UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN THE ASANTE MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY IN GHANA

PRISCILLA SERWAA ANDAM

MASTER OF EDUCATION

2022

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATIONAL BEST PRACTICES IN THE ASANTE MAMPONG MUNICIPALITY IN GHANA

PRISCILLA SERWAA ANDAM
(200051892)

A Dissertation in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Education (Early Childhood Education) in the University of Education, Winneba

AUGUST, 2022

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Priscilla Serwaa Andam**, hereby declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Signature: ……

Date: ……

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, the preparation and supervision of this research work was done in accordance with guidance for the supervision of research work as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Hinneh Kusi (Supervisor)

Signature: ……

Date: ……

DEDICATION

To my husband and children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I wish to express my humbly gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Hinneh Kusi, Senior Lecturer and HOD in the Department of Educational Administration and Management, University of Education Winneba, for his meticulous scrutiny, constructive comments and suggestions in the course of carrying out this work.

I again, express my heartfelt thanks to all and sundry whose efforts contributed in bringing this work to reality. May God richly bless you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	**1**
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	5
1.3 Purpose of the Study	6
1.4 Research Objectives	6
1.5 Research Question	6
1.5.1 Hypothesis	7
1.6 Significance of the Study	7
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	8
1.8 Definition of Terms	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	**10**
2.0 Introduction	10
2.1 Theoretical Framework	10
2.1.1 Maria Montessori Model	10
2.1.2 Reggio Emilia Model	11
2.1.3 Head Start Model	12
2.1.4 High/Scope Model	13

2.2 Conceptual Framework 13

2.2.1 Historical Perspectives of Pre-School Programme 13

2.3 Conceptual Review 14

2.3.1 Perceptual process 15

2.3.2 Instruments of perception 16

2.3.3 Factors that Influence Formation of Perception 16

2.3.3.1 Cultural Values 16

2.3.3.2 Personal Attitudes 17

2.3.3.3 Expectation 18

2.3.3.4 Motivation 19

2.3.3.5 The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception 19

2.4 Perceptions of Pre-School Education 20

2.5 General Education in Ghana 24

2.6 The Nature of Pre-School Education 27

2.7 The Policy of Pre-School Education 28

2.8 Theoretical Review 29

2.8.1 Maria Montessori‟s Theory of Early Childhood Education 29

2.9 Globalization and Early Childhood Education 34

2.10 Empirical Review 35

2.11 Summary of Literature Review 44

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY **45**

3.0 Introduction 45

3.1 Research Design 45

3.2 Population 48

3.3 Sampling Procedure 48

3.4 Data Collection Instrument 49

3.5 Validation of Instrument 51

3.6 Validity 52

3.7 Data Collection Procedure 55

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis 56

3.9 Ethical Consideration 57

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 59

4.0 Introduction 59

4.1 Research Questions 59

4.1.1 Research Hypothesis 59

4.2 Research Question 1: What are the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices? 59

4.3 Research Question 2: How do preschool teachers perceive the implementation of early childhood educational best practices? 62

4.4 Research Question 3: What is the gender difference between male and female teachers‟ knowledge about early childhood educational best practices? 64

4.5 Research Hypothesis 64

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 66

5.0 Introduction 66

5.1 Summary of the Study 66

5.2 Summary of Main Findings 66

5.3 Findings from Research Hypothesis 68

5.4 Conclusions 68

5.5 Recommendations 68

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research 70

REFERENCES 71

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1:	Reliability Statistics for Constructs and Overall Items	51
2:	Inter-item Correlation of Items under Knowledge Construct	52
3:	Inter-item Correlation of Items under Implementation Construct	53
4:	Inter-item Correlation of Items under Challenge Construct	54
5:	Inter-item Correlation of Items under Management Construct	55
6:	Perceived Knowledge Preschool Teachers Have on ECE Best Practices	60
7:	Descriptive Analysis How Teachers Implement the ECE Best Practices	62
8:	What is the gender difference between male and female teachers‟ knowledge about early childhood educational best practices?	64
9 :	Results of t-test Comparing Male and Female Teachers withRespect to their Knowledge in Early Childhood Best Practice (n=217)	65

ABSTRACT

The study assessed knowledge and practice of preschool teachers about early childhood educational best practices in the Asante Mampong Municipality. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study employed quantitative approaches through the use of self-developed questionnaires. In all Krejcie and Morgan sample size determination table was used to select 217 preschool teachers using the multistage sampling technique. The data were nalysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The findings from the study revealed that preschool teachers were aware of and had knowledge about early childhood educational best practices. Also, results from the study indicated that even though preschool teachers had knowledge about the early childhood best practices, they did not apply or implement them in the classroom. Some challenges including lack of teaching learning materials hindered the implementation of early childhood educational best practices among preschool teachers in Mampong Municipality. It was recommended from the study that, the Ministry of Education should ensure that the developmental goals and objectives in the early childhood development curriculum reflected local values and informed approaches to classroom practices. It was further revealed that the curriculum should also reflect the customary practices, traditions, and rituals that touched the lives of children in various cultural contexts and encourage the participation of children in the everyday activities of their community. Early childhood teachers should be given professional training.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This chapter gives an insight into the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study and the research questions, which serves as a guide to the study. It also deals with the significance of the study, delimitation, limitations of the study and definition of terms.

As the first country in Africa to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Republic of Ghana has a record of attention to children‟s rights and development. More recently, the Government of Ghana declared its commitment to addressing the developmental needs of children and achieving the Millennium Development Goals through policies and plans including the National Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy, adopted in 2004. This policy provides a framework for government and other stakeholders to promote survival, development, and protection for children from birth to age 8, emphasizing integrated and coordinated services among other strategies for achieving this goal. Key indicators have in recent years shown improvement in young children‟s education, health, and social welfare status in Ghana. Increases in pre-primary education attendance have been substantial and have exceeded national goals. However, rates of maternal and child mortality, malnutrition, and lack of access to adequate water and sanitation remain high, and substantial disparities in these areas remain across income groups and geographic regions.

According to Thorsen (2008), beliefs will always be part of our lives whether it is everyday activities, theories, philosophies, or the art of teaching.” This point is further

reinforced by Myers (2004) who alluded to the fact that practice may also affect beliefs. At a time when the early childhood education sector in Ghana is implementing several curricula reforms influenced by the ideals of Western goals of developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), it is important to examine the beliefs and perceptions held by teachers in the education sector. This is especially relevant in light of the fact that some of these goals may be unconnected to Ghana‟s cultural values, beliefs, and educational priorities. Ghana‟s practices have been influenced by our colonized past and Cannella and Viruru (2004) claimed that justification for the "the continued use of out-dated practices and attitudes need to be challenged" (p. 7). It is not necessarily a new idea to think of the world as a constantly changing place, nor is it new to philosophize about how education should respond to these changes. Education has long been recognized as a powerful force for shaping culture, transmitting cultural values to the next generation of learners and influencing social change (Rename, 2007; Abraham, 2012).

Understanding the complexity of today‟s changing world, recognizing inequality as a persistent and growing problem and accepting the consequences of actions taken by generations past–while seeking better, more sustainable choices for the future–are only a few of the challenges facing educators today. Educators have the opportunity to candidly accept these challenges and take an active stance in addressing them (Boutte, 2008). One vehicle for impacting change is through the practice of Education for Developmentally Appropriate Practices. In 2007, the government of Ghana declared the commitment to the developmental needs of children by making the kindergarten part of the basic education. The policy provides a framework for promoting DAP in order to foster language, cognition and social competence among the children. Developmental Appropriate Practice (DAP), is an approach to teaching

grounded on how young children develop and learn and in what is known about effective early education. Its framework is designed to promote young children‟s optimal learning and development (Cochran, 2007). Charlesworth (1998) argued that DAP is for everyone with diverse socioeconomic status, culture, race, gender, age, or special needs. Elkind (1989) also stated that a challenging, developmentally appropriate learning environment would help children develop creative thinking and critical thinking abilities. Empirical studies have demonstrated the efficacy of DAP in enhancing preschool children‟s learning and development. For instance, preschool children who enrolled in DAP classrooms had better grades in science and in physical and social skills (Macron, 1993) and scored higher on rote learning and applied knowledge skills (Huffman & Speer, 2000).

On the other hand, children in developmentally inappropriate practice (DIP) classrooms exhibit more stress behaviours than those in more DAP classrooms (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1990). According to National Association of Educating the Young in U.S reported that one of America's larger challenges regarding ECE is the dearth in the workforce, partly due to low compensation for rigorous work. Because the teacher is critical in the implementation of the developmentally appropriate approach, the teacher‟s perception about classroom practices is important. Research showed that teachers‟ developmentally appropriate perception not only influence program quality but children‟s learning outcome. McCarty, Abbott-Shim, and Lambert (2001) found that teachers in low-quality classrooms have more inappropriate perceptions than those teachers in high-quality classrooms. Jones and Gullo (1999) found that teachers‟ developmentally appropriate perceptions were associated with children‟s positive social skills ratings, but not academic achievement. Research findings indicate teachers‟ perceptions and how they are related to their

practice are important issues in the delivery of early childhood education (Rusher, McGrevin, & Lambiotte, 1992).

It is worthwhile to note that preschool teachers as key players in young children‟s education have a crucial role to play in best practices. This may include child guidance and discipline, respecting cultural diversity (McDonnell, 1999), establishing a reciprocal relationship with families, (Lundin, 2000), and creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning (NAEYC, 1997) in the classroom. In preschool best practices, both personal and environmental factors are effective. As researchers, we agree to the idea of National Association of Education of Young Children that teachers, as human beings, bring their past experience into classroom settings so their beliefs regarding how children learn and develop affect quality of the preschool best practices. In the study of Cronin- Jones (2006), it was elaborated that if the teachers‟ existing belief structures were not consistent with the philosophy of the curriculum, then they affect the success of curriculum adversely.

Parallel to this study, Kern, Kruse, and Roehring (2007) also maintains the ideas that teachers‟ beliefs about teaching and learning are strongly influencing the best practices in early childhood education. In other words, once the teachers are defending the ideology of the curriculum being implemented, then the performance of the teacher in the real classroom setting is affected positively during implementation. Furthermore, besides appreciating the philosophy of the new curriculum, Park (2008) suggested that understanding of the curricula by the teachers is crucial for proper implementation. Because once the teachers do not comprehend what the curriculum‟s

theoretical framework is in details, they will not be able to successfully implement best practices in early childhood education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The concept of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is based on Western ideology (Gupta, 2006). Literature indicates that, there is reform of the early childhood sector because pedagogical competence of the early childhood practitioner has come under greater scrutiny (Williams & Charles, 2008). It has also been accepted that in the early childhood years, children gain the educational experiences needed to set the foundation for academic skills in the later years (Saracho & Spodek, 2008). The quality of the early childhood teacher at this level, therefore, becomes of utmost importance in setting this foundation.

Although reform has been endorsed by teachers in the sector, successful implementation rests on the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and practices of these teachers. Equally, strides have been made with regards to training of teachers to cater for the needs of children in their early years yet, it is perceived that impact is not to be felt generally UNICEF (2008). According to UNICEF (2011), institutions for teacher training have been established, but only a small proportion of teachers are formally trained. Less than a third of teachers in public kindergartens nationwide have received any type of formal training in education (2008/2009 EMIS data). More so, in-service training sessions for KG teachers tend to focus on narrow methodological topics or specific resource, as a result of inadequate comprehensive training agenda or syllabus for Kindergarten teachers (UNICEF, 2011). The research problem exists because in spite of the plethora of studies on perceptions of teachers on best educational practices, the context of the preschool or early childhood environment has not been

fully explored. Limited studies touched on early childhood education especially preschool classroom environment. The vast majority of studies on the nature of best educational practices focused on primary, junior high and senior high school settings and therefore did not address issues in best educational practices of preschool teachers. The present study is an attempt to fill this research gab by exploring preschool teachers‟ perceptions of early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal, of Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate perceptions preschool teachers held about early childhood educational best practices in Ghana.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the study are;

1. To assess the knowledge level early childhood teachers have about the best practices in early childhood education in Mampong Municipal.
2. To examine whether the teachers use the best practices in the Mampong Municipal.
3. To explore gender difference between male and female teachers‟ knowledge about early childhood educational best practices.

1.5 Research Question

The research questions are;

1. What are the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal?
2. How do preschool teachers perceive the implementation of early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal?

3. What are the gender difference between male and female teachers" knowledge about early childhood educational best practices?

1.5.1 Hypothesis

The study tested the following hypothesis.

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood best practice in the Mampong Municipal.

