational tools for gathering information, provide insights into participants' feelings and thoughts and are crucial instruments for collecting qualitative data (Akman-Dömbekci & Erişen, 2022). The draft tools that were developed were pilot-tested with a group of preschool teachers (34 teachers) prior to full implementation; the clarity of the items and the time required for completion were assessed, and the forms were finalized accordingly.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, various precautions were taken, and necessary steps were implemented to enhance these aspects. Efforts were directed toward improving the robustness of the data collection tools and ensuring that they meet academic standards.

Validity

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire and interview forms developed during the research process, expert opinions were sought. Experts evaluated whether the forms adequately measured the intended target behaviors. Content validity involves obtaining sufficient expert feedback on whether the scale items cover the characteristics they aim to measure (Yeşilyurt & Çapraz, 2018). In this context, feedback was sought from six experts (one professor, one associate professor, and four subject-matter expert teachers) to enhance the content validity of the assessment tool.

Another measure taken to enhance validity was ensuring internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to the extent to which the findings of the research reflect reality (Demirtaş & Demirbilek, 2019). The questionnaire and interview form findings used in the study were meaningful, consistent, and reflective of actual processes in assessment and evaluation practices, thereby increasing internal validity.

External validity refers to the extent to which similar results can be obtained in studies resembling the current research process (Tanık-Önal, 2017). By clearly specifying the characteristics of the selected participants, data collection tools, and processes, this research aimed to guide other researchers and contribute to similar studies, thereby enhancing external validity.

Reliability

Several measures were taken to improve the reliability of the study. The first was ensuring internal consistency reliability. The reliability of the data collection tools used in the research can be achieved in various ways, such as by administering the same tool once or twice or using two similar tools once (Ercan & Kan, 2004). The reliability of the study was enhanced by applying quantitative and qualitative tools developed to measure similar characteristics. To ensure the reliability of the study, data obtained from quantitative and qualitative instruments were compared using a simultaneous triangulation model, and the extent to which the data corroborated one another was examined. Additionally, Cronbach's α was calculated to determine the reliability of the measurement instrument and was found to be .91.

Additionally, selecting a sufficiently large sample to represent the population, utilizing multiple sources throughout the research process, securely preserving the data collected, and conducting the study impartially were measures undertaken to improve reliability.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of quantitative data, the Statistcal Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical software package was employed. (IBM SPSS Corp.; Armonk, NY, US) Descriptive analyses and correlation analysis were used during the data analysis process, with Pearson correlation analysis applied for correlation measures. Pearson correlation analysis was selected to determine the strength and direction of the linear relationship between usage frequency and competence scores. Before conducting the analysis, the assumptions of sufficient sample size and the absence of significant outliers were checked to ensure the validity of the correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficient ranges from +1 to −1. The sign of the correlation coefficient indicates the direction of the relationship. The interpretation of the correlation coefficient values is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Interpretation of Correlation Coefficient Values

Range of Values	**Comment**
0.70–1.00	Strong relationship
0.30–0.69	Moderate relationship
0.00–0.29	Weak relationship

Source: Biçer et al., 2013.

The interpretation of the competence level and usage frequency scores obtained from the scale uses the following ranges: a score between 1.00 and 1.80 is considered "Very Low," a score between 1.81 and 2.60 is considered "Low," a score between 2.61 and 3.40 is considered "Moderate," a score between 3.41 and 4.20 is considered "High," and a score between 4.21 and 5.00 is considered "Very High."

In the analysis of the qualitative data of the research, content analysis was employed within the framework of the phenomenology model. The main objective of content analysis is to identify concepts and relationships that can describe the data obtained in the research (Saraç, 2017). The analysis process followed a systematic four-step procedure: (1) Transcribing the responses from interviews and open-ended questionnaire items into a digital text format; (2) performing line-by-line coding to identify meaningful units; (3) clustering similar codes into logical categories; and (4) synthesizing these categories into overarching themes.

