PERCEPTION OF AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT IN THE STANDARDS-BASED CURRICULUM IN THE EFFUTU MUNICIPALITY

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ABSTRACT
The study explored primary school science teachers' perception of authentic assessment in the Standards-based Curriculum in the Effutu Municipality. The study was modelled on an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 180 teachers for the quantitative phase out of which four teachers were purposively sampled for the qualitative phase of the study. A structured questionnaire was used to gather the quantitative data on the respondents. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages) and inferential statistics (One-way ANOVA) was used to analyse the hypotheses. In the qualitative phase, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data, and the data from the interview was analysed and presented according to the research question. The study results revealed that the majority of the teachers generally had a positive perception of authentic assessment. Again, it came to light from the study that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' academic

qualifications and their perception of authentic assessment. The study, however, established that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers' teaching experience and their perception of authentic assessment. It was recommended amongst others that periodic in-service training programs and workshops, organized by educational stakeholders in the Effutu Municipality, would foster a positive perception of authentic assessment among the teachers in the municipality.

Key Words: Authentic Assessment, Science Teachers' Perception, Standards-based Curriculum, Academic Qualification, Teaching Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Assessment is a concept that embraces various strategies and methods to ascertain the extent to which learners have achieved a lesson's predetermined objectives and outcomes (Ahmad et al., 2020). Two kinds of assessment widely used are traditional assessment and alternative assessment (Monib et al., 2020). Traditional assessment affects the methodology teachers use as they take up various kinds of examination preparation practices at the expense of other didactic activities (Watt, 2015) hence leading learners to adopt surface approaches to learning rather than profound ones (Sozcu, 2020). Alternative assessment, however, focuses on how learners construct their knowledge instead of their level of knowledge, which results in meaningful learning.

Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2018) argued that alternative assessment is a blanket term employed to cover a set of various options to traditional or standardized forms of assessment, which emerged as a result of the perceived deficiencies of traditional assessment methods. Echoing this notion, Monib et al. (2020) noted that alternative assessment is a generic term used for various forms of assessments such as authentic assessment, performance assessment, and direct assessment. Dung & Ha (2019) detailed that during alternative assessment when learners engage in activities that are closely linked to real challenges, it is termed an authentic assessment. As Ching and Wang (2021) also explained, these authentic learning activities are based on performance

and reality. The use of authentic assessment springs from the idea that learners should be capable of performing the tasks they encounter when they leave school; therefore, their assessment should require them to perform meaningful tasks that replicate real-world challenges (Alotaibi, 2021). Another basis for the increased role of authentic assessment for classroom use is the belief that education should not be a matter of memorization of facts but must be informed by critical thought and applied knowledge.

Quainoo et al. (2020) asserted that the recent educational reforms in Ghana aim at equipping learners with elementary practical skills in science. Their assertion is in line with the philosophy of the Standards-based Curriculum, which states that teaching and learning especially in the case of science, should be an inquiry-based activity where learners are engaged physically and cognitively in a rich and rigorous inquiry-driven environment (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment [NaCCA], 2019). The Standards-based Curriculum encourages the creation of a learner-centered classroom with the opportunity for learners to engage in meaningful and authentic hands-on activities that bring home to the learners what they are learning in school and what they know from outside of school (NaCCA,
2019). The teacher should "create a learning atmosphere that connects the problem with the context of the learners' world so that it presents authentic opportunities for all learners to demonstrate the results of their learning through a product or performance" (NaCCA, 2019, p. xiii). Ghana's transition from the use of the Objective-based Curriculum to the Standards-based Curriculum was that the content and assessment framework in the former was criticized for rote memorization and an apparent disconnectedness between a limited range of skills taught in the classroom and what the learners face in the real world (Transforming Teacher Education and Learning[T-TEL], 2019).

