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THE USE OF THE DENVER II DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING TEST IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS AND ITS ADMINISTRATION BY TEACHERS

Annotation

The Denver II Developmental Screening Test is widely used to assess children's motor, language, social and cognitive development. This study explores the application of the Denver II test in educational settings from teachers' perspectives, focusing on its cultural adaptability, usability, and the challenges faced in classroom administration. Using a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews, the research gathered insights from 20 teachers working in Turkish preschool settings. Content analysis of the interviews revealed several key themes. Teachers identified Denver II as a beneficial tool for tracking individual developmental progress and recognizing children's strengths and areas needing improvement. They also emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation, noting that modifications made the test more reliable and accessible for Turkish students. However, time management and maintaining classroom attention emerged as significant obstacles to its effective use in larger classroom environments. Teachers expressed a need for further training and technical support to enhance their competency in administering the test accurately and efficiently. These findings suggest that the Denver II test can be a valuable resource in education if coupled with teacher training, support in classroom management, and continuous adaptation to align with cultural and linguistic contexts. The study concludes that prioritizing such support can make developmental screening more effective within diverse educational environments and contribute to early childhood intervention practices.

Keywords: Developmental Screening, Denver II Developmental Screening Test, Child Development, Cultural Adaptation, Classroom Environment, Test Administration, Classroom Setting.

Introduction. Designed to evaluate children's motor, verbal, social, and cognitive development, the Denver II Developmental Screening Test is a widely used screening instrument [1]. Applied to identify early developmental impairments, this test has a broad spectrum of uses globally and is crucial essential in the field of child development [2]. In the sphere of education, particularly at the preschool and primary school levels, it provides the chance to keep a close eye on children's developmental situation. Denver II supports professionals in observing individual developmental variations and planning supportive strategies [3].

Studies on the application of developmental screening tests in educational environments in the literature show different results on the difficulties instructors could have while running these tests and the classroom relevance of the tests [4]. More study on the competencies needed to apply Denver II effectively in educational contexts is still required [5]. It is believed that the Denver II helps teachers to recognize their students' developmental status more accurately, particularly in alignment with structured observational criteria [6].

Assessing children's age-appropriate performance in the domains of motor, language, social, and cognitive development is mostly dependent on the Denver II Developmental Screening Test. Various research on the use of this test, especially in preschool education, and its applicability by teachers [7] abound in the literature. The integration of Denver II in the classroom supports structured developmental follow-up and helps identify specific learning needs in real-time settings [8].

Some studies underline that teachers' use of developmental screening tests guarantees early identification of children and their referral to early intervention programs [9]. Still, teachers must possess enough knowledge and ability to give such developmental tests. According to a study by Wittmer and Petersen [5, p.452] giving instructors fundamental knowledge on developmental

assessment instruments helps them to use such assessments effectively. Teachers may face challenges in managing time and engaging children effectively during developmental assessments [4, p. 335].

Furthermore, research on the relevance of developmental screening tests such as Denver II in many cultural settings underline the need of customizing the test [6, p. 124]. Teachers administering Denver II are advised to consider cultural nuances in communication and social behavior for improved applicability [10].

Consistent with this body of research, it is decided that instructors should have training on this issue and create answers to the problems they run across in the field of education if Denver II is to be used more wisely there. Furthermore, tests carried out abroad reveal that Denver II's cultural flexibility greatly influences the usability of the test in the field of education [6, p. 127].

Denver II helps professionals identify developmental needs and tailor their support accordingly [3, p. 1262]. Nonetheless, teachers must have specific knowledge and abilities if they are to deliver this test with effectiveness. According to the literature, the effective application of developmental assessment tools depends on the user's knowledge and experience [4, p. 328].

Teachers may face difficulties such as time constraints and limited student focus when using tools like the Denver II [5, p. 352]. Particularly in packed classrooms, it may be challenging to give every child enough time. Consequently, some educators would rather help the Denver II test with group activities than give it personally. Still, such cooperative projects could compromise the test's accuracy and dependability [8, p. 115].

Teachers also have to be informed on the test's language and cultural adaptation. Denver II and other developmental screening tests could have to be altered to fit the cultural setting the children live in if they are meant to be adapted to another. Consequently, the evaluation procedure will be more effective if teachers can understand this test in a way fit for the language and cultural framework of their own pupils [10, p. 487].