To ensure a systematic presentation, themes were structured to reflect the relationships between teachers' practices and the underlying factors. For instance, codes such as "tracking development" and "gathering information" were grouped under the category of "Student-oriented Reasons," which subsequently formed the theme of "Reasons for Using Assessment Tools." Furthermore, relationships between themes were established by linking implementation reasons with the specific challenges encountered, such as the relationship between "Usage Frequency" and "Time Constraints."

When presenting the participants' views, abbreviations such as T1, T2, T3… T15/T124 were used to indicate their responses. Throughout the qualitative phase, the researcher took an active role by personally developing the data collection tools, conducting the face-to-face interviews, performing the transcriptions, and managing the entire content analysis process (including coding, categorization, and theme development) to maintain internal consistency and depth of analysis.

Results

This section consists of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from the research.

Quantitative Findings

In the quantitative part of the study, the teachers' competence levels and the frequency of use of assessment and evaluation tools and methods were examined. The average values of these factors and the relationship between them were analyzed. The data obtained from the teachers' responses to the questionnaire were subjected to Pearson correlation analysis and are presented in Table 2 and Figure 1.

Table 2.
Relationship Between the Competence Levels and Usage Frequencies of Assessment and Evaluation Tools and Methods

Assessment and Evaluation Tool Types	Competence Level ($\bar{X}$)	Usage Frequency ($\bar{X}$)	*r*	Interpretation
Anecdotal record	3.64	3.11	.59*	Moderate relationship
Observation record	4.13	4.28	.55*	Moderate relationship
Systematic observation form	3.61	3.17	.59*	Moderate relationship
Development control list	4.13	3.91	.60*	Moderate relationship
Achievement evaluation form	4.16	4.03	.51*	Moderate relationship
Standard tests	2.83	2.37	.69*	Moderate relationship
Development observation form	4.40	4.43	.36*	Moderate relationship
Development report	4.48	4.50	.48*	Moderate relationship
Development file	4.26	4.28	.52*	Moderate relationship
Teacher self-evaluation form	4.41	3.44	.57*	Moderate relationship
Play observation form	3.95	3.44	.64*	Moderate relationship
Daily plan evaluation	4.41	4.62	.45*	Moderate relationship
Monthly plan evaluation	4.45	4.68	.32*	Moderate relationship

*$p < .05$.

Table 2 and Figure 1 Analysis: Upon examining Table 2 and Figure 1, it can be observed that the assessment and evaluation tool in which the preschool teachers participating in the study feel the most competent is the Development Report (4.48), while the tool they feel the least competent in is the Standard Tests (2.83). The most frequently used assessment and evaluation tool is the Monthly Plan Evaluation (4.68), while the least frequently used tool is the Standard Tests (2.37). It is evident that preschool teachers frequently prefer both traditional and contemporary assessment and evaluation tools, and they feel competent in using these tools.

Additionally, when examining the relationship between the competence levels and usage frequencies of the assessment and evaluation tools, it was determined that a "Moderate" level of relationship exists across all assessment tools. The assessment and evaluation tool with the highest relationship between competence level and usage frequency is the Standard Tests ($r = .69$), while the lowest is the Monthly Plan Evaluation ($r = .32$).

Upon examining Table 2 and Figure 1, it can be observed that participants consider themselves "Very Highly" competent in tools such as the Development Observation Form, Development Report, Development File, Teacher Self-Evaluation Form, Daily Plan Evaluation, and Monthly Plan Evaluation. They perceive themselves as "Highly" competent in tools such as the Anecdotal Record, Systematic Observation Form, Development Control List, Achievement Evaluation Form, and Play Observation Form. In contrast, they consider themselves "Moderately" competent in Standard Tests.