Teachers are considered the most influential factor in educational reforms intended to promote students' learning (Mensah & Jackson, 2018). Science teachers, therefore, become key to the achievement of scientific literacy at all levels of education because they play a critical role in aligning curriculum content to assessment. Hence, it is imperative to understand how science

teachers see the assessment practices and their perceptions regarding authentic assessment. Lewis (2019) asserted that variations in perception are fundamental to both the practice and research in education. Different perceptions may affect the science teacher's behavior in the judgments he makes. Science teachers' perceptions can be divided into two categories namely positive perceptions and negative perceptions. Positive or good teachers' perception will become a good foundation in responding to all matters relating to the assessment process in the curriculum, including the readiness for assessment implementation in the curriculum. Meanwhile, a negative perception of the assessment will become a barrier to the conduction of rules relating to the process of assessment in the curriculum. Current studies have shown that there is a positive and significant correlation between teachers' perception and their assessment practices (Al Ayubi et al., 2021; Putra, 2021). The need, therefore, to employ authentic assessment in the classrooms critically and extensively depends on how teachers perceive authentic assessment.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of a new curriculum leads to the arousal of concerns among teachers who are regarded as the critical implementors of the curriculum. Studies have reported mixed findings concerning the perception and concerns of teachers on new innovations integrated into the curriculum (Bai & Lo, 2018). A study conducted by Çetinkaya (2012) in Turkey revealed that teachers showed negative perceptions about their new curriculum, thus preventing them from implementing vital assessment models.

Umam and Indah (2020) noted that, although the adoption and integration of authentic assessment in classroom instruction in Western countries have generally been on the rise, the rate, however, has been slower in Africa. Anecdotal evidence at a teachers' workshop in the Effutu Municipality affirmed Umam and Indah's assertion. In that, it was realized that out of the eleven teachers who presented lessons on pre-arranged topics, only three of them integrated authentic assessment tasks in their lesson delivery.

In contrast, the study by Fitria et al. (2022) in Indonesia revealed that teachers' perception of authentic assessment significantly influenced its

implementation. Thus, teachers who had a positive perception of the philosophy, nature, and kinds of authentic assessment implemented it effectively and vice versa. It implies that teachers' assessment practices are influenced by their perceptions. Authentic assessment studies carried out in Ghana have been skewed towards teachers' practices disregarding their perception. These other studies were also centered on the senior and tertiary levels of education and most of them in Social Studies and English Language (Bordoh et al., 2015; Kankam et al., 2014; Nungba & Quansah, 2020; Quansah & Asamoah, 2019). From the reviewed literature, there is a scarcity of studies on authentic assessment conducted at the primary level of education and in science as a subject in the Ghanaian classroom. Likewise, these other studies adopted either the positivist or interpretivist philosophical paradigms in line with the quantitative and qualitative research approaches respectively. This study was conducted using the pragmatic paradigm with regard to the mixed methods approach to investigate primary school science teachers' perception of authentic assessment in the Effutu Municipality.

The study was guided by the following research question and hypotheses: Research question: What perception do primary school science teachers in the Effutu Municipality have about authentic assessment?

Hypotheses

1. a. Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their academic qualifications.
   b. H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their academic qualifications.
2. a. Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their teaching experience.
   b. H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their teaching experience.

Review of Related Literature

Reasonable and sound assessment practice begins with the instructors' knowledge, understanding, and perception of it (Bøhn & Tsagari, 2021). The theoretical basis of this study was grounded on the Title's Theory for Classroom Assessment Practice. Teachers' perceptions of assessment can be

conceptualized within the framework and theory of Title (1994) to guide their assessment practices. This theory emphasizes the following dimensions of classroom assessment practices: (a) Interpretation and knowledge, beliefs, intents, and actions, and (b) Assessment characteristics, embeddedness in practice, format and mode, scoring, evaluation, preparation, and feedback. Title (1994) also pointed out that there are two things essential to know about assessment: knowledge related to teaching, and knowledge about the assessment process. Teachers' self-knowledge of classroom assessment practices plays a major role in this study as it covers a wide range of issues and teachers' perception systems. For instance, teachers may have construed meanings about professional expectations, standards, values, and their effectiveness as well as construed beliefs about assessment. All these dimensions informed this study. Title's theory acknowledges that teachers' knowledge, perception, and assessment characteristics played a major role in developing the framework of this study. Teachers' perception is pivotal in constructing their experiences because it affects how they view their students, their curriculum, their pedagogy, and their professional development. Teachers' perception is influenced by their background knowledge, life experiences, beliefs, values, and attitudes. Teachers' perception also shapes their expectations, motivation, and satisfaction in their teaching career.