H_1: There is statistically significant difference between male and female teachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood best practice in in the Mampong Municipal.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study intends to offer insight into perceptions of childhood teachers about early childhood best practices and how these influence their classroom practices. My study would also serve as a reference for educators who would like to know more about teacher beliefs and self-perceptions or how reflective teaching can be used to improve classroom practices in early childhood settings (Cole, 1997). Hopefully, the study would also affect how we look at early childhood teachers, challenge our own beliefs and perceptions of early childhood teachers and the policy directions of the sector. Again, the study aimed at helping in examining the perceived knowledge levels of pre-school teachers concerning early childhood educational best practices and how it can be used to polish our younger ones towards the future with regards to the future. Based on the findings, Stakeholders, Non- Governmental Organizations, Curriculum Designers, Ghana Educational Service, Ministry of Education and interested bodies stand the chance to benefit as they would be abreast with issues about early childhood

educational best practices. This would enable the policy makers and the stakeholders to work out and implement the findings as the situation continue to live with us as a nation.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to preschool teachers in the Mampong Municipal of Ghana and does not include basic and senior high school teachers. It was also delimited to the questionnaires for the study and the chosen sample. The study was delimited to the selected circuits within the Mampong and did not include any circuit from any other district. This study was exploratory and produced descriptive, yet preliminary findings. The use of qualitative methodology could have allowed for a rich, detailed analysis of the teachers and their setting. This study was also limited to the purposefully selected sample of some selected teachers who volunteered their participation. The sample size was limited to only pre-schools in the Mampong Municipal and as such, is not a representative of the total population of early childhood teachers in Ghana. The results, therefore, cannot be applied too broadly.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Preschool Teachers: Teachers who teach between 3 and 8 years-olds children are referred to as pre-school teachers in the study.

Early childhood Curriculum: According to Langenbach and Neskora, (1977) the early childhood curriculum is a product of both long- range and short term planning.

Preschool - includes all ECIs for children from three to six years. The school is privately owned, by either an individual, corporation or faith-based institution and operate with private fees and fundraising.

Kindergarten of Preparatory School - Preparatory schools are private institutions for children age"s three to twelve. Kindergartens serve children three through to six years. Basic School - A community-owned school operated by an individual, Trust, or faith-based institution. Considered "recognized" if the institution meets a set of basic requirements of the Ministry of Education are for the purpose of receiving subsidies to staff salaries and sometimes for nutrition supplies and learning materials.

Day Care Centre - usually refers to full-day programs for young children up through the age of three. Infant Department - sections of public primary or all age schools which operate like a basic school for children ages four and five, prior to entrance to Grade One. Infant School - Government owned schools which operate under similar Ministry supervision as the basic schools. Early Childhood Institution - the term used in the 2005 Early Childhood Act to describe a setting that provides developmentally appropriate care, stimulation, education, and socialization, for children under the age of six years, including day care centres and basic schools. procedures. Chapter four is the data analysis and discussion, and finally, in the last chapter, a summary of finding, conclusions, and recommendations are offered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews conceptual, theoretical and empirical works that have been done both in Ghana and abroad on the study. It also includes definitions and theories on perceptions about early childhood best practices.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Maria Montessori Model

The name itself comes from Maria Montessori, an Italian medical doctor who was influenced by Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi thinks that a teacher must have a special training combining both intellectuality and the ability to touch the hearts by feeling respect and sympathy for the children (Montessori, 1972). Montessori followed the ideas of Pestalozzi and she focused on the process of normal development to discover how human beings could reach their potential more fully than they did in traditional schools. Montessori worked with younger children before elementary schools and Montessori began her experiment in January 1907. She viewed her schools as labourites in which to study how children learn best (Lillard, 2005).

According to Montessori‟s philosophy, a child-sized environment offering beauty and order is the best for children‟s learning because it is cultivating and stimulating. In such an environment, children may choose their own work- activities that have meaning and purpose for them. In addition, there are times when carefully sequenced and structured materials (sensory materials) are introduced by the teacher to the child (Wortham, 2006). The Montessori curriculum is divided into motor education, sensory education, and language and intellectual education (Wortham, 2006).

The sensorial materials are part of intellectual education. The teacher involves in the careful pronunciation of words as he or she talks to the children and during teaching a concept, it is common to use physical dimensions of the objects such as big, thin, large and small. On the other hand, there is a three-part lesson and when learning, for example, concepts of large and small, the teacher would first say, "This is the small ball". Second the teacher wants the child to show the small ball and finally, the teacher wants the child to name the object. Writing and reading activities are also crucial in the Montessori curriculum. First, children"s fine motor skills are enhanced by active hands-on activities with the sensory materials. At the same time, the visual-motor understanding of alphabet letters and how to form them is introduced. Exercises to write letters, words and how to read them are done. Once a child does those independently, reading and writing are expanded to writing sentences and reading simple books.

2.1.2 Reggio Emilia Model

Reggio Emilia, a small city in industrial northern Italy, established what is now called "The Reggio Emilia approach" shortly after the Second World War when working parents helped to build new schools for their young children (New, 2000). Founded by Loris Malaguzzi, the early childhood schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, have captured the attention of educators from all over the world. Inspired by John Dewey"s progressive education movement, Lev Vygotsky"s belief in the connection between culture and development, and Jean Piaget"s theory of cognitive development developed his theory and philosophy of early childhood education from direct practice in schools for infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers (Thorton & Brunton, 2009).

The teachers in Reggio Emilia are partners and collaborators in learning with the children and parents. The teachers become skilled observers of children in order to plan in response to the children. Each group of children is assigned co-teachers. There is no lead teacher or director of the school. A *pedagogist*, a person trained in early childhood education, meet with the teachers weekly. Every school has an *atelierista*, who is trained in visual arts, working closely with teachers and children. The hundreds of languages of children are the term teachers use in referring to the process of children depicting their understanding through one of many symbolic languages, including drawing, sculpture, dramatic play and writing. Teachers and children work together to solve any problems that arise (Goffin & Wilson, 2001).

2.1.3 Head Start Model

Head Start is a publicly funded program. Developed in the 1960s for intervention with at-risk minority and low-income children, it is a comprehensive program that addresses the educational, nutritional and social needs of such children. It can be associated with public school districts or conducted as a separate program through a community agency. These programs are the largest publicly funded educational programs for infants and toddlers (Early Head Start) and preschool children. They include health and medical screening and treatment, required parent participation and involvement, and comprehensive services to families. “Today there are Head Start programs in every state and territory, in rural and urban sectors, on American Indian reservations, and in migrant areas” (Essa, 2003, p. 24). From its inception in 1965, Head Start has sought to provide classroom-based and, most recently, home based comprehensive developmental services for children from low-income families.

An essential part of every Head Start program is the involvement of parents in parent education, program planning, and operating activities. Many parents serve as members of policy councils and committees and have a voice in administrative and managerial decisions while others participate as a volunteer or paid aides to teachers, social service personnel, and other staff members. Head Start programs have a low child-staff ratio, with 10 percent of the enrolment in each state available for children with special needs.

2.1.4 High/Scope Model

The high scope is a cognitively oriented curriculum (Wortham, 2006) developed in order to serve 3 and 4 years-old children from poor neighbours in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1962 so it helps children to become independent thinkers and problem solvers (Peyton, 2005). However, through the four decades of working, the curriculum has evolved to the model that is used today. There are principles of the curriculum (Morrison, 2008, pp.101-102).

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Historical Perspectives of Pre-School Programme

Throughout the history of early education, there have been a number of philosophers, educators, and theorists who have observed young children. Friedrich Frobel, the 19th century German who created and named the kindergarten (German to children"s garden). Children between the age of 3 and 6 spent their days working in identically laid out gardens, participating in especially composed singing, games, and interacting with materials designed to teach a series of specific skills. (Suzanne & Kristine: 2001) Frobel is generally considered the founder of early childhood education not only because he was the first to design a curriculum specifically for young children but

because he introduced play as a major medium of instruction (Carol, 2000). A second example, still in existence, is the curriculum developed by Maria Montessori, an Italian doctor who was inspired, in part, by Frobel‟s materials.

Observing and working with the same age children, she focused on creating curricula that permitted youngsters to advance in their learning to the greatest extent possible. Her learning materials were near as prescribed and rigid as Frobel‟s, but Montessori also was dedicated to creating citizens for democracy and built a variety of choices into the curricula and the teaching methods (Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000).

Now a day‟s two approaches or a combination of both is being implemented as at the leading world kindergarten school methodology for teaching children. Kindergarten by and large is a product of 20th century, beginning from 1940 to mid1960‟s in which preschool education has become the subject of serious studies by scholars and researchers because this time research evidences and provocative literature on child development and early learning had motivated the community in general and policy makers in particular. This idea shows that better economic development and the advancement of human knowledge on the importance of early learning brought the need for the establishment and expansion of preschool education all over the world including our continent, Africa. However, the differences in economic development and educational status among the nations of the world created disparities in the development of preschool education (Gama, 2007).

2.3 Conceptual Review

Amissah and Agbeke (20015) defined perception as a process of building on our ill-defined and incomplete sensory experiences. Perception is any act or process of knowing objects, facts and truths whether by sense, experience or by thought; it is

awareness of consciousness. Perception is a reference of sensation to an external object (Allport, 1995). To Davidoff (1994) perception is a cognitive process, a way of knowing about the world. To her, perception is the point where cognition and reality meet-that is information must be taken into the mind before one can do anything else with it.Petry andMeyer (1987) said perception involves an interaction or transaction between an individual and his environment; the individual receives information from the external world which in some ways modifies his experience and behaviour. The term perception refers to the ways in which organisations or individuals respond to the stimulus picked by their sense organ. It is used to be thought of as something analogous to such mechanical processes as photography of an object or recording sound on a record. That analogy of mechanical sequence is inadequate since it ignores the fact that perception is influenced by interest, needs and past experience (Lindesmith, 1998).

Yinger (1965) is of the view that perception in its general sense is an experience produced by an outside stimulation of the senses. Meador and Rogers (1979) also define perception as a hypothesis or prognosis for action that comes into being in awareness when stimuli impinge on the organism. Bruner (1965) explained perception as a decision process involving the placement of incoming information into a network of meaningful categories developed largely from prior learning. It can be seen from the above that almost all the definitions point to the fact that perception is a process. It is a process in that it is on-going. It occurs over a period of time.

2.3.1 Perceptual process

During the perceptual process there is a completion of information. Sensory information is changed or modified by the addition of information drawn from

memory; parts of sensory information are amplified or highlighted while others are pushed to the background. Some aspects are noted while others are ignored. This goes on until the last meaning is assigned to sensory experiences and judgments and interpretations are made (Amissah & Agbeke, 2015).

2.3.2 Instruments of perception

According to Amissah and Agbeke (20015), as one interact with the environment his sense organs receive impressions which are later processed to become an awareness and therefore knowledge. To them man receives through the five senses, namely, visual(eyes), auditory(ears), tactile(skin), gustatory(tongue) and olfactory(nose) mechanisms. They act as transducers.

2.3.3 Factors that Influence Formation of Perception

In the 1950s, Bruner and his contemporaries performed a number of studies on perceptual set. Their findings marked the very beginning of what later became known as the cognitive revolution. Bruner and his contemporaries, and other psychologists who followed up this work, found that perception could be influenced by a variety of factors. These are cultural values, personal attitudes, expectation, and motivational states.

2.3.3.1 Cultural Values

Perceiving perspective-based drawings is a specific cultural skill, which is learned rather than automatic. People from several cultures world-wide seem to prefer drawings which do not show perspective but instead split so as to show both sides of objects at the same time (Deregowski, 1972). In one study, children and adults from traditional African backgrounds were shown to pictures of an elephant‟s legs splayed

out unrealistically. The participants in the study preferred the split drawing, even though to Western eyes it looked quite unrealistic.

Deregowski further indicated that this split-style representation is universal, and is even found in young European children, before they are taught not to draw that way. One possible explanation, which Deregowski suggested, was that such a style might allow for all the important characteristics of the object to be shown. The drawing would then be a way of representing someone‟s real experience of an object far more fully than a standard perspective drawing would. Mundy-Castle (1966) conducted a study on how traditional Ghanaian children interpreted line drawings. They were shown a series of sketches, each of which used only a limited number of depth cues: height in plane, superposition, and relative size. Each picture showed a man and a deer in the foreground, and an elephant in the background, and the pictures contained different combinations of these cues. Mundy-Castle established that the children‟s interpretations differed from those made by European children of the same ages (between five and ten years old). Mundy-Castle described these differences as "errors" in interpreting the drawing, but it was noticeable that they were generally of the same kind. The studies by Deregowski (1972) and Mundy-Castle (1966) proposed that culture plays an important role in the perception of an individual or about something.

2.3.3.2 Personal Attitudes

Allport (1954) explained a study which showed how prejudice could affect perception. The experimenters used a stereoscope, which is a device for presenting a separate picture to each eye at the same time. They showed research participants mixed-race pairs of individuals, with one member of each pair shown to each eye. In

general, people were most definite when they were categorizing people from other ethnic groups. But Afrikaners, who were noted for their racial prejudices, differentiated far more sharply between the races. They perceived subcategories or uncertainties in classifying people. Allport construed this as showing how the strongly racist views held by these people had affected their perceptions.

2.3.3.3 Expectation

Bugelski and Alampay (1961) conducted a study in which the participants in the research were shown either a series of animal pictures or a set of unrelated images – furniture, vehicles, and so on. When they were shown an ambiguous "rat man" figure, people were significantly more likely to perceive it as a rat than as a man if they experienced the prior exposure to animal pictures. Just seeing those figures had established an expectation that what would follow would be more of the same thing, and that expectation had directed how they would perceive the stimulus.