Further analysis of Table 2 and Figure 1 shows that the participants feel "Very Highly" competent in the Observation Record, Development Observation Form, Development Report, Development File, Daily Plan Evaluation, and Monthly Plan Evaluation. In contrast, they perceive themselves as "Highly" competent in tools such as the Development Control List, Achievement Evaluation Form, Teacher Self-Evaluation Form, and Play Observation Form. On the other hand, they feel "Moderately" competent in the Anecdotal Record and Systematic Observation Form, and "Low" competence in Standard Tests.

A more detailed examination of Table 2 and Figure 1 reveals that participants' perceived competence levels are lower for the assessment tools with higher usage frequencies, such as the Observation Record,

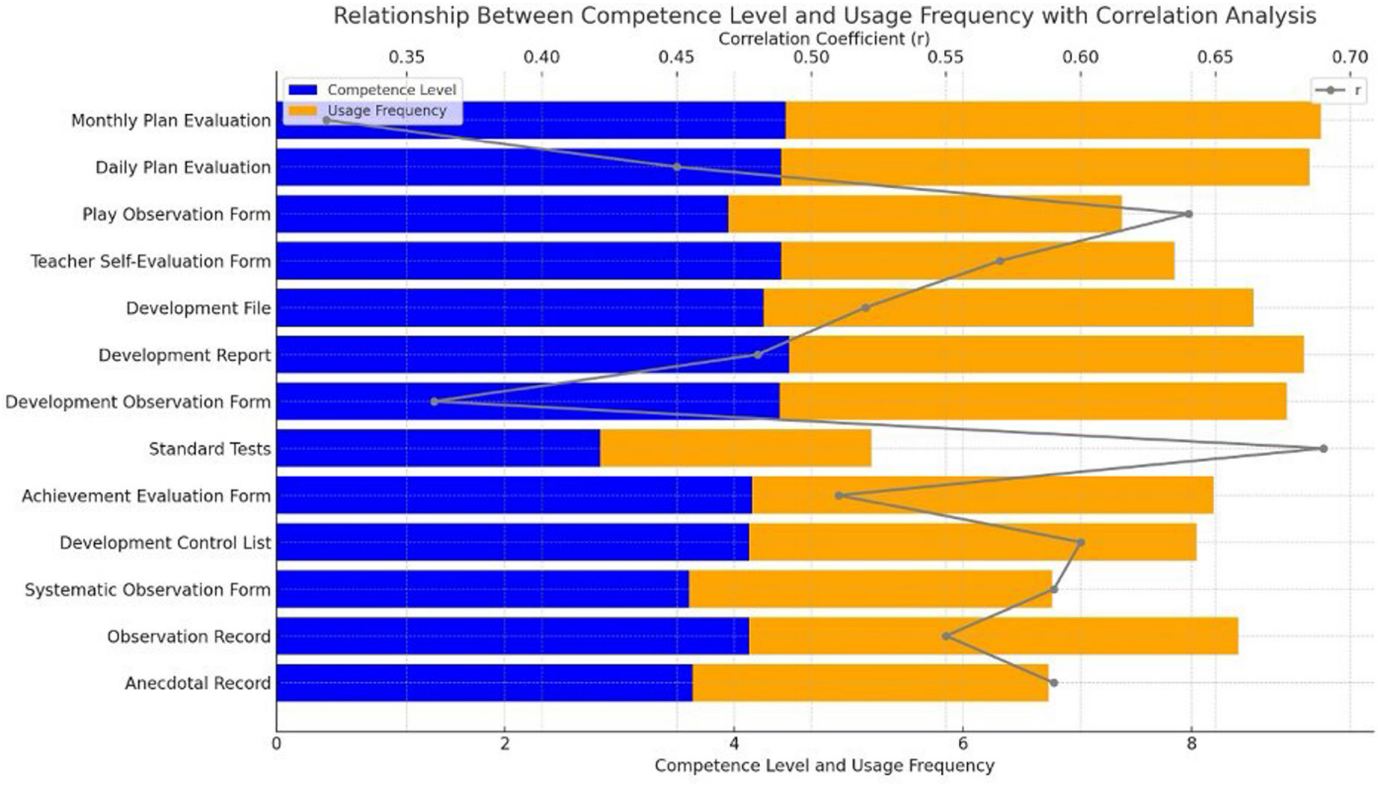

Figure 1.
The Relationship Between Competence Levels and Usage Frequencies of Assessment and Evaluation Tools and Methods Among Participants.

