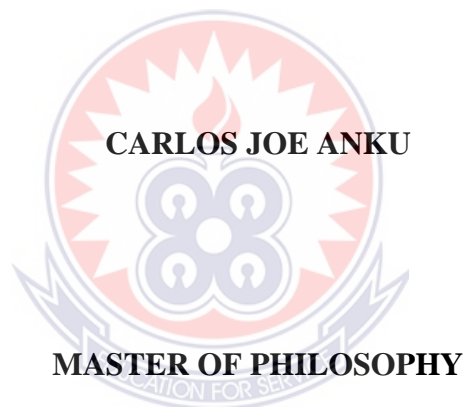


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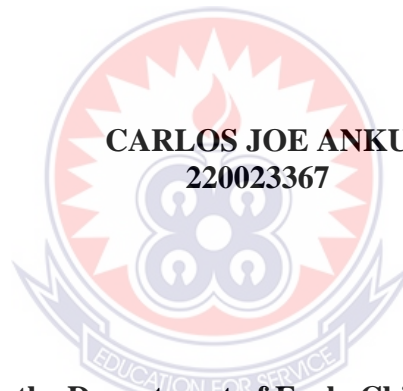
**Assessment practices of Kindergarten Teachers at Early Childhood Centres in  
Agona East District**



**2023**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS AT EARLY  
CHILDHOOD CENTRES IN AGONA EAST DISTRICT**



**CARLOS JOE ANKU**  
**220023367**

**A Thesis in the Department of Early Childhood Education,  
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Early Childhood)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**OCTOBER, 2023**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, CARLOS JOE ANKU, declare that this Thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

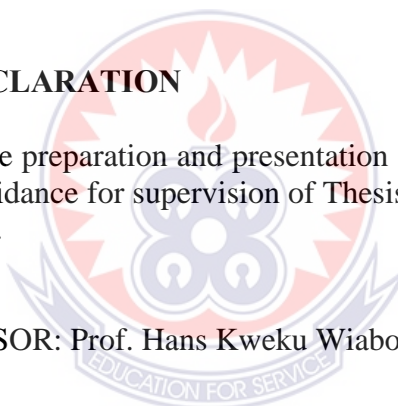
### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidance for supervision of Thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: Prof. Hans Kweku Wiabo Baffoe (PhD)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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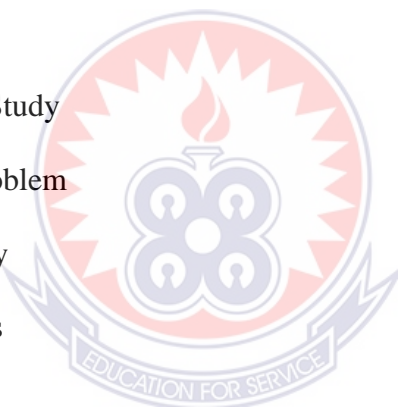
## **DEDICATION**

To the Almighty God and to all my colleagues and my Dear Nelly Afedzie Anthony



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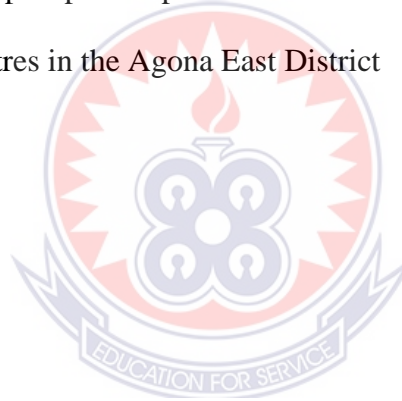


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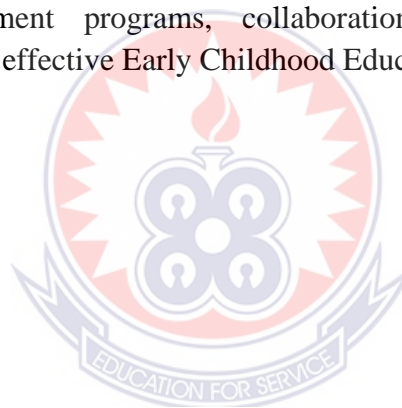
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## ABSTRACT

The study examined the assessment practices of kindergarten teachers in early childhood centres in Agona East District in the Central Region of Ghana. The study employed a concurrent embedded mixed method design within the pragmatism paradigm. Data were collected through the use of self-constructed questionnaire and observation check list. The study covered 102 KG teachers sampled from 51 ECE centres in Agona East District using census sampling and criterion purposive sampling techniques. Descriptive statistics in the form of mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the quantitative data and qualitative data was discussed thematically. The findings of the study revealed that, teachers in Agona East District use assessment in making decisions, predominantly they use play-based as assessment tool, faced with challenges of time constraint and a balance between assessment duties and instructional responsibilities as well as teacher collaboration, continuous professional development and technology integration as effective strategies to enhance assessment at the ECE centres. It was recommended that there should be diversity of assessment strategies, time management and support, continuous professional development programs, collaboration platforms and technology integration to facilitate effective Early Childhood Education assessment practices.





## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Overview**

This chapter covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and operational definitions of terms and organisation of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Early childhood education has become a vitally important field in education. Concerned parents want to know how to help their children learn and get ready for school. Working parents need quality environments for their children while they are away. Stakeholders and policy makers in education are interested in information on the well-being of young children. Also, school administrators and kindergarten teachers need to know if programmes being run in their schools are effective and whether the schools are providing young learners with the right programmes and services to cater for the broad and rapid development of young learners. All of these call for a comprehensive gathering and analysis of information through assessment (Marra, 2004; Anane, & Anhwere, 2013).

The role of assessment in the education of children cannot be underestimated and this makes Early Childhood Education assessment very crucial for educational studies. Amoah, et al. (2022) emphasized that assessment has a growing reputation among educators at all levels of education which includes early years' education. Studies conducted by Bowman, Donovan, and Burns, (2001) and Schappe, (2005) indicated that teaching and assessment in the early years are considered to have an important

place as it is in other levels of educational systems. Assessment during early years' education, therefore, must be given the most attention and consideration. Yetkin, (2017) perceived assessment as "a systematic gathering of information about students' performance that enables teachers to monitor their learning" (p.89). To Nguon, (2013), assessment refers to "the process of forming a judgment about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and, therefore, by inference a judgment about the learning that has taken place" (p. 11). McMillian, (2018) viewed assessment as the "gathering, interpreting, and using evidence of student learning to support teacher decision making in a variety of ways" (p.14). From the above definitions, assessment is an essential component of any educational process. It determines where learners are now and what level they have reached; it provides feedback on their learning; it diagnoses learners' developmental needs; and it allows for the planning of curricular, resources, and activities (Osman, and Eshun, 2021).

However, early childhood assessment is defined as the process of gathering information about children from several forms of evidence, then organising and interpreting that information (Ntuli et al. 2014). Early childhood assessment involves multiple steps of collecting data on children'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 others (Amoah et al. 2022). According to Horton and Bowman, (2002) understanding the need for early years' assessment and the way assessment practices are carried out during early years' education will improve the learning and development of young children. Amponsah, (2004) emphasized that the importance and purpose of assessment during early years' of education is to provide adults with the information they need to plan more appropriately for children's on-

going development, and therefore, it needs to involve strategies that support rather than threaten children's feelings of self-esteem.

Several studies reveal the importance of assessment, especially during the early years of education. Among these, relevance are to monitor children's learning and development progress, helps in making decisions about programmes to advance learning and development, helps in identifying children who may benefit from special support or intervention, helps in communicating a child's learning and development with families and other professionals, help in involving families in planning children's learning in a meaningful way, and helps in evaluating early childhood programmes' effectiveness (Bagnato, McLean, Macy, & Neisworth, 2011; Copple, & Bredekamp, 2006; Puckett & Black, 2000; Trevarthen, 2002).

Assessment practices in the context of this study is defined as the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deeper understanding of what learners know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences. Teachers adopt different classroom assessment practices to evaluate students' learning outcomes, and they spend much of their classroom time engaged in student assessment related activities. Teachers control classroom assessment environments by choosing how they assess their students, the frequency of these assessments, and how they give students feedback. All these are a clear indication that classroom assessments play an integral part of the teaching and learning process (Koloi-Keaikitse, 2012).

Assessment practice can be both formal and informal. Formal assessments typically involve reliable and valid standardised testing. Informal assessments, on the other hand include non-standardised testing and the performance on these assessments is

not compared with other learners. They typically include interviews with children and work sampling, and observation techniques such as running records, anecdotal records, and checklists, rating scales and event and time sampling (Asare, 2015). 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 (Linn, 2021).

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 (Asare, 2015). 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. 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. Assessment is to be considered as a process and each child should be followed in this process, not in a form of product (Subbey & Muhammed, 2021).

Despite the perceived advantages of carrying out assessment in early childhood settings, there are also challenges encountered by teachers in realizing this in practice (Navarrete, 2015). For instance, a focus on ensuring a smooth transition from early childhood education (ECE) to primary school, as well as demanding parental expectations, bring pressure to educators working in the sector (Kitano, 2011). Most

educators are challenged with disconnect between emphasising the traditional value of academic achievement in ECE and adopting the more constructivist approach that has been introduced from the West (Nah, 2014). This is also supported by Basford and Bath, (2014), who argued that there is tension between assessment processes that ensure children participation.

Teachers struggle as they try to improve their assessment practices and make assessment decisions, mainly because the whole process is characterized by the tension between teachers' beliefs about assessments and the values they bring along, as well as other external forces that they have to consider along the way (Koloji-Keaikitse, 2012). Teachers often have major constraints as they attempt to achieve their aspirations across a wide range of teaching practices. Teachers use some level of expertise to work within the challenging environment of classrooms for purposes of bringing their teaching and assessment practices in line with their values (Koloji-Keaikitse, 2012). Kindergarten teachers are faced with the challenge of negotiating their teaching and assessment practices to meet both traditional developmental and contemporary academic orientations (Gullo and Hughes, 2011). In order to teach academic skills and content in kindergarten, teachers are able to use diverse pedagogies; however, there is a general tendency toward didactic, teacher-centric, and assessment-driven instruction (Pyle & DeLuca, 2013).

Finding appropriate assessment strategies is a significant factor in ensuring the sustainability of experience-based education in school (Mulia, 2019). According to Osman, and Muhammed, (2021) several classroom assessment strategies can be used to obtain information about students' achievement categorized into traditional and alternative strategies. Traditional strategies or teacher-centred strategies consist of

tests, textbook exercises, quizzes, and examinations. In contrast, alternative strategies are mostly student-centred strategies such as group work, presentations, concept maps, journals, and portfolios. Osman and Eshun, (2021). Mulia, (2019) observed, however, that using traditional assessment models can be problematic because it is difficult to measure validly learning model as tools designed for a completely different model. Many traditional methods do not address or adequately measure the new kinds of learning that this type of education seeks to engender, such as the so-called soft skills, graduate capabilities/attributes or personal development and transformation.

Thus, Mulia (2019) stated these aspects of learning do not fit neatly into proscribed and specific learning outcomes. It is imperative to note that most teachers are challenged in assessment practices in their classrooms in different study areas. There are several studies conducted on assessment practices globally which include Pyle and Deluca's (2013) study on Assessment in the kindergarten classroom: An empirical study of teachers' assessment approach in Ohio. They sampled 3 teachers and used quantitative methodology with an in-depth interview. Their findings were that three profile descriptions were constructed based on each teacher's curricular stance and approach to assessment. Drawings on the current developmental-academic discourse for kindergarten education. Also, Subbey and Muhammed (2021) conducted a similar study on Assessment Practices: Ascertaining views and level of understanding of Kindergarten Teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. They purposively sampled 22 public inclusive schools and 120 teachers and the findings were that most of the inclusive public Kindergarten teachers in the Kumasi Metropolis have a positive view about assessment practices and confirmed to employing it in assessing children with intellectual disability in inclusive classroom. It was also evident that most inclusive

public kindergarten in the Kumasi Metropolis have knowledge about assessment practices in inclusive schools. Similarly, Osman and Eshun (2021) conducted a study on Basic School Teacher's Assessment Practices in the Sissala East Municipality, Ghana. 203 teachers were sampled for the quantitative data and 12 teachers for the qualitative data. The study employed sequential explanatory mixed method and the findings were that teachers mostly employed traditional assessment method than alternative assessment tools. Gender, age assessment training, teacher experience and class level imparted the teacher use of assessment methods. In line with these the current study delved into the assessment practice of kindergarten teachers at early childhood education centres in the Agona East District.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Assessment of students 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 (Koloji-Keaikitse, 2012). The new Standard-Based Kindergarten Curriculum focuses on a progressive achievement assessment at the early years. However, from my teaching experience, I observed that assessment in kindergarten classrooms looks like what is expected in upper-grade and junior high classrooms, with paper and pencil testing materials in the traditional assessment. Assessments in each of the schools visited differ from the other. Teachers are often not allowed to assess their own students (in order to protect the integrity of the results), and the results are sometimes used to measure teacher performance (whether or not the assessments have been designed and validated for use in high-stakes decisions). In line with this, Powell and Sigel (1991), note that traditional assessment are inappropriate for young children. They assert that "young children are not good candidates for taking traditional test. They further state that the reliability and validity



of the test results are greatly compromised by child's rapid changes in development, fluctuations in the intensity and focus of interests, and the unfamiliarity of the assessment situation" (p.194). Also, Eshun, Kankam, Bordor, and Korang, (2014) connote that most of the early childhood teachers they observed were not using assessment techniques that involved learners in the teaching and learning process. This problem has burdened kindergarten teachers by constraints of time and standards, and unable to measure learners' attitudes and values. Parents are worried and often complain, that marks given by kindergarten teachers do not reflect the real performance of the learners. Some of the complaint was that, a learner may score 100 % in pencil and paper test, but that learner is unable to read what is on the paper he scored. This situation poses problems in achieving curriculum goals and likely to limit the appropriate developmental processes of the children in early years in school (Calveric, 2010).

Investigations of teachers' assessment practices revealed that teachers were not well prepared to meet the demand of classroom assessment due to inadequate training (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003; Kankam et al. 2014; Bekoe et al. 2013). Problems were particularly prominent in performance assessment, interpretation of standardized test results, and grading procedures. When using performance measures, many teachers did not define levels of performance or plan scoring procedures before instruction, nor did they record scoring results during assessment (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003). In terms of standardized testing, teachers reported having engaged in teaching test items, increasing test time, giving hints, and changing students' answers. Teachers also had trouble interpreting standardized test scores and communicating test results (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003; Bekoe et al., 2013). Many teachers incorporated non-achievement factors such as effort, attitude, and motivation into grades and they often did not apply



weights in grading to reflect the differential importance of various assessment components (Gullo & Hughes, 2011).

In other developed nations such as USA, abuses and misuses of tests for assessing young children have been documented (Meisels, 2012; Shepard, 2011). Excessive use of standardized tests is especially inappropriate (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009). Standardised achievement tests alone cannot fulfil the major purposes of assessment in programmes for young children (Hills, 2002; Black and Wiliam, 2005). Yet, teachers in early childhood years seemed to have been overtaken by the pressures in the school system and are putting undue pressure on young learners to sit for pencil and paper tests of which some of the ‘candidates’ cannot even read what the test papers present. Kindergarten teachers and caregivers have to sometimes read examination questions to pupils, for them to give responses presumably based on what they hear from their kindergarten 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 (Anane & Anhwere, 2013).

Research has been conducted specifically on assessment in early childhood education and found that many teachers continue to find challenges with assessment practices (Subbey & Muhammed, 2021; Thompson, 2018; Subbey, and Muhammed 2022). These include teachers’ lack of an adequate knowledge base on regarding the basic testing and measurement concepts, limited teacher training in assessment and failure of teachers to employ and adhere to measurement guidelines they learned in measurement courses (Campbell & Evans, 2000; Koloi-Keaikitse, 2012). Currently, it does appear a number of preschool and kindergarten assessments, mostly teacher

made, are being used across the country (Ghana) with a variety of objectives. These assessment practices come, and often than not, as formal assessments and testing, the results of which are often used to make critical decisions such as tracking youngsters into high-and low-ability groups, (mis) labelling or retaining them, or using test results to sort children into or out of preschools (Anane, & Anhwere, 2013).