To properly apply the Denver II test in the classroom, teachers also have to get particular training and create plans to improve its applicability. Developmental screening training programs for teachers have been found in certain research on this topic to improve their test administration and result interpretation skills [9, p. 1931].

Therefore, this study aims to explore how preschool teachers perceive the applicability, benefits, and challenges of the Denver II Developmental Screening Test in the classroom. Specifically, it seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' views on the applicability of the Denver II test in classroom settings?
2. What challenges do teachers encounter when administering the test in classroom environments?
3. What are teachers' evaluations regarding the cultural and linguistic adaptation of the test?
4. How do teachers perceive the contribution of the Denver II test to supporting children's development?
5. What kind of training and technical support do teachers need to effectively administer the Denver II test?

Methods and materials. This study intends to be a qualitative one meant to assess, from the teachers' point of view, the relevance of the Denver II Developmental Screening Test in the field of education. In this regard, the qualitative research approach is suitable for assessing the usage of Denver II in the classroom environment since it enables a thorough awareness of participants' experiences and viewpoints [11].

Design of Research. The approach of this investigation was phenomenological. The phenomenological approach emphasizes close study of people's experiences, impressions, and interpretations of a given occurrence [12]. The phenomenon under investigation is the experiences of teachers who use the Denver II test in the classroom environments.

Attendees. Ten preschool curriculum Turkish instructors' opinions form the foundation of the study. Selected using the maximum diversity sample technique, the participants comprise teachers with varying ages, experience spans, and degrees of education. This diversity seeks to offer several angles on the relevance of Denver II [13].

Tools for Gathering Data. The data collecting process used a semi-structured interviewing approach. Based on subjects covered in the literature, the interview form was created and comprises of questions on instructors' knowledge levels about the Denver II test, their experiences with the test's applicability, and the difficulties they faced. The following are the questions put to the teachers:

- What is your assessment of the Denver II test's application in the classroom?
- As you are giving the test, what difficulties arise?
- Regarding the test's language and cultural features, what impressions do you have?
- How can the Denver II test help to boost children's growth?
- Does administering the Denver II test call for training?

Analysing. Every interview lasted roughly thirty to forty-five minutes and took place face-to-face in an area judged suitable by the participants. Later transcribed from taped interviews.

Content analysis was applied to the data obtained from the interviews. The recorded interviews were first transcribed and then carefully examined. The transcriptions were analyzed to identify recurring themes that reflected teachers' experiences and perspectives. These data were categorized and coded according to the identified themes [14]. To ensure reliability, a second researcher participated in the coding process. Additionally, an independent reviewer examined the responses to confirm the consistency of the findings. To further strengthen the validity of the results, some participants were invited to review the findings and provide feedback, a process known as member checking.

Results and their discussion. This section presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from teachers regarding their experiences with the Denver II Developmental Screening Tests. The results have been categorized into key themes, which reflect teachers' views on the applicability of the test in the classroom, the challenges encountered during its administration, and the cultural and educational factors affecting its use. Each theme is supported by participants quotations and illustrated with relevant tables. Teachers' evaluations of the Denver II test's appropriateness in classroom settings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Views Regarding the Denver II Test's Appropriateness in the Classroom Setting

<i>How do you evaluate the applicability of the Denver II test in a classroom setting?</i>			
Theme	Expressions	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Applicability	Denver II helps me to more clearly see the children's strong and developing features. (Teacher 3, 7, 12)	14	70
	The test should be done one-on-one; a classroom environment takes too much time. (Teacher 1, 5, 14)		
Time Management	Administering tests in crowded classrooms is challenging. (Teacher 2, 8) I have difficulty using time efficiently. (Teacher 6, 15)	6	30

Source: created by authors

Examining Table 1 reveals that fourteen teachers expressed favorable opinions on the relevance of the Denver II test in the classroom setting. Thanks to the test, teachers have said they could see kids' areas of strength and areas needing improvement. Six teachers have noted, meanwhile, that time management is a major obstacle to test administration. They have said that the test's efficacy is limited notably in packed classrooms since it is challenging to provide personalized time to every student. This scenario suggests that teachers could want instruction to enhance their test-related classroom management techniques.

