UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INFLUENCE OF SEFWI WIAWSO MUNICIPALITY SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES ON THEIR LEARNING APPROACHES

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INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES ON THEIR LEARNING APPROACHES AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN SEFWI WIAWSO MUNICIPALITY

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: …….. Date: …….

Name:……..

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: ……. Date: ……..……

Name:……..

Co-Supervisor's Signature: ……. Date: ……..……

Name:……...

ABSTRACT

The study examined the influence of students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches at senior high schools in Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Five research questions were explored with two hypotheses. The descriptive survey research design was employed. A total population of 4514 students were identified for the study. The study included a sample size of 357 participants, however only 260 completed replies were used to analyse the data. Questionnaires (i.e., SPAQ and Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory) were adapted for the study. Permissions were sought from the appropriate quarters at every stage of the data collection and all data collected from responses were kept confidential. The data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (i.e., MANOVA and multivariate multiple linear regression). It was found that, with the exception of student involvement which was a positive significant predictor of students' use of surface learning approach, none of students' perception of assessment practices substantially predicted their use of a learning approach. It was concluded that the students were consulted or involved in assessment task decisions, the more likely they were to employ the surface learning approach. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to desist from involving students in assessment task decisions since it leads to the employment of the surface leaning approach or rote learning

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DEDICATION

To my family

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Second cycle institutions worldwide are deeply connected to the development of students' intellectual skills, which leads to economic advancement through active contributions to productivity in a variety of professions (Lobanova & Shunin, 2008). According to Lobanova and Shunin, among some of these competencies are analytical thinking, problem-solving, self-confidence, and integrity. Assessment is important and plays an essential role in the process of instruction and learning. Watering, Gijbels, Dochy and Rijt (2008) concurred that not only does assessment help in assigning grades and determining if set objectives are attained, but has evolved into a means of learning

Taras (2005) posited that assessment is a verdict of students' work. According to Nitko (2001), assessment is a process of gathering data about students, curricula and programmes, and educational policy for decision making. In the opinion of Allen and Yen (2002), assessment entails analysing empirical information about students' learning in order to enhance programmes and boost students' learning. Assessment also aids in determining the curriculum, instruction, and teaching methodology's adequacy and efficacy (Kankam, Bordoh, Eshun, Bassaw, & Koranteng, 2014).

Kankam et al. (2014) indicated that data gathered from assessment is substantial for making educated decisions about students' learning capacities, level placement and accomplishment. From McMillan (2001) point of view, assessment being a measure of educational results, is anticipated to improve

teaching and learning and lead to significant school improvement. Various studies have revealed the importance of assessment and its crucial role in students' learning (Laird & Garver, 2010; Fernandes, Flores, & Lima 2012). As a result, assessment has become an important factor in assessing how students spend their time and what they consider to be important in learning, and this influences their learning either positively or adversely (Flores, Simao, Barros, & Pereira, 2016).

Despite educational goals focusing on developing informed students and future workforces (Segers, Dochy, & Cascallar, 2003), educational culture shifted from knowledge-based to competency-based in the 1900s. Various studied report across countries have discovered that students are not sufficiently equipped for life beyond school (American College Testing, 2006). This challenge according to Gulikers, Bastiaens, and Kirschner (2006) stems from the fact that school standards are not linked with workplace expectations.

All over the world, classroom instructors, at every level of the educational system conduct some form of assessment in order to ascertain whether or not leaning has taken place and also for placing and selecting learners for the levels ahead (Nitko, 2001).

Research has revealed that classroom discourse in schools at all levels of education in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) emphasises repetition and rote learning rather than developing students' comprehension (Hardman, Abd-Kadir, & Smith, 2008; Pontefract & Hardman, 2005). In light of this, Sofo, Ocansey, Nabie and Asola (2013) noted that teaching methodologies that stresses on mere recall of information are limited in measuring greater levels of understanding among learners and should therefore be discouraged.

In Ghana, teachers have been found to have poor assessment practices in various schools. Kankam et al. (2014), for instance, discovered that examination questions developed by Social Studies teachers in Senior High School (SHS) in Ghana did not match what the students were required to engage in after school. Thus, in some cases a discrepancy exists amongst what learners' study in the classroom and the abilities and knowledge learners need to possess in the workplace. The authors, therefore, recommended that Ghanaian teacher training institutions should do well to widen its horizon in instructing assessment to encompass genuine assessment. In addition, Physical Education (PE) teachers in SHS in Ghana rarely employed assessments which provided opportunity for students to construct meaning about what they have been taught (Sofo et al., 2013). Sofo et al. further discovered that the PE teachers did not use a wide range of assessment techniques even when it is required. Other studies, like that of Kankam et al. (2014), have also discovered a growing non-authentic assessment in SHSs in Ghana.

In the view of Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (2009), assessment greatly impact on how well students learn. That is to say, a learner's perception of assessment affects how the learner will handle later learning. Assessment is therefore rationally, as well as empirical, one of the distinguishing elements of students learning processes (Entwistle & Entwistle, 1991; Ramsden, 1997, Carless 2007; Raupach, Brown, Anders, Hasenfuss, & Harendza). This means that learners are more incline to choose a certain style of learning depending on how they perceived the kind of assessment to be given.

Entwistle, McCune, and Walker (2001) identified three main approaches to learning regarding students' perception of learning: surface learning

approach, deep learning approach as well as the strategic learning approach. The surface approach to learning as defined by Trigwell and Prosser (1991) encompasses superficial learning of information, mostly through unthoughtful memorisation and procedural problem solving, with limited conceptual understanding being an expected outcome. This indicates that surface learning methods imply a desire to finish a learning task with minimal personal involvement.

Surface approach to learning is conceptualised as leaners' aim to meet the demands of a learning task with little input. In this instance, learners concentrate on diverse facets of the assignment individually (e.g., signs, factual data, words and formulae rather than the whole). Additionally, these learners regard educational assignment as exterior imposition and secluded events, in which they rely on rote memorisation to pass assessment rather than comprehending and analysing the idea under consideration (Ramsden, 2003). According to Lubin (2003), students who use a surface learning strategy tend to rush through the steps required just to get a mark, a grade, or a qualification rather than being engaged in learning about the subject or content of a particular course/subject. In surface approach, low-level activities are employed when high-level actions are needed to complete a given task appropriately (Biggs, 2003). It is hence like glancing through the surface instead of going deep into it.

Deep learning approach, on the other hand, is a more long-term method that entails attempting to comprehend information in order to promote learning. This approach is characterised by excellent learning outcomes (Al-Kadri, Al-moamary, Roberts, & Vander, 2012). Deep approach to learning denotes

learning where most relevant cognitive skills are employed to complete a task appropriately and meaningfully. In this instance, learners examine, synthesize and evaluate primary concepts, writer's argument, ideologies or fruitful applications to achieve the right understanding of the task as a whole. They connect task with real life events, liken it to their life experiences and other related knowledge (Biggs, 2003; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden, 2003). That is to say, learners that employ deep learning strategy makes effort to understand what they study; such learners try to relate what they learn to other experiences and concepts while maintaining a critical mindset. Thus, deep learners want to grasp what they are studying and are naturally motivated to love what they are learning.

According to Lizzio, Wilson, and Simons (2002), the third way to learn is the strategic or accomplishing approach. According to Lizzio et al., students envision attaining the most outstanding possible grades by adopting well-organised and conscientious study methods and good time management. Students who take a strategic approach to studying, on the other hand, want to arrange their study schedules, manage their time, and learn what is required (Duff, 2004). This according to Duff will help in attaining the best possible mark.

With respect to students' perception of assessment, Gao (2012) examined high school learners'impressions of mathematics in classroom assessments. Gao found a statistically significant difference in assessment authenticity and transparency among male and female learners. For authenticity, more female students than males were of the view that mathematics assessment did not reflect real-life setting. On transparency, more female students than male

students felt that assessments in mathematics was not transparent. That is to say, most females stated that the goal of the assessment activity was not made clear to them. For instance, on the issue of transparency, most female students reported that "they were not given the opportunity to see their marked examination scripts even when they requested for it." The study, however, found non-significant gender difference in the other dimensions of the scale (i.e., congruence with planned learning, student consultation, and student diversity).

It is impossible to ignore students' perceptions of evaluation processes in any educational institution. Consequently, how students study for an assessment is contingent upon their perceptions regarding the assessment prior to, during, and after the assessment. These impacts might be beneficial or detrimental to learning process (Gielen, Dochy, & Dierick, 2003). As a result, learners must comprehend the procedures and their repercussions for them as learners (Schaffner, Burry-Stock, Cho, Boney, & Hamilton, 2000); hence, the need to examine the impact SHS learners'impressions of classroom assessment have on the learning techniques they adopt.

Statement of the Problem

Assessment is an indispensable tool in every educational system; thus, it provides comprehensive information about the overall learning development of the teacher as well as the performance of students in any educational setting (Dhindsa, Omar & Waldrip, 2007). This implies that the purpose of assessment is to maintain the existence of a complete set of evidence-based learning that documents not only knowledge proficiency, but also the thinking patterns, performance skills, and behaviours of learners pursuing a specific certification

(Sadler, 2009). Thus, assessment is critical in education since it has a direct impact on learners' study habits as well as the effectiveness of their academic achievement.

Teachers inevitably have a role in the assessment of their students, as far as decisions regarding designing assessment instruments are concerned (Cavangah, Waldrip, Romanoski, & Dorman, 2005). These test instruments often focus on assessing what students have learnt over a period of time. The intent of this assessment is to make available evidence of learners' achievement to teachers, parents and other stakeholders for the purpose of decision making (Fisher, Waldrip, & Dorman, 2005). Information gathered on students' assessment also provide feedback about students' progress. Teachers by the help of this assessment also get to know whether lessons have been successfully taught or whether students have mastered what has been taught in the classroom (Goodrum, Hackling, & Rennie, 2001).

According to Struyf, Vandenberghe, and Lens (2001), decisions regarding the forms of assessment depends on teachers in the classroom. Even though students have little or no say when it comes to decisions on which type of assessment to use, the perception students have about assessment could influence the way students learn. That is to say, students are likely to adopt different learning strategies for two different subjects taught by two different instructors. This could be as a result of how the individual instructors teach and assess their students.

For instance, a teacher who assesses students mainly with the use of recall questions is likely to propel students to learn using the rote type of learning; this in effect, does not promote proper and better understanding of

concepts on the part of students. Learners are, however, susceptible to use a deep learning approach in another instance where a teacher assesses students in a way that does not require them to memorise concepts but rather bring on board what they have learnt, by applying them in practical situations. This will in effect result in high quality learning outcomes, where students have the upper hand in applying their knowledge in new situations.

It is also important to emphasise that the general aim of education remains empowering individuals to reason and function in human society (Segers, Dochy, & Cascallar, 2003). If the goal of education is one that aims at empowering individuals to reason and function effectively in human society, assessment should be geared towards achieving such a goal. That is to say, assessment instruments should be designed to aid students in applying critical thinking in solving problems. The findings of Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2005), however, revealed a significant impact of classroom assessment practices on students' learning. Struyven et al. examined the effect of learners'impressions regarding classroom assessment practices on the learning approaches they use. The authors explained that the impression of learners concerning assessment and their learning strategies have a strong linkage. Thus, it appears as though learners' approach is significantly influenced by the perceived qualities of assessment. That is to say, findings from Struyven et al. revealed that learners have an impressive view concerning the impact of varied assessment patterns on their learning approach(es).

Inferring from the findings of Struyven et al., one can hypothesise that the type of learning approach students adopt in learning could be dependent on the assessment format teachers use in assessing them. That is to say, students

have a higher susceptibility of adopting a deep learning strategy in situations where they are required to demonstrate good understanding together with constructing the connotation of a specific concept compared to a situation where students are expected to memorise and reproduce factual contents of study materials.