Studies have, furthermore, found while teachers have realized the shortcomings of their current assessment practices, few have found the means to grow in their assessment techniques or develop a reporting format that is satisfactory to the parties involved (Guskey, 2001; Hanzlik, 2001; Swanson, 2017). In Ghana, studies on assessment and its practices among teachers have been well researched and documented (e.g. Amoako, 2018; Bordoh et al. 2013). However, the researchers in this area focused attention on teachers' grading practices (Amedahe, 1989; Anhwere, 2009), senior high school teachers formative assessment practices and their impact on students learning (Sofu et al. 2013), among Colleges of Education tutors and the strategies they use (Bekoe et al., 2013; Eshun et al., 2014), among distance education tutors (Amoako, 2018) as well as among Kindergarten school teachers in the country (Asare, 2015) and teachers' assessment practice in inclusive early childhood centres (Subbey et al., 2022; Subbey & Muhammed, 2021). Thus, this study intends to fill the knowledge gap by focusing on assessment practices that exist in the classrooms, types of assessment practices kindergarten teachers use, challenges kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practice, and strategies to improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in Agona East District.

Teachers' assessment practices are an essential element for addressing learners' learning needs, and they can ultimately improve the educational system and

accountability. Understanding teachers' assessment practices serves as a way of finding out if teachers adopt or use quality assessment methods to meet the learning needs of students (Koloi-Keaikitse, 2012).

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate kindergarten teachers' assessment practices at the early childhood centres in Agona East District within the Central region of Ghana.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

To fulfil the purpose of the study, the following objectives guided the research process:

- 1) To find out the categories of assessment practices that exist at the early childhood centres in Agona East District.
- 2) To find out types of assessment practices kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.
- 3) To identify the challenges kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.
- 4) To determine strategies that could be used to improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

In order to fulfil the objectives of the study, the following research questions were addressed.

- 1) What categories of assessment practices exist at the early childhood centres in Agona East District?
- 2) What types of assessment practices do kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?

- 3) What challenges do kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?
- 4) What strategies that could be used to be adopted to improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study would help inform policy makers, educational leaders, curriculum planners, private childcare providers, and other stakeholders in early childhood education in making developmentally appropriate practices and pragmatic decisions to enhance kindergarten teachers' assessment practices. In addition, the findings of the study would also sensitise government, private childcare providers, and other stakeholders in developing appropriate and sustainable continuous professional development on assessment practices for kindergarten teachers.

The findings of the study would be a contribution to the literature on curriculum implementation and assessment practices on early childhood education and provide the basis for further research in the field especially in the Ghanaian context. It is hoped that the study would complement studies already undertaken in this subject matter. Besides, the study could contribute to the improvement of testing practices in the early childhood centres.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the Study**

Early childhood education is too broad an area and multifaceted in nature. However, the study was delimited to kindergarten teachers' assessment practices at the early childhood education centres in Agona East District. The study was also confined to 102 kindergarten teachers working in public kindergarten schools in Agona East District.

### **1.8 Limitation**

The researcher distributed 140 questionnaires to the respondents. Most of the respondents delayed in completing the questionnaires. This compelled the researcher to make several follow ups on the teachers who were keeping the questionnaires. Subsequently, prolonging the data collection period.

### **1.9 Operational Definition of Terms**

Within the context of this study, the following definitions will be used:

**Assessment:** The process of data collection and the gathering of evidence about a student's achievement and progress.

**Formal assessment:** Assessment that is given a numerical score or grade based on student performance, usually implicates a written document, such as a test, quiz, or paper.

**Informal assessment:** Assessment that usually occurs in a more casual manner and may include observation, inventories, checklists, rating scales, rubrics, performance and portfolio assessments, participation, peer and self-evaluation, and discussion. It does not contribute to a student's final grade.

**Observation:** A method of assessment where teachers gather data not by asking for information but by watching closely. The student performs some action and her behaviour is observed and recorded by the teacher.

**One-to-one interview:** Face to face, conversations between teachers and students where teachers have a predetermined list of questions to assess a change in student attitude or what a student has learned about in a subject.

**Test:** A question, a task, or a series of such, designed to elicit some predetermined behaviour from the person being tested.

**Assessment Practice:** Is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences.

### **1.10 Organisation of the Study**

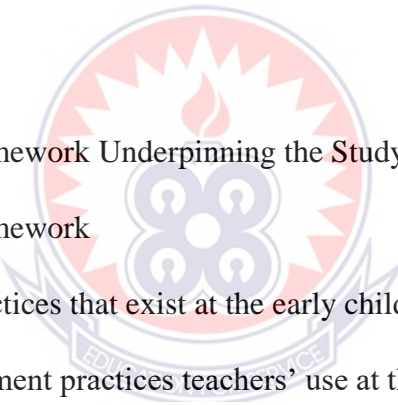
The study is organised into five chapters. The first chapter, which is the introduction, covers the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, and research questions. The rest include the significance of the study, delimitation of the study, operational definition of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter Two is the literature review. The chapter reviews existing and related literature to provide theoretical framework for the current study. Chapter Three describes the research methodology which covers the research paradigm, research approach, design of the study, study area, population of the study, sample size, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, and validation of data collection instruments, data collection procedure, methods of data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents and discusses the results of the study whilst Chapter Five provides a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. Overview

This review of literature is designed to introduce the reader to the relevant literature in the study of kindergarten teachers' assessment practices at the early childhood centres in Agona East District. According to Mugenda, and Mugenda, (2003) in literature review the researcher describes briefly, the systematic identification, location, and analysis of documents containing information related to the research problem being investigated. The sources of literature included scholarly journal articles, both published and non-published reports, books and web articles. The following major areas were covered:

- 
- Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Study
  - Conceptual Framework
  - Assessment practices that exist at the early childhood centres
  - Types of assessment practices teachers' use at the early childhood centres
  - Challenges teachers' face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres
  - Strategies to improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres

#### 2.1. Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Study

The study followed Cronbach's (1955) judgmental accuracy model and Hosoya, Blomeke, & Eid's (2021) absolute and relative judgemental accuracy theory as the theoretical basis for my research, provided that its constructions require variables that promote or hinder assessment practices. It also took into account the circumstances in Agona East District in which the research was undertaken.

Cronbachs' (1955) opined that judgmental accuracy is not a one-dimensional construct, commonly, two components are distinguished: relative and absolute accuracy.

Cronbach defined Relative accuracy as the correspondence between the relative sets of values. Thus, the judgment teachers make about their students. And the actual performance of students on a relevant standardised test. On the other hand, absolute accuracy is the difference between the level of judgement of a teacher and the level of an empirical estimate on the student side.

The absolute and relative judgemental accuracy is teachers' ability to judge the knowledge and skills of students accurately. Hosoya, Blomeke, & Eid, (2021) explained that if teachers are not able to judge students achievements and progress accurately, it is difficult for them to provide educational activities that support the learning and development of students.

It is on the above premises that the current study was grounded on this theory.

## **2.2. Conceptual Framework**

From the previous discussions on the role of assessment practices of kindergarten teachers in early childhood centres, the researcher has conceptualized that assessment practices promote holistic development among learners. As a result, the assessment practices as a component of instruction and its impact supports learners' performance and progress. In my construct, this logical structure is explained as follows:



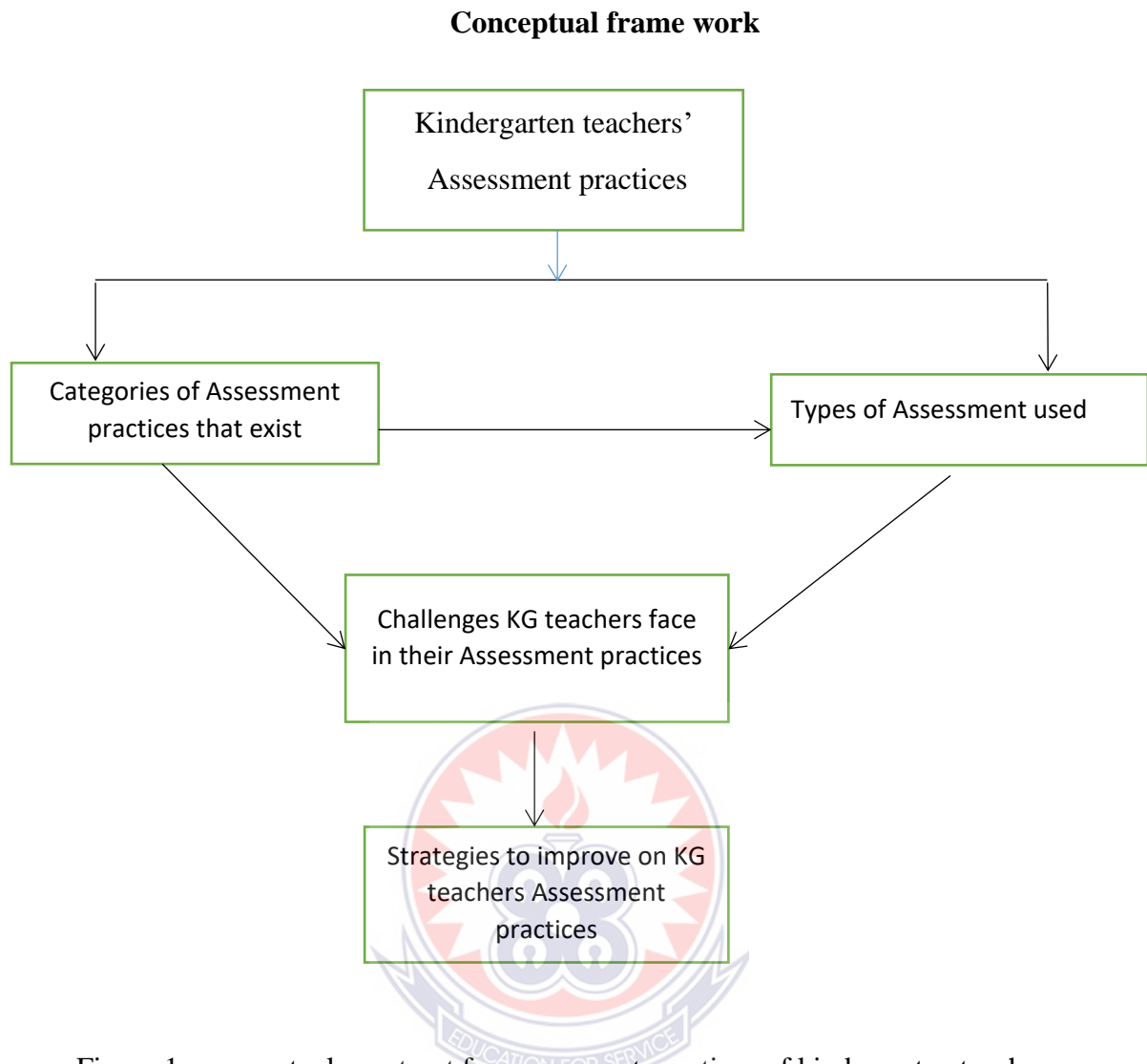


Figure 1: conceptual construct for assessment practices of kindergarten teachers

### 2.2.1. The meaning of the conceptual construct

In my conceptual construct, assessment practices aim at using various categories and types of assessment techniques to identify the strength and weaknesses of learners, as well as the challenges Kindergarten teachers face, have a positive or negative impact on learners' achievements and progress. Also, the assessment decisions kindergarten teachers make on learners' performances go a long way to inform appropriate reflective strategies to address the diverse challenges kindergarten teachers encounter during the assessment process. This, eventually, promotes physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of kindergarten learners.

This construct implies that, for a kindergarten learner to progress to the next educational level may depend on teachers' judgments on his/her performance or achievement.

### **2.3. Categories of Assessment Practices That Exist at the Early Childhood**

#### **Centres**

Assessment practices in Early Childhood Education have undergone a remarkable transition, compelling teachers to adopt procedures and approaches that assess children's development and academic learning in Early Childhood Education from a holistic point of view (Lungu, 2021). Brookhart, (2004a) published an extensive review of literature relating to classroom assessment with the aim of finding the relevant ideas associated with teachers' practices. She found three prevailing functions: instruction, management, and assessment. Brookhart found that the overlapping of the three functions has provided a rich foundation for understanding. There have been numerous studies in assessment over the last 50 years (Guskey, 1996).

Guskey identified many studies where researchers have identified many different practices and purposes in assessment and grading, but no one method or practice that could achieve all of the purposes well. Researchers and organizations have specified the content domain in which early childhood teachers need to develop assessment skills. Among the commonly discussed skills are choosing appropriate methods, developing paper and pencil test, administration and scoring tests, interpreting standardized test results, evaluating and improving assessment instruments, using assessment in decision making and grading (Subbey & Muhammed, 2021).

However, two main approaches have been used in studies investigating teacher classroom assessment practices because "teacher's classroom assessment practices are

like any observable phenomena: they can be investigated with either the teachers' self-reported practices or with independent observations of the assessment practices themselves" (Snyder, 2017, pp. 22-23). The two approaches claim to explore the actual assessment practices used in the classroom to varying levels of accuracy. Snyder, (2017) suggested that none of the two approaches would be devoid of prejudices "as the difference between observer bias and self-report inaccuracy is unknown" (p.23). The underlying principle in using self-reported surveys in studying teachers' classroom assessment practices is that those teachers who show a positive viewpoint toward a particular practice are more probable to engage in that same assessment in their classroom. This study employed a self-reported survey and structured interview to grasp teachers' classroom assessment practices. Studies that employed surveys to explore teachers' classroom assessment practices have paid attention to two domains of assessment use: the function of such practices in the classroom and the frequency they reportedly use them in their classrooms (Osman,& Eshun, 2021).

Sajjad, Nasir, Nasir, and Saif, (2019) investigated 235 secondary school grade 10 English language teachers' classroom assessment practices and the challenges they faced and opportunities they had. Results from the study revealed that teachers mostly follow traditional assessment practice such as; oral presentations, objective type test, question answering, and homework during the instruction, and disregarding alternative assessment practices such as - group projects, one-minute test, presentation, portfolio, self and, peer assessment practices. Onyefulu, (2018) conducted a study in Jamaica to determine the classroom assessment of primary (n=64) and secondary (93) school teachers. The results revealed that the teachers often used restricted essays, multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, short answers, closed-

book tests, and portfolios. Similarly, Suah, and Ong, (2012) examined the assessment practices of Malaysian in-service teachers (n=406) and found that the teacher trainees often use traditional assessment methods. Morgan, & Watson, (2002) reported that most middle and high school teachers use teacher-constructed tests to assess learners' achievement. In addition, Morgan and Watson found that most early childhood teachers view classroom assessment as an added requirement to their teaching job and not as a tool to improve their teaching.

In another study by Chapman, (2011) on the assessment practices of early childhood teachers in New Zealand outdoor education tertiary programmes, it was found that early childhood teachers were generally highly skilled outdoor education practitioners; however, there were indications that there were gaps of understanding of theoretical assessment concepts. Early childhood teachers seemed to find summative assessment challenging but they routinely used formative assessment to promote learning and worked hard at providing quality opportunities for learning. The use of assessment criteria was common practice. The role of professional judgement in assessment decisions were treated with suspicion because it was seen as too subjective. However, it became clear that professional judgement was essential aspect of their assessment practices. It is accepted that the proper use of assessment requires teachers to possess deep knowledge about the method or the procedures involved in using it (Chapman, 2011).

