

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF TEACHERS IN THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD CENTRES WITHIN THE ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-
BRAKWA DISTRICT**



2022

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**ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF TEACHERS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
CENTRES WITHIN THE ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-BRAKWA DISTRICT**

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**A Thesis in the Department of Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted
to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Philosophy
(Early Childhood Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

APRIL, 2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

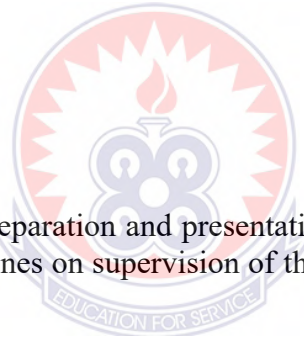
I, Stella Matilda Awadzo, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Education Winneba.



Name of Supervisor: Dr. Micheal Subbey

Signature:

Date.....

DEDICATION

To my daughter Mona Deladem Brown



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Most of the time when we go on a journey, we know it will be hard and that the road will be muddy and rough but all we have in our minds is we must get there and only heaven knows how we will get. On the way I met Dr. Micheal Subbey of the Early Childhood Department as my supervisor. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to him because I would not have reached this far without his professional guidance, advice encouragement and good will with which he guided this work. I am really very grateful. He made me realized that anything is possible.

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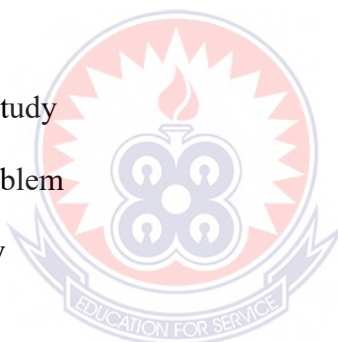
Florence Mawunya Awadzo, Edem, Vincentia Appiah and Selorm Augusta Tsah you have been a mother to my daughter. You took care of her while I was busy studying. You have been so supportive in many ways, God bless you and keep that wonderful personality. My special thanks goes to Godwin Mensah and Wisdom Darah for the faith you have in me and also for the help you have given me till I complete my programme. I can't thank you enough.

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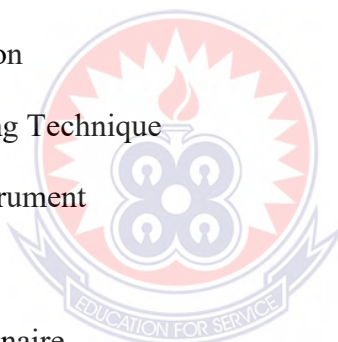
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ABSTRACT

Using the sequential explanatory mixed design, this study was conducted to investigate the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres within the Asikuma Odoben-Brakwa District. The population for the study comprised teachers, headteacher and children in all the public basic schools in the Asikuma Odoben-Brakwa District. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to sample 235 early childhood teachers, headteachers and children from across the district to form the sample for the study. The instruments used for the study were questionnaire, interview guide and observation. Quantitative data for the study was collected using questionnaires while semi-structured interview and observation were used for the qualitative data collection. Descriptive statistics and thematic content analysis approach were used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data collected for the study respectively. Among the findings from the study were that, majority of the KG teachers used paper and pencil test/ exercises to assess the progress of the children, teachers used more than one method of assessment techniques to assess the children and majority of the teachers do not use peer assessment as the form of assessment techniques to assess the progress of the children. In addition, some factors that influence the choice of assessment techniques they used to assess the performance of the children, the purpose of choosing a particular method assessment, using more than one method to understand the children more were above average. Also, majority of teachers do not have in-service training on the assessment practices that are to be used in the KG centres. They were also of the view that assessment process takes a lot of their time when carrying it out. In view of these findings, it was recommended that the GES should work with other stakeholders and ensure that teachers are sent for in-service training or workshops on assessment on a regular basis to make certain that they maintain current classroom assessment skills.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Chapter one of this research provides a background to the study, statement of the problem that triggered the researcher to research into it, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions. The chapter further captures the delimitations; limitations of the study, significance of the study and finally, how the rest of the chapters of the thesis are organized.

1.1 Background to the Study

Educators all over the world are very careful about children's education, since they try to find the best way to impart knowledge so that the children will be well educated. In order to know the teachers' impact on pupils in the teaching and learning process, an evaluation or assessment is needed. The integration of classroom assessment practices into the early childhood curriculum became an essential component of teaching and learning in 1923 with the Hadow report that argued for differentiated and personalized curriculum instructions for students at the secondary and primary level (Office of Standards in Education, 2014). Research has shown that there is an increased in public acceptance of classroom assessment practices as an essential feature in promoting the quality of teaching and learning. This was followed by the presentation of the Cockcroft report in 1982 which argued for the application of classroom assessment practices in the teaching and learning of mathematics across all age.

An empirical study conducted by the World Bank in Brazil (2001), revealed the impact of pre-school education in making children effectively school ready for primary education as well as yielding economic benefits through pre-school education

as a policy intervention in redressing developmental distortions. The study indicates that early childhood education serves as a social and economic policy intervention especially for improving the status of the poor. It is a preparatory stage of making children school ready with fundamental skills, competencies and dispositions that ensure higher school enrollment, less class repetition, fewer dropouts and an increased participation of females in the work force of countries.

In order to understand what pupils know or do not know, educators need assessment. Assessment practices teachers use in the classroom is possibly the paramount and greatest significant part of the teaching and learning process that take account of measurement, response, reflection, and change. Assessment plays a vital role because, they are essential for providing information that are used in making educational resolutions. Assessment practices of teachers again serve lots of purposes for teachers such as: grading, identification of students with special learning needs, student motivation, clarification of students' achievement expectations, and monitoring instructional effectiveness (Olsen, 2007; Stiggins, 2001). Before assessment tools can be used for children learning, classroom assessments must be transformed in two fundamental ways, "First, the content and character of assessments must be significantly improved, and second, the gathering and use of assessment information and insights must become part of an ongoing learning process" (Sheppard, 2000, p.5).

Generating information to make decision on children is not the only aim of classroom assessment tools rather; it is also used to foster learning improvement. Due to this, if it is correctly carried out on a regular basis it would help children to sharpen up and scoop out their understanding of what they have learnt. Classroom assessments are also important for conveying expectations that can stimulate learning (Wiggins,

1998). Teachers ought to have broad ideas about the children they teach because this will help them to have clearer picture about their achievement, learning challenges and wherever those challenges originate. For this reason, there is a must that teachers pay attention to how it is used, since failure to do this possibly will lead to way-out assessment of students' achievement and in the long run may prevent students from reaching their full academic potential (Stiggins, 2001). Assessment of pupils also entails the use of high-stakes assessments, such as standardized national examinations.

According to the American Educational Research Association (2000), many states and school districts mandate testing programs to gather data about children's achievement over time and to hold schools and students accountable. Certain uses of achievement test results are termed "high stakes" if they carry serious consequences for children or for educators. Schools may be judged according to the school-wide average scores of their children. High school-wide scores may bring public praise or financial rewards; low scores may bring public embarrassment or heavy sanctions. For individual children, high scores may bring a special diploma attesting to exceptional academic accomplishment; low scores may result in children being held back in grade or denied a high school diploma (AERA, 2000). These examinations are termed "high stakes" because it is through these forms of assessments that educators are able to make important educational decisions, such as graduation, and selection and placement of students to different higher education fields (Reynolds, Livingstone, & Wilson, 2009).

Assessment serves as an essential deciding factor for the future of children's learning outcomes. Educators must have a perfect understanding of the assessment practices that teachers use as they assess students, and the challenges teachers face when

assessing children. The most efficient way to measure, comprehend, and appreciate teachers' assessment practices is to assess their awareness about classroom assessment techniques.

Rowntree (1987), is of the view that when assessing children, teachers should first identify the purpose of using assessments; specifically, they should institute by what means they are going to use the results of the assessment. Teachers should also establish the content of assessment. That is, they should be in a position to determine the kinds of skills and abilities they intend to assess. Teachers should establish how they will assess those skills. Teachers are supposed to make informed decisions about their choice of assessment techniques they want to work with and should establish if such techniques are applicable for assessing the precise content and whether the methods can support children to attain their academic potentials. Again it is important for teachers to decide on how they will grade the children, give them feedback, also make decisions about how they are going to grade, give students feedback, exactly how they will examine, deduce and use the results of the assessment to make informed decisions in the teaching and learning process.

Institutions and professional bodies who conduct teachers' education and professional development need to know what teachers know and do not know about assessment, what teachers are using to assess students, and the kind of assessment skills they possess in order to effectively assess students. Curriculum developers and measurement specialists cannot be certain of teachers to use assessment techniques effectively without giving them proper training in educational assessment (Ayala, Shavelson, Ruiz-Primo, Brandon, Yin, Furtak, Young & Tomita 2008). Teachers who are entering into the teaching service new should be tested on their knowledge in the assessment and grading practices to see if they are consistent with their philosophy of

teaching and learning and beliefs they have about assessment of children. (McMillan & Nash, 2000).

For this reason, the curriculum is reviewed in the quest of improving education, especially at the formative stage. And teachers are to do their best and transfer such knowledge to the children. At the end of the day, in establishing their impact, an assessment would have to be conducted. Researchers, such as Alkharusi (2013), have made significant contributions to the field of education, particularly in the field of classroom assessment. Findings from these studies have provided educators with the requisite knowledge and skills needed to better understand the impact of classroom assessment practices on students' learning and progress in the classroom (Allen, Gregory, Mikami, Lun, Hamre & Pianta, 2013). Furthermore, these results have shown that a direct link exists between the quality of classroom assessment practices and the level of attainment in the classroom quality (Dixon, 2011). Differences in children's early childhood experiences play a formative role in shaping school readiness and largely explain the skill gaps at school entry (Magnuson, Meyers, Ruhm & Waldfogel, 2004). The study therefore sought to examine the assessment practices of teachers in early childhood settings within Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district address challenges that may have effect on the purpose of the assessment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite continuous attempts made by stakeholders in the educational sector for professional development opportunities, classroom assessment practices, most specifically in the early childhood settings, remain a concern for the well-meaning Ghanaians including the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service.

Assessment of children is very critical because effective teaching decisions are based on the ability of teachers to understand their students and to match actions with accurate assessments (McMillan, 2008). However, past research has shown that there are many problems associated with teachers' classroom assessment practices. These include teachers' lack of an adequate knowledge base regarding the basic testing and measurement concepts (Daniel & King, 1998; Schafer & Lissirz, 1987; Stiggins, 2005), limited teacher training in assessment (Stiggins, & Bridgeford, 1985) and failure of teachers to employ and stick to the measurement guidelines they learned in measurement courses (Campbell & Evans, 2000).

Ways of assessing children's learning and development cannot be separated from features of the Ghanaian curriculum (for instance, it being formal or informal) to some extent per the curriculum at some stages, especially the Kindergarten, assessment must be as informal as possible. Teachers must avoid the temptation of subjecting children's work to formal assessment. Informal techniques such as observation, conversation, and gallery works enable children to go round to appreciate others' work (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2004).

In a study conducted by Asare (2015), in some six Regions in Ghana, paper- and-pencil test mode were frequently used for assessment by the teachers. It was also established in the study that these formal techniques were unfortunately adopted by teachers to please or meet the expectations of parents and educational administrators at the expense of the requirements of the curriculum (Asare, 2015). From the above, one could deduced that, some teachers are still using the formal assessment techniques to gather information about children in some regions in Ghana.

In a related study conducted in the Ashanti Region of Ghana by Osei-Poku and Gyekye-Ampofo (2017), on curriculum delivery in early childhood education, it was discovered that teachers were not practicing curriculum-based teaching. The integrative approach methodology was not being adhered to due to formal examinations conducted by officers from the Ghana Education Service. This suggests that integrative approach to teaching which is intended to fill a gap in promoting quality teaching and learning in early schooling has not been addressed to. It was also established that monitoring and supervision has not been the best since implementation of the Early Childhood Education curriculum, absence of delivery guide for the KG teacher, and other logistic constraints were other issues raised (Osei-Poku & Gyekye-Ampofo. 2017). This obviously suggests that recommended assessment practices will not be strictly adhered to.

Even though the Ghanaian early childhood or kindergarten curriculum designers prescribe appropriate assessment practices, there is little evidence to show whether the implementers are following the approach prescribed or not. There are few or dearth studies on the entire assessment practices on the Ghanaian early childhood education process or on curriculum and assessment (UNICEF, 2010). Also, Osman (2021), investigated basic school teachers' assessment practices in the Sisala district of Ghana. The study examined the classroom assessment practices of teachers and their demographics characteristics that influence their assessment practices.

While some teachers resort to standard and nonstandard ways of assessing children of this category, Banerjee and Luckner (2013), knowing the appropriate assessment practices of teachers in early childhood schools and improving in this direction is indisputably key in increasing children's learning, demonstrating their performance as well as guarantee a solid foundation for their utmost growth and development.

Changes in curriculum standards have also led to the acceptance of classroom assessment practice as pieces of quality assurance evidence used in assessing the standard of teaching and learning in schools (Office for Standards in Education, 2014).

This is not different from the practices of teachers in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. As a teacher who have been teaching in the district for nine years, I observed that the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres defers. Different assessment tools are used in the assessment of children even within the same centers. That is, KG 1 children are assessed with different tools likewise KG 2 children. Again the prescribed assessment tools such as checklist, rating scale, interview, anecdotal records and observation are not being used in the assessment of the children. In a meeting with some teachers together with resource personnel from the education office on the implementation of the new curriculum on December 2019 at Eyipey D/A Basic, teachers were asked about the assessment tools they used in assessing the children and most of them could not respond appropriately to the question. This triggers the personnel to mention some of the tools they can use in order to assess the children. In an interaction with some KG teachers on the knowledge they have and what prompt them to use the assessments they are using for the KG children, issues like lack of in-service training on assessment, large class size, not having proper place to keep assessment records and parents not responding well to information they give them on the progress of their children came out which needs further investigations. Literature is not quite available on the subject in the country and most precisely in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District, it was on these issues raise by the teachers that this study sought to bridge the gap in the literature regarding

the subject matter of early childhood assessment practices by teachers in this category in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central region of Ghana.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the assessment practices of teachers in early childhood centers within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central Region of Ghana.

1.4 Objectives

This study sought to find out the following:

1. Assessment techniques used by teachers in the early childhood settings at the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.
2. Factors that influence teachers' choice of assessment techniques in the district.
3. The effect of assessment techniques on children performance in the early childhood settings in the district.
4. Challenges early childhood teachers' face in implementing the assessment techniques in the district.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the researcher to obtain information from participants:

1. What assessment techniques are used by teachers in examining the performance of children in early childhood centres in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District?
2. What factors influence teachers' choice of assessment techniques?
3. What effect do the assessment techniques have on children's performance?

4. What challenges do teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques during teaching and learning process?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The relevance of assessment in early childhood education in the Ghanaian context cannot be under estimated, since early childhood education constitutes the foundation for every reliable fruitful future generation, assessing learners learning progress is essentially required for modifications, adaptations, and adjustments of curricula, and teaching and learning processes.

The study brought to light the need to focus on the early childhood curriculum to meet the required needs of learners in this bracket with emphasis on most appropriate assessment methods.

It also sought to make known the caliber of teachers, care givers and curriculum implementers in this scope, their professionalism skills in delivery as well as their knowledge in best assessment practices for the learners they handle. This will make room for policy and professional development decisions.

The study sought to avail information that will help guide teaching planning in which teachers or care givers determine children strengths and set goals and best assessment practices for instruction in order to meet learners' development in all areas: cognitive, physical/motor, language, social-emotional, and approaches to learning.

Findings of this study would also support school based management and family partnerships through effective communication of learners' development to families and provide opportunity for teachers and parents to work together to support children

as they grow as expected, laying emphasis on appropriate assessment practices for these learners.

For quality program evaluation at this level, the study also seeks to provide information on best practices that will as well focus on direct educational policies in the early childhood education context.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

Delimitations talk about the characteristics that limit the scope of a study by defining its boundaries (Simon & Goes, 2013). In the first place, the study was delimited to only teachers teaching at the KG 1 and 2 classes in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district. The reason was that teachers at the KG level would relatively have the needed information and skills to express themselves when responding to the questionnaire items and the interview. Again, the study was delimited to KG children in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

In collecting the interview data, the researcher had challenges with writing the respondents comments due to the rate at which the respondents were talking but this challenge was overcome by the help of the recorder which was played back to get all the statements correctly.

With the observation, the presence of the researcher affected the performance of the respondents and so the researcher has to observe on 3 different occasions before collecting the data.

The study was also delimited to the following variables: assessment techniques of teacher in the early childhood setting, factors that influence choice of assessment techniques, effect of assessment techniques on children performance and challenges

faced when implementing the assessment techniques. These variables were selected for the purpose of the study because of their relevance to assessment practices in early childhood setting. Since the goal of assessment is to gather the needed information about learners and using the information to make decisions to improve their learning.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are matters and occurrences that are out of the researcher's control and limit the outcome of a study and conclusions drawn (Simon & Goes, 2013). These may include the instruments, the sample, the analysis, the nature of self-report, limited funding, choice of research design and other factors (Siddiqui, 2010). The limitations of this study included the following:

1. Private schools were not included in the sample to reveal a general picture of the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres. This was not done because including private schools in the study will make the research work enormous to be accomplished within the limited time frame. Thus, the private school assessment practices of teachers were not captured in this study.
2. The Circuit Supervisors were not interviewed on the assessment practices of teachers at the early childhood centres since they come around to supervise teachers due to a limited time frame to conduct the research.
3. Observation of all the KG classes was not carried out. This was done for only a few selected ones due to lack of resources.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Assessment- It is the systematic collection of information, reviewing and using the information to make decision on the children to improve teaching and learning process.

Early childhood education- Is the education of children from birth to eight years old.

Assessment techniques- They are the use of different forms of assessment to gather information about the progress of children learning.

1.10 Abbreviations

AaL- Assessment as Learning

AfL- Assessment for Learning

AOB- Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa

AoF- Assessment of Learning

ECE – Early Childhood Education

GES- Ghana Education Service

KG - Kindergarten

MoE- Ministry of Education

NaCCA- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

TLRs- Teaching Learning Resources

UNESCO- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1.10 Organisation of the Study

The thesis is organized in five chapters. Chapter two is a review of related literature covering both theoretical and conceptual frame work of the research. The methodology adopted covers chapter three of the research as the research design, study area, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments adopted. It also embodies the types of data, administration of instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis plan used by the researcher. Chapter four deals with presentation and discussion of findings from data collected under the study. Finally, the chapter five concludes the research with a summary, conclusions and recommendations to be implemented.

