

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT IN GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *In contemporary times, researchers have recognized the crucial role of classroom assessment in school effectiveness and the realization of educational goals. Therefore, this study investigated Social Studies teachers' perception of classroom assessment and the extent to which teachers' demographic variables influence their perception of classroom assessment. The study utilized the sequential explanatory mixed method design which involved collecting and analyzing of both quantitative and qualitative data. With the purposive, and convenience sampling techniques, 65 Social Studies teachers were selected for the study. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were the instruments used to collect data for the study. The quantitative data were analyzed using both descriptive (frequency, mean, standard deviation) and inferential (t-test, and ANOVA) statistics. The qualitative data were analyzed through the thematic approach. The study revealed that even though Social Studies teachers held different perceptions of classroom assessment. They perceived classroom assessment as a means of improvement of teaching and learning more than students' progress, and school accountability. Additionally, apart from gender and rank the study revealed that age, academic qualification, and years of teaching experience influenced Social Studies teachers' perception of the nature of classroom assessment. Therefore, it was recommended that the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service through the Kwahu South Education Directorate should design and implement programmes to conscientize teachers on the need to develop and practice effective classroom assessment to their teaching. Finally, Social Studies teachers should be equipped with relevant knowledge on assessment through in-service training on the nature of classroom assessment and assist them (teachers) to develop and sustain effective classroom assessment in their schools so as to realize educational goals.*

Keywords: Perception, classroom assessment, improvement of teaching and learning, students' progress, school accountability, demographic variables

INTRODUCTION

Globally, countries have not only recognized formal education as a crucial component of socio-economic development but it is also the pivot and the fulcrum around which the development and sustainability of world economies revolved (Gashaw, 2014; Okemakinde, Adewuyi & Alabi, 2013). Convinced of these critical role, societies and countries such as Ghana have formulated and implemented local and international initiatives to promote quality education in their policy agendas. Policies such as Education for All (EFA), Capitation Grant, School Feeding Programme, Free Exercise Books, Free Senior High School and Uniforms and the commitment in the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) are all clear indications of Ghana's resoluteness in providing quality education for its citizens. Accordingly, recent decades have witnessed governments, civil society groups and organizations and other stakeholders in holding the school accountable on its core mandate of facilitating students' achievements.

In this direction, classroom assessment has received attention among researchers and academics as a crucial indicator for promoting students' achievement. In pursuance of this claim, Veldhuis and Heuvel-Panhuizen (2014) posited that classroom assessment aid teachers to gather information on their students' skills and level of comprehension so as to make decisions about further instruction by tailoring their teaching to cater students' needs and create an ideal learning environment for them in their classroom. Supporting this view, researchers like Kankam, Bordoh, Eshun, Bassaw and Korang (2014) opined that classroom assessment equip teachers by furnishing them with up-to-speed information in other to inform decisions regarding students' learning abilities, their placement in appropriate levels, and their general achievement. Implicitly, it could be said that classroom assessment is a tool and an indicator for ensuring effective teaching and learning by informing the teacher on issues concerning students' progress and the degree to which teaching pedagogies are employed to realize intended learning outcomes.

As explained by Frey and Schmitt (2010), classroom assessments relates to the unending teaching process which enjoins teachers to promote students learning by ascertaining students' current level of learning and adjusting teaching to aid the students in reaching their desired learning goal. Reynolds, Livingstone and Wilson (2009) explicated that classroom assessment is systematic process for collecting information that can be used to make inferences about characteristics of people or objects. These authors, further advanced that assessment is concerned with the process of collecting information on the strength and weakness of students for the purposes of making decisions about students. Drawing on the above expositions, it could be concluded that assessment has a fundamental role in providing information to help students, teachers, administrators, and policy makers arrive at decisions. Understandably, classroom assessment is a necessary requirement for ensuring school effectiveness and students' learning outcomes.

Meanwhile, extant literature has documented that the quest to align classroom assessment with the teaching and learning process has not only heightened in its research in recent times but also as a means of ensuring that there is value-for-purpose. In line with this claim, Nga (2009) and Brown (2008) posited that the conception of most teachers of classroom assessment is driven by the fact that beliefs influence practices and outcomes. It is also understood that studying teachers' perceptions on classroom assessment is cardinal as it offers an indication of the variety of classroom assessment are being used or misuses and what should be done to improve the situation going forward. Besides, practitioners such as Lafontana and Cillessen (2002) concluded that perceptions affect behavior. Therefore, to alter and modify teachers' assessment practices it is necessary to explore teachers' understanding on the nature of classroom assessment. Since teachers are regarded as the foundation for bringing about positive change and preparing students for future endeavors. It is very essential, therefore, to understand teachers' perception of classroom assessment particularly how they assess and evaluate student learning outcomes.