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), and the National Education Association (NEA) (1990) jointly indicated that, in using assessment, teachers should competently be able to choose and develop methods appropriate for assessment decisions, to administer, score, and

interpret results, and use the results when making educational decisions about students. The standards show that, teachers using assessment need to develop valid grading procedures, communicate assessment results to various audiences, and recognize unethical, illegal, and inappropriate methods and uses of assessment. Brookhart, (2011) proposed assessment knowledge and skills for teachers by emphasizing that, teachers need to understand learning in the content area they teach, be able to set and apply learning intentions consistent with content and depth of the curriculum goals, and possess the strategies for communicating the expectations of the learning intentions to students.

To Brookhart, (2011), teachers need to also understand the purposes of the assessment type, and be able to apply it, be skilful in analysing assessment methods, and be skilful in providing meaningful feedback on student work. Again, teachers need to have the ability to develop scoring schemes to quantify student performance for making informed educational decisions, be skilful in administering external assessments and interpreting their results. Furthermore, teachers need to be able to apply educational decisions made out from classroom assessments, be able to communicate assessment information to students to motivate them to learn, and understand the legal and ethical issues in the classroom assessment practices.

Koh (2011) indicated that assessment can be a powerful tool in making improvement in educational systems, and as such, Calderhead, (1996) reported that its effectiveness depends on teachers' knowledge due to the continual interaction between teachers and students'. Knowledge in assessment by teachers is very vital in education because it gives them the impetus to do what is required for students to achieve what society expects from them. According to Darling-Hammond, teacher involvement in the

design, use, and scoring of performance-based assessments has the potential to powerfully link instruction, assessment, student learning, and teacher professional development. In a policy document prepared in the United States, Darling-Hammond indicated that the use of high-quality standards and performance-based assessments over time has been shown to improve both teaching and learning. As teachers become more experts in their practice through involvement and engagement with performance-based assessments, the outcomes for students can be expected to improve. If used wisely, this approach has the potential to address multiple important education goals through one concentrated investment.

McNair, Bhargava, Adams, Edgerton, and Kypros, (2003) investigated the grading practices of 157 primary teachers to ascertain the types and frequency of assessment tools used. The results indicated that the frequency with which paper and pencil tests are used differs significantly by grade. Third- and fourth-grade teachers regularly used paper and pencil tests, but rarely by teachers in lower grades. Forms of assessment, such as checklists, portfolios and observation, were used less frequently and principally for summative purposes of external accountability and reporting. McMillan, and Nash, (2000) found that the majority of teachers employ four main tools in determining grades. They are quizzes, tests, projects or papers and homework. A few teachers make use of participation in-class work and effort in their determination of their students' grades.

In a subsequent study to replicate these findings, McMillan, Myran, and Workman, (2002) indicated that the major factors teachers' employ for grading were academic performance, effort, and improvement; and minor factors were homework, comparing students with other students, other teacher's scores and borderline. In a situation

where a student is at the borderline of getting a higher letter grade, the teachers take into consideration the student's effort, improvement, class behaviour, among others, when determining the grade. In a similar study, Alsarimi, (2000) investigated 246 third preparatory science classroom assessment practices in Oman and found that teachers reported using multiple-choice items, oral exams, completion, short answer, and extended answer formats.

Bekoe, Eshun, and Bordoh, (2013) used interviews and classroom observation to investigate the formative assessment techniques that Colleges of Education Social Studies tutors employ to assess teacher-trainees in the Central Region of Ghana. The findings revealed that the major techniques of formative assessment tutors used were diagnostic assessment, peer assessment, portfolio assessment, and self-assessment. Furthermore, the study indicated that because of the rushed nature in devising formative assessment and scoring, it resulted in a situation where there was over-concentration on the cognitive domain of learning and ignoring the psychomotor and affective domains.

Asare, (2015) employed the sequential mixed-methods design to examine the classroom practices of formative assessment with 192 private and public kindergarten teachers in six regions of Ghana. Teachers' classroom formative assessment practices were categorized into two dimensions: (a) assessment modes frequently used, and (b) reasons for using them. Interviews were used to obtain qualitative data from three participants chosen from the sample that initially completed a questionnaire. The findings indicated that the often most used mode of assessment by the teachers was the paper- and- pencil test. Also, teachers employed a particular assessment technique just to satisfy the expectations of stakeholders (i.e., educational leaders and parents) to



the neglect of the curriculum assessment recommendations. Furthermore, the findings revealed that no significant disparities existed between the private and public kindergarten teachers on nearly all the items in the two categories used in the study; however, significant differences were found on four reasons for choosing a specific kind of assessment.

Amoako, (2018) investigated the formative assessment practices among 150 Distance Education course-tutors in Ghana using a self-administered questionnaire. The findings revealed that the common formative assessment practices of on-site Distance Education course tutors in Ghana were ‘oral questioning,’ ‘tutor made test’, ‘observation, ‘peer-assessment’, and ‘student self-assessment’. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the majority of the tutors employed multiple formative assessment measures.

Oppong-Frimpong’s (2022) study compared how teachers in private and public early childhood centres employ assessment practice in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. The study adopted a participant selection model in which 232 participants from 149 schools were selected with the use of descriptive survey design. The findings revealed that both private and public early childhood teachers make use of both formative and summative assessment practices in their classroom settings. Further analysis of the data revealed that both private and public teachers in the early childhood centres employed multiple assessment tools when assessing learning outcomes among children. However, public early childhood teachers have higher level of understanding of assessment practices than teachers in the private centres. Similarly, the current study intends to use quantitative approach to find out the assessment practices that exist at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.



#### **2.4. Types of Assessment Practices Teachers' Use at the Early Childhood Centres**

Earl, (2013) believed that it is always important to know which assessment practices you are using and why you are using it so that you use that assessment wisely and well. Further, observation as a form of formative assessment and its documentation process will be discussed because it is usually an integral part of formative assessment in Early Childhood Education (Lungu, 2021). According to Mulia, (2019), there are several types of assessment, they are: 1. Informal assessment: Brown, (2003) stated that informal assessment can take a number of forms, starting with incidental, unplanned comments and response, along with coaching and other impromptu feedback to the student. Example, saying a 'good work'. A good deal of teachers informal assessment is embedded in classroom tasks designed to elicit performance without recording results and making fixed judgements about students competence. 2. Formal assessment: On the other hand, formal assessments are exercises or procedures specifically designed to tap into a storehouse of skills and knowledge. They are systematic, planned sampling techniques constructed to give teacher and student an appraisal of students' achievement. 3. Summative Assessment: Summative assessment is kind of assignment or task conducted at the end of learning process and it is used to indicate the achievement of a learner to gauge learning outcomes. Summative assessment is used for grading. Some functions of summative assessment include grading or ranking students, passing or failing students and telling students what they have achieved (Iahad, et al. 2004).

4. Formative Assessment: As mentioned in May, McAlpine & Higgison, and Brown, et al. as cited in Iahad et al. (2004), formative assessment is set at first or during learning process. On the other hand, formative assessment is assessment that promotes learning. It is designed to assist the learning process by providing feedback

to the learner, which can be used to highlight areas for further study and performance improvement. Formative assessment has a developmental purpose and designed to help learners learn more effectively by giving them feedback on their performance and on how it can be improved and/or maintained. Reflective practice by students sometimes contributes to formative assessment. Both types of assessment were investigated in some previous research study, however, as the main objective was to identify the role of feedback in the learner-centred assessment, more emphasis is given to formative assessment such as in the form of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) (Mulia, 2019). Assessment practice could be classified as assessment of learning, assessment as learning, and assessment for learning. However, this study focused on two of the stated areas that is, assessment of learning and assessment for learning.

Assessment of learning, also known as summative assessment (Earl, 2013), is the most predominant form of assessment in schools, although Neaum, (2016) was of the view that “assessment in Early Years settings needs to be predominantly formative, not summative” (p. 149). The purpose of summative assessment of learning is to measure, certify, and report the level of students’ learning, so that reasonable decisions can be made about students (Earl). It involves reporting on learning, whether in the classroom and school contexts or broader national accreditation frameworks (Crossouard, 2011). For instance, Earl, (2013) postulated that summative assessments can also be conducted on a small scale within an institution to certify learning and report to parents and children about the children’s progress in school by signalling their relative position compared to other children.

However, this kind of approach is now being discouraged in Early Childhood Education because a child's academic performance is supposed to be interpreted according to the child's own progression and not in comparison with peers. For instance, a study by Black and William, (1998), showed that when the grading function is overemphasized and the learning function under-emphasized, it can negatively affect the student because the low performing students are likely to be demotivated and lose confidence in their capacity.

Moreover, assessment of learning is typically done at the end of something (e.g., a unit, a course, a grade, a key stage, a program) and takes the form of tests or examination that include questions drawn from the material studied during that time (Earl, 2013). The results are generally expressed as marks or letter grades and summarized as averages of several marks across several content areas to report to parents and other interested parties. A practical example that can be given is a situation where children in an Early Childhood Education Centre are subjected to mid-term tests and end of term tests. Thereafter, the children's performance is graded and consequently, they are given numbers to symbolize individual position in comparison to how other children have performed after finding the class average. This kind of approach is problematic, as it does not give a true reflection of a child's academic performance considering that this kind of examination often focuses on intellectual capabilities that is not supposed to be the case in Early Childhood Education. Instead, assessments should be holistic (Lungu, 2021).

Furthermore, summative assessments have standardised methods of testing, which are extrinsically motivated, represented by marks, transcripts, and diplomas; they are built on strategies to motivate learners, provide information about learner's performance,

serve to select or group learners, and certify learning and award qualifications. Some of the examples of summative assessments are projects, portfolios, in-class examinations, state-mandated examinations, end of term or mid-term exams, end of year testing, unit or chapter-end interim assessments, final papers, cumulative portfolios, standardised tests and placement tests (Dixson, and Worrell, 2016; Trumbull and Lash, 2013; Bennett, 2011, Wortham, 2005).

Going by Dixson, and Worrell's description, summative assessments in Early Childhood Education ought to be conducted with caution. In fact, the researcher was interested in establishing whether summative assessments were being administered in Early Childhood Education Centres in Agona East District and how they were being administered. For instance, although summative assessment methods particularly standardised testing, are often considered more reliable than the alternatives summative assessment tends to be easier to interpret and are not influenced by a particular assessor or assessment procedure (Pepper, 2013). However, the focus on reliability in summative assessment has often compromised the validity of assessment in Early Childhood Education (Lau, 2015). There is need to implement summative assessment with caution in Early Childhood Education. This is because assessment in Early Childhood Education is not just about assessing for knowledge and facts but also assessing the learners' ability to reason and solve problems (Wortham, 2005; Gronlund, 2006). Teachers should provide stimulating environments that build on the child's existing knowledge, skills, values, and experiences (MESVTEE, 2013).

Perhaps, if summative assessments in Early Childhood Education could be designed using basic language, phrases, and illustrations that children are familiar with, in that case, it may help keep summative assessments at the expected level of children's

understanding for each given age-group. Most importantly, since summative assessments usually influence how children progress at different levels of development and learning, it is important to ensure that the assessment aligns with the goals and expected outcomes of instruction. For instance, in circumstances where Early Childhood Education Centres test for school readiness as a form of summative assessment, it is essential to be categorical on what skills, knowledge, and attitudes the children would be assessed on in order to align the assessment to the intended goal, which would be to gather sufficient information to determine how well a child is prepared for a specific Early Childhood Education programme (Lungu, 2021). For instance, in Zambia, the Child Assessment Tool for Zambia (CDATZ) “can be used to ascertain school readiness of a child within the five to six years range” (Curriculum Development Centre, 2014 a: 8). However, little was known about how teachers use this assessment tool in ECE Centres. Although some ECE Centres conduct readiness assessments, it has been argued that readiness assessments are misused in most societies when assessment results at ECE Centres are used to exclude children from programmes rather than to identify areas where extra support is needed (Washington State, 2008).

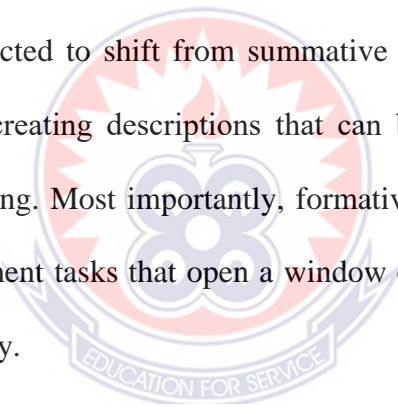
Summative assessment can also be used for diagnostic purposes. In diagnostic assessment, a thorough and comprehensive assessment of early development and learning is done for the purpose of identifying specific learning difficulties and delays, disabilities, and specific skill deficits, as well as evaluating eligibility for additional support services, infant toddler early intervention, and special education, (Washington State, 2008). Notably, diagnostic assessments are usually conducted by trained professionals using specific tests. Thus, if teachers suspect any delay, then a diagnostic assessment can be recommended for proper diagnosis. Unless a teacher

knows what is wrong with the child, it might be challenging to provide the needed support for the child to thrive developmentally and academically. Clearly, integrating children with special educational needs in the mainstream of educational institutions comes with its challenges activated by inappropriate infrastructure, unsuitable materials, and insufficiently qualified personnel (Banja, and Mandyata, 2018). Although it is not clear to what extent children in Early Childhood Education Centres may be affected, such a situation implies that children with special educational needs might not receive adequate support to make significant progress developmentally and academically. Otherwise, teachers have a huge task to ensure that individual children in their care receive the support they need to thrive despite the challenges.

Furthermore, assessment for learning is also known as formative assessment (Earl, 2013). According to Regier, (2012), formative assessment is a process that uses informal assessment strategies to gather information on student learning. Opong-Frimpong, (2022) was of the view that formative assessment is considered as formative if it shapes subsequent learning. Thus, he suggested that formative assessment is not an instrument or an event but a collection of practices with a common feature leading to some action that improves learning. Therefore, it is essential for teachers not to succumb to the weakness of formative assessment which usually encourages superficial and rote learning hence concentrating on recall or isolated details, which pupils soon forget. It also seems that when it comes to formative assessment, teachers usually fail to discuss, review, and reflect on the assessment strategies that they use with peers. As a result, there is very little reflection on what is being assessed. It is, therefore, important for teachers to be cautious when using formative assessment during the learning process so that the information

obtained is used to adjust their instruction to better satisfy learner needs (Oppong-Frimpong, 2022).

Examples of formative assessment practices include questioning and answer, discussions, drawings, observations, informal interviews, quizzes, entrance slips, presentations, concept maps, clicker questions, surveys, multiple choice questions or tests (often not included in the grading process), home work; self-evaluations; reflections on performance and curriculum-based measurements (Dixson, and Worrell, 2016; Trumbull and Lash, 2013; Regier, 2012; Bennett, 2011; Wortham, 2005). Furthermore, teachers in Early Childhood Education Centres are expected to use assessment for learning as an alternative perspective to traditional assessment in schools. They are expected to shift from summative to formative assessment, from making judgments to creating descriptions that can be used to plan for children's development and learning. Most importantly, formative assessment is relevant when teachers design assessment tasks that open a window on what the learners know and what they can do already.



To this end, Stobart, (2012) contended that, if the purpose of formative assessment is to stimulate further learning, then validity is about whether this is achieved. Therefore, teachers are expected to play a crucial role in ensuring that they set learning goals or learning targets that would enable them to give feedback about the children's performances on time (Brookhart, 2001; De Luca LaPointe-McEwan and Luhanga, 2016). When implementing assessment for learning, teachers collect a wide range of data so that they can modify the learning work for learners. This approach enables teachers to gain more insight into the learners' capabilities especially if they are engaged in tasks that require some level of explanation or those that require



responding to ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. One such task could be homework. When learners consistently do their homework, it reinforces teacher-parent partnership, classroom teaching, and learning (Cooper, 2007). Notably, for homework to be effective there is the need for parental support, understanding, and participation. The assumption is that when parents or guardians supervise their children’s homework, the children are more likely to do their homework in a meaningful manner (Cooper). However, for homework to be effective, teachers also need to be strategic on how they phrase certain questions in tasks that they design for their learners. It is important to ensure that the instructions given to children are clear, failure to which parents may find it practically difficult to assist their children with homework, hence defeating its purpose (Lungu, 2021).