CHAPTER TWO

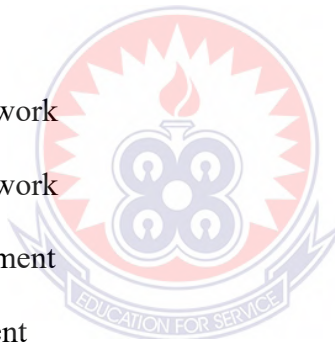
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

The study is about assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood settings in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District. The study explored the state of the various characteristics of the assessment in relation to the teachers' use of assessment techniques and how each of them influences assessment at the early childhood level in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

Literature of the study was reviewed considering the theoretical and conceptual framework the following strands, based on the objectives of the study. These are listed below:

1. Theoretical framework
2. Conceptual framework
3. Concept of assessment
4. Types of assessment
5. Principles of assessment
6. Assessment practices of teachers at the early childhood centres.
7. Influencing factors of teacher choice of assessment.
8. Effect of assessment techniques on children performance.
9. Challenges teachers' face in assessment



2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was situated in sociocultural theory. Sociocultural theories were first systematised and applied by Vygotsky and his associates in Russia in the 1920s and 1930s (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Sociocultural theories have been further

developed by other theoreticians such as Rogoff (2003) and Wertsch (1991). Sociocultural theories describe human cognition as developed through engagement in social activities, as an individual interacts with other people, objects, and events. Therefore, human cognitive development cannot be separated from the social, cultural, and historical contexts from which such development emerges (Johnson, 2009). This social and cultural engagement is mediated by culturally constructed tools such as language, materials, signs, and symbols that create uniquely human forms of higher-level thinking. Sociocultural theory is based on the social constructivist paradigm which considers that knowledge is constructed socially through interaction and shared by individuals (Bryman, 2001). Sociocultural theories describe learning and development as being embedded within social events and occurring as a learner interacts with other people, objects, and events in the collaborative environment (Vygotsky, 1978).

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory has been discussed in relation to four aspects of human cognitive development, namely mind, tools, Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and community of practice (Mantero, 2002; Nuthall, 1997; Wertsch, 1991). First, mind extends beyond a person and people. Mind, according to Vygotsky, is socially distributed. Thus our mental habits and functioning are dependent upon our interaction and communication with others, which are also affected by our environment, context, and history (Mantero, 2002). Lave and Wenger (1991), claim that "learning, thinking and knowing are relations among people engaged in activity in, with, and arising from, the socially and culturally structured world" (p. 67). The sociocultural perspective assumes that human cognition is formed through engagement in social activities (Mantero, 2002). The second aspect of cognitive development, tools, assist the developing communicative and cognitive functions in

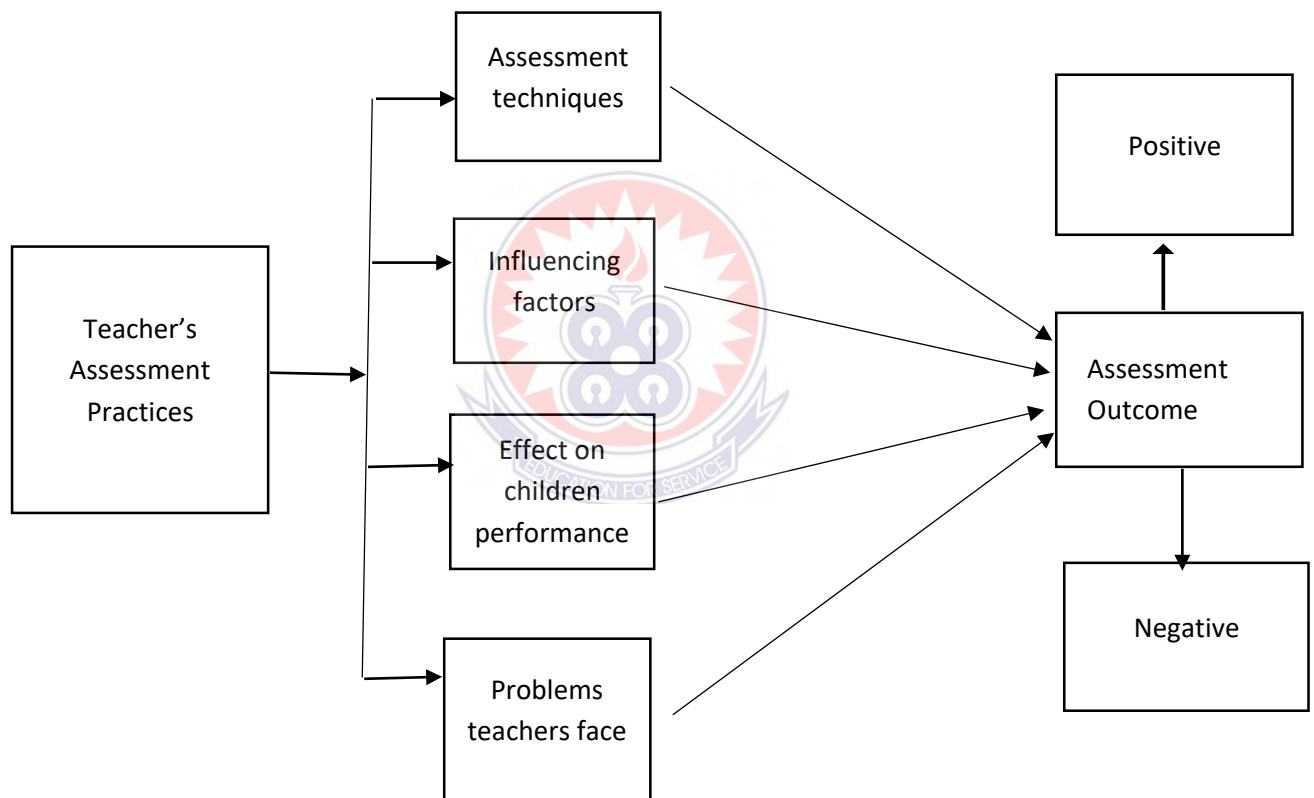
moving from the social plane to the psychological plane. Such tools include language; various systems of counting; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings and so on (Vygotsky, 1981). The third aspect of cognitive development, ZPD (the Zone of Proximal Development), was defined by Vygotsky as: “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978: 85).

Vygotsky argued that to understand the relationship between developments and learning, we must distinguish between two developmental levels: the actual and the potential levels of development. The actual level refers to those accomplishments a learner can demonstrate alone or perform independently. The fourth aspect of cognitive development is community of practice, where learning a subject domain is viewed as a process of becoming a member of a community of practice (Mason, 2007: 2). A community of practice is a group of people who are recognised as having a special expertise in some area of significant cultural practice (Nuthall, 1997). The relevance of Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory to the study is that assessment of children’s learning outcomes could be effective when issues of language and the cultural setting of the learner is taken into consideration at all times. Any slight deviation from the child’s culture and natural setting might not produce the needed or expected performance of the children during assessment.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presents an overview for the study. The major concepts underlying the study were: assessment techniques, influencing factors, the effect of assessment techniques on children performance and the challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment techniques in the early childhood centres within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Field study (2021)

Figure 1 indicated how different variables integrate during the examination of assessment practices of teachers. The conceptual framework therefore shows the relationship existing between the independent and the dependent variables in the study and illustrates the outcomes of assessment practices of teachers in the district.

Assessment techniques, influencing factors, problems face and effect on children performance at the centres when taken into consideration with the prescribed and guidelines outlined in the KG curriculum, would help in the effective implementation of the early childhood assessment practices.

From figure 1, teacher attitude towards inclusion is dependent on the independent variable mainly (training, facilities, beliefs and views). When teachers use the various types of assessment techniques given in the KG curriculum to assess the progress of children, it would help the teachers to get the needed information about the children. Again, when teachers consider the influencing factors of their choice of an assessment technique, it would aid them to know purpose of the assessment techniques, know the assessment techniques to use to get a clear understanding of each child and also motivate the children to learn. Furthermore, if the problems teachers face when they are implementing the assessment techniques are catered for, they would be able to carry out the varied assessment techniques outlined in the KG curriculum for the intended purpose of assessment to be achieved.

Lastly, assessment will affect teachers and learners performance both positively and negatively. Thus, if teachers ignored the assessment techniques they are supposed to be used in the early childhood centres, learners might not be able to grasp the concept of what they are being taught. Likewise, when they use the prescribed techniques for children it would have a positive impact on their performance. In addition, due to large class size and place for proper storage of assessment records as well as inadequate training deter the teachers from using all assessment techniques outlined in the curriculum. However, if all the above factors are in place, it will enhance assessment practice at the early childhood centres.

From the outcome, assessment would help the teachers to discover the learning difficulties of the children and to provide remedial action. This will in the long term provide feedback of results to the children by helping them to identify their own strengths and weakness as well as progress.

2.3 Concept of Assessment

Assessment on children can be conducted for different reasons of which some are to make identification and placement of a child, to make informed decision about the suitable teaching method for individual children and also to document the progress of children over a period of time. Historically, much assessment practice was founded on the content and methods of psychology especially the kind of psychology that deals with mental traits and their measurement. Thus classical test theory has primarily been concerned with differentiating between individuals who possess certain attributes, or determining the degree to which they do so. According to Carr (2001), the best opportunities to assess student learning occur within natural classroom instructional encounters with students working individually and in small and whole groups. Assessment is frequent, well planned, and well organized so that teachers are able to assist each child in progressing towards meeting the curriculum outcomes.

2.4 Assessment in Early Childhood Education

Assessment is a process of collecting and evaluating information about learners and using the information to make decisions to improve their learning. The curriculum suggested that assessment is used to promote the learning of the KG child. It also acknowledges the importance of both formative and summative assessments. Thus, assessment for learning is used to monitor learners' progress and achievement which occurs throughout the learning process. Assessment for learning which to seek and

interpret evidence of the use of authentic assessment methods (observation, checklist, running records, portfolios, interview) and assessment of learning which seek to describe the level learners have attained in the learning over a period of time (NaCCA, 2019).

Assessment in Early Childhood Education is defined by Dodge, Jablon & Bickart, (1994) as the process of gathering information about children in order to make decisions about their education. Thus, it provide opportunity for teachers to obtain useful information about children's knowledge, skills, and progress by observing, and reviewing children's work overtime. Ongoing assessment that occurs in the context of classroom activities can provide an accurate, fair and representative picture of children's abilities and progress. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Department Education (NAEYC & NAECS, USA, (1990), assessment is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child. Assessment is hence an integral to curriculum and instruction. Hills (1994), defined early childhood assessment as "the multiple steps of collecting data on a child's development and learning, determining its significance in light of the programme goals and objectives, incorporating the information into planning for individuals and programme, and communicating the findings to parents and other involved parents".

These definitions suggest a multidisciplinary approach to assessing young children. Thus, assessment of young children should make use of a variety of techniques to achieve the curriculum goal for children. In view of all these definitions, assessment can be define as a systematic process of gathering information on children in order to

know their strengths and weaknesses to make interventions. Some developmentally appropriate practices for teachers at the early childhood settings are listed below.

According to Carr (2001) the best opportunities to assess student learning occur within natural classroom instructional encounters with students working individually and in small and whole groups. Assessment is frequent, well planned, and well organized so that teachers are able to assist each child in progressing towards meeting the curriculum outcomes.

Focusing on children's thinking rather than a particular answer or solution provides valuable information about a child's learning. Sometimes their thinking is evident through their dialogue or it can be demonstrated through their behaviors. The kindergarten teacher's greatest assessment tool is a continual process of observation and documentation of learning because young children show their understanding by doing, showing and telling. Therefore, teachers need to use the assessment strategies of observing, listening and asking probing questions to assess children's achievement.

2.5 Principles of Assessment outlined in the National Pre-Tertiary Education

Curriculum Framework of Ghana

Assessment plays a critical role in the successful implementation of the curriculum which requires that the assessment in place is effective as a form of communication. The understanding of assessment as a form of communication is made to a variety of sources to the learner (feedback on their learning), to the teacher (feedback on their teaching), to the curriculum designer (feedback on the curriculum) and to district, regional and national education directorates (feedback on the use of resources) (NaCCA, 2019). Assessments provide a basis for planning, developing and implementing a variety of school programmes and classroom activities, and for

evaluation. The primary aims of assessment are to collect and interpret information on achievements and progress that learners are making and to make decisions about how to improve outcomes by constantly adjusting the teaching and learning environment (NaCCA, 2019). Assessment needs the following principles to guide it:

- i. ***Test developer must be clear about the performance indicators to be assessed.*** This involves clearly specifying the intended learning goals and selecting the appropriate assessment technique, which should be clear, explicit and accessible to all stakeholders, including learners (NaCCA 2019).
- ii. ***The assessment technique selected must match the performance indicators.*** The main criterion is whether the procedure is the most effective in measuring learning within the performance indicators. Assessment tasks should primarily reflect the nature of the discipline or subject but should also ensure that learners have the opportunity to develop a range of generic skills and capabilities (NaCCA, 2019).
- iii. ***Assessment techniques must serve the needs of the learners.*** They should provide meaningful feedback to the learners about how closely they are meeting the demands of the performance indicators. Timely feedback promotes learning and facilitates improvement and should be an integral part of the assessment process (NaCCA, 2019).
- iv. ***Assessment is a goal-oriented process.*** The assessment task should match the purpose of the subject being assessed. It works best when the programme being assessed has a clear, explicitly stated purpose (NaCCA, 2019).
- v. ***Good assessments use multiple methods.*** Multiple indicators of performance provide a better assessment of the extent to which a learner has attained a given learning target. Assessment needs to be comprehensive. Formative and

summative assessment should be incorporated into the programmes to ensure that the purposes of assessment are adequately addressed (NaCCA, 2019).

- vi. ***Assessment is inherently a process of professional judgment.*** Proper use of assessment procedures requires that the user is aware of the limitations of each technique. In interpreting the results of the assessment, these limitations must be considered. Therefore, all those involved in the assessment of learners must be competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities (NaCCA, 2019).
- vii. ***Assessment is a means to an end.*** It is not an end in itself but a vehicle for educational improvement. Assessment influences learners' motivation for learning. The nature of assessment influences what is learned and the degree of meaningful engagement by learners in the learning process. Learners are, therefore, entitled to feedback on submitted formative assessment tasks and on summative tasks, where appropriate. The nature, extent and timing of feedback for each assessment task should be clear to learners in advance (NaCCA, 2019).
- viii. ***Assessment should be valid and reliable.*** Evidence needs to be provided that the interpretations and use of learners' assessment results are appropriate and reliable. For assessment to be reliable, it requires clear and consistent processes for setting, marking, grading and moderating assignments/tests (NaCCA, 2019).
- ix. ***Assessment decision-making is influenced by a series of tensions.*** Competing purposes, uses and pressures result in tension for teachers and administrators as they make assessment-related decisions. For example, good teaching is characterised by assessments that motivate and engage learners in ways that are consistent with their philosophies of teaching and learning and with theories of development, learning and motivation. Most teachers want to use

constructed-response assessments because they believe this kind of testing is best for ascertaining student understanding. On the other hand, factors external to the classroom, such as mandated large-scale testing, promote different assessment strategies, such as using selected-response tests and providing practice in objective test-taking (McMillan & Nash, 2000).

- x. ***Good assessment appropriately incorporates technology.*** As technology advances and teachers become more proficient in the use of technology, there will be increased opportunities for teachers and district and regional education directorates to use computer-based techniques (e.g. item banks, electronic grading, computer-adapted testing and computer-based simulations), Internet resources, and more complex, detailed ways of reporting results. There is, however, a danger that technology will contribute to the mindless use of new resources, such as using items online developed by some companies without adequate evidence of their reliability, validity and fairness, and crunching numbers with software programmes without giving sufficient thought to their weighting, error and averaging (NaCCA, 2019).
- xi. ***Good assessment is fair and ethical.*** Usually, four views of fairness are presented by the Assessment Standards as i) absence of bias (e.g. offensiveness and unfair penalisation), ii) equitable treatment, iii) equality in outcomes, and iv) opportunity to learn. In assessing learners, the rights and responsibilities of test takers, testing individuals of diverse linguistic backgrounds, and testing individuals with disabilities or special needs should be considered. Student knowledge of learning targets and the nature of the assessments prior to instruction (e.g. knowing what will be tested, how it will be graded, scoring criteria, anchors, exemplars and examples of performance) is also necessary. In short, good assessment should be inclusive and promote

equity principles. It should ensure that tasks and procedures do not disadvantage any group or individual. Sound ethical principles should lead to the recognition of learners as individuals who develop at different paces. Every opportunity must be given to learners to demonstrate achievement (NaCCA, 2019).

Anderson (2003), also described the following as general principles of classroom assessment:

1. Test developer must be clear about the learning target to be assessed. This involves clearly specifying the intended learning goals and helps to select the appropriate assessment technique.
2. The assessment techniques selected must match the learning target. The main criterion is whether the procedure is the most effective in measuring the learning target.
3. Assessment techniques must serve the needs of the learners. They should provide meaningful feedback to the learners about how closely they have approximated the learning targets.
4. Multiple indicators of performance provide a better assessment of the extent to which a student has attained a given learning target. Assessment needs to be comprehensive.
5. Proper use of assessment procedures requires that the user is aware of the limitations of each technique. In interpreting the results of the assessment, these limitations must be considered.
6. Assessment is a means to an end. It is not an end in itself. Assessment provides information upon which decisions are based.

7. Evidence needs to be provided that the interpretations and use of student's assessment results are appropriate and reliable.

From the principles of assessment outlined in the National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework of Ghana and that of Anderson (2003), it can be concluded that they are all in line with one another. Therefore, early childhood practitioners must take into cognition these principles before selecting an assessment technique to assess the children they teach. This will go a long way to help them acquire the needed information which the assessment intended to achieve and also help the children to get the necessary feedback they are supposed to get.

2.6 Types of Assessment

Assessment practice can be both formal and informal. Formal assessments typically involve reliable and valid standardised testing (Brown & Rolfe, 2005). Informal assessments, on the other hand include non-standardised testing and the performance on these assessments is not compared with other children (Brown & Rolfe, 2005). They typically include interviews with children and work sampling, and observation techniques such as running records, anecdotal records, checklists, rating scales and event and time sampling (NAEYC, 2009). In early childhood years the most commonly used assessment ways include norm referenced standardized performance tests and teacher ratings. Standardized tests aim to measure children's performance differences on tasks which are considered as representing important theoretical construct (Bagnato, as cited in Downs & Strand, 2006). Standardized tests are generally conducted two or three times in a year, with limited capacity to provide continuous information supply. Another assessment technique is called as authentic assessment. In this method an individual's growth and development is evaluated by using real life events (Taylor & Nolen, 2008). Some examples of authentic (informal)

assessment techniques are; observation, teacher designed measures, checklists, rating scales, rubrics, performance and portfolio assessments, interviews, directed assignments, portfolios, narrative reports and technology based assessments (Wortham, 2008). The results of assessment, regardless of the type of method used, can be used in variety of ways while planning for instruction, reporting progress or evaluating instructional program (Wortham, 2008). Assessment is to be considered as a process and each child should be followed in this process, not in a form of product.