Table 3.
Reasons for Preschool Teachers' Use of Assessment and Evaluation Tools

Theme	Category	Code
Reasons for using assessment and evaluation tools	Reasons related to the student	Information gathering (T1) (T6) (T9) (T10) (T12) (T13) (T15) Development tracking (T1) (T2) (T3) (T4) (T7) (T10) (T11) (T13) (T15) Purpose of observation (T7) (T9) (T10) (T12) (T15) Purpose of lasting learning (T14) Supporting the student (T6) (T14) Determining learning level (T5) (T15) Facilitating classroom interaction (T10)
	Reasons related to the program	Supporting the evaluation process (T3) (T4) (T8) (T10) (T12) (T15) Being mandatory to complete (T12) Providing feedback (T9) Achievement evaluation (T2) (T4) (T5) (T9) Functional use (T8) Supporting the planning process (T4) (T6) (T7) (T9)

Development Observation Form, Development Report, Development File, Daily Plan Evaluation, and Monthly Plan Evaluation. In other words, the participants do not feel as competent in using these assessment and evaluation tools as their frequency of use might suggest, indicating that they perceive themselves as less capable in those areas.

Qualitative Findings

In the qualitative part of the study, the reasons for preschool teachers' use of assessment and evaluation tools, the characteristics of the tools they use, and their opinions regarding any tools they have created themselves were examined in the questionnaire. The data obtained from the teachers' responses to the questionnaire were subjected to content analysis, and after the analysis, codes, categories, and themes were created and presented in tables.

Reasons for Preschool Teachers' Use of Assessment and Evaluation Tools

The reasons for preschool teachers' use of assessment and evaluation tools were collected through their responses, and based on these responses, themes and categories were developed. The codes derived from the teachers' answers related to the created themes are presented in Table 3.

Upon examining Table 3, the reasons for preschool teachers' use of assessment and evaluation tools are addressed under two categories: reasons related to the student and reasons related to the program. Regarding the reasons related to the student, the highest frequency was identified as "for development tracking," followed by "for information gathering," "for observation," "for supporting the student," "for determining learning level," "for facilitating classroom interaction," and "for lasting learning."

In terms of the reasons related to the program, the highest frequency was identified as "for supporting the evaluation process," followed by "for supporting the planning process," "for achievement evaluation," "for providing feedback," "for being mandatory to complete," and "for functional use." Some of the views of preschool teachers on the reasons for using assessment and evaluation tools are as follows:

"Development observation form. Because being together with the students all the time and their communication with each other during free time, meal time, activity and game hours, it is easier to record instantly and then determine whether there is any change in their behavior and how far their development has progressed." (T15)

"Daily plan evaluation, monthly plan evaluation, development report, development observation form... Developmental evaluations allow us to collect information about the child. Deficiencies can be addressed better in the second semester." (T9)

"I use the development observation form, portfolio and development checklist frequently because it is important for me to check whether the children have achieved the outcomes and to include them back into my plan if they are not observed. I also use portfolios because they reflect children's competencies from the beginning to the end of the semester." (T4)

Preschool Teachers' Preferences in Using Assessment and Evaluation Tools

The teachers' preferences regarding the use of assessment and evaluation tools were examined, and themes and categories were created based on their responses. The codes derived from the teachers' answers to the created themes are presented in Table 4 below.

Upon examining Table 4, the views of the participants regarding their preferences for using assessment and evaluation tools are addressed under two categories: traditional assessment and evaluation tools and contemporary assessment and evaluation tools. Regarding the traditional assessment and evaluation tools, the highest frequency was identified as "Daily Plan Evaluation," followed by "Monthly Plan Evaluation," "Achievement Evaluation Form," and "Standard Tests."