Bruner and Minturn (1955) showed how strongly expectation could influence perception. They began by showing people letters or numbers, one at a time and then showed them an ambiguous figure which could be read either as a B or 13. According to Bruner and Minturn, the research participants who had seen numbers unequivocally judged the figures- to be a 13, while those who had seen letters previously saw it as a B. Moreover, when they were asked to reproduce what they had seen, their drawings showed no ambiguities: the gap in the figure was enlarged by those who believed it to be a 13, but those who believed it to be a B did not include any gap. From the two studies it can be concluded that expectation influences perception to a large extent. This suggests that once an impression is created concerning an object or about something or somebody at the back of the mind it makes an ineradicable mark. The

impression created affects an individual‟s perception about an object or someone either positively or negatively.

2.3.3.4 Motivation

Gilchrist and Nesberg (as cited in Hayes, 1998) asked people to rate pictures for brightness, and discovered that the longer they had gone without food, the brighter the food pictures were rated, even though the research participants‟ ratings of other picture showed no change. Standford (as cited in Hayes, 1998) deprived research participants of food for various lengths of time up to four hours, and then showed them ambiguous pictures. Standford found that the longer the participants had been food-deprived, the more likely they were to interpret pictures as being something to do with food. These studies, and others of the same kind, implied that internal motivational states, in this case starvation, could directly affect perception. Other factors that influence perception with regards to this study includes:

2.3.3.5 The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception

The sense-datum theory holds that when a person has a sensory experience, there is something of which they are aware (Broad 1923). What the subject is aware of is the object of experience. The object of experience is that which is given to the senses, or the sense-datum: this is how the term “sense-datum” was introduced by many writers (Price, 1932). The sense-datum theory treats all phenomenal properties (properties which determine the phenomenal character of an experience) as properties of the immediate object of experience. So, when in the case of an illusion, an external object appears to have a property which it does not have in reality, the theory says that some other object, a sense-datum, really does have this property.

The things we take ourselves to be aware of are actually sense-data, although this may only be apparent on philosophical reflection (Harman, 1990). A consistent sense-data theorist can accept this fact, but insist that the objects of experience are really sense-data. The sense-datum theory can say, however, that we are indirectly aware of ordinary objects: that is, aware of them by being aware of sense-data. A sense-datum theorist who says this is known as an indirect realist or representative realist, or as someone who holds a representative theory of perception (Lowe, 1992). A theorist who denies that we are aware of mind-independent objects at all, directly or indirectly, but only of sense-data, is known as a phenomenalist or an idealist about perception (Foster, 2000).

Idealists and indirect realists can agree about the nature of perception considered in itself, but will normally disagree on grounds independent of the philosophy of perception about whether the mind-dependent sense-data are all there is. Thus Foster (2000) argues for his idealism first by arguing for sense-data as the immediate or direct objects of perceptual experience, and then arguing that idealism gives a better explanation of the reality underlying this appearance, and of our knowledge of it. Hence, idealism and indirect realism are grouped together here as "the sense-datum theory" since they agree about the fundamental issue in the philosophy of perception. Hence this research is based on this theory because most pre-school teachers were aware of the challenges facing pre-school education.

2.4 Perceptions of Pre-School Education

Early year‟s education went through many changes in the 20th century as the learning needs of young children gained greater status all over the world. The stage of a child‟s

learning is now recognized as an important stage in its own right, rather than simply as a springboard for learning in later years.

For this reason, there is now a strong pressure from the public and from many educators for change at the lower end of the educational system (Green, 2002). The situation described above has come as a result of increasing participation of stakeholders in the pre-school education sphere. As such several people have expressed their opinions about earlier child education according to their experience.

Bartels (2004), contended that children who go through KG education are likely to stay longer in education, climbing higher, getting good jobs and supporting themselves and leading exemplary lives. This they think is possible because they (children) had earlier and better initial behavioural nurturing. Plukrose (1997) noted that creativity is an important skill that pre-schoolers develop. During this period, a young child picks a crayon and scribble on a piece of paper a representation of his mum or turns an empty cornflakes packet into an imaginary car or he is conveying something of a universal need to create, make and build. In the 1990s, he believes many children grew up in societies which seem indifferent to aesthetic values in a climate which seemed to be marked by sensitivity to child needs. Drapper, Gonong and Goddell (1987) agree that where the pre-school is well organized, a child can take an ordinary box and turn it into a boat, castle or anything that he/she pleases. A plastic may become a telephone receiver, old wire lampshade hoops a steering wheel. Pre-school develops children flexible social characters. That is why they are ready to play with any child at first sight. At the same time they fight frequently (UNESCO, 1998).

According to Bruce and Maggit (2002), children need to learn particular things at specific times. It is therefore advisable that children are guided early through pre-school education.

Neaum and Tallack (1977) suggest that through well-guided play activities, children in their pre-school years develop strong creative fantasy which is a very important aspect of pre-school years. Through fantasy each child discovers and expresses their inner self, through a range of activities such as drawing, dancing movement and music. Language development is an important activity that is achieved at pre-school years. As children engage in diverse play activities, they are bound to express themselves thereby learning and using new vocabulary. According to Kudolo (1983), they are able to learn words learnt in school because they are repeated in many activities. Newport (1990) cited in McDevitt and Omrod (2002), added that children appear to master the grammar of a language more completely if they are exposed to it in their early years before age four. UNESCO (1998) considers the fact that pre-school, being a type of programme in which children go to a centre for three to six hours a day, allows mothers some free time from child care. The organisation also believes that mothers do utilise this extra time in other productive activities.

In an attempt to advocate for pre-schools, Isbell and Raines (2003) perceive the activities of pre-schools as a means of refining the early unordered set of activities through co-operatively working together. Allen and Hard (1984) concluded that pre-schools are therefore designed to support and encourage children to express themselves, to explore their environment and to solve any physical and social problems that might arise. Children have to explore their surroundings for self-knowledge and self-awareness. Cockburn (2001) says this awareness leads to growth

and confidence as learners and pupils. Melenze, Beck and Flectcher (2000) also believe that the ability to explore is important because they are the future of every society. Donaldson (1978) says that naturally, young children want to learn by exploring whatever is available near them. At a very early age, babies show signs of a strong desire to master their environment. It is through the varied experiences at pre-school that children discover a lot of what they need to know. Cooper and Carter (1985) say that children are able to learn all these and more because throughout history, it has been demonstrated that younger persons learn best with guidance and encouragement of skilled and caring adults. Eliason and Jenkins (1994) say that in the pre-school, the trained pre-school teacher is able to continuously appraise the child‟s development physically, emotionally, socially and academically.

Inspite of the numerous areas of strength enumerated above, Arango (1998) believes that pre-schools are usually expensive. Moreover, it is not effective for the intellectual and emotional development of the child as it will be if the mother took the time to play and interact with the child in the home. Arango believes that substituting a professional for the mother does not allow for the development of the mother‟s sense of self-worth and self-image in terms of the child‟s development. Again, Arango agrees with some psychologist that some children are too young to experience separation from their parents. Tassoni (2002), for example, says that some countries, especially in Europe, frown upon every early schooling to show that successful learning outcomes in reading, writing and speaking skills do not depend on early formal start, but upon the readiness and maturity of the child.

2.5 General Education in Ghana

Globally, education is considered the pivot around which national development evolves. According to Evans (1991), it the means by which human"s capital development is achieved, it influences and is influenced by other social institutions. It is believed that the social, economic, political and cultural developments of nations depend to a large extent on the quality and quantity of formal education that their citizens receive. Governments in the world over therefore spend large sums of money and other resources to realize the man power needs of their nations. For example, the rise of Japan into the status of an economic giant today, according to Rannis (1990), cited in Evans (1991), as well as the emergence of Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia as economic world powers, have all been attributed to the great investments they made in the education of their citizens. This quest for development gingered Ghana to bring about The Education Act of 1961 which led to the establishments of several state owned schools including Ghana Education Trust Secondary Schools.

Formal education in Ghana which preceded the colonization came as a private enterprise and was first started in Elmina castle in 1529 by the Portuguese merchants for their mullato children (Kudolo, 1983). Later, some schools were opened in other parts of the country by the Catholics, the Basel, the Anglican and the Wesleyans missionaries. Demand for education become very high after the First World War (1914-1918), and during the trade slump (1930 to 1940s), which saw a rise in primary school enrolment from 53,000 to 88,000 by 1940 (Mcwilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Furthermore, the dwindling economic fortunes of the country made it difficult for the government alone to meet the high demand for education. Consequently, an

encouragement was given for private participation in education provision just before the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of 1951 (Kudolo, 1983).

Even before the attainment of independence in 1957, the country had embarked on educational expansion with the accelerated development plan for education in 1951. This was followed by the Education Act of 1961. Both were meant to increase access in education (Graham, 1976). The educational reforms introduced in 1987 in addition to promoting ideas of previous policies of education. This idea of providing practical skills in education was contained in the Dzobo committee recommendation of 1974.

The government continues to find ways to improve the quality of education in the country by instituting reforms and reviews of the education industry in the country. The latest of such reviews is the Education Review Committee of 2004 chaired by Prof. Jophus Anamoah-Mensah.

Pre-school education in Ghana: Origin, Nature and Policies Origin of Pre-school Education in Ghana. Aggrey (1996) says that pre-school education before Ghana‟s independence was provided by the missionaries, villagers themselves or two or three patriotic citizens coming together and establishing one. This means that there was no government commitment to providing pre-school education. What individuals and groups of people could provide in terms of pre-school education was what was available. According to Dogoe (1997), cited in Bartels (2004), any meaningful pre-school education can be traced back to the work of the Basel missionaries in 1843 and that individual participation in the provision of KG education was available by the 1920s.

According to Kudolo (1983) the women‟s wing of the Conventions People‟s Party(CPP) also started six-day care centers to commemorate the ascension of queen Elisabeth II to the British throne, Ghana (Gold Coast) being under Britain then. The day centers were established at the regional centers under the Department of Social Welfare (DSW).

The day care centers were given equal attention like other primary classes. They were to take care of children whose parent went to work during the day or who thought their children needed some sorts of care before they were ushered into the formal school system. The wives of expatriates also took advantage of the system to prepare their children for the "preparatory" or "international" schools. Other bodies like universities and army, in the 1920s established more pre-schools with the idea of making the children enjoy a blissful childhood under congenial atmosphere. They became the second home of the children. Kudolo posits that by 1983, there about 400 of such schools scattered all over the country. The pre-schools were largely private enterprise but their supervision was strictly the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and later the Ministry of Education (MOE) which took over the supervision.

According to MOE (1988), in 1980 a pre-school Need Assessment was conducted by the Learning Assessment Branch of MOE. The purpose of the need assessment was to gather a broad base of information on a number of issues relating to KG and to identify needs assessment perceived by teachers, administrators and parents. The information was made available to pre-school curriculum committee which was charged with reviewing the then existing pre-school programme and making recommendations to improve the curriculum. The curriculum committee then received

approval to write a new curriculum guide and revise the resource book for pre-school issued in 1973.

The starting point for the project was the pre-school child. The committee studied the characteristics of children at that level to determine the many needs to be met through the pre-school programmes as outlined in the curriculum guide.

2.6 The Nature of Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is the concept of educative programmes put in place to get children ready for formal school or (before grade one) for children up to five years of age (Morrison, 1991). Here, it means sets of experiences through which the child goes to bridge the gap between home and school. The activities are organized by institutions and supervised closely by a teacher. A child must be under six years to be in the pre-school. Sam (1973) also sees pre-school as the training that the child receives during the age before age six. He further adds that pre-school education is either given at home or in the nursery school. Specifically, pre-school education is the education which begins at age four and ends at about age six. It is likened to the foundations upon which future education is built (Kudolo, 1983). One may conclude that though pre-school semantically brings to mind any form of education that takes place before the formal schooling, it is the one provided in the two latter years (ages four and five) which is referred to as the "children"s garden" or kindergarten. Here the founder Frederick Froebel, likened children to flowers growing happily in a garden (Gorden&Brown, 1989). In this type of education, children go to the Centre learning for three to six hours in a day (UNESCO, 1989). In Ghana it is the few years (usually two to three) which some children go through before entering primary school. The

education reforms launched in January 2006, recommended a two-year pre-school education for all children before primary class one.

2.7 The Policy of Pre-School Education

Ghana has made many attempts to reform the model of schooling bequeathed to it by the colonial masters. According to Mankoe (2002), the attempts came in the forms of reforms, review committees and reviews. All the reforms followed at the tail of grave dissatisfaction among the populace of the state of affairs at the education front. The reforms have largely aimed at improving access and efficiency in the delivery of education and, above all, making education more relevant to national development need. Dare (1998) says that what emerges from the reforms is frustration where youngsters graduate without minimal basic skills.

Dean (1990), talking about the inadequacy of leadership, says it is the institutional leadership that determines what happens and, therefore leadership should be held responsible for the lapses in education. Obeng (1996) urged teachers to help reverse the falling standard through curricular reform. Chiefs and other concerned citizens contributed to what would make the Ghanaian education a good one. Wiafe (2000) held a meeting with teachers with a view to identifying causes of poor performance of pupils in order to find a solution to it. He complained of the poor educational standards in his traditional areas.

In 1987, the Education Reform Committee re-echoed the need for kindergarten education which was recommended by the Dzobo Committee of 1974 (Mankoe, 2002). When the situation was found as not be the best, another Education Reform Review Committee was set up in 2002 by the government. The content and structure of Ghana‟s education was assessed. Among their recommendations was the

introduction of a two-year kindergarten education. The recommendation on kindergarten education was accepted and the policy was specifically captured thus; Recognising the crucial role that pre-school education plays in the formative years of the child, especially its potential for overcoming the educational disabilities of children from less favoured family backgrounds, government has decided that kindergarten education should progressively become part of the Universal Free and Compulsory Basic Educational structure (White Paper on the Report on Education Reform Review, 2004).