Empirically, much is known about assessment practices among teachers in Ghana and most of the studies (e.g., Anhwere, 2009; Amedahe, 1989; Akyeampong, 1997; Kankam et al., 2014) have found limited skills in assessment and testing practices among Senior High School (SHS) teachers. Similarly, information is known about teachers' perception of assessment practices in Bangladesh and Pakistan (For example, Mehadi, 2018; Saeed, Tahir, and Latif (2018) found that most public and private school teachers perceive classroom assessment as summative assessment. Little is, however, known regarding SHS students' perception of assessment practices in Ghana, even though similar studies have been conducted in the western world (e.g., Hanan, Mohamed, Mohi, Chris, Cees, & Vander, 2011; Nadia, Zurina, & Zulaikha, 2019). Most of these studies were conducted among western university students. Regarding students' perception of assessment practices in Ghana, it appears only one study has been documented (Quansah, 2018). The study of Quansah focused on university students. Quansah found out that University of Cape Coast (UCC) students predominantly perceived assessment as congruent with planned learning, in the sense that students were assessed on what was taught.

Also, Struyven et al. (2005) examined students' perception about evaluation and assessment in higher education and discovered that learners'

attitudes toward studying and learning are highly influenced by their assessment perspectives. The study of Struyven et al. focused on students in higher education in Belgium and could not be generalised to SHS students in Ghana. Additionally, Kankam et al. (2014) investigated the assessment practices among teachers and discovered that, examination questions developed by Social Studies classroom instructors in Ghanaian SHSs did not match what the students were required to engage in after school. Kankam et al. also discovered a growing non-authentic assessment in SHSs in Ghana. Kankam et al. recommended that Ghanaian teacher educational institutions consider increasing their coverage of assessment instruction to include authentic assessment.

Based on previous studies, it appears little is known on learners' impressions of assessment practices and how their impressions influence the learning approaches they use. A critical examination of the related literature appears to suggest that most of the studies done in the area of assessment focused much attention on teachers' perception of assessment practices (Mehadi, 2018; Saeed, Tahir, & Latif, 2018) with little attention given to learners' impressions regarding assessment practices. Since learners' opinions regarding assessment practices could significantly influence their learning approaches (Struyven et al., 2005), it is important to investigate the perception students have regarding classroom assessment practices. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to investigate the influence of SHS students' impressions about classroom assessment on the learning approaches they use in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality in Ghana.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the influence of Sefwi Wiawso Municipality SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches. Expressly, this inquiry sought to:

1. ascertain whether students' perception of assessment tasks are congruent with planned learning,
2. examine students' perception of authenticity of assessment tasks,
3. explore students' perception on their involvement in assessment tasks,
4. investigate students' perception of transparency in assessment tasks,
5. examine whether students' perceived capabilities match assessment tasks,
6. examine whether the perceptions of students regarding assessment practices have any influence on the learning approaches they use,
7. ascertain the differences in the impressions of assessment practices among SHS students in Sefwi Wiawso Municipality in terms of gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions directed the study:

1. What is the perception of students on the congruence of assessment tasks with planned learning in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?
2. What is the perception of students on the authenticity of assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?
3. What perception do students have on their involvement in assessment tasks decisions in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?
4. What perception do students hold on transparency of assessment tasks?

5. What perception do students have on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment tasks?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

$H_0$1: SHS Students' perception of assessment practices will not predict their learning approaches.

$H_1$1: SHS Students' perception of assessment practices will predict their learning approaches.

$H_0$2: There is no statistically significant difference in students' perception of assessment practices in terms of gender.

$H_1$2: There is a statistically significant difference in students' perception of assessment practices in terms of gender.

Significance of the Study

The study's findings are useful to the Ministry of Education, Ghana (MoE), Ghana Education Service (GES), and heads of the various SHSs in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Essentially, this could inform policies on promoting lifelong learning among students as far as assessment of such students are concerned. Obtaining information on learner's opinions regarding assessment practices could enlighten teachers on the areas of their assessment practices which need to be enhanced or altered. The findings of this work also provide facts that will bring clarity on the learning approaches students are likely to adopt considering their perception of assessment practices. This could help the stakeholders of education as mentioned earlier to counsel students on the benefits of adopting long-lasting learning approaches regardless of students' opinions about assessment practices. This study hopes to contribute to

knowledge by adding to the extant literature in the field of assessment practices as well as the learning approaches students adopt in their studies in Ghana.

Delimitation

There are several aspects of assessment practices but this study was limited to SHS students' perception of assessment formats teachers adopt in assessing them in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Therefore, this study focused on only public SHS students in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. There might be other possible factors that may influence students' learning approaches, but this study, however, focused on students' impressions about assessment practices. Regarding the content, this study focused on perception of students in five dimensions of assessment: congruence with students' planned learning, authenticity in assessment, students' involvement in assessment, transparency in assessment, and the match between students' perceived capabilities and assessment tasks.

Limitations

Despite the strengths of using quantitative designs and statistical procedures which provide verifiable findings, the study acknowledges certian limitations. First, since the study employed questionnaires where respondents are to select from the responses provided on the questionnaire, it could be that the actual experiences of the respondents were not captured, forcing them to select from the ones provided. This could potentially distort the findings of the investigation. Additionally, the descriptive nature of the study makes it impossible to make causal inferences. Consequently, the findings of this investigation ought to be treated with the greatest caution as possible.

Organisation of the Study

The work was captured under five chapters; Chapters 1-5. Chapter One focused on the introductory aspect which included the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and definition of terms. Relevant literature rearding students' perception of assessment of assessment practices, students' perception of assessment practices and students' learning approaches, gender and students' perception of assessment were appraised in Chapter Two. Empirical findings of some studies were also reviewed. The methods used to conduct the study was discussed in Chapter Three. The research design, population, sample processes, instrument, data collection, and data analysis procedures were highlighted. Chapter Four discussed the results and their interpretation. Chapter Five summarised the study's results and conclusions, as well as making recommendations. Further studies were also included.

Operational Definitions

Assessment Practices: This encompasses the assessment formats teachers adopt in determining the quantity and the extent to which students have learned and have comprehended what they were taught in the classroom. This is often evident in the classroom tasks/assignments teachers give to students after an instructional period. This was conceptualised in terms of congruence with students' planned learning, authenticity in assessment, students' involvement in assessment, transparency in assessment, and the match between students' perceived capabilities and assessment tasks.

Students' Learning approach: This refers to students' approaches to learning, problem solving, and processing information. This was conceptualised in terms of: deep learning approach, surface learning approach, and strategic leaning approach.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study was undertaken to ascertain Sefwi Wiawso Municipality SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches. This review adopted a selective approach which focused on articles and journals of particular relevance to the issue. The current chapter reviews related literature on the issue of investigation. This comprised theoretical review, conceptual review, as well as the review of empirical studies.

The theoretical aspect of the review expatiated on two theories that guided the conduct on the study. The theories are constructive alignment theory and the social cognitive theory. The conceptual review highlighted a number of key concepts. Among some of these concepts are: concept of assessment, forms of assessment, goals of assessment, purpose of assessment, and uses of assessment, alternative assessment (authentic assessment), learning-oriented assessment, sustainable assessment, reforms in assessment, as well as students' learning approaches. Lastly, issues such as learners' opinions of assessment practices, demographic characteristic (gender) and students' perception of assessment, as well as relationship between students' perception of assessment practices and their learning approach were also captured under the empirical review. These were directed by the objectives that guided the conduct of the investigation.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The portion of the literature reviewed two theories around which the study was built. These theories are theory of constructive alignment as well as

the social cognitive theory. The ensuing paragraphs present an over of the theories and how they are related to the current study.

The Theory of Constructive Alignment

In 1949, Ralph Tyler introduced the concept of constructive alignment. Tyler (1949) asserts that the most effective way to convey educational objectives is to use language that identifies both the type of behaviour to be formed and the circumstance or sphere of life in which this behaviour is to function. Additionally, Tyler stated that learning occurs as a result of the student's proactive behaviour.

In 1996, John Biggs improved on Tyler's core concept. According to Biggs, the philosophy of constructive alignment is a teaching and learning technique in which learning objectives are expressly established and serve as a representation of the course's "Intended Learning Outcomes" (ILO). The constructive alignment theory discusses how learning or educational expectations should be attained through teaching, learning, and assessment procedures that give opportunity for students to accomplish and demonstrate ILOs.

According to Biggs (1996), the CA approach is predicated on two essential principles: "constructive and alignment". In Biggs' perspective, the connotation of the "constructive" part is that students generate meaning as a result of engaging in pertinent events in the learning process. That is to say, meaning is not taught or communicated from instructor to learner, but must be created by learners. According to Biggs (2003), the constructivist learner discovers information as opposed to simply receiving it from the classroom instructor. Thus, constructivist education entails more than merely acquiring

novel set of knowledge. It fosters critical thinking growth (Joseph & Juwah, 2012).

According to Biggs (1996), the “alignment” factor refers to the classroom instructor’s role in establishing a learning atmosphere that is conducive to obtaining the targeted learning objectives. The critical point is that the teaching system's elements, particularly the instructional methods and assessment tasks, are linked with the presumed learning activities in the expected outcomes. In a sense, the learner is 'stuck,' and perceives it as impossible to exit without acquiring the knowledge required (Biggs, 2003).

The philosophy of “constructive alignment” is a concept for teaching in which the expectations for students' learning and the manner in which they should express their learning are specified explicitly prior to the start of instruction. The teaching is then structured to engage students in learning activities that increase their chances of reaching those aims, and the assessment tasks are planned to provide for an unambiguous appraisal of how effectively those outcomes were achieved. In everyday learning, this type of framework is anticipated. For example, a father teaching his child how to tie a necktie focuses on that objective and guides the kid through the steps of tying a tie until the learner can do so correctly. In a similar manner, a motorist who is learning to drive does so by driving until he or she reaches the prescribed requirement. In each case, the target act is simultaneously the desired outcome, the technique of instruction, and the means of determining whether the desired quality or standard of the outcome was fulfilled. This is a learner-centred approach to teaching, in that the purpose is to determine what the learner needs to do and how the learner may best accomplish it to the requisite standard. The

instructional design is outcome-oriented, and all assessment must be criterion-referenced.

Additionally, it is critical to note that while establishing an aligned system, classroom facilitators are expected to identify the desired objectives of their instruction in terms of not only topic content, but also the level of knowledge desired by learners. The classroom instructor then creates an atmosphere conducive to learners engaging in the activities designed to accomplish the desired results. Finally, the classroom facilitator is supposed to select assessment activities that indicate the extent to which individual students have met these outcomes on a classified scale of suitability.

The Relevance of the CA Theory to the Present Study

This investigation intends to examine the influence of Senior High learners' perception of assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Just like what is done in any other second cycle institution, classroom instructors in SHSs within Sefwi Wiawso Municipality conduct assessment for their students to ascertain the degree to which they have grasped or understood concepts that have been taught in line with stated objectives. Hence, classroom facilitators frequently begin by developing the instructional expectation for a particular subject, followed by developing the teaching and learning activities and finally doing the evaluation. When learners approach a topic area, they first determine how it will be tested and then determine the learning activities that will be required to meet the assessment standards. Thus, assessment serves as a 'lever' for the majority of learners, dictating how and what they learn in a specific content area (Quinn, 2015). On the contrary, if a topic or curriculum is constructed in such a way that when

learners strive toward completing assessment criteria, they are actually accomplishing the subject's aims and results, assessment as a 'lever' serves as legitimate educational function. In brief, if the 'intended' objective and the achieved/actual learning outcome are identical, learners will participate in the anticipated learning activities. Are the proposed intentions for teaching specific topic areas consistent with learners' actual/attained learning results in SHSs within the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality? This is a question which this study, through the help of the CA theory, would seek to answer.