When analyzing the participants' views on the contemporary assessment and evaluation tools, the highest frequency was identified as "Portfolio," followed by "Development Observation Form," "Observation Record," "Play Observation Form," "Anecdotal Record," "Development Report," "Systematic Observation Form," and "Development Control List." Some of the views of preschool teachers on the reasons for using assessment and evaluation tools are as follows:

"I use traditional and contemporary assessment methods. In general, I use traditional plans for the evaluation of the plans I use, while I use contemporary assessment methods for the individual assessments of the children." (T2)

"So we use a mix. Both traditional and contemporary, because we don't think that only one is enough. I mean, we do daily plan evaluations, yes, but this is a general evaluation, you know, we evaluate not individual children but in general..." (T8)

"I try, do and apply both methods as much as I can, but the alternative is a bit more; because we do the daily plan evaluation every day, the monthly evaluation at the end of the month.

Table 4.
Preschool Teachers' Preferences in Using Assessment and Evaluation Tools

Theme	Category	Code
Assessment and evaluation tool preferences	Traditional assessment and evaluation tools	Monthly plan evaluation (T1) (T2) (T3) (T4) (T7) (T9) (T10) Daily plan evaluation (T1) (T2) (T3) (T4) (T7) (T8) (T9) (T10) Achievement evaluation form (T1) (T3) (T7) (T10) Standard tests (T15)
	Contemporary assessment and evaluation tools	Anecdotal record (T9) (T13) (T15) Development observation form (T7) (T8) (T10) (T13) Development control list (T13) Development report (T1) (T9) (T13) Observation record (T1) (T7) (T8) (T13) Play observation form (T7) (T9) (T13) (T14) Portfolio (T1) (T6) (T7) (T9) (T10)(T13) (T14) (T15) Systematic observation form (T1) (T7) (T13)

I can say that it is more active, but I definitely keep contemporary assessment and evaluation tools, especially portfolio, play observation forms, anecdotal records. I definitely pay attention to the development report, in this way. I generally use modern assessment and evaluation tools to follow up my students..." (T9)

Problems Faced by Preschool Teachers When Using Assessment and Evaluation Tools

The views of preschool teachers regarding the problems they face while using assessment and evaluation tools were collected, and based on these responses, themes and categories were created. The codes derived from the teachers' answers to the created themes are presented in Table 5.

Upon examining Table 5, the views of the participants regarding the problems they face in using assessment and evaluation tools are addressed under two categories: problems with using traditional assessment and evaluation tools and problems with using contemporary assessment and evaluation tools.

Regarding the problems with using traditional assessment and evaluation tools, the highest frequency was identified as "lack of time," followed by "paperwork load," "overcrowded classes," "expectations for evaluation," "attempting to be objective," "economic problems," and "absenteeism."

When analyzing the problems with using contemporary assessment and evaluation tools, the highest frequency was again identified as "lack of time," followed by "paperwork load," "overcrowded classes," "economic problems," "expectations for evaluation," and "absenteeism." Some of the views of preschool teachers on the reasons for using assessment and evaluation tools are as follows:

"The only problem for me is the lack of time, other than that I don't have any problems." (T6)

"I can experience problems both in traditional and contemporary education from time to time. I have problems due to lack of time, the burden of filling out documents and similar reasons." (T11)

"We have difficulties in observing children in the classroom because of the lack of infrastructure in our classrooms. We cannot observe all of them because our classes are crowded compared to normal standards. We have problems like this and we don't have enough time to observe all the children and fill out documents." (S14)

"When I try to implement contemporary education, there are economic inadequacies, lack of facilities at school and it requires a lot of time because it is a detailed process. I have a little more difficulty in contemporary education, but I think it should be." (T7)

Table 5.
Problems Faced by Preschool Teachers When Using Assessment and Evaluation Tools