2.6.1 Formative Assessment

Although interpretations of formative assessment vary widely, according to Wiliam and Thompson (2008), "formative assessment is used to provide information on the likely performance of students" and "to describe and feedback given to students telling them which items they got correct" (p. 60). This oppose the way selected responses measure students' achievement, given students' scores instead of feedback.

Formative assessment, according to Wiggins and McTighe (2007), occurs during instruction, as part of instruction rather than a separate activity. The goal of formative assessment is to monitor students learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. More specifically, formative assessment help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work. It also help faculty recognize where students are struggling and address problem immediately. Similarly, other researchers agree that the core features that characterize formative assessment are that it impacts the quality of teaching and learning, and it engages students in self-directed learning environment (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2003). Formative assessments are generally low stakes, which means that they have low or no point value.

According to NaCCA (2019), formative assessment in Ghana's classrooms should include:

- Observations during in-class activities
- Homework exercises as review of class discussions and signal for future teaching and learning activities.
- Reflections journals that are reviewed periodically during the term
- Question and answer sessions, both formal (planned) and informal (spontaneous)
- Progress review meetings between the teacher and student at various points in the term
- In-class activities where learners informally present their results.

2.6.2 Summative Assessment

Assessment of learning and development is the most common form of assessment.

This is the type of assessment process that “sum up” what the child has learned by reviewing documentation gathered over a period of time from a range of sources.

According to Taras (2005), it is assessment of a child's learning at a particular point in time, and that summarises all of the learning and development that has preceded it. Summative assessment is an assessment made normally but not always at the end of the school year based on the accumulation of the progress and achievements of the learner throughout the year in a given subject, together with any end-of-year tests or examinations. Summative assessment demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes and which contributes to the final mark given for the learning area within the content standards (NaCCA, 2019). This kind of assessment can be large-scale assessment in a

particular field, such as the West African Examination Council, in which an entire population of children is assessed using a common assessment tool. It can also be a small scale assessment within an individual early childhood setting with the purpose of clarifying a child's learning in order to report that learning to families (Earl, 2003) – for example, Transition Learning and Development Statements.

These processes bring together information about what the child knows, understand and can do in relation to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) Learning Outcomes. The goal of summative assessment is to evaluate students learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. Summative assessments are often high stakes, which means they have a high point value. Examples of summative assessments include:

Summative assessment in Ghana's schools is to take the following forms: Examinations (end of term), final examination (end of studying a programme; this is truly summative assessment), projects (project phases submitted at various completion points could be formatively assessed), portfolios (could also be assessed during its development as a formative assessment).

2.6.3 Diagnostic Assessment

Although some authors view diagnostic assessment separately from formative assessment, the intention is that diagnostic assessments are used for formative purposes. Diagnostic assessment or pre-assessment is used to collect information for planning instruction and acknowledging learners' needs. Wiggins and McTighe, (2007), assert that pre-assessments “include checks of prior knowledge and skill levels and surveys of interests or learning-style preferences” (p. 101). The authors maintain that, given the literature, a great number of students come to school with a

misconception that they are not talented enough to perform a certain task, such as drawing a picture or writing an analytic memo (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). According to NaCCA (2019), the information gathered from a diagnostic assessment is essential for better planning of what is to be taught and how to teach it. Diagnostic assessment may take the form of pre-test of learners' knowledge and ability in a given content standards and performance indicator. It can also take the form of self-assessment against core competences for the purposes of identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. Given this scenario, a teacher is responsible for recognizing these misconceptions and finding ways to confront them.

2.7 Assessment Techniques Used by Teachers in Early Childhood Settings

2.7.1 Observation

Observation is a technique in which the behavior of children are watched in the natural environment without the knowledge of the child being observed and are recorded to improve upon their strengths and weaknesses. With this type of technique the teacher observe a child engaging in an activity at a time. This information makes it possible for the teacher to plan ways to encourage students' strengths and to work on their weaknesses. Observations of child behaviors and skills provide the teacher with a powerful measure of a child's abilities. It is often effective when it follow a systematic plan. There are several elements that are common to most observational systems. This includes; a purpose for the observation, operational definitions of all the observed behaviors, training procedures for observers, a setting, a unit of time, an observation schedule, a method to record the data and a method to process and analyze data (Stallings & Mohlman, 1988).

2.7.2 Checklists

Checklist is list of items with their corresponding “yes or no” responses where the teachers need to choose the appropriate response that fit the child for the various items. They are use checklists to evaluate a child's ability to perform a specific skill either in as an individual or in a group.

2.7.3 Rating Scales

Rating Scales are quite similar to checklist except that rating scales allow teachers to indicate the degree or frequency to which a behaviors, skills and strategies are displayed by the learner. Rating scales state the criteria and provide three or four response selections to describe the quality or frequency of student work. Rating scales also give students information for setting goals and improving performance. In a rating scale, the descriptive word is more important than the related number. The more precise and descriptive the words for each scale point, the more reliable the tool.

2.7.4 Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal record is a brief description or “word picture” of an event or behavior (Puckett & Black, 2000). These records used to keep narrative description of behaviors and skills of children over a period of time. These records are factual and do not require long sentences. Anecdotal records should be as objective as possible and identify” who, what, where, when, how” a particular even occur over time. They are not to be written in a judgmental manner or written to make judgment and only observed behaviors are document. With a collection of anecdotal records about a student, the child's developmental progress can be documented and teaching can be tailored to meet the student's individual needs.

2.7.5 Running Records

Running records are similar to anecdotal records but are much longer. A running record is a more detailed account of the child's behaviour over a period of time. It keeps records of everything that happens in a specific time period. One helpful device in keeping a running record is the ABC analysis, in which three columns identify the Antecedent, Behaviour, and Consequences of incidents (Bijou, Peterson & Ault, 1968). This helps teachers to focus not only on the child's behaviour, but also on what causes and what follows it as well.

2.7.6 Portfolios

Portfolio development is not a new concept in the history of education. According to William and Thompson (2008), gathering purposeful examples of students' work that demonstrate their effort, progress, and level of understanding over a period to time, compose the main features of portfolio. However, what has changed through the course of time is the format and content, making portfolios meaningful and purposeful. Portfolio show a progression of growth in a child's development during a period of time through a collection Portfolio is defined as a purposeful collection of children work that tells the story of students' efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s) Arter Spandel & Culham (1995); Tedick and Gortari (1998), or is described as an "intersection" of instruction and assessment which allows the use of teaching and assessment practices together to improve learning (Paulson, Paulson & Meyer, 1991), and has been associated with terms like metacognitive knowledge and lifelong learning (Calfee & Perfumo, 1993).

The things children make, do or create are vital pieces of assessment data. Looking at samples of children's work reveal patterns of growth and change over time. Portfolios allow teachers and parents/guardians to focus on children's work samples to see what

the student is able to do rather than what he/she is not doing. Work samples can include written work, drawings, or documentation of manipulative representations such as a picture of a pattern made with beads, art projects, records of books read by the student, and writing samples. Engaging children in the selection process is an important experience for children as they are encouraged to value the presentation of their work while recognizing the growth in their learning. Dated work samples document individual student growth and progress over a period of time and it is important to share this with both parents and students. Wiggins and McTighe (2007), maintain that unlike the traditional forms of assessment that take a “snapshot” of students at one point in time, portfolios “function like a photo album containing a variety of photos taken at different times and different contexts” (p. 85). Similarly, Herrera, Murry and Cabral (2007), assert that the content of portfolios, which incorporate a collection of student work, “some indications that how student rated him/herself on the process and product included and the evidences of how those products met the established criteria” (p. 29). Investigators emphasize the importance of considering the intended purposes for developing portfolios. By establishing the targets for a portfolio, an instructor can decide what kind of student work to incorporate, who should manage it, how often to review it, and more (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007). The instructors regularly assign students to include writing samples, reflections, drawings, reading logs, student self-evaluation, and progress notes, visuals and audio clips, among the many. According to Herrera et al, (2007), the common forms of portfolios contain best examples of students’ work that illustrate their learning and progress.

In addition, portfolios are considered a good alternative to traditional forms of assessment because they incorporate the perspective of students and teachers about learning and assessment.

Another significance of a portfolio is that unlike the traditional synoptic evaluations, such as the final exam or any standardized test that happens once, portfolios provide a longitudinal observation of student progress as they show incremental gains in knowledge, skills, and proficiencies (Herrera et al., 2007). Portfolios are also authentic because they are driven by classroom activities; in most cases, they reflect “in-process adaptations to instructional methods and assessment”, and they assess learning which motivates students (Herrera et al., 2007, p. 32). This implies that when teachers use portfolio as an assessment tool and they always take those records of each child and go through it, the patterns of growth and changes over time will be reveal to them on the next action to be taken on them. The things children make, do or create are vital pieces of assessment data.

2.7.7 Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a valuable tool for learning and measurement. For example, when students’ are engaged in assessing their own work, they try to learn the criteria for high-quality performance, and they experience a willingness to apply those criteria (Herrera et al., 2007). However, Black and William (1998b), remain concerned about student readiness to self-assess or evaluate peers. They propose that once students acquire a clear picture of the outcome or purpose, “they become more committed and more effective as learners: their own assessment become an object discussion with their teachers and with one another” (p. 7).

However, agreements exist among educators, in which they recognize the value of self and peer-assessment which helps students exert control over their learning (Stiggins, et al., 2004). Initially, some teachers provide rubrics for student so that they can assess their progress. The rubrics incorporate the criteria that provide the opportunity for students to reflect on the extent to which they have made progress. Atkin, Black and Coffey (2001), illustrate a feature of alternative assessment that asks learners to ask three questions as they assess themselves: “where am I trying to go?; where am I now; and how do I close the gap” (cited in Stiggins, et al 2004, p.43)

2.7.8 Peer-Assessment

Similar to self-assessment, educators consider peer-assessment advantageous, as it furthers opportunities for students to identify targeted learning goals (Herrera et al., 2007; & Stiggins, et al., 2004). In peer-assessment, students often assess other students’ work compared to the criteria developed by the instructor, or both students and the class instructor. An important aspect of peer assessment is that it engages students in dialogue with their classmates, commenting on each other’s work rather than a one-way feedback system from instructor to student. To enrich peer-assessment and use it productively, Black and Wiliam (1998b), propose that students be trained to assess their peers purposefully, with the goal of improving learning. As students comment on their peers’ work, they use informal language which is understandable to them. In addition, according to Herrera et al, (2007), given the concept of peer assessment, students compare other students’ work to the accepted criteria, which “enables them to discern outstanding elements of both their own and their classmate’s performances and products” (p. 34).

Kwok (2008), performed a study investigating students' perceptions of peer evaluation and teachers' role in seminar discussion. He found that students viewed the experience of peer evaluation as enhancing their confidence and providing them the opportunity to exercise power of making judgments about their peers (Kwok, 2008). The study, which aimed to measure the impact of peer evaluation on seminar discussions in higher education, involved 19 undergraduates taking a course titled English for Academic Purposes.

The author used both quantitative and qualitative methods in this study and focused on students' responses from two perspectives: students as evaluators and students as evaluatees. The author found that the majority of students participating as evaluatees "considered the comments and feedback fair" (Kwok, 2008 p. 89). These respondents viewed the seminar as helpful in terms of the "importance of teamwork, selfawareness and confidence in responding to open-ended questions" (Kwok, 2008, p. 89). Similarly, students' perceptions as evaluators indicated that students enjoyed their experience of observing, listening to other students, making decisions, giving comments, and marking (grading). However, the study shows that some students considered themselves unprepared to assess peers as compared to the teacher who has more experience and provides professional advice (Kwok, 2008).

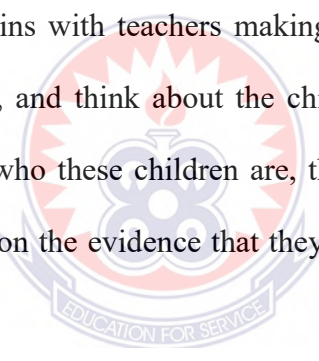
2.7.9 Interview-Based Assessment

Interview-based assessment is another form of alternative assessment the teachers use to gather data about students' experiences, interests, background, thoughts, beliefs, activities. Teacher-student interviews vary from highly structured to informal conversations. Herrera et al, (2007), agree that unstructured detailed interviews with students help teachers to adapt the lesson based on the information gathered from students. These authors note that, through a teacher's interview held with a student,

the instructor realized that “linguistic differences can interfere with the development of deeper connections with students” (Herrera et al., 2007, p. 36).

2.7.10 Play-Based Assessment

Play-based assessment is a valuable assessment form that teachers can use at different grade levels. Examples include pre-school children who are learning the names of objects, language learners who can just barely explain things in the new language, and upper grade levels who role play or dramatize concepts from the literature, history, concurrent life situations, and politics Herrera et al., (2007). In addition, Herrera et al. (2007) indicate that assessment can take place in any manner but it does not mean that authentic assessment merely happens in nontraditional ways. Goodwin (2000), agrees “authentic assessment begins with teachers making it their business to purposefully watch, listen to, talk with, and think about the children in their classrooms” (p. 6). Some teachers reflect on who these children are, the extent of what they know, and the way they learn, based on the evidence that they observe in the role-play (Herrera et al., 2007).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a sunburst at the top, a book, and a lamp. Below the shield is a banner with the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE". The entire emblem is surrounded by a decorative border.

2.7.11 Co-Operative Group Assessment

The concept of group work or team work varies, depending on the context. In the West, particularly in the United States, an individual’s success attracts more attention than the accomplishments of team work, such as in sports, (Herrera et al., 2007). However, recent recognition of collaborative or team work is increasing among educators, realizing that strengths and skills of some students are well-defined when they are engaged in group activities such as cooperative learning or assessment. Herrera et al. (2007), observe that “collaborative or group activities often culminate in projects or experiments that may or may not require oral or written reporting” (p. 38). Slavin, (2006), argues that planning for group assessment requires educators to

consider both group efforts and individual liability. Herrera et al. (2007) note the complexity of assessing a cooperative group activity, in particular distinguishing an individual student's effort and the contribution he or she makes performing a group activity or project. Teachers often document the thought and action of individual students in the process of performing an activity as they learn from cooperative activities and the dialogue that occurs among the students.

2.8 Factors that Influence Teachers Choice of Assessment Techniques

According to Hopkins and Stanley (1981), in order to plan and make instruction that is appropriate for individual students or groups of students, it is necessary to understand the factors that influence student performance in class. This means that, assessment should go far beyond what children have achieved in the classroom. Thus, there is the need for teachers to constantly evaluate teaching based on the children's interest, reaction, perseverance, participation and achievement and they all come with their own challenges.

The main purpose of planning assessment for students is to enhance the assessment value through continuous monitoring for effortless understanding as well as analysis for teachers and students; besides instructionally beneficial to guide subsequent decision making (Harlen, 2007). Assessments should be designed in order to fit the intended purpose, which will help to ensure students' validity, reliability, transparency and usability. Skills in choosing appropriate, useful, administratively convenient, technically adequate, and fair assessment methods are prerequisite to good use of information to support instructional decisions [19]. Teachers encounter/experience these in their daily practices. Thus, they need to be well-acquainted with the kinds of information provided by a broad range of assessment alternatives and their strengths

and weaknesses. In particular, they should be familiar with criteria for evaluating and selecting assessment methods in light of instructional plans

A number of researchers have explored teachers' beliefs about the purpose of assessment in the elementary music classroom, the most common of which is that assessment helps teachers' measure student understanding and thus guides future instruction. A study conducted by Patterson (2006), on assessment in general music education from early childhood through high school: review of literature. The findings of the study indicated that 90% of the respondents revealed that it enable them to "determine if students are learning". In the same study 81% of the respondents indicated that assessment of children help them "plan for further instruction" (p. 40). Peppers (2010), surveyed one hundred elementary general music teachers in Michigan regarding their attitudes toward assessment, and the top-ranked reasons for assessing were to "measure student progress over time" and to "improve instruction" (p. 38). Similarly, Talley (2005), found that the most common purpose for assessing among her respondents was "to adapt instruction," while the third most common purpose was to "gauge understanding" (p. 60).

Teachers must choose the assessment models that best fit the actual work done in their classrooms. Teachers also must consider the assessment models that enhance the teacher, student and parent involvement while making sure goals have been met. The value of assessment depends on the teachers' ability to plan complex and meaningful tasks that challenge students to use prior knowledge, recent learning and applicable skills. Students need to solve relevant, meaningful and realistic problems that assess progress on learning outcomes (Fischer & King, 1995).

This implies that before teachers assess their children in the early childhood centres, they take into consideration a lot of factors that helped them carried out the assessment successfully. The factors helped them to know the appropriate assessment technique they can use to achieve the intended goal of the assessment.

2.9 Effect of Assessment Techniques on Children Performance

Assessment is challenging of all the functions performed by teachers, undoubtedly none them demands for more energy, time, and skill than evaluation or assessment. According to Gordon and Browne (2011), anyone involved in evaluation should avoid: unfair comparison, bias, overemphasis on norms, interpretation, too narrow of a perspective, and too wide of a range. An evaluation should be designed for a single level or age group and not cover too wide of a range. It is appropriate to measure a child's ability to print at age 6 but not at age 2. What is expected of the person or task should be taken into account and the evaluation method modified accordingly.

When students know they will be assessed, they often become more interested in the classroom activity, and their level of participation increases. Helping students monitor their improvement on a regular basis is also motivational (Martin, Kulinna & Cothran, 2002). This increased interest and motivation may help students become active stakeholders and direct their own learning. Furthermore, assessment results can be used to make future lessons more interesting and challenging to teachers and students.

Watkins (2007), explains that in countries that have clearly designed national curriculum, continuing, influential assessment is typically based on aim and attached directly to the aims for the curriculum designed for all the students. National strategies for assessment may define what needs to be assessed and how it is to be assessed. Countries using this process by which assessment is done, developing and

applying assessment is mainly the duty of conventional schools and class teachers. This is in agreement to the purpose of such assessment for informing decisions about the next steps in an individual child learning (Watkins, 2007).

The goal of Continuous Assessment is to help teachers to continuously assess children learning outcomes in all three domains- Cognitive, Affective, psychomotor, particularly with regard to knowledge and understanding, procedural knowledge (making comparisons and estimates performing calculations, applying formulas), problem solving and other higher order skills.

Continuous assessment serves these aims such as providing information about the child's status and progress of each children. It helps teacher to know, plan redesign the teaching in accordance with the needs of the children. It provides diagnostic information on strengths and weaknesses of the children learning. It also provides feedback to the teachers for modification of curriculum targets and text books. It facilitates teachers in grouping of children for learning through various activities, provides criteria of grading and promoting students and counseling to children and their parents. It decides teacher training method for a program, faculty or staff (Gipps, 1990).

Affective domain encompasses both intra- and inter-personal processes of a person. The core features of affective development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships (McKown, 2017). It sets a foundation for children to engage in other developmental tasks (Keller, 2018). For example, in order to complete a

difficult school assignment, a child may need the ability to manage his/her sense of frustration and seek out help from a peer, if need be.