2.8 Theoretical Review

According to Darkwah (2001), a child is a human being of the approximate age of eighteen years or below. The first six years of the child‟s life is referred to as early childhood. Early childhood education may therefore be defined simply as the type of education given to children during the first six years of their life. In an attempt to better understand early childhood education in terms of its nature, scope and purpose various writers have looked at the process and characteristics of early childhood development. The following paragraphs summarize the key ideas of contributors to early childhood education.

2.8.1 Maria Montessori's Theory of Early Childhood Education

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) conceived of an early childhood education programme based on the principle that young children learn in a way that is fundamentally different from how adults learn. She felt that early childhood education should aim at allowing the child to cultivate his own natural desire to learn. This can be realized by allowing the child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced. Again, it is by helping the child to perfect all his natural tools

for learning so that his ability will be maximum in future learning situations. According to Henry (1995), Montessori was particularly impressed with the great capacity of children to learn much during the first few years of life and she called this capacity the absorbent mind.

Montessori, cited in Helm (1996), felt that all children have a fundamental inborn and intellectual structure that unfolds gradually as they develop. Although individual differences are due to different environmental experiences, she observed that if children‟s absorbent minds are exposed to appropriate learning experiences in the developmental stages, the minds will grow. Learning to write, read and calculate should emerge naturally as the child learns to walk and talk. In Montessori classroom, the equipment invites the child to activity at his own period of interest and readiness. This is especially true at sensitive periods and times when children are most receptive to absorbing specific learning. And as such, the hands and eyes become the chief teacher for the child. In order to learn there must be concentration and the best way a child can concentrate is by fixing his attention on some task he is performing with his hand.

Early childhood education, within the last few decades, attracted attention from different fields (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005) such as developmental psychology, cultural psychology, childhood studies, cultural anthropology, history and philosophy. This was because recent studies showed that babies and young children are born with the capacity to understand (Nutbrown, 2006). In other words, their brains are ready to learn when they came to the world and during this process; both the environment and genes take an important role which in turn, builds the brain (Levitt, 2008). This view regarding children, perceiving them as competent learners rather than empty slates

changed the disciplines‟ way of looking at the education of children or early childhood education. The readiness of the children to learn immediately after birth triggered the ideas of necessity of early childhood education both for the individual child and for the society as a whole, in a broader sense. Longitudinal studies have showed that early childhood education is the period when children‟s development was rapid and when children were affected more from environmental factors. In addition, two thirds of the brain development is completed between the years of 0-4 (Essa, 2003). Therefore, education in this crucial period is significant for the development of children. In a study conducted by Barnett (1995), it was found that getting an early childhood education provided an increase in the IQ level of children in the short term and in the long term; it increased the child‟s school achievement. Early childhood is a crucial time period for the development of children's mental functions. This development, including the emergence of language, motor skills, psychosocial, cognitive, and learning abilities, is now known to be greatly influenced by exogenous factors, including the educational environment to which a child is exposed during the first 6 to 8 years of life (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001).

Early childhood education becomes more beneficial especially, for the children coming from low socio-economic background. Bassok, Bridges, Fuller, Loeb and Rumberger (2007) identified benefits of being exposure to early education for the children coming from low-income families as cognitive growth and school readiness. Besides children from low socio-economic background, good quality of early childhood education provides early reading and math skills to children from high and middle socio-economic status.

Early education cultivates children in terms of socialization rather than purely academic enhancement such as math and reading. Webb (2003) elaborated on the fact that children learn cooperation through education in child care centers and such skills help them to obey rules and stay safe in a society. Regarding socialization, parents also share the same perspective. In the study of Webb (2003), it was revealed that one of the biggest reasons for parents sending children to early childhood education center is to get them socialized. In fact, in a longitudinal study, Kagitcibasi (1991) explained that children who received early childhood education became emotionally and socially more competent adults compared to the ones whom did not received early education.

In terms of children, in addition to social emotional and academic benefits, early education provides them a better future in the long term such as preparing them for school and increase in high school graduation rates.

Inevitably, knowing the benefits of early education for the individuals in the short and long term brings the discussion of early childhood necessity in society as a whole. Modern societies, as Durkheim clarified, are composed of many institutions and there is a dynamic relationship among these institutions. Each institution depends on each other to survive and to create the harmony within the society (Greve, 1998). Keeping this logic in mind, societies need individuals who function well within that system. Governments start to put early childhood education into their agendas, especially after it was proved that good quality of early education has long-lasting effects on the children‟s later life productivity for the society. To illustrate, Oppenheim and MacGregor (2002) distinguished that children who received early education are less likely to get involved in crime and more likely to complete their high school

education and get into a college education. In another studies such as Chicago, Longitudinal study and the Cost, Quality and Child outcome study indicated that getting high quality early childhood education make children become successful students and citizens in their later lives (Reynolds, 2004).

On the other hand, according to the World Bank Report (2005), between 0 and 6 years of age, each dollar invested on children will be returned back as 7.6 dollars in the future as a result of the productivity gained through early childhood education. Parallel to that study, Everingham, Karoly, and Kilbourne (1997) indicated that the rate of return of the investment in people in early childhood period is higher compared to investment in other periods of human life.

In addition, research results which supported the fact that the earlier children are exposed to good quality of experience, the more the connections in their brains develop, triggered early childhood education to gain greater importance in the society. Such results opened the way to start education of brains as early as possible.

In one study conducted by Knudson (2004), it was elaborated that developmental flexibility of brain wiring or its ability to change due to influences of experience were affected by both genes and early environmental factors. So, it became necessary for educators, policy makers and others in the society helping children to construct their initial brain architecture by providing education for them in their early years.

Findings of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Barnett, 1995; Openheim & MacGregor, 2002; Reynolds, 2004) concerning the benefits of early childhood education provided logical reasons to emphasize on early education for a better society. Besides all, in the last twenty years, socio-cultural changes such as getting

into the information age and changes in the world order through globalization triggered early childhood education to be the concern of many societies.

2.9 Globalization and Early Childhood Education

Globalization has reshaped many issues, international relations, population growth, development, human rights, the environment, labor, health care and poverty (Grant &Grant, 2007; Koggel, 2003). It has also affected and reshaped education as well. Beginning from early childhood education to college education, we may see the influences of globalization. Effect of globalization seemed to be have become more evident in all countries more, after 1985s, when the world entered into an information age by the mass spread of computers and internet all around the world, education and information became more crucial. In other words, knowledge became power. Hence, people are now valued on the basis of their being active, productive, and having the knowledge to produce the technology, as well as being skilled at several foreign languages. So, countries started to reshape their curriculums at all levels of education (from early childhood to college) towards cultivating those types of people (Dulger, 2000). As this cultivation process starts from the first level which is early education, the countries are looking for the best curriculum model in early childhood education.

In addition to the need for competent individuals having the skills and knowledge of dealing with the new world‟s demands, changes in the family units (Morrison, 2007) such as more mothers entering the work force or rich parents looking for the best educational places for their children as early as possible, caused early childhood education to become a growing concern. On the other hand, more women have now been favored in employment than in the past (Anning & Edwards, 2006). As manufacturing industries declined, service industries expanded. Employers seeking a

more flexible, part-time, cheaper, nonunionized workforce found that women fitted more into such patterns of employment than men. Women also traditionally have better „people skills" and that quality was both useful and profitable for industries serving the public at a face-to-face level. So, as more women entered the work force, the problem of educating those women"s children arose.

As the need for education of working mothers" children and the necessity of cultivating individuals being able to deal with the new world"s demands raised the issue of the most beneficial curriculum model for the educating of young children. So, countries started to make investigations on enhancing the quality for early childhood education such as developing early childhood curriculum models.

2.10 Empirical Review

The foregoing theoretical perspectives reflect the influences of certain psycho-social variables on the perceptions of Early Childhood Education Programmes. Following these, it is necessary to examine the literary perceptions of researchers on the Early Childhood Education as they relate to this study. Though it is not possible to involve all variables here, this study intends to at least situate the views and ideology of past researchers on the subject under study.

Falks" (1987) study revealed the following findings:

1. The issues of qualified teachers for the ECE.
2. The issues of poor learning environment
3. Lack of play equipment for the children at the centre
4. Lack of resting rooms for the children at the centre
5. Class over-crowdedness for a teacher

This is one of the comprehensive research works on Early Childhood Education Practices undertaken by Falks. His findings established that the reliability of the findings cannot be guaranteed. He even pointed out that research assistants used in the study were students who had had no training in research procedures. In similarity to this study, most of the ECE centre in the Shama District settings, children learn under a situation that is highly dominated by harshness, confusions and deprivations under unqualified teachers. Unlike this study, Falks" accessible population for the study was 3 schools out of 40 schools in a community and for data collection she used a interviews. The researcher used 67 respondents out of a population of 540 as the sample for the study. Similarly, the data analysis went through the same scientific methods, use of Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) to get frequency and simple percentage. Williams (1996), in a study, "Factors that Influence the Quality of Early Learning" revealed the followings findings:

1. The playground was too small for the children.
2. Although teachers were swift in attending to children"s toilet needs but they were unqualified for effecting ECE teaching practices.
3. The classrooms were equipped but were very small for the children"s learning.
4. The contribution of Parent Teachers Association was rather poor.
5. The teachers had no pre-service education in Early Childhood Education programme.

The focus of her study was on various important factors that can hinder quality learning of children. In the literature review, she pointed out that quality learning helps build concrete foundation for children in the early years. Her concern was on the social development, motivation, psycho-motor and physical development of a child. It was argued further that these social factors encourage learning for children

and all of these factors require qualified teachers to facilitate learning for children. Research questionnaire guides was used to collect the data for the study, and the sample for her study was 22 selected out of 45 respondents. Random sampling method, frequency and simple percentage were also used to analyze the data. The major focal points were to assess the qualification of teachers and the availability of physical infrastructures.

In her findings, Williams (1996) clarified that she was not certain of the reliability neither of the data nor of whether the results were a true reflection of the actual conditions of the situation within the area under study.

The above short comings also make this work deficient, with regard to its universal applicability. Education International (2010) revealed the following findings in its study,

"Early Childhood Education: A Global Scenario". These include:

1. The majority of teachers are young female high school graduates who are preparing for higher education.
2. ECE centers that are based in rural areas often have poor infrastructure, and lack appropriate facilities, materials and equipment.
3. Teaching staff working in early childhood education tend to be underpaid and earn (much) lower salaries compared to teachers at the primary level or higher
4. Child-teacher ratios are higher in ECE centres (around 34 children per teacher).
5. There is a large proportion of unqualified teachers employed in ECE. Education.

International focused its study on both developed and developing countries. The purpose of its study was to investigate early childhood education policies, programmes and activities across the globe, with a view to making this information available to EI member organisations to facilitate evidence-based policy-making and information exchange. Its main challenge was limited amount of information available on ECE and sources of data, particularly at the global level. Data were collected from 17 countries. Data were collected by the ECE Task Force from government and other sources, and complemented by previously published reports, studies and online resources.

In another study conducted by Shapiro (1995) it was found that more young people are now building interest in early childhood development programmes, unlike two or three centuries ago, when older people were found in Day-Care and pre-school programmes with the notion that older people have vast experience and have the capability to care for younger children. He also said that age can also be used as indicators to measure the quality of knowledge dissemination.

Almy et al. (1984) also underscores the importance of the role of early childhood caregivers, by listing some attributes dictated by what they termed as “common senses”, which include patience, warmth, nurturance, and energy. They further describe maturity, openness to new ideas, and tolerance for certain amount of ambiguity as necessary quality, therefore, if a young person possesses these characteristics, he/she will be able to move easily between the child‟s concrete level of thinking and the abstract. They added that newly trained teachers are very young and this may be due to the cutting down of the duration of schooling in the country. It

also means that majority of the new teachers would be with the service for a longer time and would help produce human resource of the country.

Balaban (1992) in a study also listed out some important personal qualities and abilities to enable Early Childhood Educators anticipate and plan; provide an interesting environment; elicit language, problem solving, and play; protect, listen, and watch; "smooth jangled feelings"; comfort; cope; facilitate social interactions; facilitate parent-child separation; and care for the whole family. According to him, young people possess certain levels of thinking ability and energy needed to perform these tasks. The quality of an educational system depends on the quality of its teachers. A specially trained teacher for the ECE programme will help in many ways to lay the proper foundation of a child early learning process. Siegel (1987, p.51) said, "due to the many functions performed by the ECE teacher; he/she must possess certain quality of education, greater theoretical knowledge of child development and early childhood education." According to Clark-Stewart (1984) an early childhood teachers or administrators who provide a high quality Early Childhood Programmes must possess certain specific training in early childhood education and development. People are in certain position or field due so many reasons.

Sheldon (1983, p.12) disclosed that "the quality of an early childhood programme depends on the availability of trained teachers" In one of the studies (Berry, Tout & Zaslow, 2006), was elaborated that higher levels of teacher education were generally linked with higher classroom quality in elementary and higher levels, but in terms of early childhood education, there is no great distinction. In other words, it cannot be concluded that the higher level of education early childhood teachers has, the higher quality classrooms with fewer problems.

