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INFLUENCES OF SELF-EFFICACY, BELIEFS AND EMOTIONAL STATES IN ASSESSMENT IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

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Abstract

Assessment in preschool education refers to collecting, registering, and analyzing the data that describe the child's progress and achievements and helps in decision making based on the accumulated data interpretation. We have emphasized some definitions of the concept of assessment in education, perspectives on the role, importance, and effectiveness of the most appropriate method that measures, collects, analyzes, and disseminates the performance of preschoolers, and theories and practices for behavior strengthening. For this reasons, we investigated, based on a questionnaire-based quantitative survey, the status-related influences, beliefs, and emotional states in the practice of assessment in preschool education. We assumed that emotional balance, professional skills, beliefs, and teaching and assessment practices influence each other. The results proved that through the collaboration based on the respect given by know-how in education, assessment procedures can be created at the institutional level, to outline trajectories that will lead to academic and socio-emotional success for future students.

Keywords: Evaluation, emotional education, preschool education, tests

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1. Introduction

The assessment process allows teachers to determine how the strategies and activities work and if they need planning modifications to help children achieve the expected learning performances. This information is meant to identify the needs of the children, set goals, and develop possible recovery plans. The approach of this subject was chosen in the context in which preschool education is always challenged to meet the needs of new generations of children, who are born and live in a constantly changing world and who, to learn skills and competencies, need various cognitive, emotional, and social intervention tools. The topic, although analysed and commented on by many education specialists, can be considered important in the context in which each educator customizes for their children, from year to year, the interventions so that they are effective and meet the parents' growing expectations.

The teaching activities involve a continuous assessment, analysis, reporting of the results, and improving registered measures. Effective assessment respects the value of each child's self and is a continuous part of the teaching-learning cycle, diagnostic, summative, and formative, reflecting both the process and the result, is appropriate, fair, varied, and regularly communicated to children and their parents. In kindergarten, teachers need to evaluate children's learning in five learning areas. As young children go through many stages as they grow and learn, teachers must also consider the spiritual, cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development of each child (Nugent, 2015).

2. Problem Statement

Assessment in education involves assessment of learning and development, assessment for learning and development, and assessment as learning. Assessment of learning and development is the most common form of assessment. This is the assessment at a certain time and contains everything that the children have learned and know how to do at that time. This type of assessment can be done on a large scale using a common assessment tool or, on a small scale, to clarify the level of development of a child, to be sent to the family or a specialized institution. Assessment for learning and development refers to the formative assessment that takes place to make decisions that help to further development (Clipa, 2008). Assessment for learning helps teachers make decisions about learning activities every day to improve performance (Oprea, 2007; Penn, 2009).

The results of the assessments are collected to develop and improve the activities, which is why they should be done in different ways and using a variety of methods. In kindergarten, the first step toward a systematic assessment is to set activity goals. Once the objectives have been specified, they can be described more thoroughly by indicators, namely, attributes that describe the quality. They translate the objectives into an assessable form. Through indicators, complex information can be summarized in a more manageable and understandable form and offers the opportunity to create uniform practices and principles appropriately. A prerequisite for the collection of systematic assessment data is that the indicators be further conceptualized into assessment criteria. The criteria are assertions or clear questions that describe the practice. The activities to be assessed are compared to the criteria and based on that, conclusions can be drawn regarding the degree of their fulfilment namely at what level are the activities carried out currently. The criteria should thus describe the desired aspect, qualitatively and quantitatively.

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In its simplest form, the finding related to an assessment criterion is that it is either met or not. The assessment criteria that describe, for example, the standard of the activities, such as poor, good, or excellent, are also called criteria (Almasi, 2009; Campbell et al., 2007). Several types of assessment are used in kindergarten. The diagnostic assessment is a type used to determine what students currently know and can do and identify strengths and weaknesses so that appropriate instructions can be provided. Diagnostic assessment methods used in kindergarten include video recordings and observation sheets (Schipor et al., 2012). There is also the formative assessment that is continuous and used to obtain information and improve children's performance and training. Formative assessment methods used in kindergarten include observation, portfolios, self-reflection and peer reflection, questions and answers, discussions, and testing sheets (Clipa et al., 2021; Hartman et al., 2016).