Teachers' views on the challenges they faced while administering the Denver II test are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Views on the Challenges Found in Administering the Test

<i>What challenges do you encounter while administering the test?</i>			
Theme	Expressed	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)

Time Management and Challenges Faced in Implementation	In crowded classrooms, it is difficult to give each student enough time. (Teacher 2, 8, 11) To complete the test thoroughly, sometimes individual work outside of class is necessary. (Teacher 4, 10)	15	75
Classroom Management	It's hard to get the class's attention during the test. (Teacher 3, 9) Students sometimes lose interest. (Teacher 5, 12)	5	25

Source: created by authors

Examining Table 2, 15 teachers have indicated trouble with time management. Furthermore regarded as major difficulties during the exam administration process by five teachers were time management and classroom control. Teachers have said that since the test calls for stillness in the classroom, it is difficult to keep kids' attention during it and to grab their interest. This result suggests that suitable materials and methods should support the Denver II test thereby improving its usefulness in the classroom environment.

Teachers' views on the cultural adaptation and language aspects of the Denver II test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Views on Test Cultural Adaptation and Language Aspects

<i>What do you think about the cultural adaptation and language aspects of the test?</i>			
Theme	Expressed	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Aspects of the Test Related to Cultural Adaptation and Language	Adapting the test to Turkish culture makes it easier for students to understand the questions (Teacher, 1,3,7). Including expressions specific to Turkish culture in the test helps students respond more comfortably (Teacher 9,17). Standard questions have been adapted to fit Turkish culture, which makes adaptation easier (Teacher 8, 11). Thanks to cultural adaptation, students participate comfortably (Teacher 13,19).	12	60
Role Supporting Linguistic Comprehensibility and Communication	The language of the test has been simplified in a way that is suitable for students, which makes the process easier (Teacher 20). The questions are presented in understandable Turkish (Teacher 14,18).	8	40

Source: created by authors

Examining Table 3, most of the teachers - 12 - said that children adjusted more readily to the Denver II test process and that the standardizing of the test in Turkey took cultural and linguistic consideration. According to the statements provided by the teachers who fit Turkish culture, the questions were easier for the pupils to grasp and their involvement in the process rose. It is realized that more efficient communication with pupils results from linguistic clarity and cultural alignment. Teachers' vies on the Denver II test's contribution to supporting children's development are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.Views on Denver II Test Contribution to Support Children's Development

<i>What are the contributions of the Denver II test in supporting children's development?</i>			
Theme	Expressed	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
The Role of Testing in Supporting Children's Development	With this test, I can see in which areas the students are lacking, allowing me to do additional work for their development. (Teacher 7, 15, 18) It is a very useful tool for tracking in-class development. (Teacher 5, 19)	11	55

Individual Development Tracking	It makes it easier for me to track the individual development of the children. (Teacher 2, 4) It allows me to see the area where the student is lacking. (Teacher 8, 11)	9	45
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Source: created by authors

When Table 4 is examined, a large portion of the teachers (11 teachers) indicated that the Denver II test is a very useful tool for recognizing children's developmental status and for individual education planning. The test provides guidance to teachers in observing children's developmental processes and offers support in identifying children's individual developmental needs (9 teachers). This finding indicates that the Denver II test can be effectively used as a developmental tracking tool in the classroom.

Teachers' views regarding the need for training to administer the Denver II test are presented Table 5.

Table 5. Views Regarding the Need of Training to Administer the Denver II Test

<i>Do you need training to administer the Denver II test?</i>			
Theme	Expressed	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Need for Educational Support	I received training to administer the test, but more practice is needed. (Teacher 10, 14) Training is needed to understand some technical aspects. (Teacher 8, 20)	13	65
Technical Support Requirement	I need guidance in some test stages. (Teacher 3, 12) There is a need for support in the implementation steps of the test. (Teacher 7, 18)	7	35

Source: created by authors

Teachers said, looking at Table 5, that rehearsing more and getting technological support when giving the Denver II examination would help (13 teachers). According to specific test phases, direction is required; moreover, supportive instruction is crucial to reduce mistakes during application (7 teachers). This finding indicates that improving training and guidance services for teachers will contribute to the more effective use of the test.