Notably, scholars suggest that homework does not just bring together children, families and teachers in a common effort to improve children's learning, homework also helps children develop problem-solving skills, study skills, self-discipline, better time management and somehow increases children’s inquisitiveness (Minke, 2017). However, although teachers use homework for assessment, it was not known to what extent it was being used in Early Childhood Education Centres in Agona East District. It was also not clear whether it was yielding the desired results as a mode of formative assessment. And so this current study would solicit the views of kindergarten teacher on the use of homework as a mode of formative assessment.

## **2.5. Challenges Teachers’ Face in Implementing Assessment Practices at the Early Childhood Centres**

Many problems have bedevilled effective assessment practices over the world; with Agona East District not being an exception. These problems include (but not limited to) teachers’ inadequate knowledge regarding the basic assessment concepts (Xu and



Brown, 2016; Deluca, Lapointe-Mcewan, 2016 & Luhanga, 2016) limited teacher training in assessment and failure of teachers to employ and adhere to assessment and measurement guidelines they learned (Murukutla, 2019). At both the district and school levels, the assessment challenge is to develop the capacity of classroom early childhood teachers to evaluate learner work in shared and common ways, often using established rubrics or scoring criteria to evaluate learner products and performances. Assessments take more time to administer, frequently tied directly to specific curriculum and instructional programs or specific assignments, and require more time for scoring, reporting the results, and effectively using the results with learners than standardized tests (Subbey, Muhammed, & Gyapong, 2022).

According to Guddemi, and Case, (2004), assessments involving children in Early Childhood Education are challenging because they require one-on-one individualistic administration within short segments due to young children's short attention span. DeLuca, (2018) found that even though teachers used various assessment strategies such as direct observation and withdrawal methods of testing (in which teachers removed learners from play to engage them in assessment activities), the assessment did not produce positive results. The exercise disturbed the children. When children are distressed, it is difficult to get them to cooperate. Similarly, while teachers used video recordings to monitor children's learning and displayed play products on documentation walls and portfolios, these assessment strategies were reportedly ineffective. According to the study, teachers had difficulty combining and analysing large amounts of data collected from these applications. While one might believe that generating large amounts of data would provide adequate information on children's development and academic learning, it appears that this is not always the case if teachers are unable to interpret the tests in the shortest amount of time.

Furthermore, teachers complained that the assessments were time consuming. Given the difficulties that teachers faced, it is highly likely that the assessment results were tainted. Meanwhile, it was unclear whether kindergarten teachers in Agona East District Early Childhood Education Centres faced the same challenges, which prompted the current study. Nah and Kwak, (2011) discovered that teachers faced assessment challenges in South Korean Early Childhood Education settings. Teachers failed to implement assessment procedures in the curriculum in a systematic manner, resulting in a wide range of assessment practices. Furthermore, teachers' documentation forms varied across environments, while superficial goals and limited information about children were observed. Observations of individual children were not systematically planned, and children were not observed with multiple participants in diverse contexts, among other challenges. Furthermore, the results of observations were frequently not integrated into summary evaluations, but rather used to inform parents rather than guide learning and teaching. When such inconsistencies are observed in early childhood assessment, the assessment outcome may be compromised, thus defeating the purpose of assessment in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

Subbey et al., (2022) conducted a study to investigate the challenges kindergarten teachers face in administering assessment tools to children with intellectual disabilities in the Kumasi Metropolis. The findings revealed that most public kindergartens teachers in the Kumasi metropolis admitted not being confident enough to try out authentic assessments like portfolios, learning logs, journals, projects graphic organizers, concept mapping and rubrics on children with intellectual disabilities in inclusive public schools ( $M=3.84$ ,  $SD=.575$ ,  $KS=.620$ ) due to inadequate professional guidance. It was, therefore, recommended that teachers

should be equipped with skills and morale in administering authentic assessment practices to learners with intellectual disabilities.

Kitano, (2011) discovered in a study conducted in Japan that teachers faced challenges such as commercialism and high family expectations. The study revealed that, over time, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) institutions in Japan developed some form of commercialisation, which was thought to have jeopardized the way assessments were carried out. Most ECCE parents wanted their children to transition to primary school, even if they were not developmentally or academically ready. As a result, most teachers caved in to parental pressure. Meanwhile, in order to meet the parents' demands, assessment approaches shifted toward satisfying the parents' expectations rather than adhering to what was prescribed in the curriculum. As a result, rather than assessment promoting child development and academic learning in ECCE, children were disadvantaged. One wonders if such things happen in Agona East District Early Childhood Education Centres.

Nah, (2014) discovered that ECE teachers faced challenges due to different ECE perspectives on children and their learning in a study conducted in South Korea. In most South Korean ECE institutions, there appeared to be a conflict between two opposing viewpoints. One viewpoint, for example, emphasized academic achievement in ECE, whereas the other promoted the constructivist approach, which encouraged teachers to simply act as guides to children's learning by facilitating activities and learning opportunities without emphasizing academic achievement. This put teachers in a bind because it was difficult to implement assessment practices that were both acceptable and in the best interests of children. As a result, in such a situation,

teachers may be compelled to employ their preferred assessment strategies at the expense of children's development and academic learning.

Basford, and Bath, (2014) observed similar challenges among early childhood teachers in English settings. The Early Childhood Education policies about assessment and documentation for English ECE settings contradicted each other. The contradictory messages to practitioners affected the way assessment was conducted. It was as though practitioners were caught up in playing an assessment game. Consequently, it proved to be a huge challenge to carry out authentic assessments using numerous assessment approaches and a totally different cultural orientation. In addition, external pressure from parents and other stake holders affected how assessment was conducted. Furthermore, a study conducted in Ethiopia on practices and challenges of children's learning assessment in pre-school Centres by Melaku, and Tadesse, (2019) showed that educators acknowledged the importance of assessment for supporting children's learning and development.

However, educators held diverse perspectives and varying assessment practices of which it was reported that they experienced assessment challenges. These challenges ranged from biased assessment practices such as unhealthy comparison of children, labelling of children as failures by emphasizing on norm, focusing on few domains of children's development when conducting assessment to using the assessment results for promotion instead of the results to inform teaching and learning. Consequently, the study seemed to suggest a possible wrong interpretation of assessment results. Given the circumstances described above, the educators did not adhere to principles that guide assessment in Early Childhood Education, and it may not be surprising for anyone to doubt the authenticity of the assessment outcome. Furthermore, poor parent

communication and feedback provision were also identified as a common problem in most pre-school Centres while “lack of professional staff, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of ECCE syllabus, large class size and, lack of knowledge and skill” (Melaku, and Tadesse, 2019:68) were also cited as major challenges in pre-school Centres. Such challenges are a serious concern because they are a threat to authentic assessment in Early Childhood Education and if left unattended to, they have the potential to impact the children negatively.

Another study was conducted in England, entitled ‘Playing the Assessment Game in Early Childhood Education: Mediating professional habitus with the conditions of the field’ Basford, (2016). This study revealed that the terms and conditions on assessment in Early Childhood Education settings influenced the teachers’ assessment practices. This could be attributed to how teachers contextualised the culture and practice of their workplace in line with policy and assessment practices. The study revealed that Early Childhood Education policies about assessment and documentation for English Early Childhood Education settings seemed to contradict each other. The contradictory messages to practitioners affected the way assessment was conducted. It was observed that the teachers had limited opportunities to utilise their skills and knowledge (professionalism) in Early Childhood Education which they had acquired through their academic studies. This situation is exceptional. As opposed to typical situations where teachers exhibit limited skills and knowledge in early childhood assessment, teachers in this study were confident of their skills and knowledge and yet they were denied sufficient opportunities to utilise their professionalism. This may imply that a workplace culture, prescribed assessment practices in a workplace and the assessment policy in Early Childhood Education

have the potential to influence how assessment is conducted in Early Childhood Education Centres (Basford).

Furthermore, lack of in-service professional development has been cited as one of the factors influencing assessment practices in Early Childhood Education. Incidentally, some studies portray a blurred picture of the teachers' abilities to effectively conduct assessment without in-service professional development as was the case in studies conducted in Alberta and Washington (McDonald, 2002; Hargreaves, Earl and Schmidt, 2002; Mabry, Poole, Redmond and Schultz, 2003). In these studies, it was revealed that teachers who did not participate in the in-service professional development lacked assessment expertise to effectively conduct authentic assessment. Such a scenario was a source of concern to the researcher who was left wondering whether the status quo was the same in Early Childhood Education Centres in Agona East District.

## **2.6. Strategies to Improve Upon Assessment Practices at the Early Childhood Centres**

There are varieties of strategies used to improve upon assessment practices. Assessment strategies such as simple screening instruments and evaluation techniques prescribed in the curriculum or developed by teachers or staff members in an Early Childhood programme to track and measure the progress of children's development and academic learning (Lungu, 2021). The assessment strategies that are administered in Early Childhood Education could either be formal (summative) or informal (formative). Formal assessments are administered according to prescribed time limits, instructional and scoring procedures, and administration guidelines and are characterized by standardised tests designed to measure abilities, achievements, aptitudes, interests, attitudes, values, and personality characteristics. Examples of such

formal assessments can be categorised as; achievement tests, readiness tests, developmental screening tests, intelligence tests and diagnostic tests (Lungu, 2021).

On the other hand, informal assessments allow children to demonstrate what they know, in situations familiar and comfortable to them which permits the teachers to document the children's progress to inform teaching and decision making about their learners (MESVTE, 2013; Morrison, 2009). One advantage of "informal assessments are that they can be derived directly from the teacher's educational objectives and curriculum or from a commercial textbook curriculum" (Wortham, 2005: 90). Additional examples of informal assessment strategies among others cited by Wortham, (2005) include teacher-designed measures; pencil and paper test; performance assessment, teacher-directed interview; technology-based assessments and portfolios. These assessment strategies help to measure and track the child's progression at Early Childhood Education Centres because through the process of assessment, teachers can collect evidence of each child's learning and development, enabling them to analyse and interpret it to make appropriate intervention measures in the best interest of the child (Bagnato, Neisworth, & Pretti-Frontezak, 2010).

However, because of the critical nature and complexity of assessment in early childhood education, several national organizations convened to develop and disseminate sound practices in evaluating young children. These organizations urge the widespread use of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically-responsive measures tied to children's daily activities (Howard, 2011). Culturally, linguistically responsive assessments identify family and child-specific strengths and needs and include the perspectives of parents, educators, and cultural brokers who provide insights into vital cultural practices and expectations. Students' individual



cultural experiences should be built by administering assessments in children's native language. Connections to the child's experiences activate their prior knowledge and connect the assessment to their cultural and linguistic context (Linn, 2021).

Moreover, national organizations urge an assessment system that provides evidence of children's learning over time and reflect. These best practices provide an array of educational opportunities that foster growth for children's academic and non-academic skills (Ray & Smith, 2010). When children receive assessment and instruction more consistently, comprehensively, and with the greatest chance of success possible, they are more likely to continue growing. Kindergarten assessments should be part of a comprehensive instructional decision making process by teachers aligned to early childhood education standards. Multiple assessment formats provide the most comprehensive picture of children's competencies, yielding information on learning by measuring students' growth over time (Domínguez et al., 2010). The teacher can use the data to make instructional decisions on what to teach and how to schedule their instructional time (Gullo & Hughes, 2011; Pyle & DeLuca, 2013). Ethical principles should guide assessment practices, and these should benefit the children with whom the assessments are used (Wat, 2012).

Another strategy is teacher professional development and coaching. Kindergarten teachers should (a) have a good understanding of the diverse subject matter for the instruction of academic and non-academic skills; (b) the kindergarten curriculum and how to adapt it according to children's abilities; (c) the learners' needs; (d) understand the processes, methods, and techniques of assessment and instruction; (e) be familiar with the school, and the local education system context; and, (f) understand their strengths and weaknesses in these competencies as a teacher professional (Pianta et



al., 2014). Accomplishing these teacher competencies requires on-going professional development and coaching to establish and sustain the skills long after initial training (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Lino, 2014; Schachter, 2015; Stewart, 2014). Instructional coaching is a model for delivering professional development to improve teacher competencies. Teacher professional development and coaching are necessary to train and assist kindergarten teachers in using and interpreting assessment. Coaching provides long-term support and guidance, should feature collaborative systems change for the entire birth through age eight workforce (Connors-Tadros, 2014; Smylie, 2014).

Collaboration with preschool and including families in the assessment process is also another strategy. Collaborating with preschool programs is critical to providing a seamless transition to kindergarten and intervening early for struggling children. Racial and ethnic disparities account for much, if not most, of the achievement gap we see later in primary and secondary school (Bradbury et al., 2015; Duncan et al., 2014). If children's needs are not accurately assessed, the instruction may not overcome environmental factors contributing to ethnic, racial, linguistic, and socioeconomic disparities. Further, if there is disconnect between preschool and kindergarten programs, transition challenges may be amplified for struggling children. These challenges are mostly present for children of colour (Aikens et al., 2013; Mulligan et al., 2012; Larson et al., 2015; Reardon & Portilla, 2016). The inclusion of families in the assessment process also provides a broader picture of the child's needs. Providing support to families may prevent adverse impacts from traumatic childhood experiences (Finkelhor et al., 2011; Greeson et al., 2013; Prevention Institute, 2014; Burt et al., 2012). The need for family engagement and collaboration with preschool

programs highlight the importance of holistic early childhood education from preschool through grade three (Bethell et al., 2014).

In Malaysia, Rethza and Jamaluddin, (2010) conducted a study to examine the assessment practices by teachers. The study was entitled “Pre-school Teachers’ Assessment Practices, Knowledge, and Perceptions in selected districts”. The study revealed that teachers mostly used informal assessment strategies. Collection of samples and direct observation were used by teachers. However, the pre-school teachers often concentrated on assessment of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Teachers focused on assessment emergent writing and reading, speaking skills, number recognition, counting, fine and gross motor, and assessment of the ability in drawing and colouring. As a result, the approach disadvantaged the children because other domains were not assessed as demanded by a curriculum that sought to assess children from a holistic point of view, hence causing an assessment imbalance.

Furthermore, there was limited documentation and recording of what was being assessed by the teachers although some form of assessment recording in the checklist and report card along with scoring of the children’s written work was done. This included, giving grades to signify a child’s capability. However, the way it was done did not depict the children’s full capabilities in all developmental domains hence demonstrating the occurrence of ineffective and unjust assessment. Further, the study revealed that Preschool teachers had low training and lacked proper assessment skills. Consequently, the teachers were reported to have had constraints conducting assessment due to large class sizes, high teacher-child ratio and mixed ability classes. As a result, this affected the assessment outcome; hence the study recommended that teachers needed more training and support for them to acquire more knowledge in all

aspects of classroom assessment. Teachers needed to be trained on how to utilise appropriate assessment strategies, how to reflect on the assessment results and interpret them, and how to communicate assessment results to the parents (Rethza & Jamaluddin, 2010).

Another study was conducted in Ireland by Navarrete (2015). It focused on assessment strategies educators employed and the associated support and challenges they experienced in Early Childhood Education. In particular, the study investigated early childhood educators' perspectives and practices regarding assessment in the early years (Navarrete, 2015). The study showed that educators held diverse views and had varying approaches to assessment by using different tools and methods. Nonetheless, assessment largely served as a process of facilitating children's learning and development and a tool to produce information about children. Furthermore, children often had limited participation in the assessment process although collaboration between teachers and parents played an important role in aiding assessment practice. In addition, it was revealed that time, structural factors, qualification, and training of teachers were some of the factors that contributed to the way in which assessment was carried out. Consequently, one may not be wrong to suggest that the assessment outcome is influenced by these same factors which may be negative or positive. Otherwise, there was consensus among participants that assessment was valuable for supporting children's learning and development. Hence, the study suggested that there was need to take measures to expand educators' knowledge and expertise on the theories and practicalities of assessment so that teachers may be helped to conduct assessment with ease and confidence. This in turn may help to produce assessment results that can be relied upon (Navarrete, 2015).