2.10 Challenges Teachers face in Using the Assessment Techniques

There are challenges teachers will definitely face in the course of assessing their children at the early childhood centres. This may also defer from school to school and also from districts to districts because of a lot of factors that could be beyond them and how they are handled at the various levels of the command chain.

Patterson (2006); Peppers (2010); Salvador (2011); Shih (1997), have revealed elementary music teachers' perceptions regarding the factors that they feel make it difficult to assess or that stand in the way of their ability to assess their students effectively, the most common of which is having too many students and not enough time to assess them all. Several studies found that a common challenge to assessment was a lack of class time Barkley, (2006); Delaney, (2011); Hepworth-Osiowy, (2004); Abell, (1993); Patterson, (2006); Peppers (2010); Salvador, (2011); Shih, (1997) and large class size Delaney, (2011); Patterson, (2006); Peppers, (2010); Shih, (1997). Participants further described their frustration with assessment through comments like, "Can someone help me figure out how to assess 25 kids in 30 minutes when I only see them two times each week?" (Hepworth-Osiowy 2004, p. 97).

The perception that there is not enough time to assess may be due in part to the amount of class time some elementary music teachers devote to preparing public performances. Interviews with teachers in Shih's (1997) study revealed that "too many music programs and events" was a major reason that many felt they did not have time to assess. Among Hepworth-Osiowy's (2004) participants, performance expectations/pressures also were seen as a negative factor affecting assessment: "It

often seems that assessment and demonstrating what a child has learned in music class is of secondary importance to aspring concert” (p 99). Similarly, two of Salvador’s (2011), three participants “reported that preparing for performances hindered or even extinguished their usual assessment practices” (p. 237). Along with a lack of time and too many students, a common perceived impediment to assessment in elementary general music is the lack of a manageable record-keeping system. One of the teachers in Patterson’s (2006), study stated that she did not assess her students because “[I] want my students to have musical experiences. Record keeping takes away their ‘doing’ time” (p. 41). “Not enough time to maintain records” was one of the top three challenges to assessment reported by the teachers in Peppers’s (2010) study. Two of Salvador’s (2011) three participants cited lack of a manageable recordkeeping system as an impediment to assessment, one of whom “stated that her main challenge was finding a way to record assessment data immediately” (p 94). However,

Hailey, Salvador’s third participant, frequently used rating scales to assess and record assessment data in a quick and manageable way; Salvador noted, “The quality and quantity of data Hailey amassed ... allowed her to monitor the success of her teaching, tailor her instruction to meet students’ needs, and plan future lessons” (p 189).

Another perceived impediment to assessment in elementary general music is the challenge of incorporating assessment into daily lessons. Some teachers report that they struggle to assess due to classroom management issues (Hepworth-Osiowy 2004;

Peppers, 2010). However, teachers who used ongoing assessment felt less stressed (Hepworth-Osiowy 2004) and had more effective strategies for incorporating it into their regular class activities (Salvador, 2011; Shih, 1997). For example, Salvador, (2011) observed that Hailey's use of embedded assessments in her classroom activities enabled her to "constantly informally and formally [track] the music learning progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole" (p 181). Many other teachers struggle to successfully incorporate authentic, embedded assessments into their daily lessons, possibly due to a lack of training in how to do so. A number of Peppers's (2010) respondents perceived a lack of preparation in college and/or a lack of professional development as challenges to their assessing, and participants in Hepworth-Osiowy's (2004) study expressed "a critical need to find tools that can help a music teacher assess quickly, easily, and effectively" (p 92). It appears helping elementary general music teachers discover manageable ways to incorporate assessment and record-keeping into their daily lessons may be key to alleviating these perceived impediments.

Early childhood professionals face multiple challenges when assessing young children and their families. First, young children are rapidly developing. Thus, the assessment processes should be repeated often and documented in a systematic manner to monitor progress. Assessment processes traditionally accepted for older children are not developmentally appropriate, nor are they sufficiently informative for assessing young children.

Excessive use of standardized tests is especially inappropriate (NAEYC, 2003). Thus, there is a need to identify valid and reliable alternate methods of assessment. Secondly, the diversity of children and families served in early childhood programs is

increasing (Hogue, 2013). Linguistic and cultural diversity often presents additional challenges when conducting assessment of young children and their families and in communicating results (Banerjee & Guiberson, 2012). Therefore, criterion-or performance-oriented assessment using broad, varied, and complementary methods should be utilized with accommodations for children with or at-risk for disabilities and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Lynch & Hanson, 2004).

Third, the differing beliefs about the purposes and expectations about assessment among teachers, program administrators, school board members, parents, and the community may make it difficult to appropriately select and accept developmentally appropriate assessment approaches that satisfy each stakeholder. Fourth, early childhood professionals often lack skills and training in conducting assessments of children with specific needs such as children with sensory impairments or children with challenging behaviors. Finally, teachers often lack the skills and training in the fusion, or the link between assessment and intervention (Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2000). Given the aforementioned challenges, it is possible that assessments may be used in early childhood programs to fulfill accountability needs or for compliance purposes to offset pressures from administrators, rather than to guide instruction.

2.10.1 Challenges of Assessing Young Children Appropriately Outline According to the new National Pre-Tertiary Education Curriculum Framework of Ghana

- i) **Lack of standards.** Most of the previous reforms in Ghana lacked standards, even though, more often than not, policy makers and stakeholders in education talk of ‘falling’ standards. For assessment results to be meaningful and useful, they must be linked to clear knowledge continua, with benchmarks along the way to illustrate what progress looks like. On the whole, teachers and early childhood

programmes cannot develop standards on their own and it appears the central government is not ready for such an undertaking, the results of which caregivers, teachers and school proprietors are running their own programmes as and when it suites them (NaCCA,2019).

ii) **Young children as test-takers.** Powell and Sigel (1991), note that traditional assessments are inappropriate for young children. They assert that “young children are not good candidates for taking traditional tests. The reliability and validity of test results are greatly compromised by the child’s rapid changes in development, fluctuations in the intensity and focus of interests, and the unfamiliarity of the assessment situation” (p. 194). Conversely, the uses of teacher-made tests as a mode of assessing young children seem to be the norm in Ghana and sometimes some early childhood centres go to the extent of buying commercially prepared questions to be administered to young children between the ages of 3 and 8. This situation poses problems in achieving curriculum goals and likely to limit the appropriate developmental processes of the children in early years in school.

iii) **Managing the negative effects of testing on curriculum.** Shepard (1994), writes about the ‘negative history of standardized testing of young children in the past decade,’ which includes a distortion of curriculum in the early grades, including a “skill-driven” “kindergarten curriculum” and “escalation of curriculum” or “academic trickle-down” (pp. 206-207). “Developmentally inappropriate instructional practices, characterized by long periods of seat work, high levels of stress, and a plethora of fill-in the-blank worksheets, placed many children at risk by setting standards for attention span, social maturity, and academic productivity that could not be met by many normal 5 – year olds” (p. 207). Anane (2007), describes influences that caused many teachers to align their curriculum and

instruction to the specific focus of the tests that are nationally conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the uses to which the results are put. Thus, the results have brought about a narrowing curriculum, a concentration on those skills most acquiescent to testing, a constraint on the creativity and flexibility of teachers. These outcomes represent a vast alteration in educational policy, aided and abetted by the inappropriate use of tests. It is therefore feared that this can tackle down and create an emerging crisis in public early childhood education.

iv) **Teachers' expertise and assessing young children.** Quality caregivers are, also, essential in early childhood programme and yet, in developing countries, such as Ghana, those who work with young children typically receive less training than their primary school counterparts. Even in urban areas where early education is quite 'refined', very few highly trained educators often work alongside with a huge number of untrained childcare workers. Early childhood educators, therefore lack the necessary competence in aligning curriculum with testing and assessment tools to achieve the national goals (NaCCA, 2019).

v) **Overcoming abuses and misuses of tests for assessing young children.** The problem of high-stakes and accountability has crept into our education system, including early childhood education. In other developed worlds such as USA, abuses and misuses of tests for assessing young children education. In other developed worlds such as USA, abuses and misuses of tests for assessing young children have been documented (Meisels, 1993; Shepard, 1994). Standardised achievement tests alone cannot fulfill the major purposes of assessment in programmes for young children. Those purposes are: instructional planning and communicating with parents, identification of children with special needs, and programme evaluation and accountability (Hills, 1992). Yet, educators in early

childhood years seemed to have been overtaken by the pressures in the school system and are putting undue pressure on young children to sit for pencil and paper tests of which some of the ‘candidates’ cannot even read what the test papers present. Teachers and caregivers have to sometimes read examination questions to pupils, and pupils give responses presumably based on what they hear from their teachers (examiners). And results from these tests are interpreted by people, who are mostly not trained in early childhood education, and those who are trained, have limited or no knowledge in assessment in basic schools.

2.11 Summary of Literature Review

The literature reviewed on the topic, the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres. On the theoretical framework, socio cultural theory have revealed that before the more knowledgeable person can know what the child has already know, assessment has to take place. The conceptual framework, concept of assessment, principles of assessment and types of assessment was also discussed. Literature again was reviewed under the objectives that guided the study as assessment techniques teachers used by teachers in the early childhood centres, factors that influence the teachers choice of an assessment practices, the effect of assessment techniques on children performance and the challenges early childhood teachers face in implementing the assessment techniques. Related studies on assessment practices of teachers show that earlier researchers have focused on the other factors with little or no attention given to the challenges teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques and the impact of the assessment on the performance of children. This study filled those gaps in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter describes the type of research method that was used in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The description of each research approach will be given separately under subheadings detailing research paradigm, research design, sampling methods, sample size, data collection methods, research instruments, and data analysis. The section will finally state the aspect of ethical considerations used in the study.

3.1 Study Area

The Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District Assembly (AOBDA) is one of the 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana and forms part of the 22 of MMDAs in the Central Region. It was established as a District Assembly on 22nd November, 1988 by Legislative Instrument (LI) 1378 with its administrative capital as Breman-Asikuma.

The District is located in the north-central portion of the Central Region of Ghana. It covers an area of 884.84 square kilometers. It is located between latitude 50 51” and 50 52” North and longitude 10 50” and 10 5” West. The District is bordered on the north by Birim South District in the Eastern Region, on the south by Ajumako-EnyanEssiam District, on the west by Assin South District and on the east by Agona East District. The population of the district according to 2010 population and housing census stands at 112,706 with 54,293 male and 58,413 female. (Ghana Districts). The district has one hundred and forty five (145) public basic schools, made up of eighty three (83) primary and sixty-two (62) junior high schools.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), every research needs a foundation, and that this foundation whether explicit or implicit, is found in the “world view” or philosophical framework chosen by the researcher. Willis (2007), considers a paradigm as “a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (p.8).

In view of this, the pragmatist paradigm was considered more applicable to the study. The pragmatic paradigm in its simplest implies, the overall approach to research is that of mixing data collection procedures and analysis within the research process (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). A major underpinning of pragmatist epistemology is that knowledge is always based on experience. One’s perceptions of the world are influenced by our social experiences. Each person’s knowledge is unique as it is created by her/his unique experiences. Nevertheless, much of this knowledge is socially shared as it is created from socially shared experiences. Therefore, all knowledge is social knowledge (Morgan, 2014). Pragmatism seek to debunk concept such as truth and reality and focuses instead on what works as the truth regarding the research questions to be investigated (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003).

A flexible approach should be adopted in the application of mixed methods research within the pragmatic paradigm. A pragmatist approach to mixed methods research allows researchers to be flexible in their choice of methods to answer research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Here, a pragmatic approach allows researchers to be flexible enough to adopt the most practicable approach to address research questions. By doing this, there will be singular and multiple realities derived from the quantitative and qualitative research (Rorty, 1999; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011)

3.3 Research Design

This is the overall configuration of research question about what type of subject is gathered, from where and how to interpret it in order to provide an answer to the initial questions. (Saunders et al, 2009). Sequential explanatory mixed method was employed for the study. Being a fact finding study in an appreciably large population, this survey design was the most recommended, Wiegmann, von Thaden, and Gibbons (2007), in identifying the prevailing assessment characteristics in the study population inexpensively and at a fast rate. The survey design allows collection of different data variables and how they might correlate with the critical variable of interest, paving way for further studies. The study began with the collection of quantitative data using closed ended questionnaires in the first phase, followed by the semi-structured interviews in the second phase for the qualitative part. The qualitative data was used to compliment the quantitative data which was obtained in the study.

The researcher believes that by using both quantitative and qualitative data, the study will get adequate insights that either types of approach cannot provide alone thereby given better understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2009). The sequential explanatory design sought to gather more of quantitative data and supported it with qualitative data in order to collect more reliable and valid results (Bernard 2002).

3.4 Population

According to Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (2011), population in research is the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events with common observable features for which a researcher is interested in studying. It is also regarded as the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. For Neuman (2006), ‘research population is an abstract idea of a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are

generalized'' (p. 224). From these definitions, one can deduce a research population as being the sum of all the participants that could that part in this study. The population for the study comprised all public basic schools with KG in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district. This is made up of KG teachers, headteachers and children in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district According to the data from the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa statistical department of GES office in the district, the district has 97 KG centres with total enrolment of 1587 children, 228 KG teachers and 97 headteachers. The district is sub-divided into 8 circuits. The target population of the study comprised KG 1 and 2 teachers, headteachers and the children in the district.

3.5 Accessible Population

Accessible population consists of KG teachers and headteachers in 4 out of the 8 circuits in the district for the quantitative phase of the study. Four out of the 8 circuits were selected because all the circuits have the same characteristics to take part as the respondents for the study and due to time factor 4 circuits were selected. These include all the KG 1 and 2 teachers in the 4 selected circuits who were present at the time of the study totalling 119. Five headteachers were drawn from the selected schools from the circuit. An observation was carried out in 4 KG centres. That is 1 KG each from the four selected circuits in their classrooms. The total number of children observed was 111. In all, 235 participants were selected as respondents of the study.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique

One of the most important processes in sampling in a survey design is to determine the sample size that can be representative of the population from which it was drawn. In a quantitative research design, if the sample is well selected, the results of the study should be generalizable to the population (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009; Mertens,

2010; Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). Different techniques can be used to ensure that the sample is representative, these techniques include determining the sample size, properly defining the population, avoiding sampling error and bias (Dillman et al, 2009; Gay et al, 2009; Mertens, 2010). Determining sample size is concerned with how much data is required to make proper resolutions on a specific study. If there is ample data, the degree of mistake is more likely to be reduced (Abraham & Russell, 2008). To ensure that teachers who participated in the study represented all significant subgroups, the sample of teachers based on their training, grade level, and subject taught, years of experience and school level was selected (Gay et al, 2009; Mertens, 2010). It represents the larger population and is used to draw inferences about that population. Sample is a research terminology widely used in the social sciences to gather information about a population without having to measure the entire population. Neuman (2006), reiterated that a sample is a smaller set of cases a researcher selects from a larger pool and generalizes to the population. For Agyedu et al, (2011), a sample consists of individuals, objects or events that form part of the population. Therefore, a sample is part of a group or subsection of the objects or individuals of a particular population which is carefully chosen for the purpose of being the representative of the population of interest.

The sample for this research consist of all KG 1 and 2 teachers, headteachers and pupils selected from the schools for the reason that they had the needed knowledge and experiences to respond to the instruments as expected. Nonetheless, the sample size used for this study was 235 which comprised 124 teachers and headteachers and 111 pupils. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009), have recommended that a sample size of 100 could be suitable for a descriptive study.

Simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select 4 circuits from the 8 circuits in the district. With this, the researcher created a frame with the numbers 1-8 which represented the circuits in the district. The numbers were cut-out and folded into a box. The researcher picked 4 of the folded papers out of the 8 to represent the sample size for the schools with a total number of 53 KG centres selected. In all, 119 KG teachers who were in the 4 circuits were selected for the study. The same sampling procedure was used to select 5 headteachers from the 4 selected circuits. Six teachers who responded to the questionnaire were purposefully interviewed. Convenient sampling was used to select 4 KG centres from the participating schools for classroom observation. It was chosen because the researcher wants schools she can easily access to collect the observation data. One hundred and one children served as the participants for the observation. In summary, teachers, headteachers and children who were respondents were involved in the study. Hence the justification for the 235 respondents.

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide and structured observation guide were the data collection instruments used for the study. The quantitative phase of the research a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument while the qualitative phase employed semi structured interview and structured observation guide. The questionnaire was administered to the headteachers and KG 1 and 2 teachers and their responses were used to achieve the first phase of the study. The questionnaire contained 33 closed-ended items and was divided into five key sections. Section one asked teachers to provide demographic information such as their sex, educational background, years teaching KG, etc. with 5 items. Section two also dealt with the types of assessment techniques teachers use in their

classrooms (8 items). Furthermore, section three was about the factors that influence their choice of the assessment techniques they use (8 times). Again, the impact of assessment techniques on the performance of children learning has 5 items. Lastly, the problems teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques is the four sections (7 items).

A semi-structured interview was carried out on the same teachers who responded to questionnaire. The interview guide was designed in order to support, inquire more and confirm the questionnaire responses obtained from respondents on the assessment techniques, factors that influence their choice of those assessment techniques, the problems they encounter implementing them and impact the assessment techniques have on the performance of children.

According to Asamoah-Gyimah and Anane (2012), observational studies, researchers collect data on the current status of subjects by watching them and listening and recording what they observe than asking questions about them. The study employed structured observation of using observational rating scale. The items on the observational rating scale were rated as low, moderate and high. This intends to respond to the objective four of the research question, in order to get the effects assessment techniques have on children participation in the classroom. The choice of using this instrument was for the researcher to get first-hand information without relying on the report of others.

3.8 Pre Testing

Pilot testing process in research is very important. It was meant to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the questionnaire, the interview guide and observation guide in terms of question format, wording and order of items. It was also meant to

help in the identification of question variation, meaning, item difficulty, and participants' interest and attention in responding to individual items, as well as to establish relationships among items and item responses, and to check item response reliability (Bell, 1993; Mertens, 2010; Gay, et al, 2009). Five KG centres were selected from the district to undertake the pre testing of the questionnaire, two teachers were interviewed and a class was also observed. This sample size was not included in the study.

3.9 Validity of Questionnaire

In enhancing the validity of the study, the investigator triangulated the data by using both quantitative and qualitative approaches: Within the quantitative section, questionnaires were administered and in qualitative section, interviews were conducted followed by observation.

In checking the content-validity of the instrument, the research instruments were given to the researcher's supervisor in University of Education, Winneba. The lecturer reviewed the items for clarity and completeness in covering most, if not all, assessment practices used by teachers in early childhood classroom settings, likewise content validity of the instrument and items. Needed amendments were made based upon the analyses of the lecturer.