The summative assessment gives a cumulative description of the pre-schooler's achievements and helps children, parents, and teachers in planning extra training and learning activities. The summative assessment methods used in kindergarten include performance-based tasks, learning journals, discussions, and testing lists (Driscoll, 2010; PLÉ. 2018).

The behavioural theories about learning believe in learning as observable processes, such as actions. In psychology and education, learning theories are used to describe how people learn. Therefore, they help psychologists and teachers understand the complex learning process. There are three main perspectives in learning theories, namely behaviour, cognitivism, and constructivism.

Cognitive theory is a theory of learning psychology that attempts to explain human behaviour by understanding thinking processes. According to authors, constructivism is the theory where people build their understanding and knowledge of the world by experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Although all three learning theories are influential in educational practice, it can be said that behavioural theory had the greatest influence compared to the other two learning theories.

This is because most of the major concepts on which the other two theories are based have some connection to behavioural concepts. According to Dembo (1994), Pavlov (1849-1936) is best known for his contribution to behavioural theory through classical conditioning or stimulus substitution. Conclusions have been drawn that the effect of the stimulus can be generalized, that the extinct responses can be recovered, the higher-order conditioning allows the association of a different unconditioned stimulus with a known conditioned stimulus. Consistent with Thorndike's notion of accurate quantitative processing of information, argues that anything that exists is there in a certain quantity and can be measured. According to the theory, learning involves creating a link between stimulus and response (Dembo, 1994; Touhill, 2017). Thorndike developed three laws: the *law of effect*, which states that the link between the stimulus and response is strengthened when it is positively rewarded and weakened when it is rewarded negatively, *exercise law,* meaning, the more the relation of response to a stimulus is practiced the stronger it becomes, and the *law of training* which states that, due to the structure of the nervous system, some management units, in certain given situations, are more prone to conduct than others.

Thorndike was convinced that a stimulus-response relation was going to be determined when the response is positive and that learning takes place when the stimulus-response relations change in behavioural patterns. Another researcher, Watson (1878-1958) believed that people are born with several reflexes and emotional reactions, such as love and anger. Behaviour development theories cannot be

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discussed without mentioning Skinner's (1904-1990) contributions. He also believed in the stimulus-response model of conditioned behaviour. Operant conditioning is a process called and investigated by Skinner and works on the principle according to which behaviour can either lead to reinforcement, which increases the likelihood of that behaviour being repeated, or to punishment, which decreases the likelihood that the same behaviour will be repeated in the future (Nutbrown, 2012; Oprea, 2007, Shonkoff, 2010).

Because education is an act of teaching and learning, then the theories of behavioural reinforcement should be found continuously in daily activities. Under these conditions, learning can be seen as a construction of personal perceptions of reality based on personal experiences, and its general objective is a form of behavioural display of the trainee. Thus, the whole complex educational learning process is based on behaviour in one way or another. Another aspect of the contribution of behavioural theories to education is the use of lesson objectives during the learning process.

It is vital to state that learning objectives are behavioural objectives since they set standards for how students are expected to behave at the end of the learning experience. Without the behavioural goals that show the general purpose of any learning experience, it can be said that a lesson has no intended direction or purpose. A behavioural goal sets learning goals in quantifiable behaviours. For learning effectiveness, the teacher should ensure a friendly learning environment because the application of operant conditioning in education is simple and direct. Teaching is the arrangement of reinforcement stimuli under which students learn. Maintaining a supportive learning environment prevents pre-schoolers or students from developing a negative attitude toward a taught subject because of the unpleasant feelings associated with the environment and the way it was learned. A controlled learning environment is a premise for total behaviour change (Almasi, 2009).

Adopting design thinking as a mentality can provide educators with new tools and new approaches that often provide simple solutions to the complex challenges they face every day, such as integrating technology and engaging children in learning. The basic concepts of universal learning design include generalization and fairness and are designed to ensure that teaching is adjusted to build on the strengths and needs of all the students.