In educational institutions, scholars have established that teachers have differing conceptions of classroom assessment (Rahman, 2018 & Brown, 2004). To this end, Brown (2004) unveiled four main assessment conceptions or beliefs of assessment: improvement of teaching and learning, certification of students' learning, accountability of schools and teachers, and the irrelevance or rejection of assessment. According to Brown (2004), the conception of assessment being for the improvement of teaching and learning often described as assessment for learning is delineated into two main indicators which are students' achievement or performance depicted through assessment results, and reliable and valid data necessary for accurately describing student performance. On the certification of students' learning, Brown maintained that assessment provides the justification and evaluation of the acquisition of facts and skills that a student has achieved. Therefore, issues such as graduation, grade retention, grades and tracking are all matters in respect of assessment on the basis of certification.

The third conception of assessment, accountability of teachers and schools, highlights public use of assessment data in juxtaposing school and teacher worth and value. Assessment as a means of school and teacher accountability serve as a means of carrying information to parents, and other stakeholders in education as a way of appreciating the very purpose of education by way of nurturing students capable of propelling a country's development. Finally, subscribers of assessment being irrelevant relates to teachers who considers assessment as being unrelated to the work of educators and students. In the reasoning of the subscribers of assessment being irrelevant, assessment detracts from student learning and excludes the inclusion of teachers' intuitive evaluations, student-teacher relationships, and in depth knowledge of curriculum and pedagogy (Brown, 2004). This finding suggests that different types of conceptions could exist in the minds of teachers at the same time.

In a study which sought to determine the prevailing teachers' perception on the nature of classroom assessment in Virginia, USA, Calveric (2010) discovered that improvement of the teaching and learning, students' progress and school accountability were prevalent in the minds

of teachers. Likewise, Remesal (2007) confirmed in his study that classroom assessment serves the purposes of improvement of teaching and learning process, school accountability and students' progress was realized in Spain. Contrarily, Kellaghan and Greaney (2001) maintained that the main purpose of assessment is to reach judgement about the effectiveness of a school, and to reach a judgement about the adequacy of the performance of an education system. Nevertheless, one could observe that these studies were conducted with teachers other than Social Studies teachers, and also foreign to the Ghanaian context. The question that continues to linger in the researchers' mind is "Would similar results be found with Social Studies teachers in the Junior High Schools in Ghana?"

Besides, teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment, researchers have investigated the effect of demographic variables on their perception of classroom assessment. Gashaw (2014) discovered that apart from gender, teachers' perception of classroom assessment has been linked with their age, academic qualification, experience and teaching load. Wiredu (2013) also discovered that academic qualification and years of teaching experience on teachers perception of classroom assessment. Further, Davison (2004) and Neesom (2000) have confirmed that teachers' academic qualification is one of the confounding variables that influence teachers' beliefs of classroom assessment. These results imply that age, sex, educational level and years of teaching of teachers affect their perception of the nature of classroom assessment. Contrarily, studies have also established no statistically significant difference in the perception of teacher across various demographic variables. For example, Campbell and Evans (2000) discovered no significant difference in the perception of males and female teachers and nature of classroom assessment. Similarly, gender, in-service assessment training, teaching load, teaching experience, knowledge in assessment, and attitude towards quantitative aspects of assessment collectively did not contribute significantly to teachers' practices with regard to the analysis of classroom assessments. These results partially agree with findings of past studies (Mertler, 1998; Alkharusi, Aldhafri, Alnabhani, and Alkalbani, 2012). Based on these conflicting results among scholars this study explored the extent to which teachers demographic variables affect their perception of classroom assessment.

The assessment of teachers' conception of the nature of classroom assessment is deeply rooted in the realization that all pedagogical acts, including teachers' perceptions and evaluations of student behavior and performance (i.e., assessment), are affected by the conceptions teachers have about many educational artefacts, such as teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum, and teacher efficacy (Brown, 2004). It is construed from these arguments among educationist that in the holistic assessment of school effectiveness, issues like teachers conceptions of classroom assessment should not be overlooked. This call gives credence to the concept of classroom assessment. Assessment theorists contend that classroom assessment has a positive sway on the attainment of educational goals. In fact, Stiggins (2010) advocated that teachers are required to have solid and a comprehensive understanding of classroom assessment so as to develop a balanced approach to assessment for learning and assessment of learning.

Despite the general consensus on assessment being the core to achieving educational goals and objectives, empirical studies have revealed that teachers lack a clear understanding of classroom assessment which affect the teaching and assessment of students (Rahman, 2018 & Danielson, 2010). Many studies have continually shown that teachers seem to have critical gaps in conceptions and practical application of assessment in the classroom. They are still dependent on few conventional methods of assessment and their practices are often not consistent with the recommended practices (Tadesse, 2015; Al kharusi, 2007; Alsarimi, 2000). Additionally, Wang, Kao and Lin, (2010) observed that teachers have limited knowledge on classroom assessment and usually resort to low-level thinking question that requires regurgitation of information covered in the textbook or during lecture. Again, apart from seeing classroom assessment as an added requirement to their teaching job and not as a tool to improve their teaching, teachers often times resort to one-shot assessment other than the recommended practice (Morgan & Watson, 2002).