In this study, teachers' opinions on the use of the Denver II Developmental Screening Test in the educational environment were evaluated. Denver II is an important tool for identifying developmental delays in children and determining their individual educational needs. This test provides an opportunity to observe children's developmental strenghts and needs [1, p. 10]. The findings obtained in the study indicate that teachers have diverse opinions regarding the applicability of the test and the challenges faced in the classroom environment. Especially challenges such as time management and providing a quiet environment in the classroom highlight teachers' needs to enhance the test's applicability. As stated by Petersen and Swartz [5, p. 425], providing teachers with basic training in developmental assessment tools can enhance the effective use of such tests.

Most teachers have provided positive feedback regarding the cultural adaptation of the Denver II test. The adaptation of the test in Turkey, taking into account the cultural context, has contributed to students better understanding the questions. This approach is also supported by Zubler et al. [9, p. 1932], who emphasize that developmental surveillance tools should be aligned with cultural and contextual factors to ensure their applicability. This perspective is supported by Guralnick [4, p. 338]. emphasized the importance of adapting developmental assessments in different cultures to meet children's needs.

One of the most significant challenges teachers face during the administration of the Denver II test is time management. It has been noted that in crowded classrooms, it is difficult to allocate sufficient time to each child, and therefore, the individual administration of the test may be limited

in a classroom setting. As emphasized in the literature [8, p. 124], teachers' inability to allocate sufficient time during the developmental assessment process can affect the accuracy of the test. Therefore, improving time management skills for teachers can contribute to the more effective use of the test.

At last, it is seen that the successful application of the test depends on teachers having technical direction and educational support. According to studies by Bagnato and Neisworth [7, p. 218], developmental screening test applicability rises with educating instructors for them. In this regard, it is advised to create initiatives meant to satisfy teachers' educational demands.

Conclusion. This study aimed to examine preschool teachers' perspectives on the use of the Denver II Developmental Screening Test, focusing on its classroom applicability, cultural adaptation, developmental benefits, implementation challenges, and teachers' training needs. Based on the research findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Applicability of the Denver II Test in Classroom Settings

Teachers generally acknowledged the usefulness of the Denver II test for identifying children's developmental strengths and areas requiring support. However, they emphasized that the test is time-consuming and difficult to apply effectively in large classroom settings without one-on-one administration.

2. Challenges Encountered During Test Administration

Time constraints and difficulties in maintaining classroom discipline were the most frequently reported challenges. Teachers stated that managing students' attention and completing the test without disruption was especially difficult in crowded classrooms.

3. Evaluation of the Test's Cultural and Linguistic Adaptation

Most participants found that the test's adaptation to the Turkish cultural and linguistic context facilitated student comprehension and participation. The inclusion of culturally relevant expressions was seen as an important factor in increasing the test's reliability and usability.

4. Contribution of the Denver II Test to Child Development

Teachers reported that the Denver II test supported the identification of individual developmental needs and facilitated planning for additional learning support. The test was considered a valuable tool for monitoring children's progress and designing targeted developmental activities.

5. Training and Technical Support Needs of Teachers

The findings revealed a clear need for teacher training and technical support to ensure proper administration of the Denver II test. Participants emphasized the importance of practice-based training to improve accuracy and confidence in applying the test.

In conclusion, it is recommended that professional development programs on developmental screening be integrated into teacher education and in-service training. Moreover, efforts to improve classroom implementation strategies and adapt the test to local cultural and linguistic conditions should be prioritized to enhance the Denver II test's effectiveness in educational settings.