As a component of education's overall purpose, learners are expected to develop self-reliance, cultivate innovative habits of genuine scholarship, and approach problem resolution constructively and developmentally (Segers, Dochy, & Cascallar, 2003). Education should also aim to provide learners with the expert information and skills necessary for professions in a variety of areas of the economy. As a result, learners who have completed any form of education in a second cycle institution are required to demonstrate certain abilities, attributes, and capabilities. But do we usually see this? Are such aspirations attained after completing the second cycle of education? Classroom facilitators' assessment techniques in SHSs can shed light on this subject. This is because assessment is the only way to obtain information regarding how learners learn (Nitko, 2001) in order to find out whether objectives of subjects have been achieved. However, Gielen, Dochy and Dierick (2003) asserted that how students prepare for assessments is contingent upon their impressions of the assessments (i.e., before, during and after the task). This implies that students' impressions of assessment are critical if the course or programme's objectives are to be met.

According to the CA philosophy, assessment in SHSs is intended to aim to collect meaningful and reliable data about students' learning that is consistent with the syllabus's predetermined goals. It is critical to emphasise that assessment is far more necessary than instruction for students' learning (Biggs, 2003). According to Biggs (1999), and Biggs and Tang (2011), Biggs's idea of CA is instructive in prompting curriculum originators in SHSs of the importance of coherence among all curriculum aspects. The objective of the course, the outcomes, the teaching methods, and, most importantly, the evaluation methods (i.e., approaches and criteria) should all be consistent in ensuring that the required learning is attained.

Classical Test Theory (CTT)

CTT emerged only when the following three achievements or concepts were postulated: (1) the detection of measurement mistakes, (2) the conceptualisation of that error as a random variable, and (3) the conceptualisation of correlation and how to index it. Charles Spearman was instrumental in determining how to rectify a correlation coefficient for attenuation due to measurement error and how to acquire the index of reliability required for the correction in 1904. According to some, Spearman's discovery marked the beginning of CTT (Traub, 1997). Others who influenced the framework of CTT George Yule, Truman Lee Kelley, those involved in the development of the Kuder-Richardson Formulas, Louis Guttman, and, most recently, Melvin Novick, to name a few over the next quarter century following Spearman's original discoveries (Lord & Novick, 1968).

CTT is a collection of interrelated psychometric theories that predicts the results of psychological testing, such as test taker ability. The foundation of

the CTT rests on the assumption that, the raw score (X) obtained by any individual is made up of two components; a true score component (T) and a random error score (E) component: X = T + E (Allen & Yen, 2002). For example, if on an IQ test Kwame's true score is 108 but his observed score is 122, then X is 112, T is 108, and E is +4. If Kwame is tested again and his observed score is 100, then X becomes 100, T is still 108, and E is – 8. For any given examinee and test, T is assumed to be a fixed value, although E and X vary for that examinee on different testing occasions.

The real scores and error scores are considered to sum up in classical true-score theory (as opposed to having some other relationship, such as multiplicative effects). Generally speaking, CTT seeks to comprehend and enhance the reliability of psychological tests. The primary goal of CTT is to successfully deal with the raw score's random error component (E). As the measure contains fewer random error, the more closely the raw score reflects the genuine score (Novick, 1966).

Assumptions of CTT

The theory has several assumptions. To start with, the raw score (X) is made up of a true score (T) plus random error (E). Assuming a teacher gives the same test to a student for a large number of times, the average of the student's raw scores would be the best estimate of true score (T) (Allen & Yen, 2002). Additionally, random mistakes surrounding the student's genuine score are assumed to be regularly distributed. Due to the regularly distributed nature of random errors, the expected value of the error (i.e., the mean of the distribution of errors over an infinite number of trials) is zero. Additionally, those random faults are unrelated to one another (Novick, 1966).

Finally, random errors are agnostic to the true score, T. There is no systematic association between a person's true score (T) and the likelihood of experiencing positive or negative errors (Lord & Novick, 1968). CTT is built on the basis of all of these assumptions concerning random errors. The standard error of measurement is defined as the standard deviation of a distribution of random errors centered on the correct score. The lower the value, the closer the random errors are to the genuine score.

Linking Classical Test Theory to this Study

The observed score (X) of an individual on a test consists of two components, True score (T) and Error score (E). In the context of this study, the observed score can be linked to the class test and examination scores of students. For instance, a leaner who obtains a mark of "82%" in an Integrated Science subject, have an observed score of "82%". It is vital to state that this observed score (i.e., 82%) is made up of a true score and an error score. In essence, the true score, here, depicts what the student can actually can do, whereas the error score consists of the factors which create inconsistencies between the grade a student obtains and the actual abilities of the student. Thus, if a student cheats in an Integrated Science Examination and as a result obtains a score of "85%" but does not have mastery over the course content, the true score becomes inconsistent with the observed score (85%). This means that the cheating which went on during the examinations have led to errors in the score of the students, and therefore, resulting in lower reliability of the observed scores.

This study, in using the theory of CTT, focuses on how assessments in education contributes to errors in the observed scores of learners. In the education system, the anticipation is that the observed score of learners equals

their true score which implies that their observed scores are error free. Although this is something too difficult to achieve, it is possible to reduce the errors so that these errors would have insignificant effect on the observed scores. This theory is significant in its effort to give a comprehensive understanding of how scores and grades of students can be contaminated by several factors. This study also explains how assessment practices of teachers are likely to significantly contribute to the errors in scores. The theory further helps to discuss why senior high school students might have good academic achievement in schools but become handicapped when there is the opportunity for them to apply what has been learnt in schools.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

This section provides some definitions to concepts or variables used in this study.

Concept of Assessment

According to Nitko (2001), assessment is a method for acquiring data that is used to make judgments regarding learners, curricula and programmes, as well as educational plan. As a result, assessment entails analysing empirical facts about students' learning in order to strengthen students' learning and programmes (Allen & Yen, 2002).

Morris and Adamson (2010), in a similar vein to Nitko (2001), defined assessment as the acts used by classroom facilitators or scholars to elicit information about their students' knowledge, dispositions, and skillset. Similarly, Stiggins and Chappuis (2005) defined classroom assessment as the act of eliciting evidence of student learning in order to guide instructional conclusions.

From a different perspective, Taras (2005) was of the view that assessment is a verdict that may be substantiated in terms of certain weighted defined aspirations, resulting in either comparative or quantitative rankings. Thus, assessment is any act of assessing data regarding a student's performance that has been gathered using a variety of different methods or procedures (Brown, 2005). Jones (2007), however gave a detailed explanation of assessment stating that it involves gathering and deliberating on data obtained from a variety of origins to assist in developing a comprehensive understanding of what learners have learned, understand, and can apply the knowledge they have gained or accumulated from their educational involvements. When the evaluation results are employed in enhancing future learning experiences, then the process is complete.

The scholars mentioned above have given diverse explanations of assessment because of the varying ideologies. Inferring from their explanations, assessment could be seen as an information gathering process on students' learning to serve two key purposes: summative and formative. This is made clear in Nitkos's (2001) definition that assessment seeks to obtain information to be employed in making informed choices and judgments regarding learners, educational plans, educational syllabi and programmes. Taras (2005) and Brown (2005) both suggest an evaluation of student achievement, which is compatible with a summative function. This objective appears to be centered on the assessment of student learning. Huba and Freed (2000), on the other hand, favour assessment that promotes future learning. Jones' (2007) definition implies a formative objective aimed at enhancing students' learning outcomes.

Goals, Purposes, and Uses of Assessment

Since teaching and assessment often go hand-in hand, there is the need for decisions to be made by teachers, school management and policy makers in the course of or after teaching and sometimes before classroom teaching. These decisions are made based on information gathered from the students. Generally, this information gathering procedure denotes assessment.

Additionally, assessment is a critical component in assisting students in their learning processes. Brown (2005) stresses the importance of evaluation techniques and tasks that enhance and sustain student learning as opposed to merely measuring it. Furthermore, Boud (2000) proposed that assessment should attempt to accomplish not only a course or programme's immediate objectives, but also to lay the groundwork for learners to develop their own evaluation practices throughout their academic careers and lives.

Additionally, Carless (2006), and Gibbs and Simpson (2004) viewed assessment as a means of informing learners about their academic achievement and areas for growth. Assessment enables us to track learners' progress toward certification and to evaluate their success in achieving graduate prominence (Banta, 2002). Assessment, according to Falchikov (2005), is critical for the teaching and learning process, as well as for involving students in their knowledge acquisition.

According to the assessment literature, assessment can be used to accomplish a variety of goals related to student learning. Assessment can be employed in monitoring student progress and providing response to help learners improve their performance (Price, Handley, & O'Donovan, 2008). Additionally, assessment tasks can be created to help learners improve their

abilities of thinking critically, solving problem and conducting self-evaluation (Hall & Jones, 2009).

Numerous studies have discovered that assessment schemes have a substantial effect on children's development into young adults and then adults' personalities and behavioral patterns (Ecclestone & Pryor, 2003). Assessment can have a lasting effect on a student's formal education career. For example, scholarly work by Ecclestone and Pryor indicated that cumulative testing molds students' approaches for future assessment survival. Further, Ecclestone and Pryor concluded that if summative assessment has an effect on how learners develop identities, so does formative assessment. This presupposes that assessment systems may inculcate learning approaches into learners.

The literature specifies that assessment serves two primary purposes: assessment for learning and assessment of learning (Boud, 2000; Falchikov, 2005; Harlen, 2005; So & Lee, 2011). The focus of this appraisal hinges on the two distinct purposes of assessment: assessment of learning (i.e., summative assessment) and assessment for learning (i.e., formative assessment). Assessment is not solely for the purpose of assigning grades or assessing student learning; it also serves to assist students in maturing as learners. The foremost purpose which is assessment of learning, is oriented around assigning grades and awarding certificates of accomplishment to learners. From Stiggins' (2002) perspective, assessment of learning is employed in reporting evidence of learners' accomplishments. According to Boud and Falchikoy (2006), this type of assessment helps learners in completing their studies with an authenticated record of their academic achievement. It generally plays a critical role when the primary goal of education is the transmitting knowledge and skillsets.

Summative assessment measures learners' advancement toward completion of a course by administering tests and assignments. Learners' achievement is determined by examining the performance of learners. Certification, according to Boud and Falchikoy, is regarded as an indication of academic success that can be used to secure employment or further education.

This notwithstanding, the assessment literature has extensively deliberated on concerns about summative assessment. Summative assessment, according to Knight (2002), is in "deep crisis" as a result of its detrimental repercussion on student learning. According to Knight, this assessment purpose may contribute to the creation of a learning environment that is overly focused on grades and learning outcomes and neglects the learning procedures. When the purpose of assessment focuses on providing learners with certificates, the use of only summative assessment may not be adequate and may even be considered to be destructive to students in their learning.

An extensive public anticipation of assessment is typically associated with summative assessment, which verifies students' accomplishments at the conclusion of a programme or course. Boud and Falchikov (2006) argued against future-oriented knowledge acquisition, arguing that it is problematic to persuade educators to abandon long-held impressions of assessment. In Barnett's (2007) view, summative assessment has the potential to exert control over students, categorise them erroneously, and limit their educational progression. This objective appears to be more concerned with quantifying student's learning as opposed to improving their future knowledge acquisition. As a result, it is possible for learners to develop short-term priorities and aspirations. According to Newstead (2003) and Maclellan (2001), this is in

consistency with the measurement model's objective of classifying and comparing students' accomplishment.

Notwithstanding these reservations, one could contend that summative assessment can facilitate student's knowledge acquisition provided assessment activities stress on contents that are analytical and can be applied. Different assessment techniques including writing of journals, developing portfolio, and problem-based learning may be employed as summative measures. Assessment tasks structured in this manner can contribute significantly to a more holistic process of acquiring knowledge or learning. In relation to this study, it can be said that learners are susceptible to employ a lifelong learning strategy when assessed in a way that does not require them to memorise concepts but rather, bring on board what they have learnt, by applying them in practical situations. This will in effect result in high quality learning outcomes where students exhibit critical thinking in applying their knowledge in new situations. On the contrary, learners are prone to employ a rote learning strategy when assessed mainly with the use of recall question. This in effect would not promote proper and better understanding on the part of the students.

Assessment for learning (AfL), the second goal of assessment, concentrates on student learning improvement. In the view of Sadler (1998), the fundamental goal of AfL is generating performance feedback in order to aid in and quicken learning or knowledge acquisition. According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), learners ought to be empowered to practice self-regulation through formative assessment and timely feedback. Thus, rather than assigning grades, one of the fundamental aims of AfL is providing continuous

feedback and closing loop holes between existing performance and learning objectives that are anticipated.