The concept of general or universal does not mean that there is an optimal solution for everyone, but rather that it reflects the awareness of the unique nature of each child and the need to adapt to differences, creating learning experiences that suit each individual and maximize their ability to progress. This means planning learning opportunities that will extend the learning to all children, regardless of their level of achievement, and help each one reaches its full potential (Bruce & Flynn, 2013; Clipa & Schipor, 2022; Singer et al., 2014; Stonehouse, 2012). Universal learning design encourages teachers to develop a group profile and then plan, from the beginning, to provide teaching tools and materials that are tailored to attract strengths and meet the needs of all children and not just those of the ones with special learning needs (Bârzea, 2006; Trevarthen, 2017).

A learning environment should provide a clear visual perspective on the classroom for all children, it should take into account that all learning materials are accessible to all children and that there is adequate space for all tools that facilitate teaching. It should be as simple as possible. Teachers can avoid unnecessary complexity and minimize distracting information by communicating consistent and

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achievable expectations, working with children to build learning goals, using clear, friendly language, and sequentially arranging information to clarify learning relative importance by breaking down concepts into pieces and providing descriptive feedback during learning. They must provide safety as a precondition for learning. The children have to be safe both physically and emotionally. Educators must provide a friendly and safe environment that is engaging, inclusive, and respectful, that promotes children's learning and well-being, enabling them to learn as much and as well as they can (Oprea, 2007).

3. Research Questions

In our approach, we aimed at investigating, based on a questionnaire quantitative survey, the status-related influences, beliefs, and emotional states in the practice of assessment in preschool education. We assumed that emotional balance, professional skills, beliefs, and teaching and assessment practices influence each other.

4. Purpose of the Study

Specifically, we assumed that there were significant positive correlations between emotional balance and *well-being at work, gratitude and happiness focus*, professional skills related to *perseverance and passion, and self-efficacy*, as well as beliefs and practices related to *how preschool teachers teach and assess*; that there are differences in the beliefs and practices of teaching and assessment (focus on skills and respect for age limits in teaching and assessment) depending on the working environment, the age and seniority of the teachers and the size of the group (number of children in the group).

We found that emotional balance with the dimensions of well-being at work, gratitude and focus on happiness, professional skills related to perseverance, passion and self-efficacy, work environment, age, seniority in the department, and the number of children in the group influence the practices of teaching and assessment with competences-focused on dimensions and compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment. The followed research objectives emphasize the correlations and differences between the analysed variables.

5. Research Methods

The method used was the survey based on a questionnaire. We used the OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)* in which we analysed the preschool teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching and assessing, through the focus on happiness, well-being, gratitude, perseverance, and passion questionnaire. They were applied randomly, in a single stage during the school year 2020-2021, to preschool teachers working in Suceava County.

The items were constructed according to the Likert scale with 5 and 7 values, and the variables were composed by calculating the sum of the values of the corresponding item. The collected data were gathered in an SPSS database, and for their statistical analysis, we used descriptive methods (frequencies and crossovers of variables), bivariate correlations (Pearson), and methods of comparing the differences between variables (t TEST for independent samples).

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To calculate the high (above average) and low (below average) level of the analysed variables, we calculated their means. Thus, in tab. 1.1 is emphasized the focus on happiness mean (55.56), gratitude (32.54), passion and perseverance (28.43), self-efficacy (36.32), well-being (78.020), focus on skills in assessment (49.05), objective or subjective performance descriptors used in assessment (33.96), compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment (31.81) and focus on teaching skills (39.13).

The sample consisted of 100 preschool teachers, who teach in both urban (51) and rural (49) areas. Of those who teach in urban areas, 27 have a teacher certification level I, 7 have teacher certification level II, 12 have a permanent teacher certification and 5 are beginners. In rural areas, out of the 49 teachers, 24 have a teacher certification level I, 12, have a teacher certification level II, 7 have a permanent teacher certification in education, and 6 are beginners. Given the specifics of this profession, all teachers voluntarily present in our sample are women. Of the 7 educators who have a high school education, all have a teacher certification level I, 3 work in urban areas, and 4 in rural areas. Most of the teachers who teach preschool education and who have participated in our investigative approach graduated from undergraduate studies (67).

Of these, 5 beginners work in urban and 5 in rural areas, with permanent teacher certification, 8 in urban and 6 in rural, with teacher certification level II, 4 in urban and 11 in rural, and with teaching certification level I, 16 in urban and 12 in the countryside. Our study was attended by 26 teachers with master's degrees. Of these, 15 work in urban and 11 in rural areas. In urban areas, 4 have permanent teacher certification, 3 – teacher certification level II, and 8 - teacher certification level I. In rural areas, we have a beginner, 1 permanent teacher certification, 1 teacher certification level II, and 8 teacher certification level I.