Through their perception, teachers develop theories about their roles and responsibilities, such as what they teach, and how and what they use to assess students' learning outcomes. Understanding teachers' perception of their classroom assessment practices is very important as it can open avenues for addressing the needs that teachers have as they wrestle with their day-to-day classroom assessment practices. The focus of this study is on primary school science teachers' perception of authentic assessment and their classroom practices. This is because teachers' perception plays a critical role in determining how they approach their teaching and also determines the quality of the assessment practices they use. Therefore, an effective interaction of primary school science teachers' perception is likely to impact their assessment practices by affecting how they design, implement, and evaluate inquiry-based tasks and activities for their students.

Teachers' Perception of Authentic Assessment

Variations in perception, according to Lewis (2019), are fundamental to both the practice and research in education, and it is therefore vital for educational practitioners to understand the cause of disparities in perception to practice and to undertake real research. Moreover, Newmann and Wehlage (2013) stated that it is a misconception to think that something is either authentic or not authentic because the degree of authenticity is not solely a characteristic of the assessment chosen; it needs to be defined in relation to the criterion situation derived from professional practice. Similarly, Johnson (2014) also found that internal and external influences impact perception. On the other hand, Chester and Quilter (2018) found that teachers' perception of classroom assessment affected their classroom assessment practices. They concluded that instructors who placed less significance on classroom evaluation employed standardized examinations most of the time in their lessons. Again, Chester and Quilter further maintained that instructors with poor experiences in alternative assessment and standardized testing are least likely to recognize the benefit of different types of assessment for their classroom. Therefore, they proposed that in-service training emphasizes helping instructors realize the benefits of various evaluation techniques used in the classroom. Teachers must perceive authentic assessment as a process of engaging learners in ways so that they can be well-rounded people and lifelong learners but not drill the life out of school with dry test preparation (Miller & Crocker, 2015). According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), if the educational objective of generating competent personnel is pursued, enhancing the authenticity of an assessment will be advantageous. Thus, an authentic assessment should involve a full array of tasks and multiple indicators of learning to come to fair conclusions.

Omar and Sinnasamy (2017) conducted a study on teachers' perception and English assessment. The purpose of their study was to determine the factors related to the implementation of School-based oral English assessment in rural secondary schools in Sandakan Division, Sabah. A total of 56 English Language teachers from 14 rural secondary schools in three rural areas under Sandakan Division were sampled and administered with structured questionnaires. Independent Samples T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, Correlation

Analysis ('r') and Multiple Regression analysis were used for this study. It was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the teachers' perception towards the implementation of school-based oral English assessment. Ndalichako (2015) also explored the perception of secondary school teachers on assessment. A total of 4160 Tanzanian teachers were involved in the study. A questionnaire comprising questions that sought to establish demographic information of participants as well as their perceptions on assessment was used. The study found that 50.7 % of the teachers who participated in the study agreed that their perception of assessment was influenced by the teaching experience.

Methodology

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed in conducting the study. The target population was all primary school science teachers in the Central Region of Ghana. The accessible population was all primary school science teachers in the Effutu Municipality, totaling three hundred and thirty-eight (338). The study focused on only primary school science teachers because the use of the standards-based curriculum in Ghana was only peculiar to primary schools at the time of the study. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting the participants for the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study respectively. The use of different sampling techniques to determine the sample size was based on a given confidence level of precision required. Several statistical formulas are available for determining the sample size, but the Krejcie and Morgan formula (1970) was used in this study for its

easy use. $S = \frac{d}{^2(N(X-21NP)+)X(1^2-PP(1)-P)}$

Where ***N*** is the population size, ***P*** is the Population proportion (expressed as a decimal) (assumed to be 0.5 (50%), and ***d*** is the degree of accuracy (5%), expressed as a proportion (0.05); a margin of error. ***S*** is the sample size of a finite population size; ***X*** is the z-value or confidence level of 95%, which is 1.96. Therefore, for this study, N is the accessible population size of three

hundred and thirty-eight (338) teachers. However, to avoid lengthy formula work, the researchers referenced the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table where all the sample sizes for each corresponding population group had been pre-calculated. The resultant sample size calculated was one hundred and eighty (180). Out of this number, 102 representing 60.0% were males while 78 representing 40.0% were females. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the 180 teachers for the quantitative phase, out of which 4 were purposively sampled for the qualitative phase. The interview was conducted with four primary school science teachers because they formed part of the leaders who trained teachers in using the Standards-Based Curriculum and also demonstrated a genuine interest and willingness to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. Although the number of participants in this qualitative phase was small (n = 4), Dawadi et al. (2021) opined that this is not unusual in qualitative studies. The teachers were interviewed to ascertain their perception of authentic assessment. Four teachers, two from the lower primary identified as LPT1 and LPT2, and two teachers from the upper primary identified as UPT1 and UPT2 were used. They were two males and two females.

