

THE CHALLENGES AND INSIGHTS OF EDUCATORS USING THE KUNO BELLER DEVELOPMENT CHART: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This study examines the lived experiences of early childhood educators who employ the Kuno Beller Development Chart (KBDC) to assess and promote gross motor development in young children in multicultural and bilingual educational environments. The purpose of this research is to better understand the KBDC's effectiveness, the challenges that educators experience while implementing it, and how it affects teaching methods.

Data were collected from early childhood educators in Stuttgart, Germany, using a qualitative phenomenological approach, including semi-structured interviews via Google Forms, focus group discussions, and reflective journals. The data gathered were evaluated using thematic analysis to gain vital insights concerning the utilization of the KBDC in various learning contexts.

The findings show that, while the KBDC provides a structured framework for monitoring motor development, its implementation is frequently hindered by cultural differences, time restrictions, and a lack of formal training. Educators called for more culturally sensitive, inclusive, and adaptive assessment instruments (Adolph & Hoch, 2019). Despite these challenges, the study found that the KBDC improves teaching practices by improving organized observations, allowing customized interventions, and strengthening communication with parents (Santrock, 2021).

This study emphasizes the need of institutional support, continuous professional growth, and the use of digital technologies to increase the effectiveness of developmental assessments (Cameron et al., 2016). The study shows that tailoring the KBDC to different cultural backgrounds can improve its implementation and effectiveness. Future recommendations involve improving educator training programs, including digital innovations, and undertaking more study to determine the long-term influence on early childhood education (Rogoff, 2003).

Key Words: Gross Motor Skills; Early Childhood Education; Phenomenological Study; Teaching Practices; Multicultural Education; Kuno Beller Development Chart

Introduction

Assessing and supporting children's development is vital for providing effective educational interventions, particularly among early childhood education (Bornstein, Hahn, & Haynes, 2012). Gross motor development, a significant aspect of early childhood development, influences a child's capacity to explore their surroundings, interact

socially, and participate in learning activities (Adolph & Franchak, 2017). In multicultural and bilingual settings, developmental assessment methods must be flexible to various learning situations (Gonzalez, Alvarez, & Nelson, 2019). The Kuno Beller Development Chart (KBDC) is a wellknown instrument for assessing children's motor abilities; nevertheless, its application in

culturally varied settings is still being addressed (Moser et al., 2019).

Existing research emphasizes the use of structured developmental assessment methods in tracking children's growth and identifying areas for intervention (Cameron et al., 2016). However, educators working in multicultural contexts frequently encounter challenges in integrating standardized frameworks with the individual developmental patterns of children from various language and cultural backgrounds (Rogoff, 2003). These issues emphasize the necessity for further research into KBDC's practical use in foreign educational environments and identify methods to improve its efficacy (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the lived experiences of early childhood educators who use the KBDC to assess and foster gross motor development (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach to gather educators' insights, challenges, and recommendations for effectively using the chart in various classroom contexts. The findings will help to improve early childhood assessment methods by recommending modifications to make the KBDC more inclusive and culturally flexible (Vygotsky, 1978).

This study seeks to help strengthen assessment methods through integrating educators' experiences and recommendations, ensuring that they reflect the different developmental paths of young learners. Enhancing the KBDC's flexibility and efficacy will eventually benefit educators, children, and early childhood education policymakers (Santrock, 2021).

Methods

Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenology research approach to investigate early childhood educators' lived experiences with the Kuno Beller

Development Chart. The phenomenological technique was used to gather in-depth insights into educators' perspectives, problems, and modifications when applying the KBDC in their teaching practice (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Population and Sample

The research involved early childhood educators from multiple branches of the Early Bird Club in Stuttgart, Germany. A purposive sample strategy was employed to choose individuals who had direct experience with the KBDC. The sample included nine educators who had at least one year of experience utilizing the instrument in their teaching activities.

Data Collection Method

Three qualitative data gathering methods were used.