This situation is not different in the Kwahu South District where the study was carried out. For instance, from personal observation and informal discussions, it appeared that Social Studies teachers in the public Junior High Schools do not follow the necessary assessment procedures in their classrooms as many teachers prefer to use tests and examinations to evaluate students' learning at the expense of the multiple methods of assessment that have been recommended in the syllabus which defies the very purpose of Social Studies as a subject whose aim among other things is to inculcates in pupils positive attitudes, values, essential knowledge and civic competence. This requires the use of classroom assessment techniques such as engaging students in constructive and fruitful discussions that engineers students to think rationally and creatively in other to enhance their ability to solve complex personal and societal problems. To be able to improve quality of classroom assessment, the perceptions of the Social Studies teachers should be understood and reviewed from time to time. Additionally, there seem to be no study on the perception of Social Studies teachers on classroom assessment in the study area. This study, therefore, sought to investigate specifically the:

1. perception of Junior High School Social Studies teachers in the Kwahu South District on the nature of classroom assessment.
2. Test the following hypothesis:
H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers on their perception of the nature of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.
H₀₂: Age does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.
H₀₃: Academic qualification does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.
H₀₄: Rank does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

H₀₅: Years of teaching experience does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

The findings of the study would expose public Junior High Social Studies teachers in the District to be aware of their conceptions and appreciate the benefits of classroom assessment. This consciousness will inspire their commitment to either strengthen the practice of their classroom assessment or modify it when need be. Besides, the outcome of the study would assist the Directorate of Education to proffer effective assessment practices that are required to engender the realization of educational goals. Furthermore, this study would make an original contribution to the field of classroom assessment, and serve as reference document for future research. Finally, it is anticipated that the findings of the study would be beneficial to students in their academic performance through improved classroom assessment practices.

METHODOLOGY

Grounded in the pragmatism epistemology, this study adopted the sequential explanatory mixed method design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data so as to draw from the strengths of these two approaches and to minimize their possible weaknesses (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). The rationale for the selection of this design was based on the view that it allows researchers to collect data regarding the opinion of participants on a particular topic, and it is used to investigate the existence of effects and relationships (Leacock, Warrican & Rose, 2009) which was in line with the purpose of the study. The target population included all Social Studies teachers in public Junior High Schools in the Kwahu South District while the accessible population was all Social Studies teachers in public Junior High Schools in the District who had worked in their respective schools for at least one year. This was enough for the teachers to provide the desired information as it pertains in their schools.

Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select all 65 Social Studies teachers. Sixty of them (35 males & 25 females) were involved in the quantitative analysis while the qualitative analysis consisted of 10 out of the 65 teachers. Teachers Perception of Classroom Assessment Questionnaire (TPCAQ) by Azis (2014) was adopted for the study with modifications to suit the Ghanaian context meanwhile the semi-structured interview guide was designed by the researchers. The internal consistency of the instrument was checked by Cronbach's alpha where a coefficient of greater than 0.70 is deemed acceptable (Polit & Beck, 2010). In this study, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were 0.81, 0.83 and 0.79 for improvement of teaching and learning, students' progress and school accountability which are all above the 0.70 threshold and an indication that the questionnaire was reliable. Face and content validation of the instrument was ensured as the researchers submitted the instruments to some Faculty members and a Professor in Social Studies Education to validate them. Suggestions relating to typographical mistakes, ambiguities, grammatical errors, and the expert advice were all incorporated in putting the instrument to shape before the actual data collection.

With the aid of the version 22 of the Statistical Product for Service Solutions (SPSS), descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation and inferential statistics such as the independent samples t-test, and one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for analysis after the assumptions underlying the use of inferential statistics have been checked and satisfied. The determination of the significance level of the study's hypothesis was done at <0.05 while thematic analysis approach was used to code the data and analyze the qualitative data. Precisely, verbatim quotations were used to add more realism to the data. After meeting the ethical requirements of anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and the trustworthiness criteria of conducting research, the researchers self-administered the instruments to the participants.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Perception of Junior High School Social Studies teachers on the nature of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District of Ghana

The aim of this research question was to investigate the perception of Social Studies teachers on the nature of classroom assessment in public Junior High Schools in the Kwahu South District. The questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data to determine the nature of classroom assessment that is carried out by Social Studies teachers as it pertained in their school. Three kinds of classroom assessment were identified in the study. These included assessment for students' progress, improvement of teaching and learning and assessment as school accountability. The results of the analysis have been presented in Table 1.