Data Collection Instruments

Data for the study was collected using both a close-ended questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The close-ended questionnaire was adapted from the Classroom Assessment Conception Instrument [CACI] of (Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) to measure teachers' perception of authentic assessment. The questionnaire was in two (2) sections. Section A consisted of 7 items made up of the biographical data of the respondents. Section B contained 12 statements on a 5-point Likert scale labeled: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire was administered to all 180 teachers, and all responded to the questionnaire representing a 100% return rate. The researchers visited the schools on different agreed dates and distributed the questionnaire to the respondents. At each school, permission was sought from the heads of the schools.

To ascertain validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by experts in the field of assessment and suggestions were used to improve the instruments. A pilot-

test was conducted in the Gomoa West District of the Central Region to ensure reliability. A reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha statistics was performed to determine the internal consistency of the items on the questionnaire instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using the Statistical Product for Services Solution (SPSS) version 26. The reliability measurements for the instrument were calculated, and the result was $\alpha = 0.88$. Sijtsma and Pfadt (2021) argued that any scale with Cronbach's alpha less than 0.7 could not be considered reliable. Based on this, the value of 0.88 was considered highly reliable.

A semi-structured interview guide made up of four questions on authentic assessment was used to collect qualitative data on personalized and indepth information that revealed the interviewees' opinions on their perceptions of authentic assessment in the science classroom. However, in this paper, responses to only the first research question is presented. The interview was conducted for the respondents in their classrooms because they gave consent for that. Each interview took between 15 to 25 minutes.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected were coded to reflect their corresponding categories using the following scoring key: strongly disagree-1, disagree-2, undecided-3 agree-4, and strongly agree-5. Afterward, the five-point Likert scale was recoded to a three-point Likert scale to simplify the analysis and interpretation of the data. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods – including percentages, frequencies, means, and standard deviations where appropriate. The inferential statistical tool, One-Way ANOVA was used to analyze the hypotheses. A transcription of an audio recording of the interview was done and the transcribed data was sent to the interviewees for member checking. This ensured the credibility of the research process. To get acquainted with the data, the transcribed data was read over severally, and they were categorized based on their content. Triangulation of results from the questionnaire and interview was done to ascertain confirmability. The data that emanated from the interview was also content analysed. This was done by making inferences from the data based on the research question.

4. Results and Discussion

Items in this section of the questionnaire are meant to explore primary school science teachers' perception of authentic assessment. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) were the analytical tools used to analyze the responses obtained from the respondents. The results of the study are presented according to the research question that guided the study as follows:

What perception do primary school science teachers in the Effutu Municipality have about authentic assessment?

Data in Table 1 presents the perception primary school science teachers have about authentic assessment.

Table 1: Primary School Science Teachers' Perception of Authentic Assessment

STATEMENT	D (%)	UD (%)	A (%)	M (SD)
Authentic assessment requires students to construct original response	0 (0)	0 (0)	180 (100)	4.74 (0.44)
Authentic assessment fosters high order thinking skills	0 (0)	7 (3.9)	173 (96.1)	4.34 (0.55)
Authentic assessment assesses the process of creating	0 (0)	0 (0)	180 (100)	4.32 (0.47)
Authentic assessment requires a collaborative effort	0 (0)	3 (1.7)	177 (98.3)	4.23 (0.46)
Authentic assessment assesses projects	0 (0)	40 (22.2)	140 (77.8)	4.02 (0.68)
Authentic assessment helps learners evaluates their work	0 (0)	13 (7.2)	167 (92.8)	4.24 (0.58)
Authentic assessment uses learners' work collected over time	13 (7.2)	39 (21.7)	128 (71.1)	3.93 (0.89)
Authentic assessment is based on a given criteria	0 (0)	40 (22.2)	122 (67.8)	3.87 (0.95)
Authentic assessment is used in different domains	0 (0)	14 (7.8)	166 (92.2)	4.30 (0.61)
Authentic assessment evaluates changes in performance	0 (0)	50 (27.8)	120 (72.2)	4.00 (0.75)
Authentic assessment incorporates information over time	0 (0)	30 (16.7)	150 (83.8)	4.21 (0.71)
Authentic assessment helps in reflection	0 (0)	60 (33.3)	120 (66.6)	4.05 (0.85)