In a similar manner, numerous scholars such as Boud and Falchikoy (2006), Newstead (2003), Price et al. (2008), and Stiggins (2002) argue that assessment for learning's purpose is to offer learners with feedback regarding their present learning by observing, discussing, and gathering evidence from assessment obligations. This suggests that one of the goals of formative assessment is to aid in the process of learning. To Maclellan (2001) and Newstead, this is line with the objective of the standard model of assessment, which is to ensure that knowledge is acquired. It has however been contended that if inadequate time is allotted for its correct implementation, formative assessment can miss its usefulness (Boud & Falchikov, 2005). This indicates that feedback timing is critical if it is to be operative. Learners must be receptive of feedback in a timely manner so that they can integrate the lessons and recommendations into subsequent works.

According to Willis (2011), AfL is a prevalent policy conversation in education that mirrors a desirable shift in the objective of assessment away from measurement and toward knowledge acquisition or learning. Gipps (2002) also submitted that making learning objectives and standards available helps learners to engage in self-assessment and provides guidance through feedback. According to Gipps, this can help learners develop greater self-regulation and independence as lifetime learners. AfL could contentiously be defined as any assessment that is structured to aid in students' learning.

According to Chalmers' (2007) assertion, despite the fact that summative assessment commands the majority of learners' attention as a result of its

importance for obtaining a degree, many educational setups are integrating necessities for formative assessment chances into their assessment guidelines. Teachers of Senior High Schools within the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality for example, assess students by intermittently giving students a number of exercises and assignments. This provides a continuous assessment information for the teachers to know students' weaknesses. This is to improve teaching and learning. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has also backed or sustained formative assessment as an operative learning implement by noting that "Teachers using formative assessment approaches guide students toward development of their own learning to learn skills that are increasingly necessary as knowledge is quickly outdated in the information society" (OECD, 2011, p. 22).

The OECD is not just an educational organisation, but an economic one. As such, Kennedy, Chan, Fok and Yu (2008) stated that as an economic organisation, it appreciates the critical role of education in economic growth and advancement. Formative assessment is economically related to concepts such as "the knowledge society" and "lifelong learning" since it seems to commit long-lasting learning advancements for all learners and not just some select few (Black & William, 1998). Numerous educational organisations according to Kennedy et al. gain substantial backing for formative assessment as a consequence.

Assessment for learning (i.e., formative assessment), has been shown to be an effective tool for enhancing learning or knowledge acquisition in empirical investigations by McDowell, Wakelin, Montgomery and King (2011), Weurlander, Söderberg, Scheja, Hult and Wernerson (2012), and Willis (2011).

For instance, Weurlander et al. examined students' perceptions of various forms of formative assessment and discovered that formative assessment encourages them to learn and also enables them in understanding what they have learned and what needs further improvement. Respondents in Willis' investigation of formative observances in learning environment perceived assessment for learning as participatory models that foster expertise and independence among learners. Additional scientific studies over several years into learners' practical account on assessment uncovered a number of characteristics of formative assessment that promote learning (McDowell et al., 2011). From these investigations, formative assessment possesses the following characteristics:

1. Rich in formal feedback (e.g., tutor comment; self-assessment systems);
2. Rich in informal feedback through dialogic teaching and peer interaction;
3. Provides opportunities to test and practice knowledge, skillset and understanding;
4. Uses assessment tasks that are genuine and appropriate;
5. Assists learners in developing independence and autonomy, and
6. Has a suitable balance between formative and summative assessment.

An investigation by McDowell et al. (2011) revealed that learners' general experiences were relatively more desirable in modules that included assessment for learning strategies, and learners were highly likely to adopt a deep learning strategy. This study corroborates Sambell, Brown, and McDowell's (2000) finding that various systems of assessment have a differential effect on students' learning strategies. According to Weurlander et al. (2012), assessment practices that emphasise factual knowledge appear to

lead learners toward superficial learning strategies, whereas assessment tasks that necessitate application and understanding appear to foster deeper learning strategies. In Taras' (2005) view, summative assessment results could be utilised in a formative manner to offer learners with feedback with the goal of enhancing their learning.

Consequently, whereas Afl (i.e., formative assessment) is theoretically feasible, implementing it faces several challenges. For instance, a case in Hong Kong outlined some of the challenges associated with implementing AfL. Some of the difficulties as observed by Carless (2005) include:

1. "An associated lack of deep understanding of assessment issues by principals, teachers and parents";
2. "Lack of time, capacity and the will to engage with myriad issues in teaching, schooling and educational reform in which assessment for learning is just one strand" (p. 50).

In responding to those difficulties, the Curriculum Development Council ([CDC], 2001) in Hong Kong provided some supervision for reducing the emphasis of summative assessments and examinations favouring greater incorporation of assessment with teaching and learning, and a greater emphasis on procedures of knowledge acquisition and results. The CDC recommended several practices as follows which they believe will promote AfL.

1. The establishment of classroom assessment regulations, such as the diversification of assessment methods and the elimination of tests and examinations;
2. A strong emphasis on feedback to notify learners about their successes and failures, as well as strategies for improving their vulnerabilities;

3. Possibilities for collaborative assessment with learners or for learners to conduct peer or self-assessment;
4. Disseminating the learning objectives with learners such that they become fully aware of the standards for which they are aspiring;
5. The administration of assessments that focus on advanced thinking abilities, creativity, and comprehension as opposed to rote memorisation of information.

Boud (2000) contended that the assessment-related events ought to accomplish "double duty". Boud listed them to be:

1. They must incorporate both formative and summative forms of assessment in order to facilitate knowledge acquisition and accreditation or credentialing;
2. They must prioritise instant tasks while also considering the long-term consequences of preparing learners for long-lasting learning in a future that is unknown;
3. And they must be concerned with both the procedures of knowledge acquisition as well as the applicable content area.

Item Formats

Assessment can take various forms. There are several ways in which items have been classified by format – supply and selection types; free answer and structured answer; essay and objective (Ebel & Frisbie, 1986; Gronlund & Linn, 1990; Thorndike & Hagen, 1977). Item types are grouped into two major categories – essay type test and objective-type test. According to some scholars, essay-based tests are more susceptible to subjective scoring compared with objective-based tests. This notwithstanding, classroom facilitators exclusively

employ both essay type test and objective-type test since only one of such tests cannot be completely adopted in measuring every educational outcome. To Gronlund (1985) and Nitko (2001), essay forms are of two main types; extended response type and the restricted response types. With regard to the objective-based tests, the "multiple choice", "short- answer/fill-in-the blanks", "matching and true or false types" are the item formats that are predominantly adopted by tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education (CoE) (Bartels, 2003). The subsequent paragraphs throw more light on the various item formats.

Essay Type

An essay test item is a test that affords respondents the liberty of composing their responses using their individual or respective expressions (Amedahe & Etsey, 2003). The essay test items are few in number, but they require lengthy replies. There are two forms of essay tests items. These are the "restricted response type" and the "extended response type". The "restricted response type" restricts the responses of the respondents to a defined length regarding the questions that have been posed whereas the "extended response type" does not demand or require any form of restrictions regarding the length of the response. According to Nitko (2001), essay type tests have a number of characteristics. Among some of these characteristics include:

1. Essay tests require learners to organise and write their personal responses.
2. They consist of relatively few items that demand for lengthy replies or responses.
3. Learners spend more time to think and write when writing essay tests.
4. An essay test's extent of quality largely depends on the test scorer.

5. Comparatively, essay tests are easily prepared but the scoring procedures are tedious and problematic.
6. Essay tests permit and encourage bluffing on the part of the test takers.
7. Content validity for essay tests is likely to be low.
8. Scoring for essay type tests is subjective and they are likely to yield unreliable scores.

Advantages of Easy Type Test

Essay type test have a number of advantages. Among some of these advantages include:

1. They provide the test taker the liberty to organise his/her personal thoughts and answer within unlimited boundaries
2. They are easy to prepare and they also eliminate guessing on the part of the respondents.
3. Skills such as ability in organising material as well as ability in writing and arriving at conclusions are improved with the help of essay type tests.
4. They encourage good study habits as respondents learn materials in wholes. Thus, students are more likely of adopting deep learning approach in their studies whenever they sit to prepare for an essay type test.
5. They are best suited for assessing high-order behaviours and mental processes such as analysis, evaluation and synthesis.
6. Little time is required in wring essay type items ad they are also practical for test small number of students.

Disadvantages of Essay Type Tests

Essay type test have a number of disadvantages. Among some of these disadvantages include:

1. They are difficult to score objectively and they provide opportunity for bluffing, i.e., students are likely to write irrelevant and unnecessary materials.
2. Limited aspect of students' knowledge is measured since students are likely to respond to fewer items.
3. Premium is often placed on writing; which implies that, all things being equal, students who write faster are likely to score higher marks.
4. Essay type tests consume a lot of classroom facilitators' (i.e., test scorers) time as well as the time of respondents who write the responses.
5. They are prone to "halo effect" where the scoring is influenced by extraneous factors such as the relationship between the scorer and the respondent.
6. Items of essay type test are usually inadequate sample of subject content.

Objective-Type Test

An objective test usually demands that the test taker either provides a succinct answer which usually does not exceed one sentence or select from given options. The objective test-items normally consist of a large number of items and the responses are scored objectively, to the extent that competent observers can agree on right or wrong responses (Amedahe & Etsey, 2003).

There are two major types of objective tests namely: the "selection type" and the "supply type". The "selection type" consists of the "multiple-choice type", "true or false type" and "matching type". The "supply type" has different

forms which are "completion", "fill-in-the blanks" and "short answer". Objective type test items provide the greatest advantage when working with extraordinarily huge class size and when there is no ample time for submitting test results (Amedahe & Etsey, 2003). Objective tests are more susceptible to guessing; and the score distribution is determined almost completely by the test (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1991).

A true or false test item consists of a statement marked true or false. A respondent is expected to demonstrate his command of the material by indicating whether the given statement is true or false. That is to say, a typical true or false question requires that learners indicate whether a statement is either true or not depending on the learners' facts they possess. Essentially, questions that employ true or false responses are often utilised in measuring simple or low-rated knowledge but could also suffice in judging complex intellectual abilities by test constructors who have the necessary expertise in test construction. Similar to multiple choice, learners react promptly to true or false questions, which enables the test developer to ascertain additional content areas during an examination. True or false questions are also easy and quick to mark (Davis, 2009)

A matching-type test is a special form of the multiple-choice format. It is not very flexible, though it is useful for testing variables that are compatible. The matching type of objective test consists of two columns. The respondent is expected to associate an item in column A with a choice in column B on the basis of a well-defined relationship. Column A contains the premises and column B the responses or options.

A multiple-choice test item is a type of objective test in which the respondent is given a stem and then is to select from among three or more alternatives (options or responses) the one that best completes the stem. The incorrect options are called foils or distracters.

There are two types of multiple-choice tests. These are the single "best/correct response" type and the "multiple response" type. The single "best/correct response" type consists of a stem followed by three or more responses and the respondent is to select only one option to complete the stem. Thus, in the single "best/correct response" type, a test taker is prompted to identify just one response from a clearly defined set of not less than three or more possible responses. The single "best/correct response" type is among the predominantly used question types and is efficiently used in the determination of respondent's fundamental choice out of a set of options. On the contrary, the "multiple response" type requires respondents to choose one or more correct answers in a list of possible answers. That is to say, unlike the single "best/correct response" type, the "multiple response" type of questions could have accurate answers that exceed one, and respondents are required to choose all of the correct answers.

Amedahe and Etsey (2003) established that objective type tests have a number of characteristics. Among some of these characteristics include:

1. Objective type tests require students to choose among several designated alternatives or write a short answer
2. A lot of time is spent by students in reading and thinking when taking an objective type test.