The data in Table 1 reveal that Social Studies teachers held all the three kinds of classroom assessment outlined in this study. Using the sub scale mean, it could be observed that Social Studies teachers rated highest on the assessment as improvement of teaching and learning ($M=4.53$, $SD=0.56$) followed by assessment as a means for students' progress ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.64$), and assessment as a means of school accountability ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.72$).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the Nature of Classroom Assessment

Nature of Classroom Assessment	Items	Response			
		A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	M (SD)
Students' Progress	1	57 (95)	3 (5)	0 (0)	4.53 (0.60)
	2	57 (95)	3 (5)	0 (0)	4.57 (0.59)
	3	51 (85)	9 (15)	0 (0)	4.32 (0.72)
	4	54 (90)	3 (5)	3 (5)	4.37 (0.86)
	5	60 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.77 (0.43)
<i>SSM (SSSD)</i>					4.51 (0.64)
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	6	60 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.62 (0.49)
	7	56 (93)	4 (7)	0 (0)	4.25 (0.57)
	8	58 (97)	2 (3)	0 (0)	4.52 (0.57)
	9	57 (95)	3 (5)	0 (0)	4.53 (0.60)
	10	57 (95)	3 (5)	0 (0)	4.72 (0.56)
<i>SSM (SSSD)</i>					4.53 (0.56)
School Accountability	11	50 (84)	8 (13)	2 (3)	4.00 (0.69)
	12	49 (82)	6 (10)	5 (8)	4.02 (0.85)
	13	56 (93)	4 (7)	7 (12)	4.05 (1.00)
	14	56 (93)	4 (7)	0 (0)	4.25 (0.57)
	15	60 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.57 (0.50)
<i>SSM (SSSD)</i>					4.18 (0.72)

In the Table, D = Disagree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, (%) = Percentage, M = Mean, SD = Std. Deviation, SSM = Sub-scale Mean, SSSD = Sub-scale Std. Deviation

Based on these results, it could be concluded that Social Studies teachers in public Junior High Schools in Kwahu South District pervasively see classroom assessment as means of improving teaching and learning while assessment as a means for school accountability was the least dominant in their perception.

Analyses of the interview data have shown that Social Studies teachers had varied opinions on their perception of classroom assessment in their schools. In responding to the perception of classroom assessment, one teacher had this to say:

As a teacher, I think the motive of conducting classroom assessment is to find out what I have achieved in terms of my objectives set for the students. It is a means of judging the progress of my students in terms of their learning. Sometimes yes, it also a way to improve teaching but I think it is primarily for knowing how-far our students have gone (Teacher #3).

The above comment has pointed out that this teacher perceived two reasons for classroom assessment. Firstly, he opined that the purpose of classroom assessment is to find out the

progress of his students. Secondly, he also conducts classroom assessment for the purposes of improving instruction. Another teacher remarked:

I conduct classroom assessment to know areas about my teaching that need modifications. It is a means for me the teacher to reflect on my methodologies in order to enhance understanding among my students. So basically that's my take on classroom assessment (Teacher #2).

This claim reveals the fact that some teachers believe that classroom assessment offers them an opportunity to improve on their teaching to enhance their students' understanding by doing a reflection of needs to be done. Another teacher indicated this:

I think apart from the fact that classroom assessment provides the teacher the chance to know what you have achieved and what needs to be done, it is also a way for authorities to know if truly you are teaching. Here at the basic school, the circuit supervisor would come and inspect the number of exercises you have conducted. If it is found otherwise, you are advised or sometimes even punished because of this every teacher must do assessment (Teacher 1#).

From this assertion, it could be seen that Social Studies teachers do classroom assessment because it is a way of ensuring that teachers are made accountable to schools. The interview data established that primarily, teachers perceived classroom assessment as a means of ensuring the progress of the students even though some saw it as a way to also improve the teaching and learning process and also make them accountable to the schools.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers on their perception of the nature of classroom assessment in Kwahu South District.

This hypothesis sought to find out the perception of male and female Social Studies teachers on the nature of classroom assessment as it pertains in their schools. The independent samples t-test was used to analyze the results as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: T-test Results for Social Studies Teachers' Sex and Perception on Nature of Classroom Assessment

Variables	Sex	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	P-Value
Students' Progress	Male	4.46	0.41	-10.062	58	0.293
	Female	4.58	0.40			
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	Male	4.52	0.33	-0.165	58	0.870
	Female	4.54	0.42			
School Accountability	Male	4.13	0.49	-0.966	58	0.338
	Female	4.25	0.47			

Significance=0.05

The independent samples t-test results in Table 2 show that there were no statistically significant differences between male and female Social Studies teachers on their perception of students' progress [$t(58) = -10.062, p=0.293$, 2-tailed], improvement of teaching and learning [$t(58) = -0.165, p=0.870$, 2-tailed], and school accountability [$t(58) = -0.966, p=0.338$, 2-tailed] at 0.05 alpha level. It could be inferred from the results that male and female Social Studies teachers did not differ significantly on their perception of classroom assessment practiced in the public basic schools in the Kwahu South District. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "There is no statistically significant difference between male and female Social Studies teachers on their perception of the nature of classroom assessment in Kwahu South District" is accepted whilst the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