The distribution of results showed a certain balance between rural and urban in terms of the teachers in preschool education training level. It is gratifying to note that well-trained teachers work in rural areas as well. Most teachers who are part of our investigative approach have a teacher certification level I (51), and just a few are beginners (11). Those with a teaching certification level II and permanent teacher certification are in equal numbers, each 19. The questionnaire was applied on May-June 2021.

6. Findings

We used the OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)* in which we analysed the preschool teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching and assessing, through the focus on happiness, well-being, gratitude, perseverance, and passion questionnaire. They were applied randomly, in a single stage during the school year 2020-2021, to preschool teachers working in Suceava County.

The items were constructed according to the Likert scale with 5 and 7 values, and the variables were composed by calculating the sum of the values of the corresponding item. The collected data were gathered in an SPSS database, and for their statistical analysis, we used descriptive methods (frequencies and crossovers of variables), bivariate correlations (Pearson), and methods of comparing the differences between variables (t TEST for independent samples).

To calculate the high (above average) and low (below average) level of the analysed variables, we calculated their means. Thus, in table 1 is emphasized the focus on happiness mean (55.56), gratitude (32.54), passion and perseverance (28.43), self-efficacy (36.32), well-being (78.020), focus on skills in

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assessment (49.05), objective or subjective performance descriptors used in assessment (33.96), compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment (31.81) and focus on teaching skills (39.13).

Table 1. Distribution of the results according to the calculation of the analysed variables means

		Focus on_ hapiness	Gratitude	Grit	Auto efficiency	Well-being	OCE	Descriptors	DE	OCT
N	Valid	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		55,5600	32,5400	28,4300	36,3200	78,0200	49,0500	33,9600	31,8100	39,1300

The analysis of the collected data showed that 53% of teachers in preschool education have a low level of focus on happiness, while 47% have it high. This means that the respondents consider that their work time passes very quickly, that their life is in the service of a high goal, ie the education of people, that they like to encounter situations that challenge their skills and abilities, and they appreciate that they like to go out, feel euphoric, that they are not always absorbed in what they do, that they do not always take into account the benefit of people in what they do, and do not consider that their life is in the service of a higher purpose.

The majority, 56%, feel very grateful for most of the things that have happened in their lives, too many people, and that they greatly appreciate the events, situations, and people in their past. 48% believe that they have a high level of perseverance and appreciate that they are not discouraged by the obstacles, failures, or disappointments they experience and consider that they work hard for everything they have, that they set goals they do not give up, they strive to complete the projects in which they are involved, and they are conscientious. The results showed that 52% of the respondents are largely distracted from their long-term goals, that they are involved in many projects that are later difficult to complete because they lose interest, and that sometimes obstacles, failures, and discouragements make them give up what they set out to achieve. Most of the teachers, 67%, consider themselves self-efficient. They believe that they can successfully teach any relevant content even to the most difficult students, they are confident that they can maintain a positive relationship with the students' parents, even if tensions arise, and think that their professional development will continue to grow every year, they do not allow themselves distracted from their work goals, and consider that regardless of their day, they can teach efficiently and responsibly.

At work, 56% of the teachers participating in the research consider that they feel good. They said that they have a high level of energy, that they are enthusiastic and inspired, and that they are persevering in the workplace, even if they have challenging times. They consider themselves mentally resilient and feel absorbed in what they have to do. When they work hard, they feel happy, enthusiastic, and proud. They stated that most teachers in preschool, 74%, when assessing children, pay attention to the level of skills they have developed so far.

They are attentive to the way they complete their work tasks if they manage to be attentive for some time, if they work without disturbing their colleagues and if they can verbally communicate their needs, desires, and thoughts, in addition to the cognitive skills they pay attention to in the assessment.