3. A large part of an objective test's quality hinges on the ability of the test developer.
4. Preparing objective type tests are fairly problematic and cumbersome, but the scoring is relatively easy.
5. Reliability of test score are likely to be high since the scoring is highly objective.

Strengths and Advantages of Objective Type Test

Objective type tests have a number of strengths and advantages. Among some of these strengths and advantages include:

1. Objective tests allow for an extensive coverage of subject content.
2. Scoring is easy and very objective.
3. They are best suited for measuring lower-level behaviours and mental processes such as knowledge and comprehension.
4. They provide economy of time in scoring and they do not provide opportunity for bluffing on the part of the test taker.
5. Premium is not placed on writing and certain confounding variables including the likes and dislikes of the scorer does not influence the test takers' results .

Weaknesses and Disadvantages of Objective Type Test

Objective type tests equally have a number of weaknesses and disadvantages. Among some of these weaknesses and disadvantages include:

1. Objective type tests are relatively difficult to construct.
2. Complex psychological processes like analysis, evaluation and synthesis are difficult to measure.

3. They often place premium on students' reading ability and this may encourage reproductive or route learning approach on the part of the student.
4. Item writing is time consuming and these items susceptible to guessing.

Alternative Assessment/Authentic Assessment

Several authors (e.g., Cummings, Maddux, & Richmond, 2008; Hargreaves, Earl, & Schmidt, 2002; Harlen, 2005; Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005; Wolf, Bixby, Glenn, & Gardner, 1991) have advocated for the use of alternative assessment since they promote deep learning, provides the ground for students to think critically about issues, as well as empowering learners to employ self-regulated knowledge acquisition. These forms of alternative assessment comprise performance assessment, portfolios, cooperative knowledge acquisition, self-evaluations, journals, replications, demonstrations, problem-based learning, artworks, project-based learning, insightful annotations, appraisals and case studies. Libman (2010) submitted that "the point of alternative assessments, however, as they are labelled, is not that they are ends in themselves but that they are designed to foster powerful, productive learning for students" (p. 63).

According to Levine (2002), as assessment practices have become increasingly important in developing education, assessment theory and practice have evolved resulting in new perspectives in aspirations and objectives. A famous authentic assessment in education activist called Wiggins (1990) stated that the authenticity of assessment is felt when it examines learners' performance on meaningful academic responsibilities. According to Wiggins, authentic task includes "ill-structured" impediments and responsibilities that

enable the learners practice the sophisticated uncertainties of adult and expert life's "game." Wiggins clearly stated that:

> "Authentic assessments present the student with the full array of tasks that mirror the priorities and challenges found in the best instructional activities: conducting research; writing, revising and discussing papers; providing an engaging oral analysis of a recent political event; collaborating with others on a debate, etc." (p. 2).

Authentic assessment is viewed as "assessment that requires students to integrate their knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to apply them in professional life" (Gulikers, Bastiaens, Kirschner, & Kester, 2008, p. 381). These definitions appear to place an emphasis on the development of assessment tasks that encourage learners to apply their observations and thoughts to practical situations and matters. Some scholars (e.g., Brown, 2005; Carless, 2007) contended that tasks ought to be practice-based to encourage learners to develop lively learning attitudes and ought to reflect practical situations related to the subject learned. Consequently, assessment strategies ought to fortify students as learners and intellectuals, demonstrating employable skills or capabilities after completing their education.

In relation to this study, it can be said that, the manner in which learners organise themselves pending assessment tasks is dependent on their perceptions regarding the evaluation formats adopted by instructors in assessing such students. That is to say, instructors who assess students mainly with the use of recall questions are likely to propel students to learn using rote/surface learning approach. This in effect, does not promote authentic learning on the part of the

students. Thus, since students adopt surface learning approach in their studies, they are less likely of developing high quality learning outcomes, which is often characterised by students' ability to exhibit critical thinking in applying their knowledge in new situations.

Learning-oriented Assessment

Learners' participation in assessment is a major element of learning-focused assessment. Learners are motivated to participate as much as possible in the assessment process. To Carless (2007), discussions with learners about assessment procedures contribute to the development of trust between classroom facilitators and learners and promote transparency. Some scholars (Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2002) asserted that when learners are emboldened to participate in the assessment process, they are able to advance their understanding of learning aspirations and become more enthusiastically involved with standards and values.

According to Liu and Carless (2006), peer feedback is regarded as a communication medium where students can exchange their varying thoughts and ponder over their performance in order to improve the self-regulation of their knowledge acquisition. Carless (2009) explained how peer feedback could be used in conjunction with self-assessment to help learners comprehend and apply standards of assessment to exemplars, their personal work, and their colleagues' works. It is critical to assist learners in developing their self-evaluation competences. Boud (2000) posited that self-assessment is a critical ingredient of "sustainable assessment," suggesting that assessment practices should not only be purpose-driven, but also involve learners in the assessment process on a continuous basis. Put differently, present assignments should foster

learners' ability to evaluate themselves as a skill that they can apply to practical circumstances once they graduate.

It is believed that the relationship among feedback and student learning is critical. Carless (2007) points out that assessment enhances knowledge acquisition when learners receive apt feedback that they can incorporate into forthcoming work. This notwithstanding, William (2009) argued that providing learners with information does not qualify as feedback until supporting student knowledge acquisition is the final outcome. It has also been pointed out that feedback alone may not be effective in enhancing student knowledge acquisition unless learners get involved with and act on it (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). Carless emphasises the importance of timely feedback and involving learners in the process. Additionally, Falchikov (cited in Carless, 2007) places a premium on peer feedback, despite the fact that teacher feedback is the norm. Thus, three simple principles summarise the fundamentals of learning-centered assessment (Carless, 2009):

First Principle: Assessment tasks ought to be created in such a way that they encourage students to participate in effective knowledge acquisition behaviours;

Second Principle: Learners should be actively engaged in discussions about requirements, quality, and their personal and/or colleagues' performance during the assessment process;

Third Principle: Feedback ought to be prompt and prospective in nature in order to assist ongoing and prospective students with their learning or knowledge acquisition.

In summary, learning-focused assessment appears to establish fundamental assessment philosophies that can serve as a guide for directing practices that promote learners' academic achievement or knowledge acquisition. It is anticipated that by integrating the so-called "potential mixture of assessment elements," suitable task design, student engagement assessment process, and operative feedback, student knowledge acquisition in present and/or upcoming projects will significantly be enhanced.

Sustainable Assessment

Boud (2000) coined the term "sustainable assessment". Boud's proposition of the concept of sustainable assessment focuses on the assessment's contribution to knowledge acquisition or learning beyond the duration of a specific course/topic. Thus, sustainable assessment has been defined by Boud as "assessment that meets the needs of the present in terms of the demands of formative and summative assessment, but which also prepares students to meet their own future learning needs" (p. 151). According to Boud, prevailing assessment tasks do not adequately prepare students for long-lasting knowledge acquisition. The majority of arguments focus on the repercussion of learning within a programme of study, rather than on learning-related employment following completion. Boud advocated for assessment to promote lifelong learning. Additionally, Boud insisted that assessment methods and techniques encompass a new conception of sustainable assessment that requires lifelong learning. Quite pertinently, Boud expressed that learners should be motivated to participate in peer and professional feedback, as well as feedback from documented and other channels, in order to maximise their learning effectiveness. Not only should assessment be used in evaluating or grading

learners' work but should as well assist in promoting their comprehension skills. Boud coined the term "sustainable assessment," which was conceptualised in collaboration with other authors who were involved with the "assessment for learning" concept.

In the view of Boud (2000), the following essential points should be considered when developing a sustainable assessment framework: (1) a guideline or standard framework is required; (2) having the confidence that every learner can excel is also required; (3) students having a strong conviction that they can excel can influence their success; (4) establishing clear differences among feedback and grading; (5) assessment ought to concentrate on knowledge acquisition and not performance; (6) developing self-assessment is key; (7) encouraging reflective assessment among colleagues and for assessment to be formative, it ought to be utilised; (8) formative assessment necessitates that teaching and learning procedures be altered from time to time. These recommendations may not be executed due to time limitations, school principles, policies, and a variety of other invisible structures that operate in a variety of educational situations (Carless, 2005). Boud concluded that in order to ensure long-term assessment, paying closer attention to the consequences of summative assessment and exploring ways of reforming it is extremely vital.

Reforms in Assessment

Assessment has witnessed drastic changes in Europe during the last 40 years. Gipps (1994) noticed a shift away from psychometrics and toward a more comprehensive educational assessment model, as well as away from a "testing and examination" philosophy and toward an "assessment" philosophy. Since then, numerous reforms that have conquered the global education agenda have

identified assessment as a key element in enhancing educational standards (Black & William, 1998). This assertion emphasises the critical nature of assessment in the process of teaching and knowledge acquisition.

According to Akyeampong, Djangmah, Oduro and Seidu, 2007, and Lewin and Dunne (2000), efforts have been made in various economies to advance initiatives related to continuous assessment. These innovations were aimed at either eliminating the need for external examinations or to supplement them with continuous assessment (CA) data that could be described differently or combined with the external examinations results. For instance, in Ghana, the School Based Assessment (SBA) system, which is a standardised form of CA, was intended to perform this function, but it has yet to be fully executed in elementary educational institutions.

This global movement toward reforming student achievement assessment has become pivotal in light of the world's increasing search for novel knowledge and abilities. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2011), learners must comprehend the fundamentals of what they have learned, think deeply, and be capable of analysing and drawing conclusions in the global economy of the twenty-first century. This implies that assessment reform has consequences for setting additional suitable learning objectives for students, inspiring curriculum restructuring, and making improvements in pedagogical procedures and knowledge acquisition resources. Additionally, there is a need for modifications in the skills and knowledge necessary for victory in appreciating how students study and in the connection among assessment and instruction, which are affecting learners' and educational institutions' learning aspirations. As a result,

some researchers (Bond, Herman, & Arter, 1994) emphasised the importance of modifying assessment tactics to align assessment design and content with novel assessment results and purposes. In meeting the demands of the twenty-first century, educators have been urged to integrate difficult obligation or tasks that elicit skills that are quite advanced (e.g., NCTM, 2006; OECD/ CERI, 2005; Shepard, 2005; Tan, 2011).

Given the widely recognized pedagogical prospects of formative assessment, its use in classrooms is currently receiving widespread universal acceptance and promotion (Berry, 2011). Many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Barbados, Canada, Portugal, Belgium, Israel, Hong Kong, Iran, Chile, and Singapore, have embraced formative assessment (OECD/ CERI, 2005; Hodgson & Pyle, 2010; Tan, 2011). Numerous international organisations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Bank, normally refer to the beneficial effects of formative assessment on education and knowledge acquisition. According to UNESCO (2005), they are both ardent proponents of formative assessment approaches for the constructive impact they confer on improving educational standards and eminence.

Reviewing literature on the issue of "reforms in assessment" is very important to this study because it helps in giving a comprehensive understanding regarding the essence of assessment in raising educational worth. This is to say, since assessment is central to the process of teaching and knowledge acquisition, recapping issues on "reforms in assessment" highlights the benefits students obtain when they adopt lifelong learning approaches in their studies. Lifelong learning is the ability of learners to practically apply the

requisite skills and knowledge acquired in schools in solving problems and challenges in the world of work or the society they find themselves.

Students who adopt lifelong learning approaches in their studies often use appropriate cognitive activities in completing a learning task meaningfully and effectively. Such students try as much as possible to critically examine, analyse and synthesise the main ideas inherent in an author's argument. They do this to have a comprehensive understanding regarding a particular document's content. By so doing, such learners are capable of applying the understanding they have gained in real life situations which are outside the classroom setting. It is however imperative to emphasise that, learners' ability to adopt the aforementioned knowledge acquisition approach which is also endorsed by the current assessment reform, is largely dependent on the perceptions such students have about how they are assessed by their respective instructors.