H₀₂: Age does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

A one-way between groups ANOVA test was employed to provide answers to this hypothesis, and the results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation and ANOVA Results for Social Studies Teachers' Age and Perception of Classroom Assessment

Variables	Age	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students' Progress	20-30	4.60	0.34	2.003	3	0.668	4.799	0.005
	31-40	4.64	0.41	7.791	56	0.139		
	41-50	4.20	0.34	9.794	59			
	51 +	4.33	0.31					
	Total	4.51	0.41					
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	20-30	4.28	0.56	1.762	3	0.587	5.275	0.003
	31-40	4.63	0.22	6.235	56	0.111		
	41-50	4.66	0.20	7.997	59			
	51 +	4.20	0.20					
	Total	4.53	0.37					
School Accountability	20-30	4.00	0.38	2.424	3	0.808	3.990	0.012
	31-40	4.39	0.46	11.343	56	0.203		
	41-50	4.03	0.50	13.767	59			
	51 +	3.80	0.40					
	Total	4.18	0.48					

Significance=0.05

The ANOVA results in Table 3 reveal that there were statistically significant differences in their perception of students' progress [$F(3, 56) = 4.799, p=0.005$], improvement of teaching and learning [$F(3, 56) = 5.275, p=0.003$], and school accountability [$F(3, 56) = 3.990, p=0.012$] at 0.05 based on age. Therefore, this study concluded that the age of the Social Studies teachers influenced their perception of the nature of classroom assessment practiced in their schools. Hence, the null hypothesis that "Age does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District" is rejected whilst the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

A further multiple comparison using Tukey HSD test was carried out and the results are shown in Table 4. The Post hoc test using Tukey HSD test results in Table 4 revealed that for students' progress, those within the age bracket of 20-30 years (M=4.60, SD=0.34) was significantly higher than those within 41-50 years (M=4.20, SD=0.34). For improvement of teaching and learning process teachers within the age bracket of between 31-40 years (M=4.63, SD=0.22), was significantly higher than those within 20-30 years (M=4.28, SD=0.56) whilst those within the age bracket of 31-40 years had significantly higher mean (M=4.39, SD=0.46) than those between the age bracket of 20-30 years (M=4.00, SD=0.38). From these results, it could be concluded that age of Social Studies teachers accounted for differences in their perception of the nature of classroom assessment in public Junior High Schools in Kwahu South District.

Table 4 Tukey HSD Test Results for Teachers Age Perception of Classroom Assessment

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Mean	Std. Dev.
Students' Progress	20-30	31-40	-0.04	0.12	0.99	-0.35	0.28	4.60	0.34
		41-50	0.40*	0.14	0.03	0.03	0.77		
		51+	0.27	0.24	0.67	-0.36	0.89		
	31-40	20-30	0.04	0.12	0.99	-0.28	0.35	4.64	0.41
		41-50	0.48*	0.12	0.00	0.11	0.76		
		51+	0.30	0.23	0.55	-0.30	0.90		
	41-50	20-30	-0.40*	0.14	0.03	-0.77	-0.03	4.20	0.34
		31-40	-0.48*	0.12	0.00	-0.76	-0.11		
		51+	-0.13	0.24	0.94	-0.76	0.50		
	51+	20-30	-0.27	0.24	0.67	-0.89	0.36	4.33	0.31
		31-40	-0.30	0.23	0.55	-0.90	0.30		
		41-50	0.13	0.24	0.94	-0.50	0.76		
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	20-30	31-40	-0.349*	0.11	0.01	-0.63	-0.07	4.28	0.56
		41-50	-0.377*	0.12	0.02	-0.71	-0.05		
		51+	0.08	0.21	0.98	-0.48	0.64		
	31-40	20-30	0.349*	0.11	0.01	0.07	0.63	4.63	0.22
		41-50	-0.03	0.11	0.99	-0.32	0.26		
		51+	0.43	0.20	0.16	-0.11	0.97		
	41-50	20-30	0.377*	0.12	0.02	0.05	0.71	4.66	0.20
		31-40	0.03	0.11	0.99	-0.26	0.32		
		51+	0.46	0.21	0.15	-0.10	1.02		
	51+	20-30	-0.08	0.21	0.98	-0.64	0.48	4.20	0.20
		31-40	-0.43	0.20	0.16	-0.97	0.11		
		41-50	-0.46	0.21	0.15	-1.02	0.10		
School Accountability	20-30	31-40	-0.386*	0.14	0.05	-0.77	0.00	4.00	0.38
		41-50	-0.03	0.17	1.00	-0.47	0.41		
		51+	0.20	0.28	0.90	-0.55	0.95		
	31-40	20-30	0.386*	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.77	4.39	0.46
		41-50	0.36	0.15	0.08	-0.03	0.75		
		51+	0.59	0.27	0.15	-0.14	1.31		
	41-50	20-30	0.03	0.17	1.00	-0.41	0.47	4.03	0.50
		31-40	-0.36	0.15	0.08	-0.75	0.03		
		51+	0.23	0.29	0.85	-0.53	0.99		
	51+	20-30	-0.20	0.28	0.90	-0.95	0.55	3.80	0.40
		31-40	-0.59	0.27	0.15	-1.31	0.14		
		41-50	-0.23	0.29	0.85	-0.99	0.53		