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This indicates that most preschool teachers use active, innovative methods in their assessments. The majority of teachers participating in our investigative approach, 71%, consider it important to assess the effort, daily participation in classes, behaviour and conduct, cooperation with the colleagues, and the ability to follow rules and follow instructions, in addition to cognitive skills. This entitles us to say that most preschool teachers assess the skills and competencies that active teaching and learning practices develop. These cannot be assessed by standardized assessments alone, but innovative methods are needed. Most teachers, 75%, appreciate that when they teach, they aim at developing skills, not just passing on knowledge and information. They train children in finding solutions to the problems they have to debate, they value discipline and creativity, and they aim at developing critical thinking and the daily development of the cognitive and socio-emotional skills of the children they work with.

To demonstrate that there are significant positive correlations between emotional balance with the dimensions of *well-being at work, gratitude, and happiness*, professional skills related to *perseverance, passion, and self-efficacy*, as well as beliefs and practices related to the way teachers in preschool, teach and assess, we used the Pearson correlation test. We wanted to emphasize the correlations between independent variables that belong to the balance with the dimensions of well-being at work, gratitude, focus on happiness, and professional skills related to perseverance and passion and self-efficacy, as independent variables and teaching beliefs and practices, and assessment with skills-focused on dimensions and compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment as dependent variables.

The results of the analysis showed that there are no significant correlations between independent variables that belong to the balance with the dimensions of well-being at work, gratitude and focus on happiness, and professional skills related to perseverance, passion, and self-efficacy, as independent variables and beliefs, and teaching and assessment practices with competences-focused on dimensions and respecting age limits in teaching and assessment as dependent variables. It is observed in the table 1.2 that there are significant positive correlations between the focus on assessment skills and descriptors ($r = 0.870$), respecting boundaries ($r = 0.932$), and the focus on learning skills ($r = 0.915$). The more teachers use active teaching methods in teaching, the more they will pay attention to assessing the socio-emotional skills and competencies that are being developed in addition to cognitive acquisition and will also use innovative assessment methods that emphasize these skills. There are significant positive correlations between descriptors and compliance with age limits in teaching ($r = 0.860$) and focus on learning competencies ($r = 0.856$). If they use innovative teaching methods and are careful not to exceed the age-specific curriculum, they will also take into account the socio-emotional skills of the children in addition to the cognitive ones. There are significant correlations between respecting teaching boundaries and focusing on teaching competencies. Teachers who will use active teaching methods will not exceed the age-specific curriculum and will respect the effort they put into the children they work with.

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Table 2. Calculation of the correlation coefficients between the variables analysed in the research

Correlations										
		Focus on - happiness	**Gratitude**	**Grit**	**Self-efficiency**	**Well-being**	**Focus on assessment skills**	**Descriptors**	**School preparation respecting boundaries**	**Focus on learning skills**
Focus on - happiness	Pearson Correlation	1	,541**	,515**	,350**	,532**	,092	,081	,049	,098
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000	,000	,000	,363	,424	,628	,334
Gratitude	Pearson Correlation	,541**	1	,490**	,654**	,474**	,066	,042	,051	,069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000	,000	,000	,517	,678	,613	,495
Grit	Pearson Correlation	,515**	,490**	1	,638**	,737**	,084	,078	,090	,073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000		,000	,000	,408	,438	,375	,470
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Self-efficiency	Pearson Correlation	,350**	,654**	,638**	1	,469**	,071	,016	,073	,041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000		,000	,483	,872	,469	,686
Well-being	Pearson Correlation	,532**	,474**	,737**	,469**	1	-,062	,000	-,027	-,026
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000		,538	,998	,793	,798
Focus on assessment skills	Pearson Correlation	,092	,066	,084	,071	-,062	1	,870**	,932**	,915**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,363	,517	,408	,483	,538		,000	,000	,000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Descriptors	Pearson Correlation	,081	,042	,078	,016	,000	,870**	1	,860**	,856**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,424	,678	,438	,872	,998	,000		,000	,000
School preparation (respecting boundaries)	Pearson Correlation	,049	,051	,090	,073	-,027	,932**	,860**	1	,907**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,628	,613	,375	,469	,793	,000	,000		,000
Focus on learning skills	Pearson Correlation	,098	,069	,073	,041	-,026	,915**	,856**	,907**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,334	,495	,470	,686	,798	,000	,000	,000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

We assumed that there are differences in teaching and assessment beliefs and practices (focus on competencies and respect for age limits in teaching and assessment) depending on the work environment. We considered as an independent variable the work environment, urban and rural, and the dependent variables being the teaching and assessment practices with the dimensions of focus on skills and respect

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for the age limits in teaching and assessment. To test the validity of hypothesis 2, we used Test t for independent samples. The data are presented in table 3.