1. Semi-structured interviews - Individual interviews were conducted via Google Form and done with open-ended questions to allow participants to discuss their specific experiences with the KBDC.
2. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) - Educators participated in a focus group discussion to promote collaborative reflection on KBDC challenges and best practices.
3. Reflective journal - Participants were requested to keep reflected journals for four weeks, recording their daily observations, insights, and changes to how they used the KBDC.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to examine the data gathered. The transcribed interviews, focus group discussions, and journal entries were coded with NVivo software to identify emerging themes and patterns. The study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic method,

which involved familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, identifying themes, assessing themes, defining and labeling themes, and writing the final report.

Ethical Consideration

The Philippine Christian University Ethics Board provided ethical approval.

Participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, all participants were assigned pseudonyms, and data was securely kept in accordance with GDPR requirements (Flick, 2018).

This thorough methodology guaranteed that the findings correctly represented educators' real-world experiences with the KBDC while also upholding research integrity and ethical standards.

Results

Data analysis revealed the following key findings:

1. Challenges in Implementation - Educators experienced difficulties to adapt the KBDC to multicultural classrooms considering the differences in child development practices across cultures.
2. Impact on Teaching Practices - The implementation of the KBDC affected structured observations, allowing educators to create personalized learning activities based on needs of pupils.
3. Need for Training and Institutional Support - Many educators acknowledged a need for professional training and additional resources to improve the capacity to use the KBDC efficiently.
4. Parental Engagement - The study found that involving parents in discussions concerning their child's development enhanced collaboration between educators and families.

These findings provide insight on how the KBDC is implemented in various educational settings, highlighting opportunities for development in professional training, flexibility, and institutional support.

Table 1. Summarizes key themes from educators' experiences with the KBDC.

Theme	Description
Challenges in Implementation	Cultural and developmental differences provide challenges.
Impact on Teaching Practices	Enhances structured observation and intervention strategies.
Need for Training and Institutional Support	Lack of formal training hinders implementation.
Parental Engagement	Improves communication between educators and parents.

Discussion

This study's findings support the effectiveness of the Kuno Beller Development Chart (KBDC) in assessing gross motor development in early childhood education settings. However, challenges such as cultural differences, a lack of formal training, and time restrictions limit its continuous implementation. The findings are consistent with previous studies, which found that standardized developmental assessment methods frequently require modifications to fit varied educational environments (Moser et al., 2019; Adolph & Hoch, 2019).

The study supports up the argument that structured assessment instruments like the KBDC assist educators in tracking developmental progress and implementing targeted interventions

(Santrock, 2021). However, similar to Rogoff's (2003) results on cultural implications in child development, this study demonstrates that children from multicultural families may not always meet specified developmental milestones. As a result, a more flexible, culturally relevant modification of the KBDC is necessary.

One of the study's key findings is that the KBDC has a considerable influence on teaching methods. Educators claimed the tool enhanced their capacity to conduct structured observations and create tailored learning strategies. This is consistent with Cameron et al. (2016), who highlight the importance of structured assessment methods in supporting effective teaching practices. Nonetheless, the study found that many educators need extra training in order to effectively utilize the KBDC, underscoring issues stated in previous research on the need for professional development in assessment approaches (Gonzalez et al., 2019).

The study also emphasized the value of parental engagement. Educators stated that utilizing the KBDC improved communication with parents concerning their child's development. This conclusion is consistent with previous research that shows that effective parent-educator collaboration improves early

childhood learning outcomes (Bornstein, Hahn, & Haynes, 2012).

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its benefits, this research has limitations. The sample size was confined to educators from a single early childhood education institution in Stuttgart, Germany, perhaps limiting the findings' generalizability. Future study may include a larger sample from diverse institutions and geographical regions in order to have a more thorough knowledge of the KBDC's efficacy in different cultural contexts.

Furthermore, while this study used self-reported data from interviews and focus groups, future research might include direct classroom observations to triangulate findings and improve reliability. Further research might look at the integration of digital technologies with the KBDC to increase efficiency and usability in current educational environments.

By addressing these limitations, future research may build on the findings of this study to improve developmental assessment tools and make them more inclusive, adaptive, and successful in promoting early childhood education.

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