Source: Field Data- Questionnaire (2022)

The result shows that primary school science generally had a positive perception of authentic assessment as the mean scores ranged from 3.87 (SD = 0.95) to 4.70 (SD = 0.44). Table 1 also recorded a mean of means score of

4.20 and a mean of standard deviation of 0.59. It is evident from Table 1 that all the respondents (100%) agreed that authentic assessment requires students to construct an original response (M=4.70, SD = 0.44) and authentic assessment assesses the process of creating (M = 4.32, SD = 0.47). Also, the majority of the respondents agreed that authentic assessment fostered high-order thinking skills (M =4.34, S =0.55), required collaborative effort (M =4.23, S =0.46), and helped learners to evaluate their work (M =4.24, S =0.58). The results show very high mean scores between 4.21 and 4.74 except for items 5,7, 8 and 10 and standard deviation scores between 0.44 to 0.95. This is an indication that primary school science teachers generally had a positive perception of authentic assessment. It implies that the majority of primary school science in the Effutu Municipality had a positive perception of authentic assessment. To help explain in greater depth and also triangulate the issues that emerged from the quantitative data, four teachers, who were purposively selected were interviewed to find out what views they had about authentic assessment.

The question around which the qualitative data (interview) was collected was: What perception do you have about authentic assessment? The following excerpts are the viewpoints presented by the teachers:

> *With the nature and structure of authentic assessment, learners are made to think critically because of the high-order thinking skills and manner of questions infused in authentic assessment. It can provide valuable information and improve students' learning regarding how effective a teacher's instructional strategies have been to date. It informs both the students and teacher about any adjustments that should be made in the learning process to improve students' understanding and achievements (LPT1, Interview data, 2021).*
>
> *In authentic assessment, learners are engaged in situations where they can apply a concept they've learnt in a practical way. This makes them think critically and have a good appreciation of how scientists do their work. It then helps teachers to identify the level of understanding their students have reached, become aware of students' strengths and weaknesses, and monitor their current progress during the learning process. (LPT2, Interview data, 2021).*

> *I know that with the nature of authentic assessment, there is eeeerm usually a collaborative effort by a group of learners since the standards-based curriculum primarily also enforces the idea of group activities. (UPT1, Interview data, 2021).*
> *I see authentic assessment as a performance-based kind of assessment that involves complex questioning and challenges learners to think critically. Moreover, these activities are usually in line with real-life activities. This will enable students to use a wide range of effective, practical, day-to-day teaching techniques in their classroom situation (UPT2, Interview data, 2021).*

Inferences from the excerpts above show that the teachers perceived authentic assessment as practical and collaborative in nature, and fostered high-order thinking skills. It implies that teachers generally had a positive perception of authentic assessment.

The findings of the study related to teachers' perception of authentic assessment, in general, indicated that primary school science teachers had a positive perception of authentic assessment as shown in Table 1. The findings of the study show that primary school science teachers view authentic assessment as a requirement for learners to construct an original response rather than choose from a list of possibly correct answers and also create a final product directly. These findings are supported by the study of Newmann and Wehlage (2013) who indicated that authentic assessment helps students achieve three broad goals: (a) construct meaning and produce knowledge, (b) use disciplined inquiry to construct meaning, and (c) aim work towards the production of discourse, product, and performance that have value or meaning beyond success in school.
Miller and Crocker (2015) opined that teachers must perceive authentic assessment as a process of engaging learners in ways so that they can be well-rounded people and lifelong learners but not drill the life out of school with dry test preparation.

The findings in Table 1 also indicated that teachers perceived authentic assessment as requiring learners to incorporate information from many areas.