There are significant differences in the focus on competencies in environmental assessment (t (98) = 3,114, p = 0.002). Urban teachers are more focused on assessment skills than those who teach in rural areas. There are significant differences in descriptors depending on the environment (t (98) = 3.004, p = 0.003). Teachers who teach in urban areas are more interested than those in rural areas in descriptors who pursue socio-emotional skills in addition to those in cognitive assessment. There are significant differences in compliance with the limits in academic preparation for the school depending on the environment (t (98) = 3,550, p = 0.001). Teachers in urban areas pay more attention to respecting the limits in the training of pre-schoolers for school than those in rural areas. There are significant differences in the focus on learning competencies depending on the environment (t (98) = 3,495, p = 0.001). Urban teachers are more focused on teaching skills than those in rural areas.

Table 3. Results regarding the difference at the level of variables focus on assessment and learning competencies, descriptors, and compliance with the limits in terms of preparation for school according to the variable work environment

Group Statistics					
	Residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	*t* TEST
Focus on assessment competencies	urban	51	50,4706	1,22234	*t* (98) = 3,114, p = 0,002
	rural	49	47,5714	6,53197	
Descriptors	urban	51	35,0784	1,93745	*t* (98) =3,004, p =0,003
	rural	49	32,7959	5,05379	
Preparation for school (respecting boundaries)	urban	51	33,4118	1,73409	*t* (98) =3,550, p =0,001
	rural	49	30,1429	6,33443	
Focus on learning skills	urban	51	40,7451	1,67144	*t* (98) =3,495, p =0,001
	rural	49	37,4490	6,51620	

We also assumed that there are differences in the beliefs and practices of teaching and assessment (focus on competencies and respect for age limits in teaching and assessment) depending on the age of the teachers. We considered as an independent variable the age of the respondents with two values, low level (below average) and high level (above average), and the dependent variables, teaching and assessment practices with the dimensions focus on competencies and respecting the age limits in teaching and assessment. To test the validity of this hypothesis, we used Test t for independent samples. We have thus shown that there are significant differences in the focus on assessment competencies depending on age (t (98) = 1,921, p = 0.05). Teachers with above-average ages (> = 38.43) are more focused on assessment skills than those with ages below average. There are significant differences regarding the focus on learning competencies according to the age (t (98) = 2,135 p = 0.03). Teachers with ages above average (> = 38.43) are more focused on teaching skills than those with ages below average, according to table 4.

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Table 4. Results regarding the difference at the level of the variables targeting assessment and learning competencies, descriptors, regarding age-appropriate school readiness limits

Group Statistics					
	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	*t* TEST
Focus on assessment competencies	>= 38,43	51	48,1569	5,84935	*t* (98) =-1,921, p =0,05
	< 38,43	49	49,9796	3,35093	
Descriptors	>= 38,43	51	33,4314	4,56620	*t* (98) =-1,382, p = 0,17
	< 38,43	49	34,5102	3,13663	
School preparation (knowing limits)	>= 38,43	51	31,1373	5,88904	*t* (98) =-1,432, p =0,156
	< 38,43	49	32,5102	3,42249	
Focus on teaching / learning competencies	>= 38,43	51	38,1176	5,99549	*t* (98) =-2,135, p =0,03
	< 38,43	49	40,1837	3,37067	

We also assumed that there are differences in teaching and assessment beliefs and practices (focus on skills and compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment) depending on seniority. We considered as an independent variable the seniority of the respondents with two values, low level (below average) and high level (above average), and the dependent variables, teaching and assessment practices with dimensions focus on competencies and respecting age limits in teaching and assessment. For testing, we used Test t for independent samples. The results showed that there are no correlations regarding the variables analysed according to age, as in table 5.