In Ghana, a study entitled ‘Classroom assessment practices of Kindergarten teachers in Ghana’ (Kotor, 2015) was conducted. The study aimed at investigating kindergarten teachers’ assessment practices. In particular, the study looked at the teachers’ modes of assessment frequently used, reasons for selecting a particular mode of assessment and the impact of performance assessment on the teachers’ professional development (Kotor, 2015). Among some of the results, the study revealed that paper-and-pencil test mode of assessment was the most frequently used by the teachers. Further, teachers were not using developmentally appropriate assessment practices in assessing children’s learning outcome. This implies that the assessment results would be compromised hence defeating the purpose of assessing the learning outcome. In addition, teachers appeared to be using modes of assessment just to fulfil the expectations of parents and educational leaders in order to keep their jobs without taking into account current knowledge and theories on children’s learning, instruction and assessment practices in early childhood.

Furthermore, the study conducted in Ghana, showed that teachers did not have the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively assess the children’s learning outcomes appropriately as they seemed to be teaching and assessing children’s learning within their comfort zone by relying on traditional mode of assessment which was not in line with the curriculum. As a result, the scenario compromised assessment results and did not add value to children’s development and learning. Whilst the study showed the teachers’ frequently used modes of assessment strategies in Early Childhood Education, little was done to show the exact knowledge gap in the assessment practices by teachers in Early Childhood Education.

In South Korea, a study was conducted to investigate child-assessment practices in the context of Korean early childhood education and care settings (Nah and Kwak, 2011). The study results revealed that although some teachers adhered to the prescribed implementation of child-assessment procedures that had been put in place by the government, some ECE settings did not implement the prescribed procedures systematically. This resulted in wide variation in goals, the types of assessment conducted, and the assessment strategies used by teachers across environments. As a result, in some cases teachers' collected insufficient information regarding children hence could not inform their subsequent planning in the best interest of children's development and learning. Some of the inconsistencies were attributed to lack of guidelines for child assessment and training for teachers, lack of a common assessment framework, common tools, and recording forms. Ultimately, when teachers choose not to abide by the prescribed assessment procedures, the assessment results are often compromised.

Assessment should occur in a natural setting whenever possible. This allows students to behave naturally, without anxiety. In a classroom, setting this may be accomplished using anecdotal records taken regularly by caretakers. The records should include the date and the action observed, as well as any other necessary comments. In this way, student growth is recorded accurately. Checklists can also be used to record child development. There are lists of child development benchmarks that can be made into checklists for students. A list should be made for each student. Caretakers can then enter a date when they have observed the student meeting the benchmark. Work samples taken once a month will show many steps taken in development as students mature in fine motor skills and writing skills. Teachers need to be looking for evidence of growth and development throughout each day. They need to be hunting

for progress and documenting what they see. Photographs taken of students engaged in building block towers or puppet shows as well as other activities may also be added to give a more complete picture of student development (Van Dyk, 2000).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter covered the research paradigm, research approach and design, study area, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection instruments, pilot-testing, validity and reliability of instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis plan and ethical considerations.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

Research paradigm is the conceptual lens through which researchers study the methodology aspect of their work to decide the methods which would be employed and how the data would be analysed (Kuranchie, 2021). The research paradigm was pragmatist paradigm. The study employed pragmatist paradigm because the study sought to mix research components in a manner that worked well for the research problem. According to Creswell (2009), pragmatism emphasis is not solely on methods, but also on the research problem, its ability to employ all approaches available to understand the problem.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

Research approach is a plan and procedure for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Saunders et al, 2012). The study used mixed methods research approach. The study used mixed method approach because it led the researcher to focus on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data to better understand assessment practices of kindergarten teachers at the early childhood education centres in Agona East District. The researcher believed that by using both qualitative and quantitative data, studies related to teacher assessment practices would give insights

that neither type of analysis could provide alone. Kuranchie (2021) indicated that mixed methods research approach combines the qualitative and quantitative approaches in studying an issue, event, or a situation to provide a better understanding of the research problem(s).

### **3.3 Research Design**

Research design is described as the plan or blueprint that specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed (Kuranchie, 2021). The study employed the use of concurrent embedded design. Rehman, (2023) contended that the concurrent mixed methods research design is a type of research methodology that combines elements of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches simultaneously. In this design, researchers collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently, meaning that data from both methods are collected at roughly the same time and are given equal weight in the study. The researcher adopted the Simultaneous Data Collection thus, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently. This means that the researcher gathered data from both methods at approximately the same time, allowing for a more holistic understanding of the assessment practices of kindergarten teachers in early childhood centres in the Agona East District.

Concurrent embedded research design was appropriate for this study because the researcher believes that it is a powerful approach that allows researchers to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive and robust understanding of a research problem. It's particularly useful when researchers want to address complex questions that require multiple perspectives.



Although, concurrent embedded mixed method design is effective and useful, it is not without certain inherent weaknesses. According to Rani, (2019) during the analysis time both type of data need to be transformed in some extent, which can be difficult. Also if there are differences between two methods it may lead to error when interpreting the results.

### **3.4 Study Area**

The study was conducted at Kindergarten Schools in Agona East District. The Agona East District (AEDA) was carved out of the Agona District now the Agona West Municipality in 2008. It is one of the 22 Districts in the Central Region. It is situated in the eastern corner of the Central Region. The District has one constituency and five Town/Area Councils. These are Nsaba, Duakwa, Asafo, Kwanyako and Mankrong Area Councils. The people in the District are predominantly farmers. The population of Agona East District, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census, is 98,324 representing 3.9 percent of the region's total population. Males constitute (47,350) 48.2 percent and females represent (50,974) 51.8 percent. Less than half (43.3%) of the district's population live in urban localities and more than half (56.7%) live in rural localities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021).

### **3.5 Population of the Study**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), population in research refers to a well-defined group of people, events, or objects. The target population of the study included professional early childhood teachers at the Basic Schools in Agona East District. Records from Agona East Education Office show that there are 70 kindergarten schools and 140 kindergarten teachers. The accessible population of the study are 51 public schools comprising 102 kindergarten teachers at the early childhood education centres in Agona East District.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

Sample size refers to the number of subjects, respondents, or participants that is finally used in a research (Kuranchie, 2021). The sample size of the study was 102 public kindergarten teachers found in the 51 early childhood education centres in Agona East District. the sample size for the study was within the statistically agreed standard. According to Alreck, and Settle, (2022) most statisticians agree that the minimum sample size to get a any kind of meaningful result is 100. They further contended that if your population is less than 100 then you really need to survey all of them.

### **3.7 Sampling Technique**

Sampling is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make statistical inferences from them and estimate characteristics of the whole population (Saunders et al., 2012). The researcher used census sampling technique for the quantitative data and criterion purposive sampling technique in selecting 4 long serving and early childhood trained teachers from the 102 respondents for the observation. As Babbie (2010) advised researchers, that in adopting this sampling technique, it is appropriate to select a sample on the basis of knowledge of the population, its element, and the purpose of the study.

### **3.8 Data Collection Instrument**

A self-designed questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data and observation check list for the qualitative data for the study. The instruments used for the study were appropriate because it offered the researcher the opportunity to sample the perceptions of a larger and smaller population.

Four likert scale questionnaire was designed to aid in the data collection. The questionnaire consisted of five sections, the first section focused on the demographic

characteristics of the respondents, the second section dealt with the academic qualification or level of training, rank and number of year's served by the ECE teachers and the third section dealt with items relating assessment practice that exist in Early Childhood centres. The Fourth section focused on items relating to types of assessment practices teachers use in assessing children, the five-section dealt with items relating to the challenges Early Childhood Education teachers face in their assessment practices and finally, the sixth-section dealt with strategies to improve assessment practices.

A section of the questionnaire contained at least 7 items and at most 10 items. The nature of items on the questionnaire was the closed- ended type. This was to ensure easy and rapid response to the items and expression of oneself respectively. The questionnaire has options presented in four-point scale ranging from: strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Correspondingly, each of those options were rated the following: SA (4), A (3), D (2) and SD (1).

Four likert scale questionnaire was used because it takes less time to complete than a higher-point scale, the four likert scale produces reliable quantitative data that can be analysed with relative ease and also, the researcher wanted a specific respondent's opinion in order to ascertain the assessment practice of kindergarten teachers in Agona East District. The Questionnaire was chosen because all the respondents were literate and, therefore, could read and respond to the items. Also, questionnaires are easier to arrange and supply standardized answers to the level that all the respondents are posed with exactly the same questions.

Also, a seventeen statement observation check list with 'YES' or 'NO' response was designed for the collection of the qualitative data.

### **3.9 Pilot-Testing**

A pilot-test of the data collection instruments were carried out in five public early childhood education centres outside the study area but with similar characteristics as the selected study location. The pilot-tests allowed for corrections and modifications of the instruments where necessary and to check if the questions/statements were easy for the respondents to understand.

### **3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

#### ***3.10.1 Validity***

Validity refers to the extent to which a measure truly reflects the idea under study. The questionnaire and the observation check list were subjected to face and content validity. Face validity refers to the process of verifying if the items on an instrument measure what they purport to (Kuranchie, 2021). The questionnaire was submitted to the supervisor to check if the items appear valid to achieve the objectives of the study. While the content validity entails checking to see if the items on an instruments are enough to cover the objectives of the study. Expert judgment is used to check the adequacy of the items (Ary et al, 2010). Thus, the instrument was given to my supervisor and other experts in the subject area or topic to assist assess the content validity of the instrument used for the study.

#### ***3.10.2 Reliability***

Reliability refers to the consistency of results generated by the research instrument. The reliability of the questionnaire was checked through pilot-testing and Cronbach alpha reliability model. A reliability co-efficient ( $r$ ) of 0.70 or more is deemed as an acceptable measure of reliability because it falls within the threshold value of acceptability (Dornyei and Laguchi 2010). With the current study, an internal consistency reliability test was conducted for each research question. The first

Research Question (RQ1) had cronbach alpha of .699, the second Research Question (RQ2) had .757, the third Research Question (RQ3) had .704, and the last Research Question (RQ4) had .874. The overall Cronbach alpha coefficient of the instrument was .896. This implies that all the items on the instrument are reliable for the data collection.

### **3.10.3 Validation of Observation Checklist**

The observation checklist was given to a group of experts from Early Childhood Department through expression of their opinions. It was further given the supervisor for final validation before used. With the help of research assistant, 4 kindergarten teachers were observed for eight days. After each day's observation, our findings were compared and summarised.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedure**

Before the commencement of the data collection process, the researcher trained a research assistant to help with the data collection. We visited the early childhood education centres to have their permission in order to include their centres in the study and asked for their subsequent support when necessary. After this, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Early Childhood Education to Agona East Education Office for approval and was taken to the kindergarten teachers as prove that the research was meant for academic purpose. Details of the research were explained to the kindergarten teachers and copies of the data collection instruments were made readily available on request for scrutiny by the kindergarten teachers. Also, consent of participation forms were attached to each copy of the instrument for respondents. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were done at the same period. The entire data collection exercise covered a period of one month but the return rate

was not hundred percent. Due to the busy schedules of the kindergarten teachers, the questionnaire and the observation check list were self-administered.

### **3.12 Data Analysis Plan**

The data that was gathered from the study using the questionnaire and the observation checklist were checked for accuracy and completeness. The data were organized, analysed and discussed with respect to the research questions on which the instruments were designed for the study with descriptive statistics in the form of means and standard deviations. In essence, the questionnaires were serially numbered, coded, and scored. The Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS version 21.0) was used to facilitate a descriptive statistics data analysis in the form of mean, standard deviation and kurtosis. Also, the observation check list was discussed based on the themes.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

According to Daniel (2005), ethics have three aspects which are worth mentioning in the context of educational research. The first aspect is that the research should be without harm. The second aspect is that responses must be kept confidential. The third ethical concern about educational research is that the participants are given time to respond to the items. The researcher ensured that all these were adhered to in the current study.

Also, before the data were collected, the proposal of the research was presented and approved by the University of Education, Winneba. In addition, informed consent was gained from the teachers participating in this research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

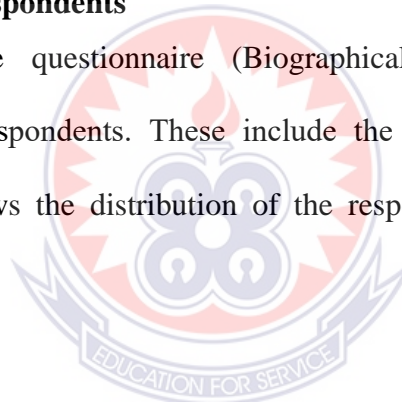
### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the questionnaire data based on the research questions of the study. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics (Means-M, Standard Deviations-Std.D, and Kurtosis). The first part of this chapter describes the demographic characteristics of the teachers selected for the study. In the second part, the research findings are presented based on the research questions formulated for the study.

#### 4.1 Description of Respondents

This section on the questionnaire (Biographical) discusses the background information of the respondents. These include the respondents' gender, age and courses. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents and their biographical information.



**Table1- Demographic Characteristics of the teachers**

Variables	Subscale	Freq.	Percent %
Gender	Male	37	36.3
	Female	65	63.7
Age Range/Years	20 – 30	21	20.6
	31 – 40	39	38.2
	41 – 50	31	30.4
	51 – 60	11	10.8
Academic Qualification	PhD	00	0.00
	Masters	09	8.82
	First Degree	39	38.2
	Diploma in Basic Education	54	52.9
Rank	Assistant Director I	47	46.1
	Assistant Director II	29	28.4
	Principal Superintendent	23	22.5
	Others	03	2.94
Duration Served	1 – 5 years	27	26.5
	6 – 10 years	51	50.0
	11 – 15 years	19	18.6
	16years and above	05	4.90

**Source: Field Data (2023)****n=102**

Table 1 presents the gender, age academic qualification rank and duration of years served of kindergarten teachers in Agona East District. Majority of the respondents were females (65) representing 63.7% of the sample size, with their ages ranging between 41 and 50 years. However, the male respondents were 37 representing 36.3%



of the sample size. Although the male form the minority, it indicates that the percentage of male kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres is gradually increasing in the district.

With regards to the age, 21 (20.6%) were between 20 and 30 years, 39 (38.6%) who happened to be the majority of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years, 31(30.4%) of the teachers also fall within 41 and 50 years. Whilst, 11 (10.8%) of the kindergarten teachers were between 51 and 60 years. This implies that the majority of the teachers are in their youthful age and the peak of their professional career.

From the table 1, none of the teachers hold Doctor of Philosophy. However, 9 (8.82) had Master of education degree. With 54 (52.9%) of the respondents hold Diploma in Basic Education. This data suggest that there is no untrained (Pupil Teacher) teaching in the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.

On the rank category, 47 teachers representing 46.1% were Assistant Director I. 29 (28.4%) were Assistant Director II. and 23 (22.5%) were Principal Superintendent with only 3 (2.94%) falling under the lower ranks. This data means that majority of the teachers have gone through the “mills” and acquired the pedagogical content knowledge in early childhood education.

The year of service of 27 of the respondents representing 26.5% range between 1 and 5 years. While, 51 (50.0%) who are the majority have served between 6 and 10 years. 19 (18.6%) have also served between 11 and 15 years with only 5 of the respondents representing 4.90% serving 16 years or more. The demographic data implies that there were few long serving (experienced) teachers in the kindergarten

level. Most of respondents were in their early years of teaching but have the prerequisite knowledge in developmentally appropriate assessment practices.