In addition, Alva, Benden, Bryant, Burchical and Maxwell (2008) detected no association with higher teacher education level and higher classroom quality in early childhood education. Preschool teachers with less or more education levels are exposed to problems in teaching as the effective pedagogy is complex and do not depend on one single criteria (Field, Clifford & Maxwell, 2006).

Hyson, Morris and Tomlinson (2009), mentioned the significance of having a degree in early childhood education. However, they did not make a comparison among teachers based on the name of the degree obtained. For them, the quality of the program is more critical than the degree itself, because they added that degree alone does not guarantee teacher competence. In other words, either departments that preschool teachers graduate from or the degree they have, does not guarantee having more qualified classrooms with fewer problems. As a matter of fact, we cannot conclude that preschool teachers who graduate from certain departments deal with fewer or more problems during teaching and learning. A study by Azzi-Lessing (2009) also revealed that the adequate infrastructure is crucial in early childhood education.

Teaching experience can be a differentiating aspect among preschool teachers in classroom management skills (Reid, Stoolmiller & Webster- Stratoon, 2008; Martina, Mayall & Yin, 2006) or selecting and using appropriate methods for teaching in their classrooms. The teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, may feel uncomfortable when writing an evaluation about a child if the parents show serious reactions for the evaluation written for their child. So, this may lead teachers to soften or change their comments related children in evaluation part. As this is a new aspect both for experienced and inexperienced teachers, this might be one of the reasons why

there is no significant difference among preschool teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience.

In conclusion, the studies reviewed in some ways were in similarity to this current study, and it satisfied some of the indicated problems. ` Role of Educational Psychology in Pre-School Education Pre-school education is the first step in a child‟s educational journey (Ball, 1994). Early childhood experts are of the opinion that attending high quality preschool programme helps to promote children‟s social and emotional development and prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Studies have shown that children who attended quality early education programs are more likely to have better test scores and grades. A great number of educators and researchers are of the view that early childhood education is highly beneficial for the children‟s cognitive and educational development and well-being of young children in terms of their individual needs and characteristics.

Hendricks (2007) holds the position that "for more than a decade, research on approaches to early childhood education has sought to investigate the effectiveness of various kinds of programmes in changing the behaviour and enhancing the development of young children. All good pre-school programmes are built on the foundations of sound human relationships. Warmth and empathic understanding have been shown to be effective means of influencing young children‟s positive adjustment to nursery school, and it is apparent that genuine caring about the children and about other adults in the programme is fundamental to success" (p. 15). At this stage of development, children learn and absorb information very rapidly, and do take keen interest in every type of new discovery. It is a well-known fact that the most important years of learning are started at birth. At this stage, the brain of a child develops such

imprints which will last for the rest of his life. The environment also has a great influence on the rapid development on the ideas grasping power and emotional skills of the young children. The extensive studies which have been carried out on the high quality pre-schools education have long term fruitful effects on a child and especially for those who are weak in studies. Pre-school shares with parents the responsibility for promoting sound growth in a period when growth is rapid and important. Children come to pre-school endowed with inherent potentials. These potentials serve children in their progress from sensory experience to perceptual experience and to the acquisition of concepts. The protected environment of nursery schools allows children to orient themselves gradually to the realities of their world, by encouraging their expression of fantasy through play. A well planned environment can direct children into acceptable behavior, emotional equilibrium, integrated development and progressive learning (Barnett, 1995) which are all areas of special interest to Educational Psychology as an academic specialty.

In the work of Ntumi (2016) who conducted a study to find out challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum in the Mampong Municipal, his studies revealed that teachers, teaching and learning materials are the main factors that influence the implementation of the early childhood curriculum. Ntumi‟s findings further show that pre-school teachers are faced with a lot of challenges in implementing the early childhood curriculum. A notable one among them is that most pre-school teachers do not understand the early childhood curriculum, preschool teachers do not have enough teaching and learning materials to help them implement the early childhood curriculum, parents do not involve themselves in their wards education, therefore, it makes it difficult for pre-schools to do the work alone.

Also, in a study conducted by Şıvgın (2005), early childhood teachers‟ views regarding the curriculum being implemented were gathered. The data were collected from early childhood teachers in Ordu city and their views categorized into four areas: objectives, education, and planning, parent involvement and evaluation. Regarding the objectives, it was detected that teachers did not have difficulties both on deciding the objectives to choose for an activity and choosing objectives from all areas of development appropriate for the age group of the children. Teachers, in terms of education and planning, proposed that there was a need for examples regarding which methods to use, what kinds of technological materials to be included in the daily plans. In addition, teachers elaborated that the examples of science and nature activities, music activities and reading- writing activities should be included in the curriculum. The type of activities was needed regarding parent involvement, on the other hand, were not described clearly according to the views of the teachers. They added that parent involvement should consider the involvement of both fathers‟ and mothers‟ education. Finally, teachers found evaluation forms designed for evaluating children inadequate. They suggested that there should be more examples of evaluation forms to understand the whole progress of the children. In other words, observation forms designed for children were not adequate so other evaluation techniques should be included in the curriculum.

Another study (İnal, Kandır, & Özbey, 2009) focused on the difficulties faced by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation of the curriculum. The study sample consisted of a total of 154 teachers working at private and government kindergartens in Ankara and Afyon. A questionnaire with two sections (demographic information of teachers and their views on educational contexts) was used to gather the data. In the study, it was aimed to analyze whether teachers‟ views on planning

educational contexts varied with respect to their years of experience, educational background and type of the school they are working in. At the end of the study, it was found that the biggest difficulties teachers faced were in preparing annual plans and choosing objectives and goals for the whole year. Then, evaluation was the difficult part for the teachers since they were not sure what to write. On the other hand, choosing the kinds of teaching methods and techniques was a problem for the teachers. They had difficulty in designing the classroom and having a problem regarding the attitudes of parents towards early childhood education. Despite stating the different types of problems faced by the preschool teachers, problems related to the kinds of activities such as science-math, reading, and writing, field trips, inclusion were not included in the questionnaire.

Moreover, the reasons for such problems were not gathered from the first-hand resources that of the preschool teachers. In that sense, to be able to offer suggestions for a possible solution to the problems of preschool teachers, their ideas might also be included in the process.

2.11 Summary of Literature Review

The literature gives evident to conclude that DAP plays a significant role in pre-school teachers understanding of the best practices. All the reviewed empirical studies suggests that pre-school teachers knowledge affect their practices in the classroom.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter elaborated the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and empirical knowledge of the study. These contributions influenced not only the knowledge that was gained from the study but also guided the research process towards achieving its stated goal. In this chapter, the methodology and research design are delineated. This involves the underlying assumptions guiding the research process and detailing what was done and why.

3.1 Research Design

Choosing an appropriate research approach is of paramount importance in any study (Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2009). Research can adopt a quantitative approach, a qualitative approach or a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2003; Creswell, 2009; Punch, 2009). The present study adopted the quantitative approach. Creswell (2009) described a quantitative approach as: „„a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedure““ (p4). The researcher therefore employed descriptive survey for the study. This enabled the researcher to collect information on the issue under study. A descriptive survey deals with the collection of data so as to provide answers to the research questions or hypothesis. It presents issues as it is on the ground with less or no personal sentiments. That is to say, a descriptive study reports findings the way they exist. Typical descriptive studies are concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions, and procedures. This was considered most appropriate for this research since the study

seeks responses from the respondents with little or no biases. The descriptive survey basically makes inquiries into the status quo; it attempts to measure what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Aryetal, 1990).

The above notwithstanding, Creswell (2003) holds the view that descriptive survey makes it easy to identify attributes of a large population from small groups of individuals**.** Again, according to Cohen, Morrison, and Manion (2004), in a descriptive survey design, researchers gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions oridentifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared. Again, as recommended by Leedy and Omrod (2010), descriptive surveys are suitable for purposes of making generalizations from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about the characteristics, opinions, attitudes and past experiences of the population.

The descriptive survey determines the nature and the situation as it exists at the time of the study. The descriptive survey design describes and interprets events as they occur (Best & Kahn, 2003). It is versatile and practical, in that it identifies present conditions and points to the recent needs. It has the characteristic of analyzing the relationships, differences, and trends that contribute to teacher‟s knowledge, challenges in early childhood best practices at the pre-school level. By this, the researcher could find clues to answer the research questions or hypothesis which involve classroom related challenges (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2008; Sarantakos, 2005).

The researcher employed the descriptive survey design because of its myriad of merits. For instance, the design provides a more accurate and meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people‟s perception and behavior on the basis of data

gathered at a particular time (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). This would allow for in-depth follow up questions and items that are unclear to be explained. More so, descriptive survey design has the potential to provide a lot of information from quite a large sample of respondents (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). It is as well considered as the best approach for the study becauseit is a relatively inexpensive way of getting information about people‟s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. It assures manageability of the data collected. The descriptive survey is more economical since many subjects can be studied at the same time (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). Also, findings from the study can begeneralized for the entire population.

Despite its advantages, the researcher acknowledges its disadvantages. Frankel and Wallen (2000) identified that the difficulties associated with descriptive surveys are that, it is difficult getting respondents to answer questions thoroughly and honestly. Again, there is a difficulty in getting a sufficient number of questionnaires completed for meaningful analysis to be made. Further, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2008) maintain that in the descriptive survey, there is the difficulty of ensuring that the questions answered are clear and not misleading. The reason is that survey results can vary greatly due to the exact wording of questions. As a result, it may produce unreliable results. There is also the difficulty of obtaining an adequate number of a questionnaire completed and returned for meaningful analysis to be made in some cases. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the descriptive survey design was found to be most appropriate and applicable for the study. It would help the researcher gather accurate data on teachers on variables underlying the study for concrete conclusions to be made.

3.2 Population

Population refers to the name of the large general group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and which is usually stated in theoretical terms (Neuman, 2003). Also, according to Polit and Hungler (1996), a study population reflects the entire aggregate of cases that meet designated set of criteria. The population of the study comprised the entire public basic school teachers in Mampong.

According to Amedahe (2000), target population refers to the population that the researcher will ideally like to generalize. Ofosua- Adane (2013) also maintains that target population refers to the empirical units such as persons, objects, occurrences, etc used for the study. The target population is the group of interest to the researcher. It is the group from whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. The target population of the study comprised three (3) selected circuits in Mampong. Within the three circuits, the researcher targeted only teachers at the pre-school level.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

The sample size was 150 respondents from the various schools selected based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table with its appropriate confidence level and confidence interval on a population of 496.

Amedahe (2000) postulates that sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population.He further asserted that a sample denotes a small and representative proportion of the population. Sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population and to obtain data that is representative of the whole population (Sarantakos, 1998).

Three circuits were randomly selected from 6 circuits within Mampong. Again, seven schools were purposively selected from the ten Basic Schools in Mampong for the study. Simple random was used to make sure any circuit, school and individual stand the chance to be selected for the study. According to Yates, David and Daren(2008), in simple random sampling each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process, and each subset of population individuals has the same probality of being chosen the sample in any study These schools were selected based on the fact that they are all public schools that are less restrictive to the study and at the same time teachers are readily available.

Purposively, preschools were selected for the study .The sampling procedure decision was based on the fact that the study was about early childhood developmental practices. I used purposively sampling because I was working with only preschool teachers and no other teachers from any educational category. According to Black (2010), purposive sampling technique in which a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs where elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgement of the researcher.

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a four-point Likert scaledquestionnaire with their appropriate numerical values. The scale of the questionnaire was strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, and negative ones were Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

The questionnaire was used to gather information from the preschool teachers in Mampong. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2004), the questionnaire is widely used and is useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured and unstructured numerical data that can be administered without the researcher, May (2001) also maintains that the purpose of the survey questionnaire is to elicit information about the characteristics or opinions of the respondents. The questionnaire has the advantages of allowing the researcher to collect data from a group of respondents at the same and it is easy to score.

The questionnaires were designed for teachers at the early childhood level. The questionnaires elicited demographic data, the perceived knowledge of teachers on early childhood best practices, teachers perceive the implementation of early childhood educational best practices, the perceived challenges in the implementation to early childhood educational best practices and finally, how early childhood educational practices issues be addressed or managed. The items in the questionnaire were structured in such a way that they enabled the respondents to pick alternative answers against their choice of responses. Questionnaire for respondents comprised four segments respectively. Section „A" elicited the bio-data of the respondents. Section B covered the first research question which considered items regarding the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices. Section „C" also looked at teachers perceives the implementation of early childhood educational best practices. Section „D" took care of the perceived challenges in the implementation to early childhood educational best practices and finally the last section considered how early childhood educational practices issues be addressed or managed.

3.5 Validation of Instrument

In quantitative research, validity rests on the foundation that a method, a test or a research tool is actually measuring what it is supposed to measure(Bryman, 2008). In a similar manner, Silverman (2009) stated that validity is a way of finding an accurate representation of the phenomena to which they referto. Reliability is a measure of the consistency over time of instruments with groups of respondents and it deals with precision and accuracy (Cohen et al., 2000). Validity and reliability are essential features of any research (Creswell, 2003; Robson, 2002).