Table 5. Results on the difference at the level of the variables focused on assessment and learning skills, descriptors, and compliance with the limits regarding the preparation for school according to the seniority variable

Group Statistics					
	Seniority	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	*t* TEST
Focus on assessment skills	>= 15,43	46	48,8696	5,04473	*t* (98) =-0,342, p =0,73
	< 15,43	54	49,2037	4,72800	
Descriptors	>= 15,43	46	34,0870	3,85185	*t* (98) =0,295, p =0,76
	< 15,43	54	33,8519	4,06275	
School preparation (knowing the limits)	>= 15,43	46	31,7609	5,06046	*t* (98) =-0,093, p =0,927
	< 15,43	54	31,8519	4,74006	
Focus on learning skills	>= 15,43	46	39,0000	5,21536	*t* (98) =,-0,238, p =0,81
	< 15,43	54	39,2407	4,80540	

We assumed that there were differences in teaching and assessment beliefs and practices (focus on competencies and respect for age limits in teaching and assessment) depending on the size of the group (number of children in the group). We considered as independent variable the number of children in the group of respondents with two values, low level (below average) and high level (above average), and the dependent variables, teaching and assessment practices with the dimensions focus on skills and compliance with age limits in teaching and assessment. To test the validity of this hypothesis, we used Test t for independent samples. The results are presented in table 6 showed that there are no correlations regarding the analysed variables according to the number of children in the group.

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Table 6. Results on the difference at the level of variables targeting assessment and learning skills, descriptors, and compliance with the limits in terms of school readiness according to the variable number of children in the group

Group Statistics					
	Number children/class	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	*t* TEST
Focus on assessment skills	>= 24,37	57	49,1404	4,60372	*t* (98) =0,213, p =0,83
	< 24,37	43	48,9302	5,22082	
Descriptors	>= 24,37	57	34,1930	3,54279	*t* (98) =0,677, p =0,50
	< 24,37	43	33,6512	4,45551	
School readiness (knowing limits)	>= 24,37	57	31,8947	4,66631	*t* (98) =0,200, p =0,84
	< 24,37	43	31,6977	5,17105	
Focus on learning skills	>= 24,37	57	39,4035	4,62856	*t* (98) =0,631, p = 0,52
	< 24,37	43	38,7674	5,43287	

The results showed that teachers with ages above average (> = 38.43) are more focused on teaching and assessment skills than those with ages below average. The more teachers use active teaching methods, the more they will pursue, in addition to the cognitive acquisition, the socio-emotional skills and competencies that are being developed and will also use innovative assessment methods to emphasize these skills. If they use innovative teaching methods and are careful not to exceed the age-specific curriculum, they will respect the effort they put into the children they work with. Compared to those who teach in rural areas, urban educators are more skills-oriented, more interested in descriptors who pursue socio-emotional as well as cognitive skills, are more attentive to respecting boundaries in preparing pre-schoolers for school and are more teaching skills-oriented than those in rural areas.

7. Conclusions

Discussions are needed to raise awareness of the fact that assessment is an integral part of teaching and that it is necessary to determine children's strengths, needs, and interests, monitor their progress over time, determine how to solve problems, celebrate learning, achievement and emphasize performance. It is necessary to identify and analyse the performance of children from the point of view of the curriculum, provide information about the assessed situation to parents and all those related to the education of children they work with, analyse the program and methodology, work regularly to improve teaching, identify authentic methods for the daily assessment of the effectiveness of the educational act by using routine activities, supporting exploratory learning in which children work together to solve a problem, clarify a concept, assess activities or continue a story because when they describe, explain and justify develop meta-cognition and learn to learn and emphasize the importance of dialogue between preschool teachers in sharing experiences so that, regardless of the work environment, level of training and age, preschoolers benefit (Brodin & Renblad, 2015; Dunphy, 2008) from educational acts that enhance their socio-emotional and cognitive abilities so that, from this perspective, they can be assured of a successful academic career.

The type of research may be considered insufficient. A qualitative approach to the analysis of assessment practices and not only could provide a broader and more conclusive picture of how the

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educational activity takes place in the group rooms. If we asked them openly, all teachers would say that they use active methods in both teaching and assessment, but in fact, this is not always the case.

Active methods require interactivity and a lot of interaction, and this requires high-class management to be able to effectively manage the teaching act. Other causes could be investigated than those analysed that determine the application to the classroom in teaching and assessment of active learning methods or based on the transmission and reception of information.

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