Again, the researcher collected the data from a diverse range of individuals who were involved in the study, such as the teachers who did early childhood education, those who did basic education and even those who have been trained in neither early childhood nor basic but are teaching in KG and students from diverse disciplines. The reason for including all disciplines was to base the findings on a rich source of data. Maxwell (2005) and Rossman and Rallis (2003), support the idea that by triangulation

a researcher can decrease the risk of any chance combined the data or covering only one phase of the phenomenon which results in using a specific method. Triangulation allows “a better assessment of generality of explanations that one develops” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 32). Following methodologists’ suggestions about being involved in the site for a long period, (Schram, 2005; Maxwell, 2005; and Rossman & Rallis, 2003), the researcher spent more than one month in the site holding formal and informal conversation with teachers and head teachers in the field and was able to ask them informally about what they felt about classroom assessment and its impact on learning.

Furthermore, since the investigator used to teach in this district for some time now, she was sincerely at ease with the site. This augmented the researcher’s understanding of the site, although the timeline of the actual study (questionnaire administration, interview and observation) was only five weeks. All through in the interviews, participants were frequently enquired to elaborate on a point they made, and the investigator shared back with the participants her understanding of their words.

In addition, to reducing personal bias and misinterpretation, the investigator shared transcriptions with some participants, checking whether they were satisfied with their interviews. Sharing the transcriptions with participants helped the investigator build more trust and confidence among the participants, which is also admired among research practitioners (Rossman & Rallis 2003; Maxwell, 2005).

3.10 Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha was adopted to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. An overall correlation coefficient of 0.746 was obtained. Although several authors have reported different levels of alpha ranging from 0.70 to 0.95. For instance, Bastick and

Matalon (2004), recommended 0.75 as the minimum acceptable alpha level, while Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), and supported by Streiner (2003), suggested a minimum of 0.70. In all cases, the obtained alpha value in this study was about the same with the values recommended.

3.11 Trust worthiness Criteria (Validation of Interview Schedule)

Speziale, Streubert and Carpenter (2011), describe trustworthiness as establishing the validity and reliability of qualitative research. Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the study respondents. Guba's model for establishing trustworthiness of qualitative research was used because it is well developed conceptually and has been extensively used by qualitative researchers. His four criteria was used to measure the trustworthiness of data: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability

3.11.1 Credibility

The researcher used probes to elicit detailed data. Also, questioning was used by the researcher so as to return to matters previously raised by participants and extracted related data through rephrased questions. Again, the researcher gave interview questions to her supervisor to scrutinize. The feedback provided by the supervisor offered a clear understanding for the researcher to refine the interview questions. Furthermore, audio recordings were made during the interview schedule and later played to participants after the interview to confirm the information they have shared.

3.11.2 Dependability

In addressing the issue of dependability, the necessary techniques were employed to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

3.11.3 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings from one study can be applied to another (Shenton, 2004). The researcher ensured that sufficient information about the area in which the fieldwork was carried out and the participants was provided to enable the reader to make a transfer in related study.

3.11.4 Confirmability

The researcher took steps to help ensure that the study's findings were the results of the experiences and ideas of participants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. The role of triangulation in promoting such confirmability must again be emphasised, in this context the researcher triangulated the data to reduce the effect of investigator biasness. To this end, beliefs underpinning decisions made and methods adopted were acknowledged within the researcher report.

3.12 Data Collection Procedure

With regards to the specific objectives set for the study, data was collected quantitatively and qualitatively on teachers, headteachers and pupils from selected schools in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the central region of Ghana. Patton as cited in Wang (2006), recommended that "multiple source of information be used to collect data as no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective" (p. 306). Questionnaire were distributed to the participants after informing them about the aim of the study, enlightening the means of completing the questionnaire, assuring them of confidentiality and the need for them to respond to the questions as best as they could. Participants were however implored not to seek assistance or what so ever from their colleagues in answering the questions and the questionnaire were completed in the presence of the researcher. The

completed questionnaires were immediately collected by the researcher where they were immediately checked for any accidental omissions. After analyzing the quantitative data, the researcher identified some areas that needed explanation and clarification

A semi-structured interview guide was employed on the selected interviewees. In each case, the researcher informed them about the aim of the interview before the interview commenced. Responses for this section were recorded prior to the participants concern, each section of the interview process lasted for a maximum of 25 minutes per head. In all these process, the researcher employed personal observations to establish the veracity and relations between the responses given and what is actually happening on the grounds as far as assessment is concerned.

Randolph (2007), stated that observation is when a researcher observes the phenomenon, understudy and records what is seen for analysis. The researcher directly sees what the participants do instead of relying on what they claim they do (Kawulich, 2005). Observation was done soon after consent of school heads have been sought. The researcher observed the sampled schools for 3 days each to complete the data collection process. The researcher appreciated the respondents verbally for their cooperation.

3.13 Data Analysis

According to Todd (2011), mixed methods research involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data using different instruments. And that mixed methods data is treated both quantitatively and qualitatively. Before the data was analysed, they were edited. With the quantitative data, few of the respondents shaded the boxes intended for ticking. Moreover, some of the shadings were faint. These anomalies

were corrected. Again, some respondents ticked one box twice and left the next box following it vertically for the next question, empty. These corrections were also made. Finally, with the qualitative data even though the interviewees express themselves well in the English language, a few of the responses had to be re-phrased as the interviewees did not properly state them. After the editing, the quantitative data were coded. All the data are categorical data, therefore the first response item was coded 1 and the other response was coded 2. For instance, 1 for male and 2 for female. Questions that have three or more responses were coded 1 for the first response, 2 for the second response and 3 for the third response and so on. The likert scale responses were coded 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Undecided, 4 for Agree, and 5 for Strongly Agree.

In entering the quantitative data, all the 124 questionnaires were numbered. The corresponding figures of the responses made by each participant were written against the questions on the questionnaire. When each questionnaire was picked, all the figures were entered horizontally in the Data View of the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) software. Occasional cross-checking was done to ascertain whether all the figures entered were correct. Wrong entries found were quickly corrected. Before the data was analysed, a final data cleaning was done. The units of analysis for this study were the teachers. SPSS was used to analyse the responses from the questionnaire to generate a descriptive picture of data obtained on the various themes (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

For the qualitative part, interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically. The recorded interviews were transcribed after several readings by the researcher based on the questions asked in accordance with a specific objective. Finally, the data was interpreted in direct quotes and the summary of researcher's findings.

3.14 Ethical Considerations

Gaining informed approval from participants is a vital process in ethical research practice. It is very significant that participants are well informed about the research, its purpose, benefits, and risks and what is expected of them in the research process even before they can give their consent (Langenbach, Vaughn & Aagaard, (1994); Reaves, 1992).

There are laid down principles and guidelines for conducting studies in an ethically appropriate manner which require researchers to obtain approval from ethics committee or equivalent and from the participants (Halai, 2006). Based on this premise, the following ethical considerations suggested by Creswell (2012), for conducting mixed methods research were adopted for this study.

With an introductory letter from my Head of Department, I took a letter of permission from the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District Director of Education which introduced me to the sampled schools under their jurisdiction. In each school visited, the purpose of the study was communicated to the respondents after taking pleasantries with the school head. They were also, assured of the protection of their anonymity and the keeping of their responses confidential. Due respect was given the study population.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Overview

Assessment practices and its outcome is of great importance to all stake- holders of education the world over and the case of Ghana is no exception. According to Cavangah, Waldrip, Romanoski, Fisher and Dorman (2005), although teachers and administrators typically select assessment forms and tasks, the purpose of assessment varies among various stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, schools, and policy makers. Goodrum, Hackling and Rennie (2001), assert that “an assessment is a key component of teaching and learning process” (p. 2). This means that teachers use “a very narrow range of assessment strategies and in practice; however, little evidence exist that teachers actually use formative assessment to inform planning and teaching” (Goodrum et al. 2001, p. 2). This study was conducted to examine the assessment practices of teachers at the early childhood centres in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district. Descriptive Survey Research Design was used as the study falls under the pragmatist paradigm. The research method comprised a multi-pronged approach commonly referred to as embedded mixed methods approach (Caruth, 2013). Thus, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected (Creswell and PlanoClark, 2007), on the same day from the pupil respondents to triangulate the data (Denzin, 2006). While the questionnaire focused on the knowledge and opinions of the respondents in relation to the variables studied, the observation and interview dwelt on their behaviour in an actual learning situation and a few related issues. The instruments which were pre-tested had a content reliability coefficient of 0.746 on the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient scale.

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, standard deviations and means were used to analyse the quantitative data (Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

Onwuegbuzie and Combs' (2011), mixed methods data analysis guideline and Yin's (1994), pattern matching descriptive/explanatory were used to analyse the qualitative data.

The sample for this study consisted of all the early childhood teachers' teaching at the various early childhood centres from the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district in the Central Region of Ghana through a purposive and random sampling techniques. The sample size was 235 teachers teaching at the at the selected early childhood centres and, therefore, have the requisite experience and knowledge to participate in the study. They could all read and write the English Language. They were used to answering objective type test questions and this facilitated their responding to the questionnaire items. All the school prefects interviewed could express themselves fluently in the English Language.

4.1 The Results

From the study, the following results were obtained.

4.1.1 Respondents Demographics

The demographic data on the respondents were taken on their sex, age range, years teaching the KG, qualification and area of specialty.

Table 1: Demographics of Respondents

Characteristics	% of	% of	% of	% of	Total	% of
Sex	Male 44(35.5)	Female 80(64.5)			124	Total 100
Age range	Below 26 2(1.6)	26-35 98(78.0)	36-45 9(7.3)	46 and above 15(12.1)	124	Total 100
Years teaching KG	1-9 110(88.7)	10-19 13(10.5)	30 and above 1(0.8)		124	Total 100
Qualification	Diploma 63(50.8)	Degree 59(47.6)	Others 2(1.6)		124	Total 100
Area of specialty	Early Childhood 42(33.9)	Basic Education 74(59.7)	Others 8(6.5)		124	Total 100

Source: Field data, 2021

From Table 1 the data show that out of the 124 teachers, 44(35.5%) were male and 80(64.55%) were females. Ninety-eight, representing 78.0% fell within the age range of 26-35 while 15 (12.1%) fell within the 46 and above age range and 2 representing 1.6% fell in the below 26 age range. With regards to the number of years they have been teaching at the KG, the range of 1-9 had 110(88.7%) teachers while 10-19 were 13(10.5%) respondents and 1(0.8%) was 30 and above. Sixty three respondents representing 50.8% were diploma holders with 59(47.6) having degree and other qualifications being 2(1.6%). Finally, the area of specialty had early childhood education with 40(33.9%) teachers and basic education with 74 representing 59.7%.

Results on Research Questions

The results for the research questions are as follows:

4.1.2.1 Research Question 1:

“What are the assessment techniques are used by teachers in examining the performance of children?”

To examine the assessment techniques of learners in the selected early childhood centres, a 5 likert scale item was constructed to elicit the teachers’ opinion on the assessment techniques used at the early childhood centres. Table 2 presents data collected to that effect. In the Table, SD = Strongly Agree, D= Disagree and was coded 2, U= Undecided and was coded 3, A= Agree and was coded 4, SA= Strongly Agree and was coded 5, T = Total, M = Mean, and SD = Standard Deviation.

Data collected in answer to this research question have been presented in Table 2.

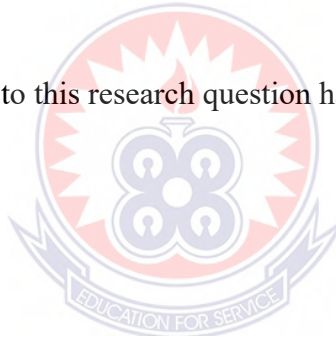


Table 2: Assessment Techniques used by Teachers

Assessment techniques used by teachers	% of SD	% of D	% of U	% of A	% of SA	% of T	M	SDv
I keep portfolio on the learning progress of children.	17 (13.7)	40 (32.3)	0 (0.0)	32 (25.8)	35 (28.2)	124 (100)	3.23	1.428
I assess children using paper pencil test.	21 (16.9)	19 (15.3)	7 (5.6)	48 (38.7)	29 (23.4)	124 (100)	3.36	1.428
I use rating scale to assess the children's progress.	18. (14.5)	25 (20.2)	3 (2.4)	54 (43.5)	24 (19.4)	124 (100)	3.33	1.378
I assess learning outcomes of children when they are performing a task.	2 (1.6)	4 (3.2)	3 (2.4)	62 (50.0)	52 (41.9)	124 (100)	3.27	0.827
I use one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess learners.	5 (4.0)	14 (11.3)	8 (6.5)	65 (52.4)	32 (25.8)	124 (100)	3.85	1.060
I use more than one method to assess the progress of children	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)	1 (0.8)	48 (38.7)	73 (58.9)	124 (100)	4.55	0.603
I use self-assessment allowing the children to assess their own work	19 by (15.3)	67 (54.0)	14 (11.3)	17 (13.7)	7 (5.6)	124 (100)	2.40	1.081
I use peer assessment where children observe their colleagues work and talk	29 (23.4)	61 (49.2)	4 (3.2)	21 (16.9)	9 (7.3)	124 (100)	2.35	1.218
Mean of Means							3.29	

Source: Field data, 2021.

From Table 2 the data show that 47(46.0%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to keeping portfolio on the learning progress of children while 67(54.0%) agree or strongly agree to keeping portfolio on the learning progress of children, however 7(5.6%) were undecided about keeping portfolio on the learning progress of children. The total valid entries made were 124(100%) with a mean score

of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.492. The data suggested that the respondents averagely keep portfolio on the progress of children. Thus, where as some of them keep portfolio on progress of children, others do not.

The data from Table 2 show that a total of 77(62.1%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to using paper and pencil test while 40(35.2%) of them agree or strongly agree to the use of paper and pencil test whereas 7(5.6%) of the respondents were undecided to the use of rating scale. The total valid entries were 124 (100%) with a mean score of 3.36 and standard deviation of 1.428. The data suggest that majority of the teachers do not use paper and pencil test to assess children. The implication is that teachers are doing away with traditional method of assessment which put children under pressure.

The data in Table 2 also reveal that 43(34.7%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree the use of rating scale to assess the progress of children while 3(2.4%) were undecided but 78(62.4%) of them agree or strongly agree to the use of rating scale to assess the children. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 1.378. The data suggest that on the average, the respondents use rating scale to assess the progress of children.

From Table 2 the data again show that 7(5.6%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to assessing learning outcomes of children when they are performing a task though 3(2.4%) were undecided to it however 114(91.9%) of the teachers agree or strongly agree to assessing learning outcome of children when they are performing a task. The total valid entries made were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.27 and a standard deviation of 0.827. The data suggested that the respondents averagely respondents assess the learning progress of children when they

are performing a task. Thus, whereas some of them assess the learning progress of children when they are performing a task others do not.

From Table 2 the data show that 19(15.3%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the use of one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess children's learning outcomes whereas 8(6.5%) were undecided to the use of one-on-one interaction, however 97(78.2%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree to the use of one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess children's learning outcomes. The total valid entries made were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.85 and a standard deviation of 1.060. The data suggested that on the average respondents use one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess children's learning outcomes. Thus, where as some of teachers use one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess children's learning outcomes, others do not.

The data in Table 2 also reveal that 2(1.6%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the use of more than one methods to assess the progress of children while 1(0.8%) were undecided but 121(97.6%) of them agree or strongly agree to the use of more than one method to assess the progress of children. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 4.55 and a standard deviation of 0.603. The data suggest that on the average, the respondents use more than one methods to assess the progress of children.

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that 86(69.3%) of teachers disagree or strongly disagree to portfolio as a formal assessment method but 14(11.3%) were undecided to portfolio being a formal assessment tool however, 24(19.3%) of them agree or strongly agree to it. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.40 and a standard

deviation of 1.081. The data suggest that on the average, some of the respondents know and others do not.

Table 2 finally show that 90(72.6%) of respondents disagree or strongly disagree to the use of peer assessment where children observe their colleagues work and talk about them while 4(3.2%) of participants were undecided to the use of peer assessment of teachers although 30(24.2%) of them agree or strongly agree to the use of peer assessment. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.35 and a standard deviation of 1.218.

4.1.2.2 Research Question 2

“What factors influence teachers’ choice of assessment techniques?”

To explore factors that influence teachers’ choice of assessment techniques, a 5 likert scale questions was used. Table 3 presents data collected to that effect. In the Table, SA = Strongly Agree, D= Disagree and was coded 2, U= Undecided and was coded 3, A= Agree and was coded 4, SA= Strongly Agree and was coded 5, T = Total, M = Mean, and SD = Standard Deviation.

Table 3: Factors that Influence Teacher's Choice of Assessment Techniques

Factors that influence teachers choice of assessment techniques	% of SD	% of D	% of U	% of A	% of SA	% of T	M	SDv
I consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one.	6 (4.8)	11 (8.9)	2 (1.6)	66 (53.2)	39 (31.5)	124 (100)	3.98	1.063
I use a specific method of assessment in order to compare children.	7 (5.6)	35 (28.2)	5 (4.0)	58 (46.8)	19 (15.3)	124 (100)	3.38	1.207
I use a particular mode of assessment to meet parental demand.	6 (4.8)	26 (21.0)	8 (6.5)	64 (51.6)	20 (16.1)	124 (100)	3.53	1.137
I use a specific method to motivate children to learn.	13 (10.5)	24 (19.4)	1 (0.8)	49 (39.5)	37 (29.8)	124 (100)	3.59	1.368
To understand each children, I use more than one assessment method.	7 (5.6)	15 (12.1)	5 (4.0)	39 (31.5)	58 (46.8)	124 (100)	4.02	1.230
I use a particular method of assessment to reduce my work load.	5 (4.0)	31 (25.0)	4 (3.2)	60 (48.4)	24 (19.4)	124 (100)	3.54	1.178
I use a specific method of assessment to conform to curriculum.	11 (8.9)	27 (21.8)	1 (0.8)	60 (48.4)	25 (20.2)	124 (100)	3.49	1.278
I use a specific method of assessment to meet the expectation of leaders at the office.	15 (12.1)	26 (21.0)	3 (2.4)	48 (38.7)	32 (25.8)	124 (100)	3.45	1.387
Mean of Means							3.62	

Source: Field data, 2021.

From Table 3 the data reveal that 17(13.7%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the statement that they consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one while 105(84.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that they consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one. The total valid entries were 124(100%). Two (1.6%) of them were undecided. The mean score is 3.98 and the standard deviation 1.063. The finding is that the teachers have a higher degree of considering purpose of assessment before using it.

Data in Table 3 show that 42(13.8%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a specific method of assessment in order to compare children however 77(62%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 43.38 and the standard deviation of 1.207. Five (4.0%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the teachers at the early childhood centres use a specific method of assessment to compare children.

When the respondents expressed their views on the use of a particular mode of assessment to meet the demand of parents, the data in Table 3 show that 32(25.8%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a particular mode of assessment to meet parents demand whereas 84(68.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Eight (6.5%) were undecided. The valid entries were 124 (100%) with a mean score of 3.53 and a standard deviation of 1.137. The finding is that as majority of the teachers agree to the use the assessment to meet parents demand, a significant number of them disagree to use the assessment to meet parents demand.