Students' Learning Approaches

Students' learning approaches basically focuses how students learn. Thus, students' learning approach encompasses the skills, methods, strategies and behaviours that students use to engage in learning. Similarly, Duff (2004) defined learning approach as a matrix of cognitive, affective, and psychological features that function as a proxy for how an individual interrelates with and reacts to his or her academic environment. Duff's model of Revised Approaches to Study Inventory proposed three different students' learning strategies that learners could adopt in their attempt to learn/study lessons taught by the teacher in the classroom. The author explained that learners are prone to adopting either deep, shallow or strategic approaches of learning in their pursuit to study/learn

what is taught in the classroom. The subsequent paragraphs throw more light on these three learning approaches.

Marton and Saljo (1976) pioneered the deep approach learning concept. Marton and Saljo observed that learners approached an assignment with varying behavioural intention (i.e., perusing a text for future use). Some learners desired to comprehend the text's connotation, while others desired to just replicate what they had learned when interrogated.

Learners who intended to extract import from their learning were more prone to connect information to prior knowledge, to construct thoughts into units that are understandable, and to appraise the knowledge and deductions outlined in the manuscript they studied critically. Learners who however took on the responsibility of memorising manuscript, were more prospective to employ rote learning strategies. The prior integration of aspirations and processing techniques was dubbed the deep learning approach, whereas the latter was dubbed the surface learning approach.

This implies that a more in-depth approach to learning is frequently associated with learners' intentions to comprehend and deduce connotations from the material being learned. To accomplish these objectives, learners frequently employ approaches such as connecting concepts to prior knowledge, identifying patterns, evaluating evidence, and conducting in-depth examinations of opinions (Marshall & Case, 2005). Additionally, a deep learning approach has been defined as a leaners' plan to comprehend content in conjunction with the mechanisms of relating and structuring thoughts, searching for foundational principles, measuring available facts, and systematically

analysing knowledge (Biggs, Kember, & Leung, 2001; Entwistle & McCune 2004; Loyens, Gijbels, Coertjens, & Cote, 2013).

Learners who take a deep approach to learning frequently demonstrate an inherent enthusiasm in the learning tasks they are assigned, as well as a genuine inquisitiveness about the area of study and its interconnection to other fields of study. Several of these students thrive on social learning, which includes debating opposing opinions.

Additionally, deep learners always seek to understand the meaning behind a particular text; they do so by interacting with the study material, the creation of valid arguments and illustrations from their everyday routines. Instead of memorising, such students engage themselves in the study material and as well engage in critical thinking about the data they process. As a result of their increased engagement, deep learners are more probable to preserve information over time (Ramsden, 2003).

On the contrary, a surface learning approach has been defined as a desire to duplicate content, with learning processes characterised by memorisation and rote learning. Thus, students who are surface learners mainly concentrate on memorising and basically learn obtain the pass mark required for an assessment. According to Marton and Saljo (1976), surface learners often see learning tasks as enforced work. That is to say, such learners learn passively, work in isolation, have the opinion that learning is a way to cope with tasks in order to pass an examination or test. Surface learners frequently treat individual components of a topic/subject as distinct units and are unable to interrelate disparate areas into a comprehensible whole.

Houghton (2004) mentioned that learners who are surface/shallow learners have some features in common. Among the features proposed by Houghton are: they accept new facts and ideas without any critical examination, they see learning resources as mere resources that ought to be learnt for exams, and they usually rely on rote learning.

The third learning approach is the strategic learning approach. Unlike deep and surface learning approaches, students who are strategic learners plan their education with the goal of obtaining a high or favorable consequence (Entwistle, 1988). In other words, students learn tactically by acquiring the knowledge necessary to earn a passing grade on an assessment. It is important to emphasise that, depending on the task to be completed, strategic learning may consist of a blend of deep and surface learning techniques.

According to Atherton (2009), students are sometimes faced with no option than to adopt a strategic learning approach. This is evident when students have a lot of documents to read or when students have very limited time at their disposable to complete a particular learning task. Students who adopt strategic learning approach exhibit a number of characteristics. Among some of these characteristics are: students who wish to achieve extraordinary scores frequently plan their time and effort to maximise their effectiveness, they ensure that the study environment and materials are suitable, and they also use past questions to forecast likely examination questions (Houghton, 2004). In his concluding remarks, Houghton (2004) asserted that students who combine both strategic learning approach with deep learning approach are more likely of gaining deep understanding in their area of study in addition to emerging as successful students.

In the nutshell, the previous paragraphs provided enough evidence to support the fact that, the learning approaches students adopt in their study is mostly dependent on their perceptions regarding how classroom facilitators teach and evaluate learners in the classroom. That is to say, students have a higher likelihood of adopting deep and lifelong learning techniques in their studies if they perceive their teachers' assessment as requiring them to bring on board comprehension and application of what they have learnt in novel situations. In such situation, students will be left will no option than to try and understand whatever they learn. On the contrary, learners have a higher likelihood to adopt surface learning strategy in their studies if they perceive teachers' assessment as requiring them to memorise and recall concepts learnt in a given subject. This approach of learning is less likely to promote students' critical thinking skills in various aspects of life endeavours.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

This aspect of the literature reviewed empirical studies based on specific study objectives.

Students' Perception of Assessment Practices

Geo (2012) studied the impressions of high school learners regarding classroom assessment of mathematics in the Northeast of Arkansas. The researcher contacted 25 high school mathematics teachers who in turn helped to contact student participants. On behalf of the researcher, mathematics teachers administered 396 questionnaires to students in their respective classes. Out of the 396 questionnaires, 248 of the students completed and returned the questionnaires accordingly.

The SPAQ in science was adapted for use in this study from Cavanagh et al. (2005). While the SPAQ has been validated in science, the researcher felt it was necessary to re-evaluate the SPAQ's reliability in mathematics, as it was used in the research. As a result, Cronbach's alpha was computed and a reliability coefficient of .80 was obtained, indicating that the SPAQ in mathematics was trustworthy. The obtained data was analysed with descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies and percentages).

The findings of the study revealed that students experienced a strong sense of alignment between mathematics assessment, planned learning, and adequate transparency regarding the purpose and assessment forms. That is to say, most of the students (85%) indicated that the assignment or tests given to them by their mathematics teachers were congruent with their learning activities. The study's findings also revealed that 78% of respondents felt that the mathematics assessments were not applicable to real-life situations. That is to say, there was inadequate authenticity in mathematics assessment tasks assigned to students in the learning environment. The study's finding further indicated that most students had slight or no input into the process of assessment arrangement. Thus, students were rarely involved in the assessment planning process.

In a similar study, Ming-Tak, Chi-Hung, and Kerry (2015) investigated the impressions of assessment practices among Chinese students as well as the degree to which classroom practice adheres to favoured assessment methods. An 11-item questionnaire developed by Brown, Peterson, and Irving (2009a) was adopted in investigating the impressions of 1,518 learners on assessment. These respondents were drawn from 15 elementary and high schools that

housed a sizable proportion of ethnic minority learners. The findings of the study showed that high school students regarded teacher-dominated assessment as the most critical assessment practice in their educational establishments, whereas younger students construed teacher-student interactive assessment as the most critical assessment practice in their educational establishments. Ming-Tak et al. further discovered three distinct perspectives on assessment practices among the marginalised ethnic learners, namely: "teacher-dominated", "student-centred" and "teacher-student interactive" assessment practices. The "teacher-student interactive assessment" practice was the most favoured assessment practice.

In another study, Quansah, Ankoma-Sey, and Aheto (2017) investigated learners' impressions of their participation in assessment decisions at the Distance Education of University of Cape Coast (UCC). A cross-sectional survey design was used for the investigation. Through multi-stage sampling technique, 618 distance education students were sampled from centres in three regions in Ghana. The study adapted a scale from Fisher et al. (2005) with 9-items which were measured on 4-point Likert-type scale. The data gathered was analysed descriptively with mean and standard deviation, and t-test (i.e., one sample and independent sample).

Quansah et al. (2017) observed that students were clear about the assessment types being used and details were given on how assessment tasks were scored. Quansah et al. further realised that although students reported that they received feedback from assessment, this feedback was not provided quickly. Thus, the students reported that their scripts were not quickly marked and returned. Consequently, Quansah et al. recommended that management of

College of Distance Education should consider providing prompt feedback for students concerning their assessment.

In furtherance, a study by Ibrahim and Khairuddin (2019) investigated students' perception of classroom assessment practices (CAPs) in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs). The study's objective was to examine learners' attitudes of CAPs and to determine whether any correlation existed between their perceptions of the six CAP scales (i.e., congruent with planned learning, authenticity, students' consultation, transparency, students' capability, and students' soft skills). Ibrahim and Khairuddin employed quantitative research method utilising questionnaire survey, adopted from Fisher, Waldrip and Dorman (2005). In all, 109 diploma students were randomly chosen from Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs). The data were using the means and standard deviations.

Ibrahim and Khairuddin (2019) observed that, MHEIs students' perception of classroom assessment practices were congruent with planned learning. Students also perceived authenticity in classroom assessment tasks. The students also reported transparency regarding the classroom assessment tasks. Ibrahim and Khairuddin' study also discovered that classroom assessment practices helped students to develop and improve their level of capability and their soft skills. This suggests that classroom assessment tasks were appropriate and best suited students' capabilities. Additionally, Ibrahim and Khairuddin's study revealed a substantial positive linkage among the students' perceptions towards the six scales of CAPs.

In their study, Dhindsa, Omar, and Waldrip (2007) evaluated upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the

dimensions covered in students' perception of assessment questionnaire (SPAQ). A stratified sampling procedure was used to engage 1,028 science students in four different areas in Brunei. Questionnaire served as the principal instrument for conducting of the investigation. Means and standard deviations helped in analysing the data gathered.

Dhindsa et al. (2007) discovered high mean scores for congruence with planned learning (CLP) and transparency in assessment (TIA) dimensions of assessment process and a low mean score for student consultation on assessment (SCA) dimension. The high average scores for the CPL and TIA scales indicate that students generally viewed their assessments to cover what they learned in class and that their assessments were frequently transparent. Nevertheless, the low average scores for SCA indicates that students were consulted on classroom assessment at a minimal level. Additionally, the research found low mean scores for the assessment scale's remaining two dimensions: Applied Learning (AL) and Use of Diversity in Assessment (DIA). This demonstrates a tenuous connection between knowledge assessment and application in everyday activities. The findings of the study also suggests that classroom assessment did not cater for students' diversity.

Students' Perception of Assessment Practices and Students' Learning Approaches

Beausaert, Segers, and Wiltink, (2013) undertook a study in two different secondary educational institutions in two distinct Netherland towns. The purpose of the study was to ascertain how secondary school students view their classroom facilitators' approaches to teaching in various fields and the manner in which this affects their learning styles. Beausaert et al. also explored

the differences that exit in the manner in which mathematics and Dutch-language learners view the delivery strategies of their classroom facilitators and the tactics they use in learning. The descriptive survey design (cross-sectional) was used to conduct of the investigation. A simple random procedure was used to engage 128 respondents.

Questionnaire served as the principal tool for gathering data. The data gathered were analysed with means and standard deviation, as well as hierarchical regression analyses. Additionally, analyses of variance (ANOVA) and covariance (ANCOVA) assisted in exploring the differences in the impressions of mathematics and Dutch-language students regarding their classroom instructors' delivery strategies and the tactics they use in learning.

The findings of the study revealed that a teacher-centred approach predicted a surface learning approach while a student-centred approach predicted a deep learning approach. This indicates that learners who interpret their teachers' assessment processes to be teacher-centered have a higher likelihood to implement a surface learning approach. Similarly, learners who perceive their classroom facilitators to be exhibiting student-centered characteristics in their assessment processes have a greater propensity of adopting a deep learning strategy. The findings of the study further revealed that students who pursued Dutch-language perceived their classroom facilitators to be predominantly student-centred, such students adopted a deep learning approach as against their student counterparts who pursued mathematics courses.