Table 1: Reliability Statistics for Constructs and Overall Items

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Number Of Items
Knowledge	.903	9
Implementation	.828	6
Challenge	.826	9
Management	.871	8
Overall	.953	32

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 shows the reliability coefficient (α) of items under each Construct and the overall items. The alpha value shows how the data collected by items are consistent when the same items are use in different places at different times. The closer the value of alpha to one, the higher the consistency of the data collected by the items are. It is mostly use by researchers in their studies for reliability checks though some have their reservations on its use. The alpha value for the constructs Knowledge, Implementation, Challenge and Management are .903, .828, .826 and .871 respectively. The overall alpha value is .953 indicating high level of consistency of the instrument used in data collection.

3.6 Validity

Face validity is whether an item measures what it claims to measure by it appearance. For face validity of the items, expects in the field of study looked at the items for assessment and validation. For content validity, the items were made in reference to the curriculum for Early grade education and other relevant materials written by expects in the field.

Construct validity is concern with whether the items under a given construct measure the variable or not. It determines the relationship between the items under a given construct. Pearson Correlation coefficient was used to check the inter – item correlation of items under each construct and the results are shown in Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 2: Inter-item Correlation of Items under Knowledge Construct

	Q1	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**	**P_know**
Q1	1	.559**	.483**	.513**	.533**	.369**	.545**	.567**	.430**	.736**
Q2		1	.424**	.549**	.572**	.432**	.561**	.474**	.404**	.742**
Q3			1	.523**	.627**	.426**	.570**	.420**	.559**	.747**
Q4				1	.614**	.569**	.608**	.572**	.597**	.810**
Q5					1	.506**	.631**	.500**	.520**	.811**
Q6						1	.586**	.318**	.571**	.687**
Q7							1	.507**	.567**	.820**
Q8								1	.512**	.718**
Q9									1	.757**
P_know										1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2 shows that there is a positive correlation in between the items and the Pearson *r* of each item and transformed variable (P_know). indicate that all the items are valid since all the values there are larger as compared to the critical values on the Table of critical values for Pearson *r* at level 0.01 and $df = 148$, $p < 0.01$. This indicate that all the items under Knowledge Construct are measuring the same variable.

Table 3: Inter-item Correlation of Items under Implementation Construct

	Q10	**Q11**	**Q12**	**Q13**	**Q14**	**Q15**	**P_implement**
Q10	1						
Q11	.576**	1					
Q12	.516**	.534**	1				
Q13	.487**	.570**	.584**	1			
Q14	.396**	.480**	.403**	.352**	1		
Q14	.434**	.567**	.435**	.518**	.353**	1	
P_implement	.755**	.831**	.759**	.758**	.684**	.736**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 shows that there is a positive correlation in between the items and the Pearson *r* of each item and transformed variable (P_implementation) indicates that all the items are valid since all the values there are larger as compared to the critical values on the Table of critical values for Pearson *r* at level 0.01 and $df = 148$, $p < 0.01$. This indicate that all the items under Implementation Construct are measuring the same variable

Table 4: Inter-item Correlation of Items under Challenge Construct

	Q15	**Q16**	**Q17**	**Q18**	**Q19**	**Q20**	**Q21**	**Q22**	**Q23**	**P_chal**
Q15	1									
Q16	.629**	1								
Q17	.379**	.301**	1							
Q18	.342**	.332**	.603**	1						
Q19	.319**	.295**	.419**	.368**	1					
Q20	.363**	.345**	.135	.222*	.258**	1				
Q21	.488**	.554**	.254**	.253**	.299**	.450**	1			
Q22	.458**	.498**	.218*	.269**	.202*	.313**	.477**	1		
Q23	.538**	.484**	.231*	.220*	.190*	.290**	.530**	.561**	1	
P_chaL	.764**	.752**	.586**	.597**	.580**	.570**	.739**	.665**	.683**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 shows that there is a positive correlation in between the items and the Pearson *r* of each item and transformed variable (P_chaL) indicates that all the items are valid since all the values there are larger as compared to the critical values on the Table of critical values for Pearson *r* at level 0.01 and $df = 148$, $p < 0.01$. This indicate that all the items under Challenge Construct are measuring the same variable.

Table 5: Inter-item Correlation of Items under Management Construct

	Q24	Q25	Q26	Q27	Q28	Q29	Q30	Q31	P_manage
Q24	1								
Q25	.425**	1							
Q26	.589**	.579**	1						
Q27	.380**	.422**	.504**	1					
Q28	.264**	.563**	.383**	.356**	1				
Q29	.409**	.676**	.576**	.440**	.591**	1			
Q30	.452**	.657**	.561**	.352**	.531**	.619**	1		
Q31	.414**	.628**	.587**	.372**	.453**	.628**	.610**	1	
P_manage	.570**	.747**	.666**	.577**	.599**	.728**	.676**	.725**	1

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 shows that there is a positive correlation in between the items and the Pearson *r* of each item and transformed variable (P_chaL) indicates that all the items are valid since all the values there are larger as compared to the critical values on the Table of critical values for Pearson *r* at level 0.01 and $df = 148$, $p < 0.01$. This indicate that all the items under Management Construct are measuring the same variable.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

After establishing the necessary contact with the head teachers of the selected schools, permission was sought for the administration of the instrument.

Again, the researcher trained two research assistants for the collection of the data. These assistants were trained on how to talk to respondents, how to explain certain difficult questions to respondents and other equally important information that

enabled the researcher to have uniform information. The researcher together with the assistants explained the purpose of the study and procedure for responding to the questionnaire to respondents. In order to ensure clarity of how the questionnaire could be completed, the researcher together with the assistants again administered the questionnaire themselves respondents personally during regular school time..

3.8 Data Processing and Analysis

The research data collected was very extensive and was analysed using quantitative methods. Patton (1990) notes, "the analysis of the empirical data aimsto make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals" (p. 371). The field data was collated, sifted through and edited in order to address questions that have been answered partially or not answered. For effective statistical presentation and analysis, the questionnaires were serially numbered to facilitate easy identification. It is necessary to observe this precaution to ensure quick detection of tiny sources of errors when they occur in the tabulation of the data. Responses to the variousitems in the questionnaires were then be added, tabulated and statistically analysed.

After editing and coding, the data was entered into the computer using the Statistical Product and service solution (SPSS Version 22.0) software. Before performing the desired data transformation, the data was cleaned by runningconsistency checks on every variable. Corrections were made after verification from the questionnaires.

For research question one, two three and four descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data to describe simple characteristics and research variables. Frequencies and percentages were used for categorical and nominal data and means

standard deviations were used for interval or ration data. Data from the teachers was analysed based on the research questions as follows.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Punch (2008) was of the opinion that researchers should be mindful of ethical issues especially in social research because it is concerned with data about people. Consideration for moral issues and respect for participants is essential in social research. Hence, in this research, several ethical issues were taken into consideration. The research addressed all ethical concerns which include informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality.

One of the issues involved in this research was informed consent. It affords prospective participants the opportunity to accept or decline to engage in the research. It describes the need for participants to understand the aims, objectives and potential harm that such involvement may have on them (Seidman,2006). It also spells out that they have the right to withdraw even after consent hasbeen given; this is in line with Cohen et al (2000) and Mertens, (2010), who stated that informed consent arises from the participant‟s right to freedom. In this study, the purpose of the study was carefully reviewed with each participant before they were involved in the research.

The anonymity of study respondents was also highly taken intoconsideration in the present study. Oliver (2010) pointed out that anonymity is a vital issue in research ethics because it gives the participants the opportunity to have their identity concealed. In this research, fictitious names were used for identification purposes which cannot be traced to the participants. Codes were also adopted where necessary to ensure anonymity of information and harm. In order not to

unnecessarily invade the privacy of participants, the researcher made prior visits to schools before the data collection commenced. Neither names nor any identifiable information from respondents was taken as a way of ensuring the ethical principle of anonymity in social research. This is to prevent possible victimization of respondents where certain responses may be viewed as unpalatable to other stakeholders.

On the issue of confidentiality, efforts were made to maintain the confidentiality of the responses of the participants. Participants were told that their responses would be kept confidential and that no one known to them would have access to the information provided and none of the respondent's names were recorded in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the preschools teachers‟ perception of early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal. The analysis is based on the 100% returned data obtained from 150 selected pre-school teachers in the Mampong Municipal.

4.1 Research Questions

1. What are the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal?
2. How do preschool teachers perceive the implementation of early childhood educational best practices? Mampong Municipal?
3. What is the gender difference between male and female teachers‟ knowledge about early childhood educational best practices Mampong Municipal?

4.1.1 Research Hypothesis

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between males and femalesteachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood best practice.

H_1: There is statistically significant difference between males and females teachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood practices.

4.2 Research Question 1: What are the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices?

To materialize the purpose of the study means and standard deviations were computed for the responses of the teachers with regards to perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices. Table 6

presents the findings.

Table 6: Perceived Knowledge Preschool Teachers Have on ECE Best Practices

Knowledge of teachers about ECE best practices	N	Mean	Std. D
ECE best practice consider children‟s individual differences	150	3.25	.437
ECE best practice take into consideration children‟s interest	150	3.33	.471
ECE best practice rest on the idea that children have to select their own activities.	150	3.36	.500
ECE practice provides a variety of concrete learning Materials in Centres (Writing Centre, Science Centre, Maths Centre, etc.)	150	3.34	.796
ECE best allows children to learn by actively exploring relevant and interesting materials.	150	3.21	.408
ECE best practice allows children to learn by interacting and working cooperatively with otherchildren	150	3.22	.413
ECE best practice allows teachers to move amonggroups and individuals, offering suggestions	150	3.46	.500
ECE best practice allow children to establish rulesfor their classroom	150	3.76	.408
ECE best practice allows children to have storiesread to them daily, individually or in groups.	150	3.20	.403
Mean of Means/SD	150	3.37	.426

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 6 presents the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices. From the Table, the overall mean and standard deviation (M=3.37, SD=.426) show that majority of them were aware and have knowledge about the early childhood educational best practices. To illustratefew of the statements, the majority of teachers indicated that ECE best practice takes into consideration children‟s individual differences. The mean and standard deviation of

(M=3.25, SD=.437) confirm the foregoing statement.

The findings further show that majority of the pre-school teachers (M=3.33, SD=.471) are knowledgeable and aware that ECE best practice is the one that takes into consideration children‟s in interest. The findings lend support to the work of Bredekamp (2011) who posited that teachers need to meet the children where they are. This involves observing children‟s engagement with materials, activities, and planning curriculum and adapting teaching strategies based on observation, assessing what children already know and their interests, and keeping teaching goals in mind.

The results again show that majority of the pre-teachers have the knowledge that ECE best practice allows teachers to move among groups and individuals, offering suggestions. The teachers‟ responses to that statement produced a mean and standard deviation of (M=3.46, SD=.500) to confirm it s. The findings are consistent with of Morrison (2007) who also revealed that in ECE best practice there is the need for a fully competent individual child having the skills and knowledge of dealing with the new world‟s demands, changes in thefamily units.

On the issue of whether pre-school teachers are aware that ECE bestpractice allows children to establish rules for their classroom, the mean and standard deviation of (M=3.79, SD=.408) gives statistical evidence that majority of the pre-school teachers agreed totally to the statement. This study corroborates the findings of Webb (2003) who elaborated that ECE practice pay way for children to learn cooperative skills through education in child care centres and such skills help them to obey rules and stay safe in the society.

4.3 Research Question 2: How do preschool teachers perceive the implementation of early childhood educational best practices?

The researcher went further to explore m the teachers whether they put in practice the early childhood educational best practices. To achieve this, means and standard deviation were deemed appropriate for the analysis.

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis How Teachers Implement the ECE Best Practices

Teachers use of early childhood educational best practices	N	Mean	Std. D
I use all aspect of the development in teaching	150	1.28	.257
I promote a positive climate for teaching and learning	150	2.03	.271
I use a variety of teaching strategies	150	1.06	.300
I assess and evaluate children's learning progress primarily through observation, check lists, work samples as part of their classroom assessment	150	1.14	.496
I provide a safe environment and age-appropriate supervision that allows for children to become responsible	150	2.01	.298
I use enough teaching and learning materials	150	1.22	.323
Mean of Means/SD	**150**	**1.27**	**.226**

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 7 presents how preschool put into practice the early childhood educational best practices. The results show that even though the majority of the teachers are aware of the early childhood educational best practices they seem not to put them into practice. The overall mean and standard deviation (M=1.27, SD=.226) which is less than 2.50 supports the findings. For example, to find out the pre-school teachers use of all aspects of the childhood development in teaching, the mean and standard

deviation (M=1.28, SD=.257) shows that most ofthe teachers do not use all of them. The findings agree with that of Hart, et al., (2003) whose study revealed that there was a negative correlation between developmentally inappropriate practices and pupil‟s outcome.

The Table further shows that majority of the pre-school teachers do not use a variety of teaching strategies. This was evident after the teacher's responses produced a mean and standard deviation (M=1.06, SD=.300) which is less than the test value of 2.50.

To further explore from the teachers whether pre-school teachers provide a safe environment and age- appropriate supervision that allows for children to increasing responsibility, the results show that majority of the teachers indicated that they do not provide a safe environment and age- appropriate supervision that allows for children to be responsible. The mean and standard deviation of (M=2.01, SD=.298) gives statistical evidence to that effect.