Funding information. This research is funded by the Science Committee of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Grant No. AP23488203)

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ДЕНВЕР II ДАМУ СКРИНИНГТІК ТЕСТІНІҢ БІЛІМ БЕРУ МЕКЕМЕЛЕРІНДЕ ҚОЛДАНЫЛУЫ ЖӘНЕ ОНЫ МҰҒАЛІМДЕРДІҢ ЖҮРГІЗУІ

Аңдатпа

Денвер II даму скринингтік тесті балалардың моторлық, тілдік, әлеуметтік және когнитивтік дамуын бағалауда кеңінен қолданылады. Бұл зерттеу Денвер II тестінің білім беру мекемелерінде қолданылуын мұғалімдер көзқарасынан қарастырады, оның мәдени бейімделуіне, қолайлылығына және сыныптағы басқару кезіндегі қиындықтарға назар аударады. Зерттеу сапалық әдіснаманы пайдалана отыра, жартылай құрылымдалған сұхбаттар арқылы Түркиядағы мектепке дейінгі білім беру ұйымдарында қызмет атқаратын 20 мұғалімнің пікірлерін жинады. Сұхбаттарды контенттік талдау бірнеше негізгі тақырыптарды көрсетті. Мұғалімдер Денвер II жеке дамудың прогресін бақылау және балалардың күшті жақтары мен дамытуды қажет ететін салаларды анықтау үшін пайдалы құрал ретінде бағалады. Олар сондай-ақ мәдени бейімделудің маңыздылығын атап өтті, тесттің түрлендірілген нұсқаларының түрік оқушылары үшін сенімді әрі қолжетімді екенін айтты. Алайда, уақытты басқару және сыныптың назарын сақтап қалу үлкен сыныптарда тестті тиімді қолдануға кедергі келтіретін маңызды мәселелер болып шықты. Мұғалімдер тестті дәл әрі тиімді жүргізу үшін қосымша білім беру мен техникалық қолдауды қажет ететіндерін білдірді. Бұл зерттеу нәтижелері Денвер II тесті

білім беруде құнды ресурс бола алатынын көрсетті, егер ол мұғалімдерге арналған оқыту, сыныпты басқаруға қолдау көрсету және, мәдени және тілдік ерекшеліктерімен үздіксіз бейімдеу арқылы қолданыласа. Зерттеу мұндай қолдауды басымдықпен ұсыну даму скринингін әртүрлі білім беру орталарында тиімді етуге және ерте балалық шақтағы араласу тәжірибелеріне үлес қосуға мүмкіндік береді деп қорытындылайды.

Түйінді сөздер: даму скринингі, денвер II даму скринингтік тесті, бала дамуы, мәдени бейімделу, сынып ортасы, тесті жүргізу, сыныптағы жағдай.

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ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ СКРИНИНГ-ТЕСТА РАЗВИТИЯ DENVER II В ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ УЧРЕЖДЕНИЯХ И ЕГО ПРОВЕДЕНИЕ УЧИТЕЛЯМИ

Аннотация

Скрининг-тест развития Denver II широко используется для оценки моторного, языкового, социального и когнитивного развития детей. Это исследование рассматривает применение теста Denver II в образовательных учреждениях с точки зрения учителей, акцентируя внимание на его культурной адаптируемости, удобстве использования и проблемах, с которыми сталкиваются учителя при его проведении в классе. Используя качественный подход с полуструктурированными интервью, исследование собрало мнения 20 учителей, работающих в дошкольных учреждениях Турции. Контент-анализ интервью выявил несколько ключевых тем. Учителя отметили, что тест Denver II является полезным инструментом для отслеживания индивидуального развития и выявления сильных сторон детей, а также областей, требующих улучшения. Они также подчеркнули важность культурной адаптации, отметив, что модификации теста сделали его более надежным и доступным для турецких учащихся. Однако управлением временем и поддержанием внимания детей в классе стали значительными препятствиями для эффективного использования теста в больших группах. Учителя выразили потребность в дополнительном обучении и технической поддержке, чтобы повысить свою компетентность в точном и эффективном проведении теста. Эти выводы свидетельствуют о том, что тест Denver II может быть ценным ресурсом в образовательном процессе, если его сочетать с обучением учителей, поддержкой в управлении классом и постоянной адаптацией к культурным и языковым особенностям. Исследование приходит к выводу, что приоритетное внимание таким аспектам может сделать процесс оценки развития более эффективным в различных образовательных средах и способствовать практикам раннего вмешательства.

Ключевые слова: скрининг развития, скрининг-тест развития Denver II, развитие ребенка, культурная адаптация, классная среда, проведение теста, обстановка в классе.

Received: 22.05.2025

Approved after peer review: 27.06.2025

Accepted for publication: 27.06.2025