Significance=0.05

H₀₃: Academic qualification does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

In testing this hypothesis, one-way between groups ANOVA test was employed and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and ANOVA Results for Social Studies Teachers' Academic Qualification and Perception of Classroom Assessment

Variables	Academic Qualification	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students' Progress	Diploma	4.53	0.45	0.493	2	0.246	1.509	0.230
	Bachelor's Degree	4.45	0.39	9.301	57	0.163		
	Masters	4.70	0.39	9.794	59			
	Total	4.51	0.41					
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	Diploma	4.18	0.53	1.770	2	0.885	8.101	0.001
	Bachelor's Degree	4.62	0.29	6.227	57	0.109		
	Masters	4.60	0.00	7.997	59			
	Total	4.53	0.37					
School Accountability	Diploma	3.98	0.38	2.736	2	1.368	7.069	0.002
	Bachelor's Degree	4.12	0.45	11.031	57	0.194		
	Masters	4.64	0.48	13.767	59			
	Total	4.18	0.48					

Significance=0.05

The ANOVA results in Table 5 reveal that apart from students' progress where there was no statistically significant differences [F (2, 57) = 1.509, p=0.230], there were statistically significant differences for improvement of teaching and learning process [F (2, 57) = 8.101, p=0.001], and school accountability [F (2, 57) = 7.069, p=0.002] at 0.05 based on academic qualification. Therefore, this study concluded that the academic qualifications of Social Studies teachers influence their perception of the nature of classroom assessment carried out in their schools. Hence, the null hypothesis that "Academic qualification does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District" is rejected whilst the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

In checking where the differences came about, a further multiple comparison using Tukey HSD test was carried out and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Tukey HSD Test Results for Teachers Academic Qualification Perception of Classroom Assessment

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		Mean	Std. Dev.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	Diploma	Degree	-.432*	0.11	0.00	-0.70	-0.17	4.18	0.53
		Masters	-.417*	0.14	0.01	-0.76	-0.08		
	Degree	Diploma	.432*	0.11	0.00	0.17	0.70	4.62	0.29
		Masters	0.02	0.12	0.99	-0.27	0.30		
	Masters	Diploma	.417*	0.14	0.01	0.08	0.76	4.60	0.00
		Degree	-0.02	0.12	0.99	-0.30	0.27		
School Accountability	Diploma	Degree	-0.13	0.15	0.64	-0.48	0.22	3.98	0.38
		Masters	-.657*	0.19	0.00	-1.11	-0.20		
	Degree	Diploma	0.13	0.15	0.64	-0.22	0.48	4.12	0.45
		Masters	-.524*	0.16	0.00	-0.90	-0.15		
	Masters	Diploma	.657*	0.19	0.00	0.20	1.11	4.64	0.48
		Degree	.524*	0.16	0.00	0.15	0.90		

Significance=0.05

From the data in Table 6, it could be seen that for improvement of teaching and learning those with bachelors' degree (M=4.62, SD=0.29) was significantly higher than those with masters (M=4.60, SD=0.00) and diploma (M=4.18, SD=0.53) while in school accountability, Social Studies teachers with masters (M=4.64, SD=0.48) was significantly higher than those with bachelor's degree (M=4.12, SD=0.45) and diploma (M=3.98, SD=0.38). Based on the results, it could be concluded that Social Studies teachers' academic qualification influence their perception on improvement of teaching and learning and school accountability but not students' progress.

H₀₄: Rank does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

The one-way between groups ANOVA was employed to answer this hypothesis. Rank was classified into five: Assistant Director 1, Assistant Director 2, Principal Superintendent, Senior Superintendent 1 and Senior Superintendent 2, and the results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7 Mean, Standard Deviation and ANOVA Results for Social Studies Teachers' Rank and Perception of Classroom Assessment

Variables	Rank	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students' Progress	AD 1	4.27	0.31	0.693	4	0.173	1.047	0.391
	AD 2	4.28	0.11	9.101	55	0.165		
	PS	4.55	0.44	9.794	59			
	SS 1	4.43	0.21					
	SS 2	4.66	0.51					
	Total	4.51	0.41					
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	AD 1	4.80	0.35	1.133	4	0.283	2.270	0.073
	AD 2	4.48	0.27	6.864	55	0.125		
	PS	4.59	0.29	7.997	59			
	SS 1	4.29	0.30					
	SS 2	4.31	0.67					
	Total	4.53	0.37					
School Accountability	AD 1	4.20	0.00	0.413	4	0.103	0.426	0.789
	AD 2	3.96	0.36	13.354	55	0.243		
	PS	4.22	0.57	13.767	59			
	SS 1	4.23	0.21					
	SS 2	4.06	0.25					
	Total	4.18	0.48					