The findings are in conformity with that Brede-kamp and Copple (1997) and Buchanan et al., (1998) who argued that teaching practices for young children include opportunities for choice, hands-on learning, promotion of collaboration between children, use of a variety of teaching strategies, individualization, and self-regulation, however, most teachers do not engage pupils in these activities and such they are not able to teach pupils to unearth their potentials.

4.4 Research Question 3: What is the gender difference between male and female teachers' knowledge about early childhood educational best practices?

Table 8: What is the gender difference between male and female teachers' knowledge about early childhood educational best practices?

GENDER	MEAN	SD
Male	31.92	6.821
Female	97.87	18.73

Source: Field Survey, 2022

From Table 8, the means and standard deviation showed that the female teachers (M = 97.84, SD=18.73) are more Knowledgeable in early childhood best practice than males teachers (M=31.92, SD=.28079).

4.5 Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis to find out the differences between males and females with respect to their knowledge in knowledge in early childhood best practice was considered. To do this, independent sample t-test was deemed appropriate for the analysis

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference between males and females teachers with respect to their knowledge in early childhood best practice.

H_1: There is statistically significant difference between males and females Teachers with respect to their knowledge in early childhood best practice.

Table 9 : Results of t-test Comparing Male and Female Teachers withRespect to their Knowledge in Early Childhood Best Practice (n=217)

Gender	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	Sig-Value
Males	31.92	6.821	9.611	168.9	.000
Females	97.84	18.73			

* Significant at p=0.05 (2-tailed)
Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 9 presents differences in male and female teachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood best practices. From Table 9, the means and standard deviation showed that the female teachers (M = 97.84, SD=18.73) are more Knowledgeable in early childhood best practice than males teachers (M=31.92, SD=.28079). The independent sample t-test, results show that there was a statistical significant difference between male and females in Knowledge in early childhood best practice [t (168.9) = 9.611, n=217, p = .000)]. This gives evidence that there is the statistically significant difference between females and males with respect to their knowledge of the best practices in early childhood. and as such the null hypotheses stated as "there is no statistically significant difference between males and females teachers with respect to their knowledge in early childhood best practice:" is rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis that "there is statistically significant difference between males and females teachers with respect to their Knowledge in early childhood best practice. the agrees with a study conducted by Şıvgın (2005) who also found that female early childhood teachers are knowledgeable and proactive to teachers practices than males.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study as well as the conclusions, recommendations, and directions for further research. Thus, the chapter focuses on the implications of the findings from the study for policy formulation and further research. The recommendations are made based on the key findings and major conclusions arising from the study.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study assessed knowledge and practice of preschool teachers about early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal.. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The study employed quantitative approaches through the use of self-developed questionnaires. The pre-schools teachers participated in the study via responding to the questionnaire. In all, there were 150 respondents. Quantitative data analysis was performed using the Statistical Products and Service Solutions (SPSS), Version 23.0). In relation to the quantitative data, both descriptive (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistical (independent samples t–test) tools were used in order to analyse the data, and also answer the research questions and hypothesis.

5.2 Summary of Main Findings

The main purpose of research question one was to determine the perceived knowledge preschool teachers have on early childhood educational best practices. The results from the study revealed that preschool teachers are aware of and have knowledge about early childhood educational best practices. Best practices suchas

ECE consider children‟s individual differences, children‟s in interest, ECE rest on the idea that children‟s to select their own activities, ECE provide a variety of concrete learning materials in centres (writing centre, science centre, math centre, etc.), ECE allows children to learn by actively exploring relevant and interesting materials were all indicated by teachers that they are knowledgeable in those best practices.

Research question two sought to determine how preschool teachers implement these early childhood educational best practices. The results from the study unravelled that even though pre-school teachers have knowledge about the early best practices, however, they do not apply or implement them in the classroom. For example teachers indicated that they do not emphasize all aspect of development in teaching, not promoting of positive climate for teaching and learning was also identified, teachers again indicated that they do not do variety of teaching strategies and more importantly they do not provide a safe environment and age- appropriate supervision that allows for children to increasing responsibility.

Research question three explored from the pre-school teachers some factors that challenge the implementation to early childhood educational best practices in the Mampong Municipal. Identified challenges include the lack of parental support, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of curriculum materials, lack of pupils readiness, Inadequate school facilities, Inadequate government support and attitudes of school heads.

The last research question elicited from the teachers about how early childhood educational best practices issues should be addressed or managed. In the quest of providing a solution to address the situation, it was revealed that change of teacher‟s attitudes, parental involvement, provision of adequate school facilities, adequate

teaching and learning materials and Government active involvement in early childhood education were postulated as factors to managethe situation.

5.3 Findings from Research Hypothesis

I tested the hypothesis to find out the difference between male and female pre-school teachers with respect to their knowledge in ECE best educational practices. The results show that female pre-school teachers are knowledgeable and well equipped with ECE best educational practices than male pre-school teachers.

5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded there is a gap between theory and practice in teaching skills among the preschool teachers in the Mampong Municipal. The findings give reasons to believe that there is a need toengage teachers in critical reflection in action of what they know. This can be done by strengthening and facilitating professional development training to enhance the teacher‟s lesson delivery and provide an avenue for them to initiate discussions on what works or doesn‟t work for them in reality.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made.

In the first place, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should provide teachers with comprehensive training and awareness on the contextual implementation of the early childhood best practices within a culturally relevant context.

Again, the Ministry of Education should ensure the developmental goals and objectives in the curriculum reflect local values and inform approaches to classroom practices. The curriculum should also reflect the customary practices, traditions, and rituals that touch the lives of children in various cultural contexts and encourage the participation of children in the everyday life of their community.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Early Childhood departments in schools, provide hands-on practice to in-service teachers so that they can translate child development principles to classroom practice. The model could include offering short courses with a multilevel approach which leads to a systematic professional development.

Principals of Colleges of Education must ensure that teachers are provided with continuous training on how children develop and equip them with the best ways of observing and listening to children. This can be done by affording them release time to attend workshops or observe other teachers and classrooms.

The government should establish an electronic inter-school database network in all of Ghana in which all early childhood teachers can exchange ideas, lesson plans, and activities, discuss similar areas of concern, and post videos documenting classroom best practices.

Finally, parents must be sensitized and encouraged to be fully involved in the education of their wards.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

From the overall recommendations which have been under listed in this research report, it is recommended that other academic research exercises couldbe directed around the topic. The following are some suggested areas that can be considered for further studies.

1. The researcher suggests that similar studies should be conducted in other Municipalities in the entire Region (Ashanti), this is to help make a concrete generalization of the findings.
2. Further research can concentrate on the higher classes. For example lower and upper primary to examine teachers knowledge and practice of the subject matter.

REFERENCES

Abraham A. (2012). Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus groups. In P. Cairns, and A.L. Cox (Eds.), *Research methods for human computer interaction* (pp. 17-34). Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Abu-Jaber, M., Al-Shawareb, A., & Gheith, E. (2010). Kindergarten teachers‟ Abu-jaber, M., Al-Shawareb, A., & Gheith, E. (2010). Kindergarten teachers‟ beliefs towards developmentally appropriate practice in Jordan. *Early Childhood Journal, 38*, 65-74.

Adams, A. (1993). Questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus groups. In P. Cairns, and A.L. Cox (Eds.), *Research methods for human computer interaction* (pp. 17-34). Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review. *English Linguistics Research, 3*(1). https://doi.org/10.5430/elr.v3n1p39

Arteaga, I., Humpage, S., Reynolds, A. J., & Temple, J. A. (2014). One year of preschool or two: Is it important for adult outcomes? *Economics of Education Review, 40*, 221–237. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2013.07.009

Aryetal, L. (1990). *Research methods in education*. (6th ed.) London: Routledge.

Barnett, S. W. (1995). Long term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. *The Future of Children, 17*, 69-8.

Basic Education in Ghana 2008/2009. Accra, Ghana: MOE, March 2009.

Beaty, J. J. (1993). *Skills for pre-school teachers*. New York: McMillan Publishing Company.

Beijaard, D., Verloop, N. & Vermunt, J. D. (2000). Teachers‟ perceptions of professional identity: An exploratory study from a personal knowledge perspective. *Teacher and Teacher Education, 16*(7), 749-764.

Bem, D. J. (1972). Self-perception theory. *Advances in Experimental School Psychology, 6*, 1-62.

Bennett, N., Wood, E. & Rogers, S. (1997). *Teaching through play: Teachers' thinking and classroom practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Berg, B. L. (2007). Qualitative research methods for social sciences. San-Francisco: Sage.

Bierman, K .L., Domitrovich, C .E., Nix, R.L., Gest, S.D., Welsh, J.A.,Greenberg, M.T., Blair, C., Nelson, K. and Gill, S. (2008). Promoting academic and

social-emotional beliefs towards developmentally appropriate practice in Jordan. *Early Childhood Journal 38*, 65-74.

Bird, D. K. (2009). The use of questionnaires for acquiring information on public perception of natural hazards and risk mitigation-a review of current knowledge and practice. *Natural Hazards and Earth System Sciences, 9*(4), 1307.

Black, P. J. (2010). Formative and summative assessment by teachers. *Studies in Science Education, 21*, 49 – 97.

Blaise, M., & Ryan, S. (2012). Using critical theory to trouble the early childhood curriculum: Is it enough? In. N. File, J. Mueller and D. Basler Wisneski (Eds) 2012. *Curriculum in early childhood education: Reexamined, rediscovered, renewed*. New York: Routledge.

Bloch, M., & Popkewitz, S. (2000). Using critical theory to trouble the early childhood curriculum: Is it enough? In. N. File, J. Mueller and D. Basler Wisneski (eds) 2012. *Curriculum in early childhood education: Reexamined, rediscovered, renewed*. New York: Routledge.

Borg, S. (2001). Self-Perception and practice in teaching grammar. *English Language Teaching Journal, 55*(1), 21-29.

Boutte, G. S. (2008). Beyond the illusion of diversity: How early childhood teachers can promote social justice. *The Social Studies, 99*(4), 165–173. https://doi.org/10.3200/TSSS.99.4.165-173

Boutte, S. (2008). Self-perception and practice in teaching grammar. *English Language Teaching Journal, 55*(1), 21-29.

Bowman, B. (2011). Bachelor"s degrees are necessary but not sufficient: Preparing teachers to teach young children. In Zigler, E., Gilliam, W.S. and Barnett, W. S. (Eds.), *The pre-K debates current controversies and issues* (pp. 54-57). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Bowman, B.T., Donovan, M.S. & Burns, M.S. (Eds.). (2001). *Eager to learn: Educating our pre-schoolers*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Bredekamp, S. (2011). *Effective practices in early childhood education: Building a foundation*. Upper Sadler River, N.J: Pearson Education.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (2006). *Serving children from birth through age 8 Adopted July 1996*. Early Years Education: Major Themes in Education, 1, 231.

Bredekamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practice in*

early childhood programs (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

Brophy, J.E., & Good, T.L. (1974). *Teacher-student relationships: Causes and consequences*. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston.

Bryant, D.M., Clifford. R.M., & Peisner, E. S. (1991). Best Practices for beginners: Developmental appropriateness in kindergarten. *American Educational Journal, 28*(4), 783-803.

Buchanan, T.K., Burts, D.C. & Pellar, L. (1998). Developmentally appropriate practices in teacher education: Lessons from one semester. *Journal of Early Childhood Education, 19*(3), 275-284.

Burns, N. & Grove, S. K. (2003). *Understanding nursing research* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Company.

Burts, D. C., & Hart, C. H., Charlesworth, R., DeWolf, D. M., Ray, J., Manuel, K., & Fleege, P.O. (1993). Developmental appropriateness of kindergarten programs and academic outcomes in first grade. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 8*(1), 23-31.

Burts, D. C., Hart, C. H., Charlesworth, R., & Kirk, L. (1990). A comparison of frequencies of stress behaviours observed in kindergarten children in classrooms with developmentally appropriate versus developmentally inappropriate instructional practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 5*, 407-423. D

Carol, K.-W. (2000). Preservice teacher education students‟ epistemological beliefs and conception about learning. *Instructional Science, 39*(1), 87-108.

Chapman, M., British Columbia, & Ministry of Education. (2000). *The primary program: A framework for teaching*. Victoria: British Columbia, Ministry of Education.

Charles, L. D., & Williams. S. (2006). Early childhood care and education in the Caribbean (CARICOM states). Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007 Strong foundations. *Early Childhood Care and Education, 3*(5), 26-83. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.

Charlesworth, R ., Hart, C H ., Burts, D.C., & Hernandez, S. (1991). Kindergarten teachers‟ beliefs and practices. *Early Child Development and Care, 70*, 17-35.

Charlesworth, R. (1998). The effectiveness of developmentally appropriate compared with developmentally inappropriate practices: Implications for teacher preparation. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 15*(1), 8-12.

Charlesworth, R., Burts, D.C. and Hart, C. H. (1994). The effectiveness of developmentally appropriate compared with developmentally inappropriate practices: Implications for teacher preparation. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 15*(1), 8-12.

Charlesworth, R., Hart, C.H., Burts, D.C., Mosley, J., & Fleege, P.O. (1993). Measuring the developmental appropriateness of kindergarten teachers‟ beliefs and practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 8*(3), 255-276.