Theme	Category	Code
Problems in using assessment and evaluation tools	Problems with using traditional assessment and evaluation tools	Expectations for evaluation (T1) Absenteeism (T8) Economic problems (T14) Paperwork load (T1) (T3) (T10) (T11) (T12) (T13) Attempting to be objective (T3) Overcrowded classes (T5) (T10) (T14) (T15) Lack of time (T1) (T4) (T5) (T6) (T9) (T10) (T11) (T12) (T13) (T14)
	Problems with using contemporary assessment and evaluation tools	Expectations for evaluation (T1) Absenteeism (T8) Economic problems (T7) (T14) Paperwork load (T1) (T2) (T10) (T11) (T12) (T13) Overcrowded classes (T4) (T5) (T10) (T14) (T15) Lack of time (T1) (T2) (T5) (T6) (T7) (T9) (T10) (T11) (T12) (T13)(T14)

When the quantitative and qualitative data from the study are evaluated as a whole, it is evident that the two data sets show a high degree of overlap and meaningfully complement one another. The quantitative finding that there is a statistically significant moderate correlation between preschool teachers' frequency of use of assessment tools and their proficiency levels is consistent with the findings from the qualitative interviews, in which teachers cited the reasons of "finding the tools functional" and "getting to know the students." The fact that, in the quantitative data, the highest perception of adequacy is associated with the "development report" and the most frequent use is associated with the "monthly plan evaluation" is explained by the themes in the qualitative findings that these tools are "required to be completed" and are "considered essential guidelines for process monitoring." On the other hand, the fact that "standardized tests" have the lowest levels of use and adequacy in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions is consistent with the methodological framework, given that these tools "require expertise" and are categorized by teachers as falling within the "domain of the guidance service." Consequently, the usage patterns revealed by quantitative data have been used to justify the structural barriers identified in the qualitative data—such as time constraints and paperwork—thereby strengthening the methodological validity of the study.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this section of the study, the quantitative and qualitative findings obtained from the participants are combined and discussed. One of the key results of the research is that there is a moderate positive correlation between the preschool teachers' competence levels and their usage frequencies of assessment and evaluation tools. It was found that the highest relationship exists between competence levels and usage frequency in the Standard Tests tool, with a moderate statistical correlation, while the lowest relationship is observed in the Monthly Plan Evaluation tool, which also has a moderate statistical correlation.

When examining the qualitative findings obtained from the participants, it is evident that preschool teachers primarily use assessment and evaluation tools for reasons such as obtaining detailed information about students, tracking student development, promoting interaction among students, and ensuring the tools' functionality. However, there were very few mentions regarding the necessity of using these tools due to requirements.

In general, when analyzing the reasons for using assessment and evaluation tools, it was observed that preschool teachers place more importance on the process rather than the outcome. Consequently, they primarily use these tools for tracking student development and for supporting the evaluation process at the end of the teaching period. For development tracking, they benefit from tools that involve observing students and recording the results, while for supporting the evaluation process, they use tools based on filling out plans, forms, and other materials found in the preschool education program.

Previous studies found that preschool teachers use various assessment and evaluation tools for different purposes such as tracking students' development, supporting students, facilitating classroom

interaction, ensuring functionality, and supporting the evaluation process (Aybar-İnce, 2022; Büyükgöncü, 2013; Can-Gül, 2009; Elden 2019; Gömleksiz & Kay, 2019; Gürsoy, 2018; Karagöz, 2019; Sezer, 2010; Türkoğlu, 2017; Uzun, 2013).

The findings indicate that preschool teachers perceive themselves as less competent in tools they use infrequently, such as standard tests, which are deemed less functional for preschool education. In contrast, they feel more competent with frequently used tools like the Systematic Observation Form and Play Observation Form, highlighting a positive relationship between usage frequency and perceived competence. This suggests that regular use of assessment tools enhances teachers' skills, benefiting student development.