This confirms the findings of Mueller (2016) who recognized that authentic activities provide the opportunity for learners to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources. The task offers learners the opportunity to examine the problem from a variety of theoretical and practical perspectives, rather than allowing a single perspective that learners must imitate to be successful. In the framework of authentic assessment, Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) were of the view that since the demonstration of relevant competencies is often not possible in one single test, an authentic assessment should involve a full array of tasks and multiple indicators of learning to come to fair conclusions. Chester and Quilter (2018) in their study opined that studying teachers' perception of authentic assessment is important because it indicates how different forms of authentic assessment are being used or misused and what could be done to improve the situation.

The study also sought to establish the relationship that existed between teachers' academic qualifications and their perception of authentic assessment, and the difference that existed between teachers' perception of authentic assessment and their teaching experience. To achieve these, two research hypotheses were posed.

Hypothesis One

The hypotheses aimed at establishing the relationship between teachers' academic qualifications on their perception of authentic assessment. Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their academic qualifications. H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their academic qualifications.

Table 2: One-Way ANOVA of the Influence of Academic Qualification on Teachers' Perception

Group	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.16	8	0.27	0.80	0.60
Within Groups	57.48	171	0.33		
Total	59.64	179			

Source: Field Data- Questionnaire (2022); *p < 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 2, the One-way ANOVA reports no statistically significant difference between teachers' academic qualification and their perception of authentic assessment: F (8, 171) = 0.80, p = 0.60. The null hypothesis was therefore accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected. It implies that the primary school science teachers in the Effutu municipality's level of academic qualification had no influence on their perception of authentic assessment. This confirms the study by Omar and Sinnasamy (2017) conducted on teachers' perception and English assessment. It was found that there is no statistically significant difference between the teachers' perception towards the implementation of schoolbased oral English assessment in relation to their academic qualification.

Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis sought to find out if a statistically significant difference existed between teachers' perception and their teaching experience. Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their teaching experience.

H_1: There is a statistically significant difference between primary school science teachers' perception and their teaching experience. *Table 3: One-Way ANOVA of the Influence of Years of Teaching Experience on Teachers' Perception*

Group	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.38	8	0.67	2.02	0.04
Within Groups	56.81	171	0.33		
Total	62.20	179			

Source: Field Data- Questionnaire (2022); *p < 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 3, the One-way ANOVA reports a statistically significant difference between teachers' number of years of teaching experience and their perception of authentic assessment: F (8, 171) = 2.02, p = 0.04. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected, and the alternative hypothesis, accepted. It implies that the primary school science teachers in the Effutu municipality's

number of years of teaching experience had a significant influence on their perception of authentic assessment. This finding supports the study of Ndalichako (2015) that the majority of teachers considered their perception of assessment as influenced by the teaching experience.

CONCLUSION

The study explored primary school science teachers' perception of authentic assessment in the Effutu Municipality. The responses gathered from both questionnaire and interview used in this study provided evidence to suggest that teachers had a positive perception of authentic assessment. Also, the findings of this study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between teachers' academic qualification and their perception of authentic assessment. It implied that the academic qualification of teachers had no influence on their perception. Finally, the study provided evidence to suggest that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers' number of years of teaching (teaching experience) and their perception of authentic assessment. This meant that teachers' number of years of teaching experience had a significant impact on their perception of authentic assessment.

Therefore, authentic assessment is an effective way of measuring students' learning outcomes in primary school science education. Also, teachers' academic qualification does not affect their perception of authentic assessment, which means that teachers with different levels of education can equally appreciate and implement authentic assessment in their classrooms. Teachers' number of years of teaching does affect their perception of authentic assessment, which means that teachers who have more experience in teaching science may have more knowledge and skills in using authentic assessment methods and strategies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing a positive perception of authentic assessment may lead to the practice of authentic assessment. The study revealed that the majority of teachers generally had a positive perception of authentic assessment, however, a few others did not. Thus, it is essential for the Effutu Municipality Educational Directorate in collaboration with the heads of schools to organize

periodic in-service training and workshops so that all teachers will develop a positive perception of authentic assessment. These workshops must ensure the continuous use of authentic assessment. This will help teachers to understand the relevance of the concept of authentic assessment to current education practices. In connection with this, tutors and lecturers in various tertiary institutions whose task is to train prospective teachers should be encouraged to inculcate into their students the relevance of authentic assessment.

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