#### **4.2 Analysis of the Research Questions (Q1-Q4)**

To gather evidence for the study, the selected kindergarten teachers' in Agona East District were made to rate their responses using Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagrees. Using means, the scales were scored as (Strongly Agree =4, Agree =3, Disagree= 2 and Strongly Disagree =1). The criterion value of 2.50 was established for the scale. To obtain the criterion value (CV=2.50), the scores were added together and divided by the number scale ( $4+3+2+1= 10/4=2.50$ ). To understand the mean scores, items/statements on the factors that scored a mean of **0.00 to 2.49** were regarded as low factor contributing to the teachers' assessment practices at the early childhood centres in Agona East District. Those items/statements that scored mean from **2.50 to 4.00** was regarded as high factor contributing to the teachers' assessment practices at the early childhood centres in Agona East District. This interpretation is applicable to only the research questions 1-4.

#### **4.3 Research Question One: What assessment practices exist at the early childhood centres in Agona East District?**

The first research question of this study sought to illuminate the diverse landscape of assessment practices that exist within the early childhood centres of the Agona East District. In the realm of early childhood education, assessment is a multifaceted endeavour that encompasses a spectrum of strategies and methodologies. Understanding the breadth of assessment practices employed by educators in this district is essential for gaining insight into the ways in which young learners' progress is monitored, understood, and nurtured. By examining these assessment practices, this research aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the assessment landscape

within the Agona East District's early childhood centres. The data collected in answer to Research Question one has been presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Categories of Assessment Practices that Exist at the Early Childhood Centres in Agona East District**

Statements	M	SD	Kurtosis	MR
I use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement	3.89	.174	.688	1 <sup>st</sup>
I develop assessment that help learners to develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and critical analyst of their learning	3.71	.924	.840	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized examination	3.69	.235	.327	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I allow learners to serve as peer-assessors and self-assessors during assessment	3.62	.249	.588	4 <sup>th</sup>
I recognise unethical, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate uses of assessment information and methods.	3.58	.345	.120	5 <sup>th</sup>
I communicate classroom assessment results to learners, parents, and other teachers	3.39	.364	.473	6 <sup>th</sup>
I design a table of specifications to plan assessments before every lesson.	3.32	.501	.620	7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mean of Means/StD</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>.398</b>	<b>.522</b>	

**Source: Field Data (2023) CV=2.50 (n=102)**

The data in Table 2 show that the variables follow a normal distribution this is based on the reason that the kurtosis values were within the acceptable limit for normal distribution of  $\pm 2$  (George & Mallery, 2011) indicating that the data was normal. Table 2 gives evidence to believe that generally, most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District practice assessment. This was

evident after the teachers' responses scored an average mean ( $MM=3.60$ ) greater than the Test Value of 2.50.

Dwelling on the individual statement, it was found that most early childhood teachers in Agona East District use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=.174$ ,  $K=.688$ ,  $n=102$ ). Again, it was evident that most of the early childhood teachers in Agona East District develop assessment that help learners to develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and critical analyst of their learning ( $M=3.71$ ,  $SD=.924$ ,  $K=.840$ ,  $n=102$ ).

In another related evidence, it was revealed that most early childhood teachers in Agona East District develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized examination ( $M=3.69$ ,  $SD=.235$ ,  $K=.327$ ,  $n=102$ ). Similarly, most early childhood teachers in Agona East District indicated that they allow learners to serve as peer-assessors and self-assessors during assessment ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.249$ ,  $K=.588$ ,  $n=102$ ).

In furtherance to the above, it was evident that most early childhood teachers in Agona East District recognise unethical, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate uses of assessment information and methods ( $M=3.58$ ,  $SD=.345$ ,  $K=.120$ ,  $n=102$ ). Another way the teachers indicated to practice assessment is that they communicate classroom assessment results to learners, parents, and other teachers ( $M=3.39$ ,  $SD=.364$ ,  $K=.473$ ,  $n=102$ ). finally, they results showed that most of the early childhood teachers in Agona East District design a table of specifications to plan assessments before every lesson ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=.501$ ,  $K=.620$ ,  $n=102$ )

#### **4.4 Analysis of Qualitative Data on Research Question One: What categories of assessment practices exist at the early childhood centres in Agona East District?**

Throughout the observation period, it was observed that a concerning lack of teacher observation during free play sessions. While teachers were present in the classroom, they remained predominantly stationary at their desks, engaging in administrative tasks or conversing with other staff members. As a result, children engaged in free play without direct supervision, leading to instances of rough play and conflicts going unaddressed.

During structured activities such as circle time and art sessions, teacher observation was marginally improved but remained inconsistent. While teachers led the activities, their attention often wavered as they multitasked, dividing their focus between leading the activity and attending to other responsibilities. This resulted in missed opportunities to provide individualized support and guidance to children who required assistance. Additionally, disruptions during structured activities went unaddressed for extended periods, indicating a lack of proactive supervision from teachers.

Also, throughout the observation period, there were no instances of teachers documenting children's activities, behaviours, or achievements through the use of anecdotal notes. Despite opportunities for teachers to observe and record children's interactions, play, and learning experiences, there was a noticeable absence of written documentation. Teachers did not appear to carry notebooks or utilize digital devices for note-taking purposes during our observation. Similarly, there was a lack of evidence indicating that teachers at kindergarten documented children's experiences through the use of photos. While teachers occasionally used smartphones or cameras during special events or group activities, they did not actively capture moments of

children's learning and development throughout the regular daily routine. Opportunities to visually document children's progress, engagement, and interactions were missed, contributing to a lack of comprehensive documentation.

It was once again noted that a significant absence of documentation regarding children's interests, interactions, and developmental milestones concerning assessment. Teachers did not record observations of children's preferences, social interactions, or developmental progress. This lack of documentation hinders the assessment process and impedes the ability to tailor instruction to individual needs effectively. Without comprehensive documentation, teachers may struggle to track children's growth accurately and provide targeted support. We recommend implementing structured observation protocols and training to ensure teachers effectively document children's interests, interactions, and developmental milestones to inform assessment practices.

Also, a lack of immediate feedback provided by teachers during various activities aimed at skill development. While children engaged in tasks such as puzzles, drawing, and block building, teachers remained passive observers, offering minimal guidance or encouragement. Opportunities for teachers to scaffold children's learning and provide constructive feedback were consistently missed. Instead, children worked independently, without the benefit of timely feedback to support their skill development.

Moreover, it was observed that a lack of adaptation in teaching strategies based on on-going observations and assessment data. Kindergarten teachers adhered to a predetermined curriculum without apparent flexibility or responsiveness to individual student needs. Despite opportunities for differentiation, instructional methods

remained uniform across the classroom, regardless of variations in student readiness, learning styles, or interests.

Teachers did not appear to systematically collect and organize samples of children's artwork, writing samples, or photos of activities to document their learning and development over time. There were no visible portfolios or designated areas where such materials were stored or displayed for reference.

During the researcher's observation at kindergarten centres in the Agona East District, the focus was on assessing whether teachers referred children for further assessment or intervention if developmental concerns were identified in terms of assessment. It was noted that instances where developmental concerns were evident during various assessment activities. Some children demonstrated delays or difficulties in areas such as development, fine motor skills, and social-emotional competence. Despite these observations, there was a lack of proactive identification and documentation of developmental concerns by teachers. Teachers did not appear to have a systematic process in place for referring children for further assessment or intervention when developmental concerns were identified.

Throughout the observation period, there was limited evidence of teachers actively soliciting input from parents regarding their child's development. While some parents dropped off and picked up their children, interactions with teachers were brief and focused primarily on logistical matters such as schedules and administrative tasks. Opportunities for meaningful dialogue about children's progress, challenges, and goals were seldom initiated by teachers. Parents were not actively engaged in the assessment process, and there was little evidence of collaboration between teachers and parents in monitoring children's development. Teachers appeared to rely solely on



their own observations and assessments to inform their understanding of children's strengths and areas for improvement, without seeking input or validation from parents

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data indicated that teachers in Agona East District employed diagnostic assessment, Formative assessment and Summative assessment. This implies that the assessment practices that exist in the Agona East were Assessment as learning, assessment for learning and assessment of learning as indicated by the standard Based Curriculum.

#### **4.5 Research Question Two: What type of assessment practices do kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?**

Delving deeper into the intricacies of assessment practices, the second research question of this study focuses on discerning the specific types of assessments that kindergarten teachers utilize within the early childhood centres of the Agona East District. The array of assessment tools available to educator ranges from observations and portfolios to standardized tests and developmental checklists. Each type of assessment serves distinct purposes in gauging different aspects of a child's growth and learning. By investigating the types of assessments preferred by kindergarten teachers in this district, this research sought to uncover the nuances that inform their choices and the implications of these choices on the educational experience of young learners.

Table 3 presents results on type of assessment practices kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.



**Table 3: Types of Assessment Practices Kindergarten Teachers Use at the Early Childhood Centres in the Agona East District**

Statements	M	SD	Kurtosis	MR
<b>Formative Assessment Practices</b>				
I give feedback to learners in order to guide the learning process	3.72	.344	.232	1 <sup>st</sup>
I monitor learning progress during instruction	3.52	.813	.231	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I prepare tests for each segment of instruction e.g. unit, chapter	3.42	.313	.932	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I guide learners to take some ownership over their own learning and assessment	3.35	.141	.235	4 <sup>th</sup>
I use assessment to guide the next steps associated with teaching and learning	3.18	.189	.245	5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mean of Means/StD</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>.360</b>	<b>.375</b>	
<b>Summative Assessment Practices</b>				
I give exercise to learners at end of each lesson	3.84	.711	.235	1 <sup>st</sup>
I offer learners data utilized for determining their performance in class	3.79	.454	.245	2 <sup>nd</sup>
I report learner achievement and progress in class to parents	3.62	.433	.235	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I summarize learners' achievement for the purpose of selection and promotion.	3.48	.171	.632	4 <sup>th</sup>
I design assessment technique to determine the extent to which the instructional goals have been achieved	3.32	.343	.234	5 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mean of Means/StD</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>.422</b>	<b>.316</b>	
<b>Source: Field Data (2023) CV=2.50</b>		<b>(n=102)</b>		

The data in Table 3 show that the variables follow a normal distribution. This is based on the reason that the kurtosis values were within the acceptable limit for normal distribution of  $\pm 2$  (George & Mallery, 2011) indicating that the data was normal. Table 3 gives evidence to believe that generally, most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District use the two types of assessment (formative and summative). This was evident after the teachers' responses scored an average mean (MM=3.44 and MM=3.61) for formative and summative respectively. These values are greater than the Test Value of 2.50.

Reporting on the formative types, it was evident that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District give feedback to learners in order to guide the learning process (M=3.72, SD=.344, K=.232, n=102). Similarly, it was found that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District monitor learning progress during instruction (M=3.52, SD=.813, K=.231, n=102).

In furtherance to the above, it was found that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District prepare tests for each segment of instruction e.g. unit, chapter (M=3.42, SD=.313, K=.932, n=102). Another evidence suggests that most kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District guide learners to take some ownership over their own learning and assessment (M=3.35, SD=.141, K=.235, n=102). Finally, on the formative assessment, it was found that majority of the teachers use assessment to guide the next steps associated with teaching and learning (M=3.18, SD=.189, K=.245, n=102)

Focusing on summative assessment, it was evident from the data that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District give exercise to learners at the end of each lesson (M=3.84, SD=.711, K=.235, n=102).

Equally, it was found that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District offer learners data utilized for determining learners' performance in class ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=.454$ ,  $K=.245$ ,  $n=102$ ).

In another related results, it was found that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District report learner achievement and progress in class to parents ( $M=3.62$ ,  $SD=.433$ ,  $K=.235$ ,  $n=102$ ). In a similar way, it was found that of the teachers summarize learners' achievement for the purpose of selection and promotion ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=.171$ ,  $K=.632$ ,  $n=102$ ). Finally, it was found that most of the teachers' design assessment technique to determine the extent to which the instructional goals have been achieved ( $M=3.32$ ,  $SD=.343$ ,  $K=.234$ ,  $n=102$ ).

#### **4.6 Analysis of Qualitative data on Research Question two: What types of assessment practices do kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?**

In answering of the statement whether the kindergarten teachers assess learners before instructions, it was observed that kindergarten teachers used oral questions to find out what learners already know before new concepts are introduced. This implies that diagnostic assessment is used to link relevant previous knowledge to the new concept. To answer the question do kindergarten teachers assess learners during lessons? The team also observed that the kindergarten teachers used observation tools (check list, rating scales) cameras, phones and oral questions to find out whether learners were benefitting from the on-going instructions or provide remediation if the situation is the vice versa.

To answer the question do kindergarten teachers assess learners after lessons? It came out from the observation that the kindergarten teachers used oral questions, exercises,

homework, group work, project work and test to assess the learners after almost each lesson taught.

We further observed that the kindergarten teachers recorded unusual but unique behaviour of on an anecdotal record sheet. The anecdotal record sheet provided information about learners for decision making.

#### **4.7 Research Question Three: What challenges do kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?**

The third research question delves into the challenges encountered by kindergarten teachers in implementing assessment practices within the early childhood centres of the Agona East District. Effective assessment requires a delicate balance between pedagogical intent, practical application, and addressing the diverse needs of young learners. Yet, educators often grapple with a range of hurdles that can impact the seamless execution of assessment practices. These challenges may encompass issues related to resources, time constraints, cultural sensitivity, and aligning assessments with developmental stages. Understanding these challenges is crucial for enhancing the quality of assessment strategies and supporting educators in overcoming obstacles that may impede the holistic development of their students.

Table 4 depicts results on challenges kindergarten teachers' face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood Centres in the Agona East District.

**Table 4: Challenges Kindergarten Teachers Face in Implementing Assessment Practices at the Early Childhood Centres in the Agona East District**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>MR</b>
I am faced with limited resources to conduct the assessment in school	3.92	.120	.923	1 <sup>st</sup>
I am faced with limited time to create/develop assessment tools.	3.82	.355	.532	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Assessments take more time to administer, score, and report the results.	3.73	.129	.102	3 <sup>rd</sup>
I am not confident enough to try out authentic assessment due to inadequate professional guidance	3.60	.234	.721	4 <sup>th</sup>
Assessment tools delay the pupils in completing topics in their syllabuses	3.34	.182	.835	5 <sup>th</sup>
I am restricted to try other assessment concept mapping and rubrics due to examination policies in schools	3.32	.824	.234	6 <sup>th</sup>
I have limited knowledge on how to fuse different forms of assessment in my classroom	3.19	.582	.346	7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mean of Means/StD</b>	<b>3.56</b>	<b>.346</b>	<b>.553</b>	
<b>Source: Field Data (2023) CV=2.50</b>		<b>(n=102)</b>		

Clearly, from the kurtosis values, the results show that the variables follow a normal distribution. This is based on the reason that the kurtosis values were within the acceptable limit for normal distribution of  $\pm 2$  (George & Mallery, 2011) indicating that the data was normal. Data in Table 4 give evidence to believe that generally, most

kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District pointed out in their quest to practice assessment; they face a lot of challenges. This was evident after the teachers' responses scored an average mean (MM=3.56) greater than the Test Value of 2.50.

From the individual challenges, it was found that most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District are faced with limited resources to conduct the assessment in school (M=3.92, SD=.120, K=.923, n=102). Again, most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District are faced with limited time to create/develop assessment tools (M=3.82, SD=.355, K=.532, n=102).

Again, most of the teachers indicated that they spend more time to administer, score, and report the results (M=3.73, SD=.129, K=.102, n=102). Most of the respondents also pointed out that they are not confident enough to try out authentic assessment due to inadequate professional guidance (M=3.60, SD=.234, K=.721, n=102). Another found challenge was that assessment tools delay the pupils in completing topics in their syllabuses (M=3.34, SD=.182, K=.835, n=102).