Significance=0.05

Note: AD 1=Assistant Director 1, AD 2 =Assistant Director 2, PS = Principal Superintendent, SS 1: Senior Superintendent 1, SS 2: Senior Superintendent 2

The ANOVA results in Table 7 indicate that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean scores for students' progress [$F(4, 55) = 1.047, p > 0.05$], improvement of teaching and learning [$F(4, 55) = 2.270, p > 0.05$], and school accountability [$F(4, 55) = 0.426, p > 0.05$] due to rank. These results pointed out that rank was not a determinant of nature of classroom assessment in the school. Hence, the null hypothesis that "Rank does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District" was accepted while the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

H_{05} : Years of teaching experience does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District.

The aim of this hypothesis was to find out whether the perception of Social Studies teachers on the nature of classroom assessment was similar based on their years of teaching experience. In this study, years of teaching experience was grouped as 1-5, 6-10, 11-15 and 16-20 years. The One Way between groups ANOVA was employed to provide answers to this hypothesis, and the results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviation and ANOVA Results for Social Studies Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience and Perception of Classroom Assessment

Variables	Experience	Mean	Std. Dev.	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students' Progress	1-5	4.51	0.42	4.441	3	1.480	15.485	0.000
	6-10	4.78	0.29	5.353	56	0.096		
	11-15	4.37	0.24	9.794	59			
	16-20	4.02	0.24					
	Total	4.51	0.41					
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	1-5	4.27	0.58	1.220	3	0.407	3.359	0.025
	6-10	4.61	0.22	6.778	56	0.121		
	11-15	4.63	0.24	7.997	59			
	16-20	4.56	0.26					
	Total	4.53	0.37					
School Accountability	1-5	3.99	0.39	2.384	3	0.795	3.910	0.013
	6-10	4.42	0.50	11.383	56	0.203		
	11-15	4.08	0.43	13.767	59			
	16-20	3.98	0.44					
	Total	4.18	0.48					

Significance=0.05

The ANOVA results in Table 8 show that there were statistically significant differences in the choice of students' progress [$F(3, 56) = 15.485, p = 0.000$], improvement of teaching and learning [$F(3, 56) = 3.359, p = 0.025$], as well as the school accountability [$F(3, 56) = 3.910, p = 0.013$] at 0.05 alpha level across years of teaching experience. Thus, there is evidence to conclude that years of teaching experience did matter in the perception of Social Studies teachers on the classroom assessment utilized in the public Junior High Schools in the Kwahu South District. Therefore, the null hypothesis that "years of teaching experience does not account for differences among Social Studies teachers on their perception of classroom assessment in the Kwahu South District" was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

However, post hoc analyses where the Tukey HSD test was used (Table 9) reveal that for classroom assessment as students' progress, teachers who had 6-10 years' experience rated significantly higher ($M = 4.78, SD = 0.29$) than those within 1-5 years ($M = 4.51, SD = 0.42$) experience whereas teachers with 11-15 years ranked significantly higher ($M = 4.37, SD = 0.24$) than those within 16-20 years of experience ($M = 4.02, SD = 0.24$). For assessment as an improvement of the teaching and learning, teachers who had 11-15 years' experience recorded significantly higher ($M = 4.63, SD = 0.24$) than those with 6-10 years ($M = 4.61, SD = 0.22$) whereas teachers with 16-20 years was significantly higher ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.26$) than those with 1-5 years ($M = 4.27, SD = 0.58$) experience. Significant differences were discovered among the years of teaching experience and school accountability. Indeed, Social Studies teachers with 6-10 years experience had significantly higher ($M = 4.42, SD = 0.50$) and were more aligned to classroom assessment as school accountability than those with 1-5 years ($M = 3.99, SD = 0.39$) experiences.

Table 9: Tukey HSD Test Results for Teachers Years of Experience Perception of Classroom Assessment