Cheng, M.M.H,. K-W. Chan, S.Y.F. Tang, & Cheng, A.Y. N. (2009). Pre-service teacher education students‟ epistemological beliefs and their conceptions of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 319-327.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*, (4th ed.) Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Cronin-Jones, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Curtis, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davies, R. (1997). *A historical review of the evolution of early childhood care and education in the Caribbean*. Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Davies, R. (2008). *The Jamaica early childhood curriculum for children birth to five years: A conceptual framework*. Kingston: Dudley Grant Memorial Trust.

Dawson, C., & Dawson, C. (2009). *Introduction to research methods: A practical guide for anyone undertaking a research project*. Oxford: How to Contents. Retrieved from http://seite&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=285231

Doliopoulou, E. (1996). Greek\s kindergarten beliefs and practices: How appropriate are they? *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal, 4*(2), 33-48.

Essa, E. L. (2003). *Introduction to early childhood education*. NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.

Fang, Z. (1996). A review of research of teacher beliefs and practices. *Educational Research, 38*(1), 47-65.

Farrell, T. S. C. (2006). The teacher is an octopus: Uncovering pre-service English

language teachers‟ prior beliefs through metaphor analysis. *Regional Language Centre Journal, 37*(2), 236-248.

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS* (2nd ed.). London, Sage Publication.

File, N. (2012). The relationships between child development and early childhood curriculum. In N. File, J. Mueller, and D. Basler Wisneski (Eds.) *Curriculum in early childhood education: Re-examined, rediscovered, renewed*. New York: Routledge.

Fleer, M. (2003). Early childhood education as an evolving, community of practice‟ or as lived, Social Reproduction: Researching the taken-for granted. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 4*(1), 64-79.

Fleer, M. (2012). *Developmental fossils--unearthing the artefacts of early childhood education: the reification of "child development"*. Francisco: Pearson Education, Inc.

Fraenkel, J. R, & Wallen, N. E. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Gama, S. (2007). An exploratory investigation on the influence of practical experience towards shaping future early childhood teachers‟ practice in the arts. *Australasian Journal, 36*(3), 117-121.

Garvis, S., Fluckiger, B., & Twigg, D. (2012). Exploring the beliefs of commencing early childhood education graduate students: Providing insights to improve teacher education programs. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(1), 6.

Goffin, C. & Wilson, R. (2001). Developing deep learning approaches and personal teaching efficacy within a pre-service teacher education context. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 72*, 483-511.

Goffin, S.G. & Wilson, C. S. (2001). *Curriculum models and early childhood education*. USA: New Jersey

Gonzalez- Mena, J. (2008). *Foundations of early childhood education*. USA: New York

Grisay, S., Mahlck, D. (1991). Breaking the negative cycle: The formation of selfefficacy beliefs in the arts, a focus on professional experience in pre-service teacher education. *Australasian Journal, 36*(2), 36-41.

Grotewell, P. G. & Burton, Y. R. (2008). *Early childhood education: Issues and developments*. USA: New York.

Guerriero, S. (2014). Teachers‟ pedagogical knowledge and the teaching profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 2*(1), 7.

Hart, C. H., Yang, C., Charlesworth, R., & Burrs. D.C. (2003). *Kindergarten teaching practices: Associations with later child academic and social/emotional adjustment to school*. Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child development, Tampa, FL.

Hedge, A. V., & Cassidy, D. J. (2009). Kindergarten teachers‟ perspectives on developmentally appropriate practices (DAP): A study conducted in Mumbai (India). *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 21*(1), 65-78.

Ho, D. C. W. (2008). Exploring the definitions of quality early childhood programmes in a market-driven context: case studies of two Hong Kong preschools. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 16*(3), 223-236.

Huffman, L. R., & Speer, P. W. (2000). Academic performance among at-risk children: The role of developmentally appropriate practices. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 15*, 167-184.

İnal, G., Kandır, A., & Özbey, S. (2009). A study on the difficulties faced by preschool teachers in the planning and implementation. *The Journal of International Social Research, 2-6*, 373-387.

Janzen, M. (2008). Where is the (postmodern) child in early childhood education research? *Early Years, 28*(3), 287-298.

Jones, J., & Gullo, J. (1999). Caring and learning together: A case study of Jamaica. *Early Childhood and Family Policy Series, 21*.

Jones, J., Brown, A., and Brown, J. (2011). *Caring and learning together: A case study of Jamaica*. New York: UNESCO.

Kagan, D.M. (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review Educational Research, 62*(2), 129-169.

Kern, J., Kruse, S., & Roehrig, M. A. (2005). Toward an integrative "Educare" system: An investigation of teachers' understanding and uses of developmentally appropriate practices for young children in Korea. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 20*, 49-56.

Kilderry, A. (2012). *Teacher decision making in early childhood education*. Doctoral Thesis, Queensland University of Technology. Retrieved from http://eprints.qut.edu.au/53196/1/Anna_Kilderry_Thesis.pdf.

Kim, H. K. (2011). Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) as defined and interpreted by early childhood preservice teachers: Beliefs about DAP and

influences of teacher education and field experience. *SRATE Journal, 20*(2), 12-22.

Kim, K.-R. (2005). *Teacher beliefs and practices survey: Operationalizing the 1997 NAEYC guidelines*. Retrieved from http://etd.lsu.edu/docs/available.

Knudson, E. D. (2004). *Reform and early childhood education: Making teacher preparation professional & relevant*. USA: A Documented Briefing.

Koggel, C. (2003). Globalization and women's paid work: expanding freedom. *Feminist Economics, 9*(2), 163-184.

Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W. (1970). *Determining sample size for research activities*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Langenbach, C. P., & Neskora, C. S. (1997). Teachers‟ pedagogical beliefs and their planning and conduct of computer-mediated classroom lessons. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 39*(5), 807-828.

Leedy, P.D., & Ormod, J.E. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design*, (9 thed.). New Jersey: Merrill, Upper Saddle River.

Leung, C. H. (2012). Teacher beliefs and practices of kindergarten teachers in Hong Kong. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood, 37*(1), 38.

Levitt, S. M. (2008). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 2*(3), 6-9.

Lillard, J. (2005). U.S. and Chinese beliefs about learning. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*(2), 1-15.

Lilley, B. W. (2007). *Language development in early childhood education*. Boston: Pearson Higher Ed.

Lim, C., & Torr, J. (2007). Singaporean early childhood teachers‟ beliefs about literacy development in a multilingual context. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(4), 409–434.

Lockhart, S. (2010). Reflect on your history: An early childhood education teacher examines her biases. *Multicultural Education, 17*(4), 25-30.

Lundin, S. (2000). Is developmentally appropriate practice for everyone? *Childhood Education, 74*(5), 283-292.

Marcon, R. A. (1993). Differential effects of three preschool models on inner-city 4-year-olds. *Early Child research Quarterly, 2*(4), 17-30.

May, J. W. (2001). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.) Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

McCarty, R. A., Abbott-Shim, Y.U., & Lambert, T.R. (1992). Differential effects of three preschool models on inner-city 4-year-olds. *Early Child Research Quarterly, 7*(4), 517-530.

McDonnell, M. (1999). The effects of early childhood teacher education on selfperceptions and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education, 18*(3), 55-68.

McMullen, M., Elicker, J., Goetze, G., Huang, H. H., Lee, S. M., Mathers, C., Wen, X. & Yang, H. Y (2006). Using collaborative assessment to examine the relationship between self-reported beliefs and documentable practices of preschool teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(1), 81-91.

Miles, L. & Browne, A.P. (2004). Practitioners‟ beliefs and children‟s experience of literacy in four early years settings. *Early Years: An International Journal of Research and Development, 24*(2), 121-133.

MOE (2002). *Education sector development program II (ESDP II)*. Addis Ababa: MOE.

Montessori, C. G. (1972). *Theories of childhood: An introduction to Dewey, Montessori, Erikson, Piaget and Vygotsky*. St Paul, MN: Red Leaf Press.

Mook, B. (2007). The changing nature of childhood: A metabolic study. *Collection du Cirp, 1*, 137-159.

Morrison, G. S. (2007). *Early childhood education today* (10th ed). Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson/Merrill Prentice Hall.

Moyles, J. (2001). Just for fun? The child as active learner and meaning maker. In J. Collins, K. Insley, and J. Sober. (Eds.). *Developing pedagogy: Researching practice* (p.11-25). London: Open University Paul Chapman.

Myers, R. (2004). *In search of quality in programmes of early childhood care and education (ECCE).* Paris, France: UNESCO.

NAEYC (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education programmes: A Position Paper*. NAEYC.

Ntumi, S. (2016). Challenges pre-school teachers face in the implementation of the early childhood curriculum. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(1), 54-62.

Nutbrown, C. (2006). *Key concepts in early childhood education and care*. USA: New York Publishers.

Oppennheim, J. & MacGregor, T. (2002). *The economics of education: public benefits of high-quality preschool education for low-income children: Building communities for change.* Retrieved December 25, 2017, from http://www.aradvocates.org/childcare/Economics.

Park, A. S. (2008). Developmentally appropriate practice in kindergarten: Factors shaping teacher beliefs and practice. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 21*(1), 65-78.

Parker, A., & Neuharth-Pritchett, S. (2006). Developmentally appropriate practice in kindergarten: Factors shaping teacher beliefs and practice. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 21*(1), 65-78.

Patton, J. (1990). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for Windows* (Version 10). Australia: Allen and Unwin.

Peyton, R. S. (2005). Teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning: A constructivist perspective. *American Journal of Education, 100*(3), 354-395.

Polit, D. F., & Hungler, B. P. (1996). *Nursing research: Principles and methods* (6th ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott.

Punch, K. F. (2008). *Introduction to research methods in education*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Raths, J. (2001). Teachers‟ beliefs and teaching beliefs. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 3*(1) Retrieved April 2, 2017 from http://ecrp.u/v3n1/index.html

Rename, J. (2007). Teachers‟ beliefs and teaching beliefs. *Early Childhood Research and Practice, 3*(1), 5-9.

Reynolds, A. J. & Ou, S. (2004). Alterable predictors of child well-being in the Chicago longitudinal study. *Children and Youth Services Review, 26,* 1–14.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioners-researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Rodgers, C.R. & Scott, K.H. (2008). The development of the professional self and professional identity in learning to teach. In M. Cocharan-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser and K.E. Demers, *Handbook of research on teacher education*, 732–46. New York: Routledge.

Roopnarine, J. L. & Johnson, J. E. (2005). *Approaches to early childhood education*. USA: Preface.

Rosemary, M. H. (2003). The colours of learning: Integrating the visual arts into the early childhood curriculum. London: Teachers College Columbia University.

Rusher, A. C., McGrevin, M. L., & Lambiotte, M. M. (2011). Addressing challenging behaviors in Head Start: A closer look at program policies and procedures. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 30*(4), 209-220.

Saracho, O. N. Spodek, A.Y. (2008). *An integrated play-based curriculum for young children*. New York: Routledge.

Sarantakos, S. (1998). *Social research* (3rd ed.). Melbourne: MacMillan Education

Schunk, D. H. (2000). *Learning theories*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Seidman, I. H. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Columbia: Teachers College Press.

Seng, S. H. (1994). *Quality of kindergarten education in Singapore: parents' views and expectations*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meetings of ISSBD. Netherlands: Amsterdam.

Sykes H. & Turner C. (1980). *Language and literature*. New Delhi: Eastern limited.

Terri, J. S. (2001). *Theories of child development: Building blocks of developmentally appropriate practices*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Thorsen, A. A. (2008). *Teachers' priorities and beliefs: A venture into beliefs, methodologies, and insights*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Stavanger, Norway. Retrieved from http://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream.

Thorton, B. W., & Brunton, B. E. (2009). *Conducting educational research* (6th ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Topcu, M.S. (2011). Turkish elementary student teachers‟ epistemological beliefs and moral reasoning. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(1), 99-125.

Tsai, C. C., & Chuang, S. C. (2005). The correlation between epistemological beliefs and preferences toward Internet-based learning environments. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 36*(1), 97-100.

UNESCO. (1985). *The Dakar framework for action: education for all—meeting our collective commitments*. World Education Forum, Dakar: UNESCO.

UNICEF. (2011). *The Dakar framework for action: Education for all—meeting our collective commitments*. World Education Forum, Dakar: UNICEF.

Vartuli, S. (2005). Beliefs: The heart of teaching. *Young Children, 60*(5), 76-86.

Walsh, G., Sproule, L., McGuiness, C. & Trew, K. (2011). Playful structure: a novel

image of early years pedagogy for primary school classrooms. *Early Years, 31*(2), 107-119.

Wasserman, R. (1993). Editor's comments: The rhetoric of positivism versus interpretivism: A personal view. *MIS Quarterly, 28*(1), iii-xii.

Wasserman, S. (1993). *Principles of education* (2nd ed). New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House PVT. LTD.

Webb, D. (2003). Becoming a qualitative researcher: The value of reflexivity. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(1), 82-101.

Williams, S. & Charles. L. (2008). The experience of developing early childhood learning goals and outcomes in the Caribbean and the implications for curriculum development and implementation. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 16*(1), 17-29.

Wood, E., & Attifield, J. (2005). *Play, learning and the early childhood curriculum* (2nd ed.). London: Paul Chapman.

Wortham, M. (2006). Changing perspectives on early childhood: Theory, research and policy. *International Journal of Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood, 4*(2), 1-43.