The respondents also expressed their views on the use of a specific method of assessment to motivate children to learn. Data in Table 3 show that 37(29.%) of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a specific method of assessment to motivate children to learn like their teachers' way of teaching while 86(69.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. One (0.8%) were undecided on the issue. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.59 and a standard deviation of 1.184. The data suggest that the teachers use a particular method of assessment to motivate children to learn.

Another question to ascertain their views on the use more than one method of assessment to help them understand each child, the respondents expressed their views on the statement. Data in Table 3 show that 22(17.7%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that to understand each child, I use more than method of assessment while 97(78.3%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 4.02 and the standard deviation of 1.230. Five (4.0%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the teachers at the early childhood centres use a more than one assessment technique to help them understand each child well.

When the respondents expressed their views on the use of a particular method of assessment to reduce their work load, the data in Table 3 show that 36(25.8%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a particular method to reduce their work load however 92(74.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Four (0.6%) of the respondents were undecided. The valid entries were 124 (100%) with a mean score of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.178. The finding is that as majority of the teachers use a particular one to reduce their work load other also do not use a particular method of assessment to reduce their work load.

The respondents also expressed their views on the use of a specific method of assessment that conforms to the curriculum. Data in Table 3 show that 38(30.7%) of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a method that conforms to the curriculum while 85(68.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. One (1.1%) of the teachers was undecided on the issue. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.278. The data suggest that the teachers at the early childhood centres use assessment techniques that conform to the curriculum.

From Table 3 the data finally reveal that 41(33.1%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they use a specific method of assessment to meet the expectations of leaders at the education office want to learn business related subjects while 80(64.5%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Three (2.4%) of them were undecided. The total valid entries were 124 (100%) with a mean score of 3.45 and standard deviation of 1.387. The finding is that the teachers at the early childhood centres use a method of assessment to meet the demands from the leaders at the education office.

4.1.2.3 Research Question 3

“What Effects do the Assessment Techniques have on Children’s Performance?”

To determine the effect of assessment techniques on children performance, a 5 likert scale item was constructed to elicit the teachers’ opinion on the assessment techniques used at the early childhood centres. Table 4 presents data collected to that effect. In the Table, SD = Strongly Agree, D= Disagree and was coded 2, U= Undecided and was coded 3, A= Agree and was coded 4, SA= Strongly Agree and was coded 5, T = Total, M = Mean, and SD = Standard Deviation. Data collected in answer to this research question have been presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Effects of the Assessment Techniques on the Performance of Children

Effects of assessment on the performance of children.	% of U	% of A	% of SA	% of T	M	SDv	
Assessment offer children another opportunity to learn.	26. (21.0)	47 (37)	6 (4.8)	30 (24.2)	15 (12.1)	124 (100)	2.69 4
Assessment provide teachers with useful information on children learning.	25 (20.2)	15 (12.1)	6 (4.8)	54 (43.5)	24 (19.4)	124 (100)	2.60 1
Children receive prompt feedback on their work.	15 (12.1)	41 (33.1)	4 (3.2)	38 (30.6)	26 (21.0)	124 (100)	3.15 7
Children do not demonstrate their new level of competence.	27 (21.8)	49 (39.5)	3 (2.4)	32 (25.8)	13 (10.5)	124 (100)	2.64 2
Children are able to collaborate with their peers and work in groups.	12 (9.7)	29 (23.4)	0 (0.0)	52 (41.9)	31 (25.0)	124 (100)	3.49 6
Children are able to identify their shortcomings and improve on them.	20 (16.1)	38 (30.6)	8 (6.5)	35 (28.2)	23 (18.5)	124 (100)	3.02 1

Mean of Means**2.93**

Source: Field data, 2021

From Table 4 the data reveal that 73(58.9%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the statement that assessment offer children another opportunity to learn while 45(36.3%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that it offer

children another opportunity to learn. The total valid entries were 124(100%). Six (4.8%) of them were undecided. The mean score is 2.69 and the standard deviation 1.364. The finding is that the teachers have a higher degree of not offering children another opportunity to learn.

The data from Table 4 show that a total of 40(32.3%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the statement that assessment provide teachers with useful information on children learning while 78(62.9%) of them agree or strongly agree to it assessment provide teachers with useful information on children learning whereas 6(4.8%) of the respondents were undecided to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.60 and standard deviation of 1.331. The data suggest that on the average, assessment provide teachers with useful information on children learning.

When the respondents expressed their views on children receiving prompt feedback on their work, the data in Table 4 show that 56(45.2%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that children receive prompt feedback on their work whereas 64(51.6%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Four (6.5%) were undecided. The valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.15 and a standard deviation of 1.397. The finding is that as majority of the teachers agree to children receiving prompt feedback on their work, a significant number of them disagree to children receiving prompt feedback on their work.

Again, children do not demonstrate their new level of competence was the next statement for soliciting respondents view. Data in Table 4 show that 76(61.3%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that children do not demonstrate their new level of competence while 45(36.3%) of them either agreed

or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.64 and the standard deviation of 1.346. Three (2.4%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the children demonstrate their new level of competence.

The data from Table 4 show that a total of 41(33.1%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree children are able to collaborate with their peers and work together in groups while 83(66.9%) of them agree or strongly agree to it that children are able to collaborate with their peers and work together in groups whereas 0(0%) of the respondents were undecided to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.49 and standard deviation of 1.346. The data suggest that on the average, children are able to collaborate with their peers and work in groups.

Table 4 show that 58(46.7%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that children are able to identify their shortcomings and improve on them while 58(46.7%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.02 and the standard deviation of 1.411. Eight (6.5%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that children at the KG are able to identify their shortcomings and improve on them.

4.1.2.4 Research Question 4: “What Challenges do Teachers Face when Implementing the Assessment Techniques during Teaching and Learning Process?”

To ascertain the challenges early childhood teachers’ face in implementing the techniques a 5 likert scale item was constructed to elicit the teachers’ opinion on the assessment techniques used at the early childhood centres. Table 5 presents data

collected to that effect. In the Table, SD = Strongly Agree, D= Disagree and was coded 2, U= Undecided and was coded 3, A= Agree and was coded 4, SA= Strongly Agree and was coded 5, T = Total, M = Mean, and SD = Standard Deviation. Data collected in answer to this research question have been presented in Table 4.

Table 5: Challenges Teachers Face when Implementing the Assessment Techniques

Challenges teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques.	% of SD	% of D	% of U	% of A	% of SA	% of T	M	SDv
The assessment take a lot of time in carrying it out.	9 (7.3)	28 (22.6)	3 (2.4)	51 (41.1)	33 (26.6)	124 (100)	3.57	1.295
I do not have proper place to keep the children's work.	32 (25.8)	5 (4.0)	2 (1.6)	20 (16.1)	65 (52.4)	124 (100)	2.49	1.158
I find it difficult to implement the assessment technique due to lack of training.	18 (14.5)	24 (19.4)	3 (2.4)	47 (37.9)	32 (25.8)	124 (100)	3.41	1.426
There are too many children in my class.	24 (19.4)	54 (43.5)	3 (2.4)	31 (25.0)	12 (9.7)	124 (100)	2.62	1.310
Rating of items in some already prepared assessment tools are difficult.	11 (8.9)	28 (22.6)	8 (6.5)	62 (50.0)	15 (12.1)	124 (100)	3.34	1.209
Parents do not show concern when informed about the progress of their children.	15 (12.1)	33 (26.6)	3 (2.4)	54 (43.5)	19 (15.3)	124 (100)	3.57	1.326
Children lack the basic items to use during the assessment process.	18 (14.5)	27 (21.8)	0 (0.0)	57 (46.0)	22 (17.7)	124 (100)	3.31	1.374
My school does not have adequate Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) to help me in the assessment of children.	6 (4.8)	34 (27.4)	4 (3.2)	56 (45.2)	24 (19.4)	124 (100)	3.47	1.219
Mean of Means							3.22	

Source: Field data, 2021.

From Table 5 the data reveal that 37(29.9%) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree to the statement that the assessment method they use takes a lot of their time when carrying it while 84(67.7%) either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement that they consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one. The total valid entries were 124(100%). Three (2.4%) of them were undecided. The mean score is 3.57 and the standard deviation 1.295. The finding is that the teachers have a higher degree of considering purpose of assessment before using it.

The respondents also expressed their views on not having proper place to keep the children's work. Data in Table 5 show that 37(29.8%) of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they do not have proper places to keep the work of the children whereas 85(68.5%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Two (1.6%) of the teachers was undecided on the issue. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.49 and a standard deviation of 1.158. The data suggest that the teachers at the early childhood centres do not have proper places to keep the assessment results of children.

Again, another question to find out whether the teachers find it difficult to implement the assessment technique due to lack of training, the respondents expressed their varying views on it. Data in Table 5 show that 42(33.9%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they find it difficult to implement due to training while 79(63.7%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.41 and the standard deviation of 1.426. Three (2.4%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the teachers have difficulty in implementing assessment techniques due lack of training.

Data in Table 5 show that 78(62.9%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that they have too many children in their classes however 43(34.7%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 2.62 and the standard deviation of 1.310. Three (2.4%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the respondents have large class sizes at the early childhood centres.

Another question to ascertain their views on whether rating items in some already prepared assessment tools are difficult, the respondents expressed their views on the statement. Data in Table 5 show that 39(31.5%) of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that rating items in some already prepared assessment tool is difficult while 77(62.1%) of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.34 and the standard deviation of 1.209. Eight (6.5%) of them were undecided on the issue. The data suggest that the teachers at the early childhood centres have difficulty in rating already prepared assessment tools.

The respondents also expressed their views on the parents concern when their wards progress are discuss with them. Data in Table 5 show that 48(38.7%) of them either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the statement that parents do not show concern when they are informed about the progress of their children whereas 73(58.8%) either agreed or strongly agreed to that statement. Three (2.4%) were undecided on the issue. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.326. The data suggest that the parents do not show concern when they are informed about the progress of their children.

From the Data in Table 5, teachers express varying views on the children not having the necessary items to use during assessment process. The total valid entries were 124 (100%) with a mean score 3.31 and a standard deviation of 1.374. A total 45(36.3%) disagree or strongly disagree but 79(63.7) either disagree or strongly disagree to the statement but those who agree or strongly agree were 79(63.7%). None representing 0% were undecided. This then suggest that children lack the basic items to use during the assessment process.

Lastly, the Data from Table 5, shows the views of teachers on the school having teaching and learning materials to help them in the teaching and learning process. A total of 40(32.2%) disagree or strongly disagree to the statement while 80(64.6%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree to it that their school does not have teaching and learning materials. Four (3.2%) of the teachers were undecided to the statement. The total valid entries were 124(100%) with a mean score 3.47 and a standard deviation of 1.219. The data put forward that the schools does not have teaching and learning material for teachers to use during the teaching and learning process.

The qualitative data gathered to validate the quantitative data on the problems early childhood teachers' face in implementing the techniques was in connection with the quantitative data collected. The general finding is that teachers face varying problems when it comes to the implementation of the assessment.

4.2 Discussion of Results

This section of the chapter presents the discussion of the results and the interpretation of the findings in relation to the research questions designed to guide the study.

4.2.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The results on the gender show that 64.5% of the respondents were females in the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district than the males. The finding confirms a study conducted by Abdulai (2016), that there is much credence to the position that child upbringing and care is one that women by their nature are good at, hence a reaffirmation of female dominance in early childhood educational sector.

When the participants indicated their age range, the result showed that 78.0% the teachers were within the age range of 26-35. The finding is that the majority of the early childhood teachers in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district are in their active working age group.

The results again reveal the number of years teachers have been teaching at the early childhood centres. The outcome was that 11.3% of the respondents have more than 10 years working experience at the KG level. The implication is that since these teachers have been teaching at the early childhood centres for some number of years, they may have the required knowledge to use different assessment techniques in the early childhood centres.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked to indicate their professional qualification 98.4% of the participants have either diploma or degree. This implies that the respondents are all qualified to teach the early childhood centres. Because of their level of education they have been taken through some course on assessment as part of their studies. Munton, Mooney, Moss, Petrie, Clark, Woolner and Barreau

(2002), confirms that qualified teachers result in an improved quality learning environment and positive outcomes for children.

The final item on the demographic data was the area of specialty of respondents. The result show that 33.9% of the teachers specialised in the early childhood education. The implication is that, the majority of the respondents were not trained in early childhood education and hence may not have the necessary skills in assessing children.

The first variable on the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres investigated in this study was the assessment techniques teachers' use.

4.2.2 Research Question 1

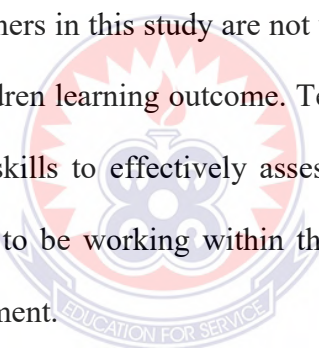
“What are the Assessment Techniques Adopted by Teachers in Examining the Performance of Children?”

This was designed to help examine the assessment techniques of learners in the selected early childhood settings. The results from the data collected on this research question were as follows:

The respondents' use of portfolio assessment shows that 54% of the teachers use portfolio as a method of assessment to check the progress of the children. The finding is that most teachers in the district at the early childhood centres use portfolio assessment to check the progress of their children. Portfolios allow teachers and parents/guardians to focus on children's work samples to see what the student is able to do rather than what he/she is not doing. It, therefore, implies that teachers use portfolio assessment to help the children to be able to reflect on their work done over a period of time. According to Herrera et al, (2007), one significance of a portfolio is that unlike the traditional synoptic evaluations, such as the final exam or any

standardized test that happens once, portfolios provide a longitudinal observation of student progress as they show incremental gains in knowledge, skills, and proficiencies.

The results on the use of paper and pencil exercise also show that 62.1% of the respondents do not use paper and pencil test to assess the children. The implication is that, whereas many of the teachers do not use test to as their assessment technique to assess children's performance, the others do not. It, therefore, implies that majority of the early childhood teachers have not been using test as a form assessment technique. This contradict what Asare (2015), said in her study that, the kindergarten teachers solely employ the use of teacher made paper and pencil test in their assessment drive in the classroom. The teachers in this study are not using developmentally assessment practices in assessing children learning outcome. Teachers, therefore, do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively assess the children learning outcomes appropriately. They seem to be working within their comfort zone by relying on a traditional mode of assessment.



Another item in connection with the use of assessment techniques is the teachers' use of rating scale to assess the progress of children. The result shows that 62.4% of the respondents use rating scale to assess the progress of children. The finding is that the respondents' use of rating scale to assess the children is above average. Thus, in accordance to a study conducted by McQuarrie and Sherwin (2013), found that majority of their respondents reported that they "frequently use" or "sometimes use" a rubric or rating scale to assess individual student performance.

The KG curriculum started that through play, learners make sense of the world around them and develop internal process of inquiry that allows them to think critically and creatively (NaCCA, 2019). When the respondents expressed their views in relation to assessing learning outcomes of children with play based method, the result shows that 91.9% of them agree to assess learning outcomes of children when they are performing a task. The finding is that majority of teachers use play based method of assessing children. Assessing the performance of children when they are performing a task is good enough to let children participate actively during lesson delivery and when they are performing a task. This is likely to exert some influence on their involvement and comporment during the performing of the tasks. Herrera et al, (2007), found that some teachers reflect on who these children are, the extent of what they know, and the way they learn, based on the evidence that they observe in the role-play.

Furthermore, the results show that 78.2% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree to use one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess children's learning outcomes. The finding is that, the respondents use one-on-one interaction (interview) to assess the learning outcomes of children. Interview as a form assessment method is good at that early childhood stage because it helps the teachers to be able to identify whether the child has any form of problem which may require more attention or referring the child to a specialist for interventions to be made on them. This confirms what Herrera et al, (2007 p.36), says that unstructured detailed interviews with students help teachers to adapt the lesson based on the information gathered from students. These authors noted that, through a teacher's interview held with a student, the instructor realized that "linguistic differences can interfere with the development of deeper connections with students".

Still with the issue of assessment techniques they use to assess the progress of children, the result shows that 74.1% of the respondents use of more than one method to assess the progress of children. The result suggests that teachers use more than one method of assessment to assess the progress of children. This implies that when teachers use several methods of assessment to check the progress of children more insight about the child's progress will be noted with what only one assessment method was not able to do. This is consistent with the findings of the study by McMillan and Workman (1998), which showed that teachers used several methods and grade to assess students.

Assessment is one of the major components of education. Children can be able to assess their own work if they are given rules and regulations governing the process. When this study investigated the use of self-assessment by allowing the children to assess their own work as the assessment method, the result shows that 68.6% of them do not use self-assessment as an assessment technique to assess the children. The finding is that though some of the teachers use self-assessment as method of assessment, majority of the teachers do not use self-assessment to assess the children. This implies that if children are allowed to assess their own work, they are able to follow the laid down procedures set by the teacher to come out with a good assessment. According to Herrera et al, (2007), when students' are engaged in assessing their own work, they try to learn the criteria for high-quality performance, and they experience a willingness to apply those criteria.

Finally on the assessment techniques adopted by teachers in examining the performance of children, an issue about the use of peer assessment where children observe their colleagues work and talk about them was investigated. The result shows that 64.5% of them either agree or strongly agree to use peer assessment where

children observe their colleagues work and talk about them. The finding is that teachers use peer assessment where children observe their colleagues work and talk about them. This type of assessment helps children to express their views on what exactly should be done about a particular work given them and children turn to accept what the verdict of their work is. Kwok (2008), found that students viewed the experience of peer evaluation as enhancing their confidence and providing them the opportunity to exercise power of making judgments about their peers. Herrera et al, (2007), also supported the foregoing statement that given the concept of peerassessment, students compare other students' work to the accepted criteria, which "enables them to discern outstanding elements of both their own and their classmate's performances and products" (p. 34).

4.2.2.1. Assessment Techniques Teachers Use in the Early Childhood Centres

The qualitative data that validated the quantitative data collected on the assessment techniques adopted by teachers to assess the progress of children was in connection with the questions ask on the assessment techniques use. The field data collected on this issue show that the results confirmed that teachers adopt varying techniques including, paper and pencil exercise, interviews, rating scales, portfolios, group work, observations among others though paper and pencil exercise dominated as indicated in the quantitative data. The following themes emerged as the interviewees responded to the interview one questions: 1. Assessment method teachers used, 2. Other forms of assessment, 3. What portfolio assessment contain 4. Difference between rating scale and checklist. Whiles some teachers adopt two methods, others combined more than two method in the assessment process. For example a female KG 1teacher noted,

I often use paper and pencil test method, rating scale or sometimes interviews depending on what I am looking for from them or probably based on the topic I am teaching them.

Another teacher also said:

I use pencil and paper method, group work and verbal communication.