Furthermore, the teachers pointed out that they are restricted to try other assessment concept mapping and rubrics due to examination policies in schools (M=3.32, SD=.824, K=.234, n=102). Finally, most kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District asserted that they have limited knowledge on how to fuse different forms of assessment in my classroom (M=3.19, SD=.582, K=.346, n=102).

#### **4.8 Research Question Four: What Strategies could be used to Improve upon Assessment Practices at The Early Childhood Centres in the Agona East District?**

The final research question of this study focused on exploring strategies that hold the potential to enhance assessment practices within the early childhood centers of the Agona East District. The pursuit of effective assessment is an ongoing endeavor that requires continuous refinement and adaptation. Educators and policymakers alike are invested in identifying approaches that optimize assessment processes, foster a deeper understanding of young learners, and ensure equitable educational opportunities. This research question delved into the realm of innovative strategies, drawing from educational best practices, pedagogical research, and the collective wisdom of educators. By investigating these strategies, this research aimed to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing efforts of improving assessment practices within the early childhood centers of the Agona East District.

Table 5 presents the data on strategies to help improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District.

**Table 5: Strategies to help Improve upon Assessment Practices at The Early Childhood Centres in the Agona East District**

<b>Statements</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>MR</b>
To use portfolios to collect evidence of each child learning and development	3.89	.682	.235	1 <sup>st</sup>
Collaboration between teachers and parents	3.83	.529	.855	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Teacher professional development and coaching	3.78	.835	.863	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Develop teachers monitoring skills	3.73	.755	.982	4 <sup>th</sup>
The use of paper and pencil tests and homework to consolidate or reinforce classroom teaching and learning.	3.69	.382	.736	5 <sup>th</sup>
The use of technology-based tasks	3.62	.544	.354	6 <sup>th</sup>
To use screening instruments and evaluation techniques to track and measure the progress of children's development and academic learning	3.58	.974	.121	7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Mean of Means/StD</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>.496</b>	<b>.473</b>	

**Source: Field Data (2023) CV=2.50 (n=102)**

Clearly, from the kurtosis values, the results show that the variables follow a normal distribution. This is based on the reason that the kurtosis values were within the acceptable limit for normal distribution of  $\pm 2$  (George & Mallery, 2011) indicating that the data was normal. Data in Table 5 show that generally, most of the kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres can adhere to strategies to help improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East



District. This was evident after the teachers' responses scored an average mean (MM=3.76) greater than the Test Value of 2.50.

Some of the strategies were that kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres in Agona East District should use portfolios to collect evidence of each child's learning and development (M=3.89, SD=.682, K=.235, n=102). Also, Collaboration between teachers and parents can serve as a strategy to help improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District (M=3.83, SD=.529, K=.855, n=102).

Beyond the above strategy, Teacher professional development and coaching can also serve as a strategy to help improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District (M=3.78, SD=.835, K=.863, n=102). Develop teachers monitoring skills could also be helpful (M=3.73, SD=.755, K=.982, n=102).

Another key strategy is the use of paper and pencil tests and homework to consolidate or reinforce classroom teaching and learning (M=3.69, SD=.382, K=.736, n=102). The use of technology-based tasks can also serve as a strategy to help improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District (M=3.62, SD=.544, K=.354, n=102). Finally, the use of screening instruments and evaluation techniques to track and measure the progress of children's development and academic learning (M=3.58, SD=.974, K=.121, n=102).

## **4.9 Discussion**

### ***4.9.1 Assessment Practices that Exist at the Early Childhood Centres***

The results from the study gave evidence to settle that early childhood centres in the Agona East District commonly use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement,

develop assessment that help learners to develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and critical analyst of their learning and develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized examination to capture and document the developmental progress of young children. These accrued findings lend support to several related studies.

For instance, numerous studies have underscored the paramount importance of embracing diverse assessment practices within the realm of early childhood education. Smith and Wynn's (2018) comprehensive exploration illuminated that within the landscape of early childhood centres, observation-based assessments are frequently harnessed as a powerful tool for capturing nuanced insights into the multifaceted journey of children's developmental progress. This approach resonates profoundly with the fundamental principles of early childhood education, which posit that young children's growth extends far beyond academic milestones but depends largely on social, emotional, cognitive, and physical facets.

In parallel, Johnson's (2019) brought to light the prevalence of portfolio assessments within early childhood centres. The significance of this approach lies in its capacity to serve as a dynamic canvas that artfully captures and chronicles the tapestry of children's development. By keeping collections of their work, including drawings, writings, and artifacts of play, educators craft a narrative of growth that extends beyond mere quantifiable outcomes. In the context of this study, portfolio assessment was one of the major assessment practices that was practiced by early childhood teachers within the Agona East District. This method mirrors the philosophy that early education should not solely centre on conventional academic achievements but rather embrace a holistic perspective that encompasses the blossoming of creativity, interpersonal skills, and emotional intelligence.

These emerging findings harmonize seamlessly with the foundational premise of early childhood education: that it should be guided by a profound understanding of each child's unique progress. The multifarious layers of growth and learning that weave together in a child's early years are not adequately encapsulated by traditional standardized measures. Instead, a more holistic evaluation strategy that incorporates observation-based assessments and curated portfolios serves as a more faithful representation of the intricate mosaic of a child's holistic development.

Early childhood centres in the Agona East District regularly use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement, develop assessments that support learners' development, practice, and comfort with reflection, and critical analysis of their learning, and develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized exams to capture and document the developmental progress of young children.

#### ***4.9.2 Types of Assessment Practices Kindergarten Teachers Use at the Early Childhood Centres***

The data from the analysis depicts that kindergarten teacher within the Agona East District use both summative and formative assessment. In this, it was found that Kindergarten teachers at early childhood centres predominantly employ play-based assessments, recognizing the value of observing children's interactions, problem-solving abilities, and creativity during playtime. The results from the present student corroborate with the research conducted by Brown and Lee (2020) which contributes a distinctive perspective to the spectrum of assessment practices employed by kindergarten teachers. Their study delved into the intriguing realm of play-based assessments, revealing that these educators predominantly harness the power of observation during children's playtime to glean valuable insights into their

interactions, problem-solving prowess, and boundless creativity. This methodological choice attests to the recognition of the profound significance of exploration and hands-on experiences in shaping the learning trajectory of young minds.

Brown and Lee's exploration aligns seamlessly with the paradigm that young children, in the prime of their developmental years, are most receptive to learning when immersed in engaging, interactive, and experiential contexts. The idea of play as the crucible for holistic growth is widely supported by contemporary early childhood education research (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020). Play not only nurtures cognitive and motor skills but also acts as a fertile ground for social interactions, emotional intelligence, and imaginative thinking.

Moreover, the study conducted by Garcia and Martinez (2017) lends further insight into the assessment practices employed by kindergarten teachers. Their research highlights the effective utilization of formative assessments by these educators. Formative assessments, characterized by their dynamic nature and ongoing implementation, allow teachers to continually fine-tune their instructional strategies in response to real-time observations of student progress.

These findings collectively underscore the critical importance of adapting assessment methodologies to the unique developmental needs, learning styles, and ever-evolving progress of young children. By integrating a mix of play-based and formative assessment practices, kindergarten teachers not only align with the principles of early childhood education but also maximize their potential to cultivate well-rounded learners prepared for a dynamic world.

From the analysis, informal assessment practices which are a set of evaluation methods and techniques that are less structured and more flexible than formal assessments were the assessment techniques that are been used at the kindergarten

centres within the Agona East District. They are often used early childhood educators, but can also be applied in various settings to gauge a person's knowledge, skills, or progress in a less standardized manner. Informal assessments provide valuable insights into an individual's abilities and understanding, but they are typically less systematic and may not result in standardized scores. Similar to this, kindergarten teachers at early childhood centers mostly use play-based evaluations because they understand the importance of watching children's interactions, creativity, and problem-solving skills while they are playing.

#### ***4.9.3 Challenges kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres***

The landscape of the early childhood education is not without its challenges, and a growing body of research sheds light on the common hurdles encountered by kindergarten teachers in implementing effective assessment practices. The study revealed that kindergarten teachers within the Agona East District face a series of challenges in their quest to assess their learners in the classroom. The analysis posits that limited resources, limited time, inadequate knowledge on different form of assessment among others are some key challenges to assessment in kindergarten classrooms.

This aligns with a study by Anderson et al. (2019) delved into the intricate tapestry of these challenges, revealing a prevailing obstacle that resonates with many educators: time constraints. The demands of the classroom, coupled with administrative responsibilities, often restrict teachers' capacity to conduct the in-depth observations and meticulous portfolio duration that form the foundation of holistic assessment.

These findings echo in harmony with the insights presented by Mitchell and Turner (2018) that unveil another facet of the complex challenge the delicate balancing act

between assessment duties and the core instructional responsibilities of teachers. The sheer scope of classroom management, curriculum delivery, and individualized attention required by young learners can render the task of robust assessment implementation overwhelming. This conundrum underscores the pressing need for a comprehensive support system that acknowledges the multifaceted role of kindergarten teachers and addresses the intricacies they navigate daily.

The significance of mitigating these challenges becomes all the more evident when we consider the pivotal role kindergarten teachers play in shaping the formative years of children's educational journeys. To create an environment where assessment practices can flourish harmoniously, it is imperative to establish supportive policies that recognize the value of comprehensive assessment approaches and allocate appropriate time for their execution. Equally vital are the provision of adequate resources that streamline assessment processes and the availability of targeted professional development opportunities that empower educators to navigate the assessment landscape with confidence and finesse.

Kindergarten teachers within the Agona East District encounter challenges related to time constraints and the delicate balance between assessment duties and core instructional responsibilities that impede the purpose and essence of evaluating children in early childhood settings.

#### ***4.9.4 Strategies that could be used to Improve Upon Assessment Practices at the Early Childhood Centres in the Agona East District***

From the analyzed data, effective strategies facilitate the practice of assessment in kindergarten classrooms which include continuous professional development of teachers on early childhood assessment practices, teacher collaboration with parents, as well as technology base tasks. These resonate with a study by Thompson and

Williams (2021) underscores a compelling strategy to bolster the quality of assessment practices within early childhood centers: the power of teacher collaboration and continuous professional development. This approach recognizes that the collective wisdom of educators, when pooled through collaborative efforts, can yield transformative outcomes in assessment methodologies. Through shared insights, experiences, and innovative strategies, teachers cultivate a dynamic repository of assessment techniques that align with the diverse needs of their students. This collaborative synergy not only enriches the assessment toolkit of each individual teacher but also fosters a culture of mutual support and growth within the educational community.

In line with these findings, the insights presented by Davis and White (2019) accentuate the potential of technology to revolutionize assessment practices. Integrating technological solutions into the assessment process can streamline the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. This digital paradigm not only enhances efficiency but also empowers teachers with real-time insights that enable timely interventions to support student progress. Additionally, technology facilitates seamless communication with parents, providing a transparent and holistic view of their child's development, thereby forging stronger home-school partnerships.

An optimal approach to enhancing assessment practices within early childhood centers involves a strategic amalgamation of diverse strategies. Peer mentoring programs, where experienced educators guide their colleagues, can serve as a rich source of professional growth. Workshops that delve into emerging assessment methodologies, tailored to the unique developmental stages of young learners, contribute to a deeper understanding of effective assessment techniques. Technological integration, meanwhile, infuses a data-driven dimension into



assessment practices, ensuring that insights are evidence-based and readily actionable. By embracing this multifaceted approach, early childhood centers in the Agona East District can cultivate a comprehensive and effective assessment ecosystem that nurtures the holistic development of their young learners. By proactively addressing the challenges underscored by these studies, educational institutions can pave the way for kindergarten teachers to engage more meaningfully in the art of assessment, fostering an environment where both teachers and young learners thrive.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary

The main purpose of this study was to examine the assessment practices of early childhood teachers of kindergarten teachers of early childhood centres in Agona east district. Four research questions guided the study and the questions were:

- 1) What categories of assessment practices exist at the early childhood centres in Agona East District?
- 2) What type of assessment practices do kindergarten teachers' use at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?
- 3) What challenges do kindergarten teachers face in implementing assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?
- 4) What strategies to improve upon assessment practices at the early childhood centres in the Agona East District?

For the purpose of the study to be achieved, a concurrent embedded mixed method design within the pragmatism paradigm was used. The accessible population for the study was made up of 102 kindergarten teachers from 51 early childhood centres were the respondents. A census sampling and criterion purposive techniques were used for all the 51 public early childhood centres for the study. A criterion purposive sampling technique was also used to sample 6 trained and long serving early childhood teacher for the observation. For the purpose of data collection, a self-designed questionnaire and observation check list were used as the instruments. Again, data obtained from

the questionnaire and the check list were analysed using descriptive statistical tools in the form of mean, standard deviation and kurtosis presented in tabular form. Specifically, percentages were used to analyse the demographic data of the respondents whilst mean, standard deviation and kurtosis were used to analyse the data obtained with regards to the various research questions. And the data obtained from the observation were discussed based on the themes.

## **5.2 Key Findings of the Study**

The following key findings were emerged from the study

1. Early childhood centres in the Agona East District commonly use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement, develop assessment that help learners to develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and critical analyst of their learning and develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized examination to capture and document the developmental progress of young children.
2. Kindergarten teachers at the early childhood centres predominantly employ play-based assessment which includes interview, checklist, rating scale anecdotal report, running record, work sampling, time and event sampling recognizing the value of observing children's interactions, problem-solving abilities, and creativity during playtime.
3. Kindergarten teachers encounter challenges related to time constraints and the delicate balance between assessment duties and core instructional responsibilities. Also, kindergarten teachers are challenged with inadequate knowledge in assessment of children, limited Continuous Professional

Development and failure to adhere to the assessment guidelines as required by the curriculum.

4. Effective strategies that could be used to enhance assessment practices at early childhood centres include teacher-parent collaboration in the form of Parent Teacher Association and town hall meetings to deliberate on learners' development and academic progress, continuous professional development like orientation/induction programmes workshops, seminars Professional Learning Community (PLC), the integration of technology such as the Ghana Education Service Accountability Dashboard, the mobile school report card (mSRC) and the use of dynamic repository of kindergarten assessment techniques that are aligned with the diverse needs of learners.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the realm of early childhood education within the Agona East District vividly showcases a dedicated commitment to implementing comprehensive assessment practices that are thoughtfully tailored to the developmental requirements of its young learners. The prevalence and strategic application of formative and summative assessments, and play-based assessments serve as an unequivocal testament to the pedagogical dedication in capturing a holistic, multi-faceted view of children's growth. By transcending the mere realms of academics, these assessment methods reflect a profound understanding of the intricate interplay between cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development during these formative years.

However, within this noble pursuit, the challenges that kindergarten teachers confront, such as the omnipresent constraints of time and the intricate task of maintaining equilibrium between assessment responsibilities and the core tenets of instruction,

remain palpable. It is imperative to recognize that these challenges, if unaddressed, have the potential to inhibit the seamless implementation of comprehensive assessment practices and, subsequently, the enriched developmental experiences of young learners.

Guided by the insights gleaned from the exploration of effective strategies, the Agona East District has the opportunity to chart a course of transformation. The embrace of collaborative approaches, whereby educators share their experiential wisdom and innovative techniques, can dissolve the isolation of assessment endeavors and pave the way for a collective wisdom that transcends individual limitations. The commitment to continuous professional development stands as a beacon of growth, ensuring that kindergarten teachers are equipped with the latest insights and strategies to navigate the intricate landscape of assessment. Moreover, the integration of technology, with its capacity to streamline data management, enhance analysis, and foster transparent communication with parents, can act as a catalyst for a more sophisticated and efficient assessment framework.

As the Agona East District intertwines these threads of collaboration, professional growth, and technological empowerment, it not only propels its assessment practices forward but also nurtures the holistic development and ultimate success of its young learners. Through this concerted effort, the District reaffirms its role as a steward of quality early childhood education, shaping the foundation upon which future generations will thrive and flourish.