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval			
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Mean	Std. Dev.
Students' Progress	1-5	6-10	-0.27	0.10	0.06	-0.54	0.01	4.51	0.42
		11-15	0.15	0.12	0.62	-0.17	0.47		
		16-20	0.49429*	0.13	0.00	0.16	0.83		
	6-10	1-5	0.27	0.10	0.06	-0.01	0.54	4.78	0.29
		11-15	0.41667*	0.11	0.00	0.13	0.71		
		16-20	0.76333*	0.12	0.00	0.46	1.07		
	11-15	1-5	-0.15	0.12	0.62	-0.47	0.17	4.37	0.24
		6-10	-0.41667*	0.11	0.00	-0.71	-0.13		
		16-20	0.35	0.13	0.05	0.00	0.70		
	16-20	1-5	-0.49429*	0.13	0.00	-0.83	-0.16	4.02	0.24
		6-10	-0.76333*	0.12	0.00	-1.07	-0.46		
		11-15	-0.35	0.13	0.05	-0.70	0.00		
Improvement of Teaching and Learning	1-5	6-10	-0.337*	0.12	0.03	-0.65	-0.03	4.27	0.58
		11-15	-0.36	0.14	0.05	-0.72	0.00		
		16-20	-0.29	0.14	0.20	-0.67	0.09		
	6-10	1-5	0.337*	0.12	0.03	0.03	0.65	4.61	0.22
		11-15	-0.03	0.12	1.00	-0.35	0.30		
		16-20	0.05	0.13	0.98	-0.30	0.40		
	11-15	1-5	0.36	0.14	0.05	0.00	0.72	4.63	0.24
		6-10	0.03	0.12	1.00	-0.30	0.35		
		16-20	0.07	0.15	0.96	-0.32	0.47		
	16-20	1-5	0.29	0.14	0.20	-0.09	0.67	4.56	0.26
		6-10	-0.05	0.13	0.98	-0.40	0.30		
		11-15	-0.07	0.15	0.96	-0.47	0.32		
School Accountability	1-5	6-10	-0.431*	0.15	0.03	-0.83	-0.03	3.99	0.39
		11-15	-0.10	0.18	0.95	-0.57	0.37		
		16-20	0.01	0.19	1.00	-0.49	0.50		
	6-10	1-5	0.431*	0.15	0.03	0.03	0.83	4.42	0.50
		11-15	0.33	0.16	0.17	-0.09	0.76		
		16-20	0.44	0.17	0.06	-0.01	0.89		
	11-15	1-5	0.10	0.18	0.95	-0.37	0.57	4.08	0.43
		6-10	-0.33	0.16	0.17	-0.76	0.09		
		16-20	0.10	0.19	0.95	-0.41	0.61		
	16-20	1-5	-0.01	0.19	1.00	-0.50	0.49	3.98	0.44
		6-10	-0.44	0.17	0.06	-0.89	0.01		
		11-15	-0.10	0.19	0.95	-0.61	0.41		

Significance=0.05

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The first research question investigated Social Studies teachers' perception on the nature of classroom assessment in public Junior High Schools in the Kwahu South District, and the findings indicated that Social Studies teachers were more aligned to assessment as a means of improvement of teaching and learning, followed by the students' progress whereas classroom assessment as school accountability was least practiced by Social Studies teachers. This finding is consistent with results of previous studies (Brown, 2002; Calveric, 2010 & Vardar, 2010) where it was established that the improvement of teaching and learning was dominant but however, disagrees with Kellaghan and Greaney (2001) where it was disclosed that the main purpose of classroom assessment is to make judgement about the effectiveness of a school, and to reach a judgement about the adequacy of the performance of an education system.

Five hypotheses were tested in this study. The aim of the first and fourth hypotheses which sought to find out whether the perception of Social Studies teachers on the nature of classroom assessment was similar based on their gender and their rank revealed that there is no statistically significant differences between Social Studies teachers gender and rank on their perception of the nature of classroom assessment which concurs with previous studies (Alkharusi, Aldhafri, Alnabhani, & Alkalbani, 2012; Campbell & Evans, 2000) where gender (male/female) had no statistically significant influence on Social Studies teachers' perception of the nature of classroom assessment. However, the finding of this study departs from Gashaw's (2014) finding where it was revealed that teachers' gender is crucial in the discussion of the nature of classroom assessment. The findings from the second, third and the fifth hypotheses have disclosed that teachers' perception of the nature of classroom assessment is statistically significantly influenced by their age, academic qualification and years of teaching experience respectively. These findings are in agreement with prior findings (Gashaw, 2014; Wiredu, 2013; Davison, 2004 & Neesom, 2000) that there were statistically significant differences between teachers' perception on the nature of classroom assessment based on age, academic qualification and years of teaching experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of classroom assessment is not new among Social Studies teachers in public Junior High Schools in Kwahu South District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The teachers had varied perceptions of classroom assessment although much attention was directed at improvement of teaching and learning. This suggests that the teachers were conscious of the importance of regular classroom assessment. This implies that apposite classroom assessment practices have the potential to engender the attainment of educational objectives. From the study's finding that the teachers held different perception of classroom assessment, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service through the Kwahu South Education Directorate should design and implement programmes to conscientize teachers on the need to develop and practice effective classroom assessment to their teaching. Teachers should be equipped with relevant knowledge on assessment through in-service training on the nature of classroom assessment and assist them (teachers) to develop and sustain effective classroom

assessment in their schools so as to realize educational goals. The Circuit Supervisors should be equipped with current theories in assessment so that they can offer necessary assistance to teachers on how to improve on their classroom assessment practices. Finally, based on the finding that age, academic qualification, and experience influenced Social Studies teachers' perception of classroom assessment, it is recommended that in the design and implementation of programmes to conscientize teachers on the need to develop and practice effective classroom assessment, these variables should be considered since they are critical to the teachers' conceptions of classroom assessment.

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