Development Reports, which document students' progress, are widely prepared and shared with families and management. Preschool teachers often consider themselves competent in using these reports due to their consistent application. Previous studies confirm that Development Reports are a critical tool for tracking development, enabling teachers to monitor progress effectively (Arslan & İlkay, 2015; Aybar-İnce, 2022; Elden, 2019). The high level of competence and frequency observed in Developmental Reports and Monthly Plan Evaluations can be interpreted as a result of administrative mandates rather than purely pedagogical choice. These tools are compulsory documents (report cards) that must be submitted to the school administration and shared with parents at the end of terms. This obligatory nature ensures continuous practice, which leads to a mastery of the reporting format over time, as also suggested by Furat et al. (2012). Consequently, teacher proficiency in these areas might represent a "procedural competence" driven by official requirements.

Additionally, teachers place significant emphasis on portfolio work, a contemporary tool that tracks students' progress from the start to the end of the year. Sharing portfolios with families allows them to observe their child's development firsthand. Supporting studies demonstrate that Development Files and portfolios contribute meaningfully to student development and improve teacher competence (Balcı & Tezel-Şahin, 2021; Kabaş, 2007) These findings emphasize the importance of frequent, practical tool use in enhancing both teacher competency and student outcomes.

Another finding obtained from the study is that the participants frequently use the assessment tools, both traditional and contemporary, and perceive themselves as competent in using them. Preschool teachers are required to conduct assessments based on the plans they implement during the day. The evaluations address questions such as whether the concepts, achievements, and indicators discussed have been achieved, whether the activities met their objectives, the level of learning attained, and the degree to which students participated in the activities, and these tools are frequently used in the process. Similarly, Kılınç et al. (2021) found in their research that the evaluation of daily plans is frequently used in the process, as it helps review the educational process and reinforces the information learned during the day, thus increasing retention.

On the other hand, it was found that some traditional and contemporary assessment tools are less frequently preferred, and the participants consider themselves less competent in using some of these tools. Specifically, the quantitative findings revealed that the least used assessment tool by preschool teachers in the traditional category is the standard tests. Since preschool teachers do not feel competent in standard tests, they do not frequently use them in the assessment and evaluation process. The reason for this could be that the application of standard tests requires expertise. Indeed, Balcı et al. (2012), Bayraktaroğlu & Ayekin-Dülger (2020) and Gokiert et al. (2013) found in their research that preschool teachers do not use standard tests frequently due to a lack of sufficient knowledge and the need for specialized training in their application, and consequently, they do not gain much competence in these tools. A critical perspective on the low usage of standardized tests reveals an institutional division of labor. Qualitative findings suggest that teachers often perceive these tests as the domain of school counselors or psychological guidance experts rather than a regular classroom activity. Furthermore, while teachers may recognize the names of tests like Metropolitan, they often lack insight into the "how" and "why" of their application due to the absence of specialized training during their pre-service education, as noted by Işıkoğlu-Erdoğan et al. (2021). This indicates that the gap between knowledge and practice is not merely an individual failure but a systemic issue reflecting a lack of professional development opportunities in formal assessment tools.

Additionally, the least used contemporary assessment tool by preschool teachers is the Development Control List. Preschool teachers prefer using different types of observation tools for monitoring students' development rather than the Development Control List, as observation tools are easier to use. Similarly, Kan (2007) and Viscione et al. (2017) found in their research that preschool teachers do not frequently use Development Control Lists due to some disadvantages associated with them, and as a result, they do not gain much competence in using this tool.

In the interviews, participants reported frequently combining traditional and contemporary assessment tools. This approach allows teachers to capitalize on the strengths of each method, facilitating data collection, tracking student development, performing effective observations, and sharing information with stakeholders. Such practices align with the literature, highlighting the effectiveness of assessment tools in monitoring progress, determining learning levels, and improving educational outcomes (Aybar-İnce, 2022; Elden, 2019; Gürsoy, 2018; Kumas & Ergül, 2021; Trepanier-Street et al., 2001; Türkoğlu, 2017; Turupçu, 2014). These findings underscore the importance of integrating diverse tools to meet the multifaceted needs of preschool education, enhancing both process and outcome evaluations.