## 5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the research questions and supporting studies, several recommendations are proposed to enhance assessment practices and promote the holistic development of young learners within the Agona East District:

1. **Diversify Assessment Strategies:** While observation-based, portfolio, and play-based assessments are valuable tools, it's essential to continuously explore and incorporate a diverse range of assessment methods. This could include peer assessments, self-assessments, and reflective journals, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of each child's progress and learning journey.
2. **Time Management and Support:** Address the challenge of time constraints by allocating dedicated time slots for assessments within the curriculum. Educational administrators can also provide administrative support to reduce teachers' administrative burdens, allowing them to focus more on meaningful observations and documentation.
3. **Professional Development Programs:** Establish regular and tailored professional development opportunities that specifically address assessment practices. These programs should equip teachers with the latest techniques, research-based insights, and effective strategies to enhance their assessment skills and ensure a comprehensive approach to child development.
4. **Collaborative Platforms:** Create formal platforms for teacher collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Encourage regular meetings, workshops, and peer mentoring sessions where educators can exchange ideas, share successful practices, and collectively tackle assessment challenges.

5. **Technology Integration:** Invest in appropriate technology solutions that facilitate efficient data collection, analysis, and communication. Develop a user-friendly platform that allows teachers to record observations, track progress, and share insights with parents, fostering a transparent and collaborative learning environment.
6. **Parent Engagement:** Foster stronger partnerships with parents by involving them in the assessment process. Regularly communicate assessment goals, methods, and outcomes to parents, empowering them to support their child's development at home.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

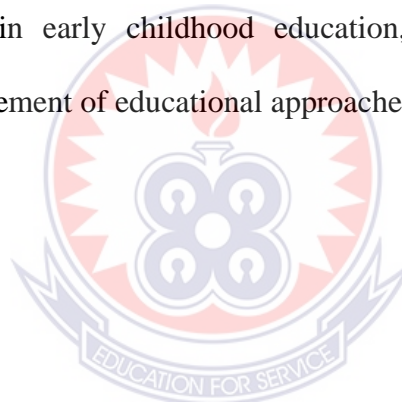
The following areas are suggested for further studies

1. **Impact of Culturally Responsive Assessment Practices:** Future studies could investigate how culturally responsive assessment practices influence the assessment process and outcomes in early childhood centres. Examine how assessments can be adapted to consider diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, and learning styles, ultimately fostering more inclusive and equitable assessment methods.
2. **Long-Term Effects of Play-Based Assessment:** Future studies could conduct longitudinal research to explore the long-term effects of play-based assessments on children's academic, social, and emotional development. This study could track students over several years to determine whether early engagement in play-based assessments correlates with positive outcomes throughout their educational journey.
3. **Teacher Training and Assessment Implementation:** Future studies could explore the correlation between the quality and frequency of teacher training

related to assessment practices and the effectiveness of assessment implementation. This study could assess whether more comprehensive professional development directly translates to improved assessment practices in early childhood centers.

4. Parental Involvement in Assessment: Future studies could investigate the impact of involving parents in the assessment process. Examine how parent-teacher collaboration in assessment practices influences children's learning outcomes, as well as the strategies that effectively engage parents and facilitate their understanding of assessment methods.

These suggested research topics can provide valuable insights into various aspects of assessment practices in early childhood education, contributing to the ongoing refinement and enhancement of educational approaches for young learners.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

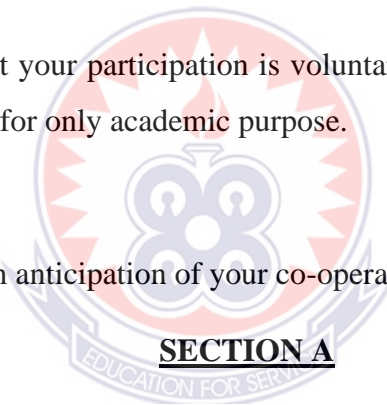
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

#### **QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS**

This questionnaire is part of a study designed to find out the kindergarten teacher's assessment practices in their ability to promote effective assessment of kindergarteners work and learning, and I would be grateful to have you participate in the study.

Please, be informed that your participation is voluntary and responses will be treated confidentially and used for only academic purpose.

Thank you very much in anticipation of your co-operation.



#### **SECTION A**

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF RESPONDENTS**

Kindly tick (✓) where appropriate

##### **1. Sex (select as appropriate)**

Male	
Female	

##### **2. Age Range (select as appropriate)**

Age Range/Years	20 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51 – 60
Select				



**3. Academic Qualification (select as appropriate)**

Academic Qualification	PhD	Masters' Degree	First Degree	Diploma in Education
Select				

**4. What is your rank in your teaching profession? (select as appropriate)**

Rank	Assistant Director I	Assistant Director II	Principal Superintendent	Others
Select				

**5. How many years have you been teaching at the kindergarten level (select as appropriate)**

Duration Served	1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16years and above
Select				

**6. Which of the following best describes your training in assessing learner's learning? (Choose ALL that apply)**

- a. I received no training in assessment, tests, and measurement of learner learning. [ ]
- b. Assessment, tests, and measurement were included in a course covering other topics.[ ]
- c. I took a course dedicated to assessment, tests, and measurement of learner learning. [ ]
- d. I received in-service/workshop training in assessment, tests, and measurement. [ ]



**SECTION B****ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THAT EXIST IN CLASSROOM**

In this section, you are required to give your ratings on the assessment practices that exist in your classroom. The scale given in Table 1 indicates the weighting assigned to the responses.

**Table 1**

4	3	2	1
<b>Always</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>

For each of the statement in Table 2, tick (✓) as appropriate to indicate the degree to which you rate the assessment practices that exist in your classroom.

**Table 2**

#	<i>Assessment Practices That Exist in Classroom</i>	4	3	2	1
1	I use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual learners and evaluating class improvement				
2	I develop assessment that help learners to develop, practice, and become comfortable with reflection, and critical analyst of their learning				
3	I develop assessments that prepare learners for standardized examination				
4	I design a table of specifications to plan assessments before every lesson.				
5	I allow students to serve as peer-assessors and self-assessors during assessment				
6	I communicate classroom assessment results to learners, parents, and other teachers				
7	I recognise unethical, illegal, or otherwise inappropriate uses of assessment information and methods.				

**SECTION C****TYPES OF ASSESSMENT PRACTICES TEACHERS USE**

In this section, you are required to give your ratings on the types of assessment practices you use in your classroom. The scale given in Table 3 indicates the weighting assigned to the responses.

**Table 3**

5	4	3	2	1
<b>Always</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>	

For each of the statement in Table 4, tick (✓) as appropriate to indicate the degree to which you rate the types of assessment practices you use in your classroom.

**Table 4**

#	<i>Types of Assessment Practices Teachers Use</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Formative Assessment Practices</b>				
8	I monitor learning progress during instruction				
9	I prepare tests for each segment of instruction e.g. unit, chapter				
10	I use assessment to guide the next steps associated with teaching and learning				
11	I give feedback to learners in order to guide the learning process				
13	I guide learners to take some ownership over their own learning and assessment				
	<b>Summative Assessment Practices</b>				
14	I design assessment technique to determine the extent to which the instructional goals have been achieved				
15	I report learner achievement and progress in class to parents				
16	I summarize learners' achievement for the purpose of selection and promotion.				
17	I offer learners data utilized for determining learners performance in class				
18	I give exercise to learners at end of each lesson				

**SECTION D****CHALLENGES TEACHERS FACE IN IMPLEMENTING ASSESSMENT****PRACTICES**

In this section, you are required to give your ratings on the challenges you face in implementing assessment practices in your classroom. The scale given in Table 5 indicates the weighting assigned to the responses.

**Table 5**

4	3	2	1
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>

For each of the statement in Table 6, tick (✓) as appropriate to indicate the degree to which you rate the challenges you face in implementing assessment practices in your classroom.

**Table 6**

#	<i>Challenges Teachers Face in Implementing Assessment Practices</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
19	I am faced with limited resources to conduct the assessment in school				
20	I am not confident enough to try out authentic assessment due to inadequate professional guidance				
21	I am faced with limited time to create/develop assessment tools.				
22	Assessments take more time to administer, score, and report the results.				
23	Assessment tools delay the pupils in completing topics in their syllabuses				
24	I am restricted to try other assessment concept mapping and rubrics due to examination policies in schools				
25	I have limited knowledge on how to fuse different forms of assessment in my classroom				

**SECTION E****STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE UPON ASSESSMENT PRACTICES**

In this section, you are required to give your ratings on the strategies to improve upon assessment practices. The scale given in Table 7 indicates the weighting assigned to the responses.

**Table 7**

4	3	2	1
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>

For each of the statement in Table 8, tick (✓) as appropriate to indicate the degree to which you rate the strategies to improve upon assessment practices.

**Table 6**

#	<i>Strategies Teachers use in Implementing Assessment Practices</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
26	Teacher professional development and coaching				
27	Develop teachers monitoring skills				
28	Collaboration between teachers and parents				
29	To use screening instruments and evaluation techniques to track and measure the progress of children's development and academic learning				
30	To use portfolios to collect evidence of each child learning and development				
31	The use of technology-based tasks				
32	The use of paper and pencil tests and homework to consolidate or reinforce classroom teaching and learning.				

**APPENDIX B****OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLISTS**

Observational checklist on ‘Assessment practices of kindergarten teachers at early childhood centres in the Agona East District

No	Statement	Yes	No
	<b>Assessment practices that exist in kindergarten centres</b>		
1	Do the teachers regularly observe children during free play, structured activities, and routines?		
2	Do the kindergarten teachers record observations using a combination of anecdotal notes, photos, and videos?		
3	Do the teachers document children's interests, interactions, and developmental milestones?		
4	Do teachers provide immediate feedback during activities to support skill development?		
5	Do teachers adjust teaching strategies based on ongoing observations and assessment data?		
6	Do teachers maintain individual portfolios for each child, including samples of artwork, writing, and photos of activities?		
7	Do teachers regularly update portfolios to document children's progress and achievements across different domains?		
8	Do teachers monitor children's progress in key developmental areas such as language, motor skills, and social-emotional development?		
9	Do teachers refer children for further assessment or intervention if developmental concerns are identified?		
10	Do teachers solicit input from parents about their observations, concerns, and goals for their child's development?		
11	Do kindergarten teachers adapt assessment practices to accommodate diverse cultural norms, values, and communication styles?		

12	Do kindergarten teachers engage parents in the assessment process by sharing observations, assessment data, and children's progress reports?		
	<b>Assessment kindergarten practices that teachers use</b>		
1	Do kindergarten teachers assess learner before the start of lessons		
2	Do kindergarten teachers assess learners during the lessons		
3	Do kindergarten teachers assess learners after lessons		
4	Do kindergarten teachers record unique behaviour of learners		
5	Do kindergarten teachers allow learners to talk about their own work		



## APPENDIC C

### REQUEST FOR DATA COLLECTION FORM



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana  
+233 (020) 2041072

[ece@uew.edu.gh](mailto:ece@uew.edu.gh)

#### INTRODUCTORY LETTER REQUEST FOR DATA COLLECTION

##### Section A

Name of Student: CARLOS JOE ANKY  
Index Number: 220023367  
Contact No.: 0500007760 Year of Entry (Admission) 2022  
Thesis Topic: ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF KINDERGARTEN  
TEACHERS AT EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES IN  
AGONA EAST DISTRICT.  
GES Address of Research Area: GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE,  
P. O. BOX NP 17, AGONA EAST - NGRANA  
Signature: [Signature] Date: 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2023  
(PLEASE ATTACH YOUR INSTRUMENTS)

##### Section B

Name of Supervisor: Prof. Hans Kwaku Wiabo Baffoe  
Contact No.: 0242127084  
Confirmation of:  
1. Readiness of Chapter 1-3: The student is ready  
for data collection.  
2. Inspection and Validation of data collection instruments:  
I have validated the data  
collection instrument.  
Signature: [Signature] Date: 08/06/2023



[www.uew.edu.gh](http://www.uew.edu.gh)



**APPENDIX D**  
**INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF EARLY**  
**CHILDHOOD**



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana  
+233 (020) 2041072

[eco@uew.edu.gh](mailto:eco@uew.edu.gh)

8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2023

The Director  
Ghana Education Service  
Agona East-Nsaba  
P.O. Box NP 17  
Agona

Dear Sir/Madam,

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

I write to introduce to you **Mr. Carlos Joe Anku** with index number: **220023367** who is a Master of Philosophy (M. Phil) student in the above department. He was admitted in 2021/2022 academic year. He is in his final year and has to embark on his thesis on the topic: "**Assessment Practices of Kindergarten Teachers at Early Childhood Centres in Agona East-Nsaba**".

**Mr. Anku** is to collect data for his thesis, and I would be most grateful if he could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Subbey'.

**Dr. Michael Subbey**  
Ag. Head of Department



[www.uew.edu.gh](http://www.uew.edu.gh)



**APPENDIX E**

**PERMISSION LETTER FROM AGONA EAST DISTRICT**

**GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE**

In case of reply the number and the Date of this letter should be quoted

My Ref:GES/CR/NSB/PG/126/06

Your Ref .....



Republic of Ghana

District Education Office  
Post Office Box NP 17  
Agona East-Nsaba

E-MAIL: [agona\\_easteduinfo@yahoo.com](mailto:agona_easteduinfo@yahoo.com)

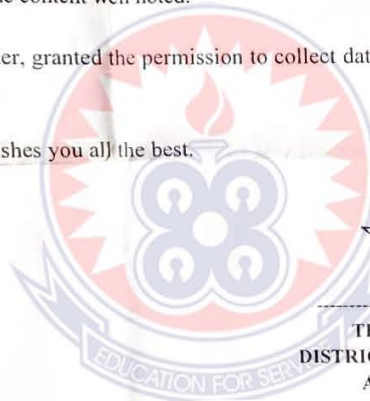
20<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.

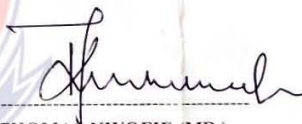
**RE: APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA ON KG  
TEACHERS FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSE**

With reference to your letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2023, in relation to the above subject, has been received and the content well noted.

You are by this letter, granted the permission to collect data on KG teachers for academic purpose.

The Directorate wishes you all the best.



  
THOMAS KWOFIE (MR.)  
DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
AGONA EAST-NSABA

MR. CARLOS JOE ANKU  
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
AGONA NSABA

Cc: File

## **APPENDIX F**

### **TEACHERS' CONSENT**

**Researcher:** Carlos Joe Anku

**Contact Details:** Tel: 0500007760

**Research Title:** Assessment Practices of Kindergarten Teachers at Early Childhood Centres in Agona East District

#### **Purpose of the Research**

As the title suggests the purpose of this research is to investigate into the assessment practices of the kindergarten teachers with regards to the implementation of the standard- based curriculum,

#### **Possible Material risk to the participants**

Participation in this study does not involve any known risk to the participants.

#### **Confidentiality of the data**

Only the researcher will know the identities of the participants. All the responses would be kept in a secured place with password, and only the researcher will get access to them. No identifying information about the participants will be used in any paper that may result from this study.

#### **Questions or Concerns**

You are welcome to contact the researcher regarding any questions or concerns you may have about this study. Should you have any concerns relating to the ethical conduct of this study, kindly feel free to contact the researcher or the Dean of Graduate School of University of Education, Winneba.

#### **Feedback to the participants**

Feedback will be provided to the participants through publications.

## Consent

By signing below you indicate that you:

1. Acknowledge that the nature of this research and your involvement in this study has been explained to you;
2. Understand that confidentiality will be maintained and no identifying information will be released;
3. Understand that you may withdraw from this study at any time, without comment or penalty: and
4. Understand that your participation in this study is voluntary.

Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

I trust that you will be able to assist me in this study and that I look forward to hear from you.

Thank you,

Signed

Carlos Joe Anku.