Another teacher added:

Sometimes I use rating scale, give them activities to perform and then I will observe their progress. Normally, for KG, I use the two and sometimes I give them minor exercises to do.

The data imply that some of the early childhood centres use various forms of assessment techniques to check the progress of children. But one of the interviewees throwing more light on the situation noted that:

Portfolio, observation, and rating scales do help a lot especially at their level. So normally that is what I use in assessing them.

4.2.2.2. Other Forms of Assessment Methods

Responses to the question of whether respondents (teachers) have other forms of assessment techniques revealed that there was largely no other major techniques aside the techniques mentioned anecdotal records or questionnaires. A male teacher with seven years of teaching experience indicated:

Yes, at times we base our assessment on anecdotal records of the children.

When asked to explain anecdotal record further he noted:

It is a records that consist brief notes he writes down just after he finishes observing of the children.

Another respondent added:

Yes, we have questionnaire, where we normally look out for some performance or progress indicators on the child.

When asked to explain further she said:

It is a list of behaviours on the progress of children in which they indicate against the item that the child perform of has exhibited.

4.2.2.3 Content of portfolio

In determining respondents understanding of what a portfolio assessment contains, the response showed varied understanding of the technique though others had no understanding of it. Some were of the view that it entailed the record of their learners. Others also believed it is a holistic record of all academic and home data or information of the child.

These were some of the responses:

Sincerely I don't know what it contains, so which of the techniques do you adopt most? As you know, paper and pencil is what we have used for all this while.

Another also said:

Hmm, Madam, I think it contains the record of the children. Records like what? Records like all the activities of the child throughout the term or year.

It's a compilation of the child's work that I use to assess the child's progress over a period of time.

Another respondent also shared her views:

It is assessing the child physically and the work of the child that is arts and music.

Portfolio assessment contains information about children right from home, his/ her developmental stages and the performance as well in the school.

4.2.2.3 Difference between Rating Scale and Checklist

Further efforts were made in soliciting views of respondents on the difference between a rating scale and a check. The results show yet again varying responses even though some could not tell the specific difference.

These are some of the responses:

Yes there is a difference but I honestly can't state specifically what the difference is because you know we just use any of them at any time.

Actually I don't know the differences between them because we often do not pay critical attention to some of these techniques during assessment

Yes there is. In terms of checklist, if the behavior of the child listed is performed I tick it but in the rating scale the behavior performed is marked against a degree to which it is executed.

Another respondent said:

Not much difference. Normally checklist deals with yes or no responses while rating scale use the degree to which the child performs an activity by rating them as in average, high, highest and so on.

In a similar response a teacher said:

Checklist contains of a yes or no response but rating scale does not contain yes or no but it's straight.

The other qualitative data used to validate the quantitative data and the interview was observation. An observational rating scale was used on the assessment techniques teachers used to assess the children and it yielded the following results: In all the 3 centres observed, the teachers used different types of assessment to assess the children. Some of the assessment techniques used were observation, interview, group work and paper and pencil exercise. The finding here is that, the teachers use different form of assessment techniques used to assess the progress of children. Thus, the observation result confirmed the general finding from the quantitative and the interview data on the variable, assessment techniques used by teachers.

The second variable on the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres investigated in this study was the teacher's choice of assessment techniques.

4.2.3 Research Question 2

“What Factors Influence Teachers’ Choice of Assessment Techniques?”

This was designed to explore factors that influence teacher’s choice of assessment techniques. The result elicited on this research questions are discussed as follows:

Assessment is conducted for a variety of reasons and the nature of the assessment often reflects the purpose for which it is being carried out. Assessment provides information for decisions about children curricular and programmes and educational policy. It helps teachers to determine the progress made by each individual children in learning. When study investigated whether teachers consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one. The results shows that 84.7% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree to consider the purpose before choosing a particular one. The finding is that teachers consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one. The finding confirm the McMillan (2015), that it is important to know the purpose for the assessment being carried out as the purpose of the assessment affects when and with which method the assessment will be done and how the results will be used.

Again, on the issue of factors that influence teachers’ choice of assessment techniques, respondents expressed their views on whether they agree or disagree to use specific mode of assessment in order to compare children easily. The result shows that 62.1% of them either agree or strongly agree to the use of a specific method of assessment in order to compare children easily. The finding is that, the respondents agree to the use of a specific method of assessment in order to compare children easily. The findings are in keeping with Kubiszyn and Borich (2000), recommended five different ways the teacher could compare students’ performance. These are“1)

with other students, 2) established standards, 3) aptitude, 4) actual versus potential effort, and 5) actual versus potential improvement” (p.204). Kubiszyn and Borich (2000), noted that each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Also on the factors that influence teachers’ choice of assessment techniques, this study examined the respondents’ use of a particular mode of assessment to meet the demands of parents. The result reveals that 68.6% of the respondents use a particular mode of assessment to meet the demands of parents. The implication is that it does not support the principle of fair assessment as stated in the (NaCCA 2009)

This study investigated whether the respondents agree or disagree to the use of a specific method of assessment to motivate children to learn. The result shows that 69.3% of them either agree or strongly agree to the use of a specific method of assessment to motivate children to learn. The finding is that, teachers use a specific method of assessment to motivate children to learn. Banerjee and Luckner (2013), asserted that knowing the appropriate assessment practices of teachers in early childhood schools and improving in this direction is indisputably key in increasing children’s learning, demonstrating their performance as well as guarantee a solid foundation for their utmost growth and development.

A further investigation made on whether teachers use more than one method of assessment to understand each child reveals that 78.3% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that to understand each child they use more than one method of assessment. The finding is that the respondents use more than one method of assessment to understand each child. The finding relates to the guidelines provided by Reynolds et al, (2006), and Waugh and Gronlund (2013), which recommended that

test developers should use multiple sources and types of assessments, especially if the assessment results are used to make educational decisions with high consequences.

A follow up question on the issue of using a particular method of assessment to reduce their work load yielded the result that 74.1% of the respondents use a particular method of assessment to reduce their work load. The finding is that the early childhood education centres teachers use a particular method of assessment to reduce their work load. This finding suggests that the early childhood teachers have a lot of work load on them when it comes to assessment. This finding is in line with comments made by Hepworth-Osiowy (2004), further described their frustration with assessment through comments like, “Can someone help me figure out how to assess 25 kids in 30 minutes when I only see them two times each week?”(p.97).

Again, when respondents were asked as to whether they use a specific method of assessment that conforms to the curriculum the result came out that 68.6% of the teachers either agree or strongly to use a specific method that conforms to the curriculum. The findings are that teachers at the early childhood centres use a specific method of assessment that conforms to the curriculum. The findings contradict that of Asare (2015), which says that teachers’ current assessment practices cannot help them to effectively implement the curriculum developmentally as the developers of the curriculum prescribed.

Finally, on the factors that influence teachers’ choice of assessment techniques, the respondents expressed their views on their use of a specific method of assessment to meet the expectations of leaders at the education office. Giving teachers the room for choosing the most suitable assessment method to check the performance of children is important because this they know the children they are teaching the form of

assessment that can suit each of them. When this study elicited information from the respondents on using an assessment method to meet what officers are expecting from them, the result shows that 64.5% of them are use that method assessment to meet the expectations of the leaders. The finding is that the teachers at the early childhood centres use a specific method of assessment to meet the expectation of the leaders at the office. On the contrary, a number of them (33.1%) do not use a specific one to the expectation of leaders.

With respect to the factors that influence the choice of a technique, the interview process saw series of questions asked respondents for their responses.

4.2.3.1 Time of Using Assessment Technique

Responses to the question of when teachers administer an assessment tool in the teaching and learning process revealed that the techniques are often adopted during a lesson or at the end of the lesson. Some also indicated they adopt a method before commencing a day's activity or lesson. For observation, rating scale and others, interviewees indicated they usually adopt them when the learners are carrying out an activity or performing a task. Below are some examples of the responses.

A male teacher with seven years of teaching experience who had been teaching in the KG level for the past four years said:

I sometimes use the method during learning and after learning

Another participant said:

I use rating scale, paper and pencil test after I finish teaching and with regards to interviews, I interview the children early in the morning before I start the days teaching and learning.

A female teacher also stressed:

For observation, I do it when the children are performing an activity. Normally in the kindergarten (KG) level, when the children are performing an activity or a task then you will be observing and doing the assessment as well. The same applies to rating scale by allowing them to perform the activity and rating them.

4.2.3.2 Reasons for Chosen A Particular Form of Assessment

As to why teachers choose to use particular form of assessment technique, the results show that teachers used a technique to determine progress, drawbacks and overall development of a child. The responses also shows that teachers do select a particular assessment technique for the learning progress of a child based on parents demands for tangible prove of their wards learning progress. At times learners' progress demands by supervisors of these teachers also force them to select a particular type of assessment in order to meet their supervisors or superiors targets. Below are some examples of the responses

Usually I choose a particular type of assessment technique to know the progress and weakness of the children. Said by a 24 year old female teacher

Another teacher said:

Oh for assessment techniques I adopt one to see the performance of the children and also determine their understanding of what I teach them.

A male teacher with over seven (7) years of teaching experience added:

For assessment techniques, it normally because of parental demands, we are often asked to use paper and pencil method. Most of the parents request for evidence of our teaching activities, even our supervisors, so we are in a way compelled to use that one. They want the evidence of our teachings in the form of evaluation.

It helps me as a teacher to check how the child develops

Another teacher again said:

My choice is paper and pencil or verbal communication because I sometimes want to find out the child's previous knowledge in relation to the topic I will be teaching first and also to find out whether they have understood what I taught so in this case I adopt a group work. Also the paper and pencil test method gives me evidence to my teaching as often required by parents.

And other teacher also added:

Ok, for me personally I know my children are young and they have individual differences so you have to observe each and every child before you can know their level and help them out. That is with the appropriate evaluation and assessment technique.

4.2.3.3 Assessment Techniques Prescribed by School

In determining whether the school prescribes any form of assessment for teachers to use, the responses were largely negative as most respondent could not give a specific technique that their respective schools recommend during the teaching and learning process.

No the school does not prescribe any form of assessment technique for us

Oh not specific, but sometimes during in service training they tell us to use this or that. But we choose the one that we think is more appropriate for our class and for the specific work.

The third variable on the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres investigated in this study was the effects of assessment techniques on the performance of children.

4.2.4 Research Question 3

“What Effects do the Assessment Techniques have on Children’s Performance?”

This question was designed to help determine the effect of the assessment practices on the performance of children.

The results from the data collected on this research question are as follows: The respondents' views on teacher offer children another opportunity to learn show that 36.3% of them either agree or strongly agree that they offer children another opportunity to learn. However, the results also reveal that majority of the teachers do not offer children an additional opportunity to learn. The finding is that some groups of teachers offer children another opportunity to learn. The implication is that, this practice of teachers defeat the principle of fair assessment. This finding dispute what NaCCA (2019), said that "learners should be provided with sufficient opportunity to demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitude or behaviours being assessed. Assessment information can be collected in variety of ways" (p.39).

Again, when the respondents were asked to express their views on providing useful feedback on children assessment data, the result show that 63% of them said it provide them with the needed information they need to know on the progress of children learning. Nonetheless, the results also reveal that, some teachers also said the assessment does not provide them with the information they need on the children. The finding is that majority of early childhood teachers get the necessary information they need on the progress of the children. This confirms the findings from the study conducted by Taras (2005) and Stiggins (1992), which indicated that assessment, also provide teachers with useful feedback about student learning acquisition.

A further investigation into the effect of assessment techniques on children performance in the early childhood centres was children receive prompt feedback on their work. The result yielded that 51.6% of the respondents give prompt feedback on the work of children. The finding here is that teachers at the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa give prompt feedback on the work of children. In assessment for learning, assessment is used to give feedback to students (McMillan,

2015). Wojtczak (2002), argues that it helps teachers evaluate the strengths and weakness of their students and to motivate them. This method allows teachers the opportunity to evaluate learning, and then use that information to improve student knowledge.

The study inquired from the respondents that children do not demonstrate their new level of competence. The result shows that 36.3% of the respondents indicated that their children demonstrate their new level of competence. The finding is that some of the teachers agree to the statement that the children in their class do not demonstrate their new level of competence. Those who indicated that their children demonstrate their new level of competence formed the majority. Ash and Levitt (2003), elaborated the views of Vygotsky by arguing that learners learn best not only as individuals but in a collaborative manner with teachers in a social setting. This view is also supported by Rashida et al, (2013), who stated that knowing the appropriate assessment practices of teachers in early childhood schools and improving in this direction is indisputably key in increasing children's learning, demonstrating their performance as well as guarantee a solid foundation for their utmost growth and development.

Having children collaborate with their peers and working together in groups helps children in turn taking and also develops their communication skills. Teachers have the responsibility to create that room for children to be able to work in groups in the classrooms in order to develop these skills in them. When respondents expressed their views on children collaborating with peers and working together in group, the result shows that 66.9% of them are able to collaborate with their peers and work in groups. The finding is that children at the early childhood centres collaborate with their peers and work together in groups. According to Kwok (2008 p. 89), majority of students participating as evaluatees "considered the comments and feedback fair". These

respondents viewed the seminar as helpful in terms of the “importance of teamwork, self-awareness and confidence in responding to open-ended questions” (Kwok 2008, p. 89). In addition, students’ perceptions as evaluators indicated that students enjoyed their experience of observing, listening to other students, making decisions, giving comments, and marking (grading). Ash and Levitt (2003), elaborated the views of Vygotsky by arguing that learners learn best not only as individuals but in a collaborative manner with teachers in a social setting.

Lastly on the effect of assessment on children’s performance, the study investigated the issue of children being able to identify their short comings and improve upon them. The result shows that 46.7% of the respondents indicated that the children able to identify their short comings and improve upon them. The same percentage of teachers also indicate that their children are not able to identify their short comings and improve upon them. The finding is that, the same percentage of the teachers agree and disagree to the statement. The finding agree with what NaCCA (2019), stated that assessment is used to promote learning. Its purpose is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of learners to enable teachers ascertain learners/response to instruction. In addition, the curriculum encouraged learners are to take responsibility for their own learning to improve performance.

The qualitative data used to corroborate the quantitative data on the effect of assessment techniques on the performance of children was observation and it brought forth the following results: In all the 4 centres observed, children received prompt feedback on their assessment. It also identified that children who had challenge or short comings were identified and supported in their learning. It was again observed that, teachers offer children another opportunity to learn. A typical was when a teachers gave children some work to do and some of the children were not able to

write it well. She later brought them out of the classroom, sit with them under a tree and help them to be able to write it well while the second teacher engage the rest of the children. The finding here was that, the teachers use different form of assessment techniques to improve the performance of the children. Hence, the observation result confirmed the general finding from the quantitative data on the variable, impacts of assessment techniques on the children performance.

The fourth variable on the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres investigated in this study was the challenges teachers' face in the implementation of the assessment techniques in the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District.

4.2.5 Research Question 4

“What Challenges do Teachers Face when Implementing the Assessment Techniques during Teaching and Learning Process?”

This question was designed to ascertain the challenges early childhood teachers face in implementing the techniques at the early childhood centres. The results are as follows:

To begin with, when the respondents expressed their views on the assessment techniques takes a lot of time to implement it, the result shows that 67.7% of them agree that the assessment method takes a lot of the time. The rest said the methods does not take a lot of their time. The finding is that, mostly the assessment techniques teachers use takes more time. Thus the realisation is that in carrying out assessment on the various subjects, a lot time goes into it than time given. The finding relates with two of Salvador's (2011), three participants who noted that lack of time to carry

out the assessment is not enough. This implies that teachers will eat into other subjects' period making it difficult to be able to achieve that intended goal of the day.

Still on challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment techniques they use, the respondents gave their responses on not having proper place to keep the children's work. The result reveals that 62.1% of them attest that they do not have proper place to keep pupils work. The finding is that the early childhood teachers lack proper place to keep the work of the children. Record keeping is important because if teachers do not have a good place to keep the work of children they will be tempted to use assessment type that will not involve too much records to be kept. This endorses what two of Salvador's (2011), three participants cited as lack of a manageable recordkeeping system as an impediment to assessment, one of whom "stated that her main challenge was finding a way to record assessment data immediately" (p 94).

There are verbal reports that teachers at the early childhood centres mostly do not have in-service training on the assessment techniques to use in assessing the children. This study also investigated the statement that, I find it difficult to implement the assessment technique due to lack of training, and the result shows that 63.7% of the respondents find it difficult to use the assessment techniques due to lack of training. The finding is that majority of the teachers find it difficult to implement the assessment technique due to lack of training. This finding confirms an earlier finding by Asare (2015), which states that early childhood teachers lack the requisite knowledge on the use and practices involved on the impact performance assessment on their own professional development.

This study accordingly enquired from the respondents if there are many children in their various classes and here came their responses. The result shows that 62.9% of them have too many children in their classes. The finding is that teachers at the early childhood centres have large class size and this makes it difficult to assess all of them at a go. According to Delaney, (2011); Patterson (2006); Peppers (2010); Shih (1997), large class size is one the impediment teachers have in the assessment children. For an effective assessment to carry out on the progress of children, the number of children must be less to help teacher assess them well.

The respondents also expressed their views on parents do not show any concern when they are informed about the progress of their children. The result shows that 58.8% of them either agree or strongly agree that parents do not care when they inform them about how their wards are progressing. The finding is that parents do not show concern when they are briefed on the progress of their children. The finding contradict the assertion made by Wilder (2014), that overall, there is a positive relationship between parents involvement in school with the children's achievement.

Respondents again where investigated on the children lacking the basic items to use during assessment process. The result shows that 63.7% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that the children lack the basic items to use during the assessment process. The finding is that the children at the early childhood centres do not have the necessary items to use when assessment is in progress.

Finally on the challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment tools, an issue about the respondents school not having Teaching Learner Resources (TLAs) to help in the assessment of the children was investigated. The result shows that 64.7% of them either agree or strongly agree that their school does not have TLAs to help them

in the assessment process. The finding is that early childhood centres do not have TLAs to help the teachers to implement the assessment tools. However, this oppose the teaching philosophy of the KG curriculum which stated learners should be provided with materials and opportunities at different centres or corners of the classroom to explore and to independently carryout activities in order to help them achieve curriculum objectives in all areas (NaCCA, 2019).

The qualitative data gathered to validate the quantitative data on the challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment tools in the early childhood centres was in connection with that of the quantitative aspect of the questionnaire. With regards to the challenges teachers' faces when implementing the assessment techniques, a number of questions were asked and the respondents gave their views on the questions.

4.4.1 Challenges Face in Implementing Assessment Techniques: State of Assessment Training

In order to determine whether respondents do get enough training on assessment technique and practices in their respective schools, some responses from teachers to the question on whether they have enough training on assessment practices revealed that teachers do not have enough training on the assessment practices they are supposed to use.

These are some of the responses in this regard

No we don't have. I can remember only one workshop that was organized for us on assessment practices.