The findings indicate that preschool teachers' competence levels are lower for assessment tools requiring longer-term application, such as Observation Records, Development Reports, and Daily and Monthly Plan Evaluations, compared to their usage frequency. Economic and time-related challenges, alongside time-consuming tasks like paperwork, appear to hinder teachers' ability to develop competence with these tools. Participants highlighted that limited time after daily classroom activities, coupled with large class sizes, negatively impacts their capacity to conduct thorough evaluations. These factors limit opportunities for professional growth and effective tool implementation. Integrating quantitative patterns with qualitative insights provides a holistic explanation for the lower competence scores in long-term application tools like Observation Records. While quantitative data show moderate usage frequency, qualitative interviews reveal that teachers perform the documentation burden of these tools during or after school hours, often leading to fatigue and a perceived lack of depth in their observations. The tension between the pedagogical desire to use contemporary tools and the reality of crowded classrooms (e.g., classes of 25–30 students) limits the "quality" of the assessment process. This suggests that the moderate correlation found between usage frequency and competence is suppressed by structural constraints such as excessive paperwork load, a finding consistent with Aybar-İnce (2022).

Daily Plan Evaluations, the most frequently used tool, are often constrained by tight schedules, as teachers must balance evaluation with completing daily activities. Each tool requires not only knowledge but also practical application skills, further complicating their use in already demanding contexts. Supporting this, prior research

has identified common obstacles, including time shortages, large class sizes, lack of training, excessive paperwork, tool complexity, and insufficient collaboration with families (Arslan & İlkay, 2015; Aybar-İnce, 2022; Balcı & Tezel-Şahin, 2021; Elden, 2019; Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007). Addressing these barriers is essential for improving teachers' proficiency and enabling more effective assessment and evaluation practices in preschool education.

Suggestions

Based on the specific findings of this research, the following targeted suggestions are proposed:

- To address the low competence and usage frequency found in standardized tests ($\bar{X}$=2.83 and 2.37, respectively), specialized in-service training programs should be organized for preschool teachers, as the lack of expertise was identified as a primary barrier.
- Since time constraints and paperwork load were the most significant problems reported by teachers in both traditional and contemporary tools, official assessment forms (e.g., development observation forms) should be simplified or converted into more practical, user-friendly digital formats to reduce the documentation burden.
- To support teachers who develop their own informal assessment tools (such as notebooks and photo-documentation) due to the perceived impracticality of official forms, the preschool education program should be updated to integrate these flexible and functional teacher-developed methods.
- Given that teachers' competence levels are lower for tools requiring long-term application (e.g., observation records) compared to their usage frequency, professional supervision should focus on the quality of implementation rather than just the mandatory completion of these documents.
- Regarding the varied communication methods used with families, school–family cooperation should be strengthened through digital platforms (like e-portfolios) that allow for instant and interactive feedback, addressing the time-related challenges identified in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Artificial IntelligenceUsage Statement: This study used Deepl to improve language clarity, grammar, and academic expression during the preparation of the manuscript.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethical committee approval was received from the Ethics Committee of Siirt University (Approval No.: 4418; Date: March 6, 2023).

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all the participants who agreed to take part in the study.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Author Contributions: Concept – A.T., Z.B.T.; Design – A.T., Z.B.T.; Supervision – A.T.; Resources – Z.B.T.; Materials – Z.B.T.; Data Collection and/or Processing – Z.B.T.; Analysis and/or Interpretation – A.T., Z.B.T.; Literature Search – Z.B.T.; Writing Manuscript – A.T., Z.B.T.; Critical Review – A.T., Z.B.T.

Declaration of Interests: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. None of the authors is a member of the Editorial Board or Advisory Board of HAYEF: Journal of Education.

Funding: The authors declare that this study received no financial support.

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