Throwing more light on the concepts, "teacher-centered approach" and "student-centered approach," it is worth emphasising that teachers who

implement a teacher-centered strategy often exert control over the material that students study, such teachers often instruct students regarding the way and manner they (students) are expected to study the material. This leaves students with limited options of adopting deep learning strategies that will assist them in relating what they study to their personal experiences. Teachers who adopt a student-centered approach on the other hand do not exert control over the learning materials that students are supposed to study. Students are given the free will to interact with the teacher in order to deepen their understanding regarding what is being taught in the classroom. This gives the student an opportunity to relate what they study to their personal experiences which could eventually deepen their understanding.

In another study, Scouller (1998) examined the impact of assessment methods on students' approaches to learning. Two hundred and six students were contacted for the study. The students answered the questionnaires regarding their impressions about two different assessments strategies for a course which are essay and multiple-choice questions (MCQ). Questionnaires were administered to respondents regarding the issue under investigation. The data gathered were analysed with means and standard deviations. Scouller observed that students had a higher likelihood of employing a surface learning strategy in MCQ which measures simple knowledge or knowledge abilities. That is to say, the use of deep learning strategies was related with lower achievement on the MCQ examination. The study further revealed that, students tended to use deep learning techniques during assignment essays preparation that they viewed as measuring complex cognitive abilities.

In their study, Gulikers, Bastiens, Kirschner, and Kester (2006) investigated the linkage among students' impressions regarding assessment authenticity and alignment on their learning approaches together with learning achievement. The authors engaged students in Senior High School who were persuing a vocational programme. The respondents completed questionnaires regarding the authenticity of varied assessment attributes and the alignment among teaching and assessment. A standardised scale on learning approaches was also administered to measure students' learning approaches: deep and shallow learning approaches. In testing the study's hypotheses, correlations and structural equation modeling were utilised.

Gulikers et al. observed that when assessment tasks are more authentic, that is, when they are more aligned with real-world situations, there is also irrefutable proof of deeper learning and/or increased general skill advancement. The study also discovered that the impression held by students regarding the assessment task's authenticity had no influence on the use of surface learning. That is to say, students were less likely of adopting a surface learning approach when they perceive that assessment tasks assesses their capability of applying the knowledge they have gained in practical situations or problems.

Gender and Students' Perception of Assessment

Gao (2012) studied the views of high school students about mathematics assessment in the classroom. Gao communicated with 25 mathematics teachers in high schools via phone calls and email to help in reaching the targeted participants in Northern Arkansas (USA). Students who were between the ages of 16 to 18 years were conveniently sampled for the study. Through a survey, 248 American students (104 males and 144 females) gave valid responses to a

standardised questionnaire by name "Students' Perception of Assessment Questionnaire (SPAQ)." Gao observed a statistically substantial gender variations in assessment authenticity and transparency. For authenticity, more female students than males were of the view that assessment did not reflect real life setting. On transparency, more female students than male students felt the assessment in Mathematics was not transparent. The study, however, found non-significant gender difference in the other (i.e., congruence with planned learning, student consultation, and student diversity) dimensions of the scale.

Regarding whether males and females differed substantially in their impressions about mathematics assessment in classroom, Gao (2012) used chi-square instead of an unpaired sample t-test to estimate gender variations in the perception of students on each dimension. It is important to state that chi-square is used for finding association. Getting a marked linkage among gender and the impressions of students regarding assessment does not necessarily mean that there are differences in their perception. The result might be misleading. Gao, however, failed to ascertain the gender variation regarding the composite score of students' perceptions of assessment practices.

In another study, Alkharusi, Aldhafri, Alnabhani and Alkalbani (2014) sought to develop a model that would describe the role of gender in the multivariate connection among the impression of learners regarding assessment tasks and assessment in classroom. In all, 411 middle school students from Oman's Muscat government-assisted educational institutions were chosen with a cluster sampling technique. Descriptive-correlational design was adopted for the study. The findings of the study revealed substantial gender variations in the perception of female students about assessment tasks and assessment in

classroom. Additionally, the study's result indicated that a learning-oriented assessment environment has a link with high levels of "congruence with instruction", "authenticity", "student consultation", and "diversity" for male and female students. Nevertheless, in male and female classrooms, the link between an achievement assessment environment and perspectives of assessment tasks varied.

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review was captured under three (3) categories. These categories include the theoretical, the conceptual and the empirical reviews. The theoretical component of the literature reviewed two theories (i.e., the constructive alignment theory and the social cognitive theory) that guided the study's conduct. Similarly, issues such as concept of assessment, forms of assessment, goals, purpose, and uses of assessment, alternative assessment (i.e., authentic assessment), learning-oriented assessment, sustainable assessment, reforms in assessment, as well as students' learning approaches were captured under the conceptual review. Regarding the empirical review, studies were appraised in line with the study's objectives.

The empirical studies on students' perception of assessment practices were discussed. It was clear from the literature that majority of the research were carried out in other nations where the education systems seem to differ from that of Ghana. It appears, however, that there is no known study on SHS students' perception of assessment practices on their learning approaches in relation to the five dimensions: congruence with planned learning, authenticity, students' consultation, transparency, and students' capability. This current study therefore, investigates the influence of SHS learners' impressions of

practices of assessment on their learning approach, taking into consideration the aforementioned five dimensions of assessment.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

This study examined Sefwi Wiawso Municipality SHS students' impressions of classroom assessment practices on their approaches to learning. The present chapter provides information on the methods utilised in conducting the research. The chapter, specifically, gives a step-by-step procedure in gathering valid and consistent information and how the information has been analysed with the intent of achieving the study's overall objective. The chapter is divided into the following sections: research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedures, and data processing and analysis.

Research Design

To Blessand Higson-Smith (2000), each study requires a research design that is meticulously planned to meet the study's specific requirements. A study without a well-structured research design has the potential of being inefficient and leads to conclusions that are inaccurate and/or misleading. Punch (2005) described a design of any research as directional plan for leading investigators from "here" to "there"; where "here" is described as the preliminary series of interrogations to be responded to, whereas "there" comprises certain series of inferences about the stated questions. In between "here" and "there" reveals a number of key steps, comprising the collection and analysis of relevant data (Yin, 2003). A research design may also be defined as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation employed by the researcher in order to obtain appropriate answers to a set of research questions (Creswell, 2009).

This study adopted a descriptive research design. From Leedy and Ormrod's (2010) view, survey research includes obtaining data about one or more individuals, maybe about their opinions, characteristics, previous experiences or attitudes by asking a number of questions and summarising their responses. Creswell (2014) have noted that employing survey as a research design permits the investigator to choose a group of interest and present to them a questionnaire, and or even carry out an interview to gather data about a phenomenon.

This study involves surveying respondents and recording their responses for analysis (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). This was used because the investigation intends to provide a description of the attributes of the SHS students being studied, and also to determine the proportion of respondents who behave in a certain way without any form of manipulation. This is a type of design where researchers are often interested in describing the attitudes and behaviours of a large population about a specific topic or issue at a specific time point (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

This design was deemed appropriate because the researcher intended to observe and explain existing patterns of behaviour, of students at SHSs concerning their impressions about assessment practices and the influence these perceptions have on the learning approaches they use (Creswell, 2009). Again, this design was chosen because the study was mainly based on numerical analyses of data drawn from primary data collected. Moreover, the basis for the choice of the quantitative approach using descriptive design was as a result of the guidance of the study's objectives and identified questions, one of which aimed at investigating the linkage among the impressions of SHS students about

assessment practices and the learning approaches they adopt in their studies. In the use of this design, I carried it out as a quantitative study. With the adoption of questionnaire, I gathered data on the opinions of SHS students about classroom assessment practices and how they influence the learning approaches they adopt.

Study Area

This research was conducted in Sefwi Wiawso Municipality within Ghana's Western-North Region. Sefwi Wiawso is the regional administrative capital of the region which is cited at the region's south-eastern part and bounded bounded by Juaboso, Bodi and Akontombra on the west, Bibiani Anhwiaso-Bekai district to the east, Wassa Amenfi West to the south-east, and Ahafo, Bono-East and Bono Regions to the north. The 2010 population and housing census clearly stated that, Sefwi Wiawso was the largest municipality in the region and it covered a total land area of 11,011.6 square kilometres with a total population of about 139,200. Males constitute 50.1% and females represent 49.9% of the population. Their major economic activity has been cocoa farming, and Sefwi Wiawso has been the largest cocoa-producing municipal in the region (MOFA, 2019). Currently, there are 114 elementary schools, 119 primary educational institutions, as well as 76 junior high schools within the Municipality. There are also four public Senior High Schools (SHSs), namely Sefwi Wiawso SHS, St. Joseph SHS, Asawinso SHS and Sefwi Wiawso Secondary and Technical School in the Municipality. There are also one Vocational School, a College of Education, and Health Assistant Training School in the Municipality.

Population

Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) conceptualised population as the principal investigator's ideal group, that is "the group to whom the researcher would like to generalise the result of the study" (p. 104). Population is the larger group in which a study is being conducted. It is the universal set from which a sample was selected and about which conclusion can be made (Degu & Yigzaw, 2006). The study's population comprised all students in public SHSs within Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Records from the Municipal Directorate of Education indicated that the four (4) public SHSs had a total of 4,514 students in the Municipality. Out of the total population, 2471 of the students were males while 2043 were females. All students within the various academic levels (SHS 1, SHS 2 and SHS 3) within the various public schools served as the population for the study. Table 1 displays the distribution of the students' population per level.

Table 1- *Distribution of SHS Students in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality*

School	Level of Study								
	SHS 1		SHS 2		SHS 3		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	ALL
St. Joseph SHS	132	132	196	177	91	118	419	427	846
Asawinso SHS	203	180	243	208	341	309	787	697	1484
Sefwi Wiaso SHS	247	229	270	206	285	232	802	667	1469
Sefwi Wiawso S/T. S	180	68	199	141	84	43	463	252	715
Sub-total	762	609	908	732	801	702	2471	2043	**4,514**

Source: GES, Sefwi Wiawso Municipality, Directorate (2020)

Sampling Procedures

A study's sample size is proportional to the size of the universal set studied (Neuman, 2007). In essence, a sample is a subset of a universal set which is thought to represent the entire universal set in an investigation. Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size helped in calculating or estimating the study's sample size. According to Krejcie and Morgan, a sample of 357 is sufficient in representing a population of 4514 in order to make meaningful inference from the sample to the population.

To select the individual respondents, the stratified sampling technique (with two stratification variables, level of study and gender) was utilised in selecting 357 students. Firstly, a proportionate stratified sampling method was adopted in determining the number of respondents to sample out of the four (4) public schools. In each school, the number of students selected took into consideration each academic level's quantity of students and the gender of the respondents. After that, the study's respondents were enrolled using a simple

random sampling technique, more precisely, the table of random methods. Table 2 provides details of the sampled students.

Table 2- Sampling Distribution of SHS Students in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality

School	Level of Study								
	SHS 1		SHS 2		SHS 3		TOTAL		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	ALL
St Joseph SHS	10	10	16	14	08	09	34	33	67
Asawinso SHS	16	14	19	16	27	24	62	54	116
Sefwi Wiawso SHS	20	18	21	16	23	18	64	52	116
Sefwi Wiawso S/T. S	14	06	16	11	07	04	37	21	58
Sub-total	60	48	72	57	65	55	197	160	**357**

Source: GES, Sefwi Wiawso Municipality, Directorate (2020)

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaire was employed in gathering information for the investigation (see Appendix B). Specifically, the questionnaire was adapted from various scales developed by some researchers (Fisher, Waldrip & Dorman 2005; Duff, 1997). The questionnaire entails three (3) sections labelled as "A" "B" and "C". Section "A" was made up of four (4) items. These items requested for respondents' background information. The demographic variables were gender, level of study, name of school and programme of study. Section "B" comprised 37 items soliciting information on the impressions of students about assessment in the classroom with regard to the assessment practices their classroom facilitators use. These items were adapted from Fisher, Waldrip and

Dorman. The last aspect of the questionnaire, that is, Section "C" was made up of 30 items adapted from Duff. This aspect of the questionnaire elicited information about learning approaches adopted by students. In all, a total of 71 items were composed.