Another teacher said,

No, I have never gone through any training for assessment aside the one I had from college.

Another respondent said,

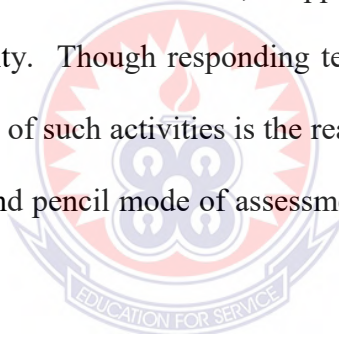
We use to have training some years back but currently there is nothing like that for us.

The issue appears to more worrying with regards to respondents who were not traditionally early childhood degree holders and most often had qualification in that field.

A male teacher interviewed which noted,

Hmmm! Not at all! Some of us did not even do early childhood so I have to contact other teachers to help me understand how some of the techniques are used.

The finding from the responses showed that teachers largely do not get training on assessment techniques. For those who have, it appears it been long since they were taken through such activity. Though responding teachers deemed it necessary, they indicated that the absence of such activities is the reason why most teachers at the KG level do resort to paper and pencil mode of assessment which is not ideal at that level of the educational ladder.



4.2.5.1 Time Factor Regarding Time Involved in Assessment Techniques

Implementation

With regards to time involved in the implementation of an assessment technique, responses to the question of whether it is time consuming to utilizing an assessment technique, majority of the interviewees responded affirmatively indicating high population of children in a class and long time spent by kids in meeting objectives of the assessment technique as some factors.

For example a teacher said,

Yes, it's time consuming due to the high population of children in my class.

Another teacher also said,

Yes, it's time consuming because even if you give some of them the whole day to finish one work, they will not be able to finish.

Another respondent added.

In fact, it is time consuming. You are a teacher yourself in the early childhood field and you know how it is.

For those who shared a contrary view, a respondent said

Not as such because it is often done during the instructional period so it is not time consuming. It can only consume time when it is done before or after the class.

4.2.5.2 Availability of Assessment Items

Concerning the availability of basic items in making assessment easy, mixed reactions greeted the interview question in this regard.

A respondent said,

No. Most of them don't have, if I tell them to bring something to school they will come back and tell me that their parents said they don't have money.

Another person said,

Some parents do provide while others do not all in the name of poverty

4.2.5.3 Response of Parents to Assessment Results

A follow up question as to how parents do respond to the progress of their wards, the responses are indicated as follows.

Some teachers said

Most of them are very happy about their wards progress. Those that their progress is not all that good, their parents do follow up to ask me how I can help their children to also come up like their colleagues.

Most of them don't care about the progress of their children when I inform them about it. Some don't care about it but some also respond well

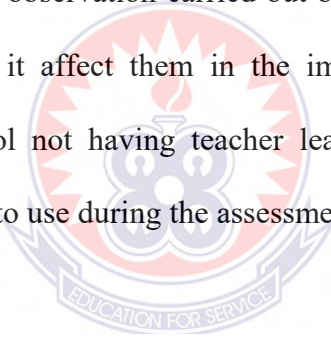
Another teacher also added

That one, some of them respond positively by agreeing to whatever I tell them to provide for their children that will help them in school while others also pretend as though they do care. So when they go you will not hear from them again.

Another female teacher noted.

Some makes efforts indicating that they have been teaching them at home and the cases where the performance of the child is still down they will step up their efforts. Others too don't show any concern. Some also show concern in your presence but does nothing about it when they leave your presence and will also never come to check on their progress again.

From the responses from the questionnaire shows that there are a lot of challenges the teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques. This affirms what interview results say. The observation carried out by the researchers also shows that the challenges exist and it affect them in the implementation of the assessment techniques like the school not having teacher learner resources and children not having learning materials to use during the assessment process.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the research findings of the study. The purpose of this study is was to investigate the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres. The conclusions presented in this chapter are based on information obtained from the respondents in the selected schools.

5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this research was to examine the assessment practices of teachers' in the early childhood centres within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District of the Central Region of Ghana. This became necessary for some reasons: Assessment practices remain a challenge to teachers especially those at the early childhood settings. This concern has also been identified by MoE and GES at large. In addition, there is lack of empirical work on early childhood assessment practices of teachers especially in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district. These are treats to effective implementation of the KG curriculum (Adentwi, 2000).

In view of that, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What assessment techniques are used by teachers in examining the performance of children?
2. What factors influences teachers' choice of assessment techniques?
3. What effects do the assessment techniques have on children's performance?
4. What challenges do teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques during teaching and learning process?

To probe the assessment practices of teachers in the early childhood centres, a descriptive research multi-pronged approach commonly referred to as embedded mixed methods Caruth, (2013), was used. This method enabled me to collect, analyse and mix both quantitative and qualitative data in this study (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007). The population for this study comprised all public early childhood centres within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District in the Central Region of Ghana who were in school at the time of the study. The sample size used for this study was 124 early childhood teachers, headteachers and KG children drawn from the population through the simple random sampling, purposive sampling and the convenient sampling techniques. Questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide, as well as structured observation rating scale were the instruments used for the data collection. The instruments for this study were pre-tested in five different schools outside the target population for the study. The data collection lasted for six weeks. In each of the sampled schools, the questionnaire was administered to all the early childhood teachers present. Interview was carried out on selected teachers. Observation of lessons was also made in selected schools. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, standard deviation and means were used to analyse the quantitative data while the qualitative data was also analyse using themes.

The results of the study are as follows: On the teachers' demographics, the results on the gender of the respondents showed that there are more females in the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district than males and that the majority of the respondents were within the age 25-35 range. The results again showed that a large number of the teachers have been teaching at the KG between 1-9 years while 30-40 age range was the least. From the results, it was deduced that

diploma holders were the majority of the respondents as compared to other qualifications as in line with the teachers with basic education as an area of specialty.

5.2 Key Findings

The following are the key findings of the study based on the research questions:

5.2.1 Research Question 1

“What Assessment Techniques are used by Teachers in Examining the Performance of Children?”

This question was designed to help examine the assessment techniques of learners in the selected early childhood settings. The results show that, most teachers use paper and pencil test to assess the children. It was also revealed that the most used assessment technique of teachers in assessing their children was rating scale. There is again the finding that many teachers use more than one method of assessment to assess the children and majority of the respondents also use paper and pencil test to assess the children. The results also show that whereas majority of the teachers disagreed to the use of peer assessment as a technique of assessing the children majority also disagree to the use of self-assessment. Largely, the knowledge level of the teachers for using assessment techniques in the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district is above average. The qualitative data showed that the teachers' responses are in connection with the questionnaires on the assessment practices listed in the 5 likert scale.

5.2.2 Research Question 2

“What Factors Influence Teachers' Choice of Assessment Techniques?”

This question was designed to explore factors that influence teacher choice of assessment techniques. The results show that the teachers' consider the purpose of the

assessment before they pick the one that will be appropriate to use and that some of them use particular assessment technique in order to compare the performance of children. The results also show that the respondents use the assessment technique that will reduce their work load to help them carry out other duties and likewise to meet the demands of parents. Again, respondents are of the view that they use more than one assessment technique to help them understand each child well. However, some of them also use it to motivate children to learn. Lastly, the results show that majority of the teachers use specific method of assessment to conform to what the curriculum outlined and as well as to meet the expectations of educational leaders. The qualitative data show that the teachers' use a particular assessment technique for the outcome they want to get. The general finding on this variable is that the teachers have are well inform of what the assessment technique intend to achieve at the end of it.

5.2.3 Research Question 3

“What Effects does the Assessment Techniques have on Children’s Performance?”

This question was finally designed to determine the effect the assessment techniques on children performance in the early childhood settings. The results for this research question show that majority of the teachers do not offer children another opportunity to learn likewise the children not given variety of ways to learn. The result again shows that the children receive prompt feedback on their work and minority of the teachers attest that the children do not demonstrate their new level of competence. Furthermore result show that children have positive one on one interaction with teachers. Also the result shows that children are able to collaborate with their peers and work actively in groups. Lastly, the result shows that children are able to identify

their shortcomings and improve on them. The general finding on the impact of assessment techniques on children's performance at the early childhood centres was that teachers use varying forms of activities that indicate the various forms of assessment techniques they are using in their classrooms. The qualitative data confirmed that the teachers engage children in various activities in order to assess the progress of the children. They group the children to work collaboratively and this helps children be able to take turns.

5.2.4 Research Question 4

“What Challenges Do Teachers Face when Implementing the Assessment Techniques during Teaching and Learning Process?”

This was designed to ascertain the challenges early childhood teachers face in implementing the techniques. The results show that the teachers are faced with a high challenge of how to rate some items in the assessment tools that have been prepared already for them to tick and that some parents do not care about any information on the assessment outcome given to them by the teachers. The results further showed that majority of the teachers are not with the view that the assessment technique they use limit the process of how the children should develop appropriately in the formative years and that they do not find the assessment technique difficult to implement due to lack of training. Lastly, the results showed that apart from some children not having the basic items to use during assessment, majority of the respondents attest to it that their schools do not have sufficient Teacher-Learner Resources to aid them in the assessment of the children. The qualitative data on the challenges teachers faced during assessment showed that assessment techniques consume a lot of their time when they are assessing the children. However, some parents respond positively to their wards' progress when informed. The general finding on the problems teachers

faced is that, the teachers do not have training on assessment practices in the early childhood levels in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

5.3 Conclusions

There are several authentic assessment practices outlined in the curriculum but teachers still adhere to the traditional method of assessment that is paper and pencil test. The study talks about the assessment techniques teachers' use, the factors that influence teacher's choice of assessment techniques, the effects of the assessment techniques on children performance and challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment techniques. The result did not differ from findings other researchers. This could be said that assessment practices are not taken serious when it comes to the assessment of children and thus at the early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.

The following conclusions were drawn from the study.

Teachers use traditional method of assessment techniques to assess the performance of children. This type of assessment technique used by the teachers mainly encourages memorization of facts, principles, procedures and processes. Again, teachers do not decide on the standardized factors they should follow before choosing appropriate assessment techniques to assess the children at the end of the learning and learning process. Furthermore, teachers create the environment for children to engage in activities with their peers and this helps them to improve upon their performances. Finally, it can be concluded that challenges such lack of TLMs, large class size, lack of in-service training affected the assessment practices teachers in their assessment of children.

5.4 Recommendations:

Based on the outcome of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should adopt the prescribed assessment techniques they are supposed to use in assessing learners at the early childhood centres in the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district.
2. Teachers should adhere to the standardized factors that influence the choice of assessment practices at the early childhood centres.
3. Teachers should stick to assessment techniques that serve the needs of the children by should providing them with meaningful feedback to the children about how closely they are meeting the demands of the performance indicators.
4. The Ministry of Education in conjunction with GES should ensure that in-service training or workshops are organised for teachers on a regular basis and also provide teachers with the assessment tools they need in order for them use the appropriate assessment practices effectively.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study was conducted in only public early childhood centres in Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa district. It is suggested that future researchers consider conducting it in private schools in the district to find out whether the same outcome would emerge.

Also, in future research like this should investigate whether parents have an idea about the appropriate assessment techniques that teachers are supposed to use at the early childhood centres to assess the children.

Finally, future research should investigate Circuit Supervisors knowledge on assessment practices used at the early childhood centres so that they can be able to make inputs whenever they come for supervision.



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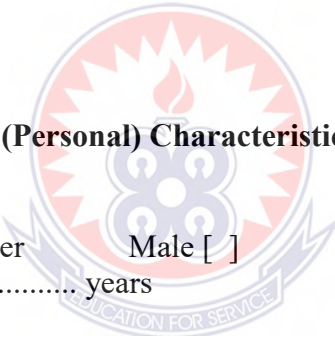
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APPENDIX A

Thank you for accepting to participate in the study, I am Stella-Matilda Awadzo pursuing Master of Philosophy in Early Childhood Education. I am conducting a study on Assessment Practices of Teachers in Early Childhood Settings in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District of the Central region of Ghana. These questionnaires are solely for academic purposes and not in any way is it intended to test your knowledge or professional competence.

Kindly spend few minutes of your time in answering these questions. Don't indicate your name or identity in any part of the questionnaire. For **Validity, Reliability and purpose of analysis, answer all questions by selecting** or providing the most applicable response

Section A. Demographic (Personal) Characteristics

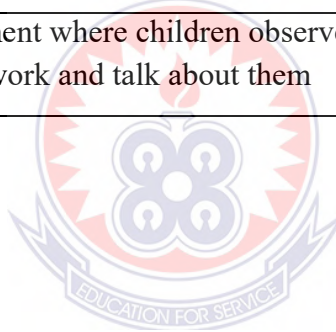
- 
1. Indicate your gender Male [] Female []
 2. Age years
 3. Your qualification
SSSCE/WASSCE [] Diploma [] Degree [] Masters []
Other (Specify).....
 4. How many years have you been teaching at the Kindergarten?
..... years
 5. What is your field /area of specialty

SECTION B. ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES USED BY TEACHERS IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

The items listed below are designed to obtain information on types of assessment methods or types of test items you use. The items are rated Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Please read the

items carefully then tick (√) the appropriate response from the scale of Strongly Agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD)

	Techniques of assessment	SA	A	U	D	SD
6.	I build portfolio on the learning outcomes of children.					
7.	I use pencil and paper test to assess the children.					
8.	I use rating scale to assess the progress of children.					
9.	Assessing learning outcomes through children's' performance of task					
10.	I use interviewing to assess learning outcomes.					
11.	I use more than one method to assess the progress of children.					
12.	Portfolio is a form of formal assessment method					
13.	I use peer assessment where children observe their colleagues work and talk about them					



	Factors influencing teachers choice	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	I consider the purpose of the assessment before choosing a particular one.					
15.	I use a specific method of assessment in order to compare children.					
16.	I use a particular method of assessment to meet parental demand.					
17.	I use a specific method to motivate children to learn.					
18.	I use more than one method of assessment to help understand each child.					
19.	I use a particular method of assessment to reduce my work load.					
20.	I use a specific method of assessment to conform to the curriculum.					
21.	I use a specific method of assessment just to meet the expectation of leaders at the office.					

SECTION C. FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEACHERS' CHOICE OF ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The items listed below are designed to obtain information on factors that influences your choice of assessment techniques you use. Please read the items carefully then tick (✓) the appropriate response from a scale of Strongly Disagree (**SD**) to Strongly Agree (**SA**)

**SECTION D. IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES ON CHILDREN
PERFORMANCE**

The items listed below are designed to obtain information on impacts of assessment techniques on the performance of children. Please read the items carefully then tick (✓) the appropriate response from a scale of Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA)

S/N	Impacts of assessment	SA	A	U	D	SD
26	Assessment offer children another opportunity to learn.					
27	Assessment provide teachers with useful information on children learning.					
28	Children receive prompt feedback on their work.					
29	. Children do not demonstrate their new level of competence.					
30	Children are able to collaborate with their peers and work in groups.					

SECTION E. CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACED IN IMPLEMENTING ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The items listed below are designed to obtain information on challenges teachers face when implementing the assessment techniques. Please read the items carefully then tick (✓) the appropriate response from a scale of Strongly Disagree (**SD**) to Strongly Agree (SA)

S/N	Challenges teachers face	SA	A	U	D	SD
26	Assessment techniques I use takes a lot of my time.					
27	There is no proper place to keep the children's work					
28	I find it difficult to implement the assessment technique due to lack of training.					
29	There are too many children in my class.					
30	Some parents do not show any concern when they are informed about the progress of their children.					
31	Children lack the basic items to use during the assessment process.					
32	My school does not have TLAs to help in the assessment process.					

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

A semi- structured interview guide on the study on Assessment Practices of Teachers in Early Childhood Settings in Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District of the Central region of Ghana. The interviews are solely for academic purposes and not in any way is it intended to test your knowledge or professional competence. Kindly respond to all the questions that will be asked you.

1. Name of school
2. How many years have you been teaching in the Kindergarten?
3. Highest qualification of the interviewee
4. Academic area of specialization
5. The class you are teaching

ASSESSMENTS TECHNIQUES TEACHERS USE IN THEIR CLASSROOM

6. Which type of assessment techniques do you use in your classroom?
7. Do we have other forms of assessment techniques? Ask further
8. What does a portfolio assessment contained?
9. Is there any difference between a rating scale and a check list? Ask further

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE TEACHERS' CHOICE OF ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

10. When do you administer your assessment tool in the teaching and learning process?
11. Why do you choose to use that form of assessment technique?
12. Does the school prescribe any form of assessment for teachers to use? Ask further if yes.

**CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACE WHEN IMPLEMENTING THE
ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES**

13. Do you have enough training on assessment practices?
14. Is the implementation of the assessment technique time consuming?
15. Are all the basic items of the children provided to make assessment easy?
16. How do parents respond to the progress of their wards when informed?



APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION


The items listed below are designed to obtain information on effects of assessment techniques on the performance of children. The items are rated low, moderate and high with low being the lowest to the highest.

1. Gender of teacher being observed
2. Class
3. Teacher's area of specialty
4. The type of assessment tools being used

S/N	Impact of assessment on children performance	INDICATORS		
		LOW	MOEDRA TE	HIGH
1	Teacher offers children another opportunity to learn.			
2	Provide useful feedback on children assessment.			
3	They receive prompt feedback on their work.			
4	Children demonstrate their new level of Competence.			
5	Children collaborate with their peers and work together in groups			
6	Children are able to identify their shortcomings and improve upon them.			

APPENDIX D

INTRODUCTORY LETTER



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
+233 (020) 2041072
ace@uew.edu.gh

FES/DECE/S.6

May 12, 2021

The Director,
Ghana Education Service,
Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District
Winneba *Asikuma*

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTORY LETTER


I write to introduce to you Ms. Stella Matilda Awadzo with index number 8180190022 who is an M.Phil student in the above department. She was admitted in 2018/2019 academic year and has successfully completed her course work and is to embark on her thesis on the topic: *“Assessment Practices of Teacher in Early Childhood Centre within the Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa District”*

Ms. Stella Matilda Awadzo is to collect data for her thesis, and I would be most grateful if she could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Yayra Dzakadzie
Yayra Dzakadzie, Ph. D
Ag. Head of Department



www.uew.edu.gh

APPENDIX E

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the
Number and date of this
Letter should be quoted
My Ref: GES/AOB.91/3
Your Ref:



Republic of Ghana

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-BRAKWA
P. O. BOX 29
BREMAM ASIKUMA

12th July, 2021

THE AG. HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

Dear Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER
MS. STELLA MATILDA AWADZO

The Directorate writes to acknowledge receipt of your letter introducing Ms. Stella Matilda Awadzo, an M.Phil student to our district.

Permission has been granted to undertake the exercise and hope the student will comport herself well.

The Directorate is prepared to offer her any assistance.

Congratulations.

ROBERT KWAMINA ASOMANING
DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
ASIKUMA-ODOBEN-BRAKWA

District Director
Ghana Education Service
Asikuma-Odoben-Brakwa