Students' Perception of Assessment Questionnaire (SPAQ)

The "Students' Perception of Assessment Questionnaire" (SPAQ) was designed by Fisher, Waldrip and Dorman in 2005. The SPAQ instrument was designed and validated using an instinctive logical approach. More than 64 research and policy publications on outstanding and successful assessment practices, attributes, guidelines, and strategies were analysed as part of a comprehensive literature appraisal.

The following tentative dimensions of the SPAQ instrument were determined to be significant based on the comprehensive appraisal of research and policy publications: "Congruence with Planned Learning", "Diverse Methods", "Authenticity", "Student Consultation", "Transparency", and "Accommodation of Student Diversity". Fisher et al. (2005) gave the following descriptions for the sub-scales:

1. Congruence with planned learning: The degree to which assessment tasks match the goals, objectives and activities of the learning programme.
2. Diverse Methods: The degree to which multiple, diverse assessment tasks are used.
3. Authenticity: The degree to which assessment tasks feature real life conditions that are pertinent to the learner.

4. Student consultation: The degree to which students are consulted and informed about the forms of assessment tasks being employed.
5. Transparency/Clarity: The extent to which the purposes and forms of assessment tasks are well-defined and clear to the learner
6. Accommodation of student diversity: The extent to which all students have an equal chance at completing assessment tasks.

Due to the instrument's length constraint, Fisher et al. (2005) developed a set of 11 items for each component and exposed them to measurement criticism with the target of including eight items per sub-scale in the tentative questionnaire. As a result, a team of scholars with expert knowledge in educational and psychological measurement and school evaluation reviewed a collection of 66 items for inaccuracies and imprecision. Each item's face validity and scale assignment were given special consideration. The items required respondents to respond on a four-point Likert-type scale: "*Almost Never", "Sometimes", "Often", and "Almost Always"*. This review process resulted in the development of a 48-item instrument with six sub-scales. Every subscale consisted of eight items.

The SPAQ was administered to a random sample of 320 Australian secondary school students. Fisher et al. (2005) calculated the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach Coefficient) and discriminant validity (mean correlation between each scale and the remaining scales) of each sub-scale. With the exception of the Diverse Methods scale, all scales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability. Discriminant validity revealed overlap between the scales, and exploratory factor analysis using Varimax Rotation revealed low factor loading for Diverse Methods scale items.

As a result of this, the Diverse Methods scale was eliminated. This determination was made on the basis of two factors: a lack of internal consistency and theoretical intersection with the scale of Accommodation of Student Diversity. Next, the Diversity scale was rechristened Accommodation of Student Diversity. Thirdly, a number of items were altered to improve their face validity. Lastly, it was determined that each scale should have only six items. This determination was made grounded on information indicating that there was no discernible loss of the five scales' internal consistency reliability. Besides that, smaller scales improved the instrument's overall management economy.

Fisher et al. (2005) administered the final version of SPAQ to 3,098 students in 150 classrooms. The SPAQ's reliability was determined by performing item analysis on the data and calculating the internal consistency/reliability (i.e., Cronbach alpha) of the approximated factors. The data indicate that the alpha reliability for the sample ranged between 0.62 and 0.82, indicating that all SPAQ scales have desirable levels of reliability, particularly those with a modest quantity of items. Specifically, congruence with planned learning had reliability estimates of .72, authenticity .82, student consultation .72, transparency .82 and diversity .62. The mean partial correlation coefficient between two scales was used to assess the SPAQ's discriminant validity. Correlation coefficients ranged between 0.38 and 0.46, implying that the SPAQ assesses different, even though slightly conflicting, characteristics of assessment dimensions.

Cavanagh, Waldrip, Romanoski, Fisher and Dorman (2005) validated the SPAQ using Rasch Rating Scale Model. The model was used to determine

whether the data from the rating scale instrument met the measurement's requirement, that is, whether the data from the instrument's items constituted measurement of the attributes of interest. The 30-item questionnaire was administered to students in the 8th to 10th years in 16 classes in Queensland (Australia) Metropolis together with countryside schools. The result showed that students' chances of selecting two adjacent response options (e.g., almost always and often) are identical. Post hoc analysis was conducted and the four-point response scale was reduced to three-point scale after the number of items have been reduced to 24. It was again discovered that the three-point response option was relatively suitable.

Koul and Fisher (2005), in contrary to Cavanagh et al.'s (2005) findings, stated that the three-point scale did not give respondents a wide range of options to choose from and as a result, respondents were forced to choose from options available even if it does not reflect their actual response. Koul and Fisher, therefore, developed and applied the SPAQ using a five-point Likert type scale (i.e., strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree). A sample of 1,000 participants from 40 science classes were selected to respond to the instrument. Through reliability estimates and factor analysis, the instrument served its purpose and was consistent as compared to the previous form (i.e., three-point scale). The factor loadings were from .69 to .91. The reliability estimates for the dimensions were .77-.92.

Dhindsa, Omar, and Waldrip in 2007, evaluated the SPAQ by administering the instrument to 1,028 science students in Brunei. SPAQ was appropriate for assessing the impressions of students regarding assessment with a five-point scale. Dhindsa et al. observed from the factor analysis that the instrument served

the purpose for which it was designed. Generally, the SPAQ was regarded as valid and consistent for the Brunei students. The reliability estimates were of the subscales were from .79-.93. The overall reliability was .95.

In examining classroom assessment practices of 99 government educational institutions in Oman, Alkharusi, Aldafri, Alnabhani and Alkalbani (2014), adopted the SPAQ with the five-point Likert scale and found that the instrument was good in measuring the perception of students on assessment. The reliability estimate was found to range from .63- .72. Through statistical means, they found the instrument to be reliable and valid in obtaining information on students' perception of assessment.

In this current study, the SPAQ was adapted to examine SHS students' perception of assessment practices with four-point Likert scale (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree). This aspect of the questionnaire (Section B) comprised 37-items measuring students' perception of assessment practices with the following sub-dimension: congruence with planned learning (7-items), authenticity (9-items), student consultation (8-items), transparency (8-items) and student's capabilities (5-items).

As earlier indicated, the original questionnaire was modified to suit this particular study. None of the original items was eliminated but were reworded to fit into the context of the study. For example, statements like "Questions in science tests what I know" was reworded to "Assessment tasks in my school tests what I memorise". These rewording was essential because the sample for the study differed from the sample used in the development of the instrument.

A number of items were, however, added to the original 24-item scale to increase the number to 37-items. Some of the new items added included:

"Assessment tasks in my school focus more on learning past questions", "Assessment tasks in my school do not reflect issues in real life situations", "Assessment tasks in my school does not give me the chance to demonstrate my ability on wider learning tasks" and "Assignments in my school do not offer the chance to learn values and processes of team work". These additional items were necessary because I identified additional samples of behaviour which together with the existing items, would help provide a comprehensive measure of students' perception of assessment practices. Increasing the number of items did not only aim at improving validity of findings but also the reliability of the results as argued by Nitko (2001) that as the quantity of items of an instrument increase, the more dependable the instrument becomes.

Students' Learning Approaches

Similarly, the "Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory" [RASI] (4-point scale) was adapted from Duff (2004) to measure students' learning approaches. The instrument has 30 items with three dimensions: deep approach; surface approach; and strategic approach. The psychometric attributes of RASI have been confirmed by many authors since the extensive revision of the ASI was achieved. For instance, Tait and Entwistle (1996) conducted an investigation and sampled 640 UK bachelor students. A study that used the 1992 form of the RASI and reported high internal consistency reliability values (i.e., $\alpha = .73 - .83$ for the five dimensions) and high construct validity, from the factor analysis. In a similar study, Sadler-Smith (1996) sampled 245 UK business students. Sadler-Smith used a 38- item version of RASI and reported values of generally acceptable internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .70 - .82$ for four scales and an unacceptably low value of .29 for one scale, lack of direction), and high

construct validity, which was revealed by conducting an exploratory factor analysis.

As an attempt to produce a short version of RASI, Duff (1997) found proof for the construct validity of the values generated by the RASI's three essential learning strategy scales. These tripartite defining strategies were deep, shallow and strategic approaches. These tripartite defining strategies were also confirmed by Sadler-Smith and Tsang (1998) in one previous exploratory factor analysis. In view of this, Duff developed an abridged form of the RASI. This abridged RASI eliminated items that comprised the lack of direction, academic self-confidence and metacognitive awareness subdimensions.

The short-form scale of RASI which the study adapted was developed to assess students' learning strategies in higher education. Students' learning strategies ware measured on three dimensions: deep, shallow and strategic. The inventory was made up of 30 items, with 10 items under each of the three dimensions. These items followed a four-point Likert-scale type of measurement: 1 = "Strongly disagree", 2 = "Disagree", 3 = "Agree" and 4 = "Strongly Agree". A widely known factor analysis modelling technique such as principal-axis factoring was used to establish psychometric properties of the instrument. Additionally, Cronbach alpha coefficient helped in establishing the internal consistency reliability of the various dimensions.

Estimate of reliability was found to range from .80 -.82. Specifically, the reliability estimates obtained for the various aspects of the scales include: deep learning approach = - 0.80, surface learning approach = - 0.80, and strategic learning approach = - 0.82. All in all, the responses given to the 30-item version of RASI provided an acceptable internal consistency reliability on

the three defining approaches to learning as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Through a statistical means, Duff observed the 30-item RASI to be reliable and valid in obtaining information on students' learning approaches. Thus, the 30-item version of RASI was equivalent to the first RASI (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Ramsden & Entwistle, 1981) in terms of its psychometric property. The RASI with 30 items however present has a strength of taking comparably shorter period to finish, it also avoids respondents' fatigue and ensures respondents' co-operation (Entwistle & Tait, 1995; Wolf, 1988).

Pilot Testing

The scales on the instrument were subjected to pilot-testing using 100 SHS students in Edinaman SHS which is located in Cape Coast Metropolis. Results and feedback obtained from the pilot tests were used to refine the instrument for the final data collection.

Results of the Pilot Testing

This section contains the results on the validation of the SPAQ and the Revised Approach to Study Inventory (RASI). Data were collected from 100 SHS students in Edinaman SHS in Cape Coast Metropolis. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using Smart-PLS. Tables 3 to 7 shows details of the results.

Table 3- *Factor Loadings, AVE, and Reliability for SPAQ*

Constructs	Items	Estimate	AVE	nAVE	rho_A
Congruence	B1	-.599	.284	.475	.795
	B2	-.017*			
	B3	-.621			
	B4	.821			
	B5	.693			
	B6	-.090*			
	B7	-.285*			
Authenticity	B8	-.071*	.177	.298	.721

	B9	.625			
	B10	.141*			
	B11	-.307			
	B12	-.259*			
	B13	.500			
	B14	.408			
	B15	-.067*			
	B16	-.771			
Consultation	B17	.592	.254	.488	.804
	B18	.746			
	B19	.602			
	B20	-.107*			
	B21	.267*			
	B22	-.036*			
	B23	.004*			
	B24	.822			
Transparency	B25	.334	.174	.285	.701
	B26	.345			
	B27	-.829			
	B28	.214*			
	B29	.256*			
	B30	-.276*			
	B31	.253*			
	B32	.471			
Capabilities	B33	.454	.374	.610	.874
	B34	.211*			
	B35	-.039*			
	B36	.944			
	B37	.853			

*Items to be deleted

From Table 3, 17 items of the 37 items had factor loadings below .30, therefore, were not considered. These items could not explain at least 9% of their respective constructs. These items were then deleted and the new AVEs were estimated. The internal consistency estimated for all the dimensions were greater than .70. From Table 3, with the exception of Capabilities sub-dimension which had an AVE of .61, all the other dimensions had AVEs below .50 indicating lack of convergent validity.

Table 4- *Discriminant Validity of the SPAQ*

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Authenticity					
2	Capabilities	.818				
3	Congruence	.942	.847			
4	Consultation	.785	.772	1.003		
5	Transparency	.991	.830	1.082	.873	

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT). From Table 4, transparency, and consultation dimensions had HTMTs greater than .95, however, all the others were below. This suggests reduced discriminant validity. Figure 1 shows the measurement model for SPAQ.

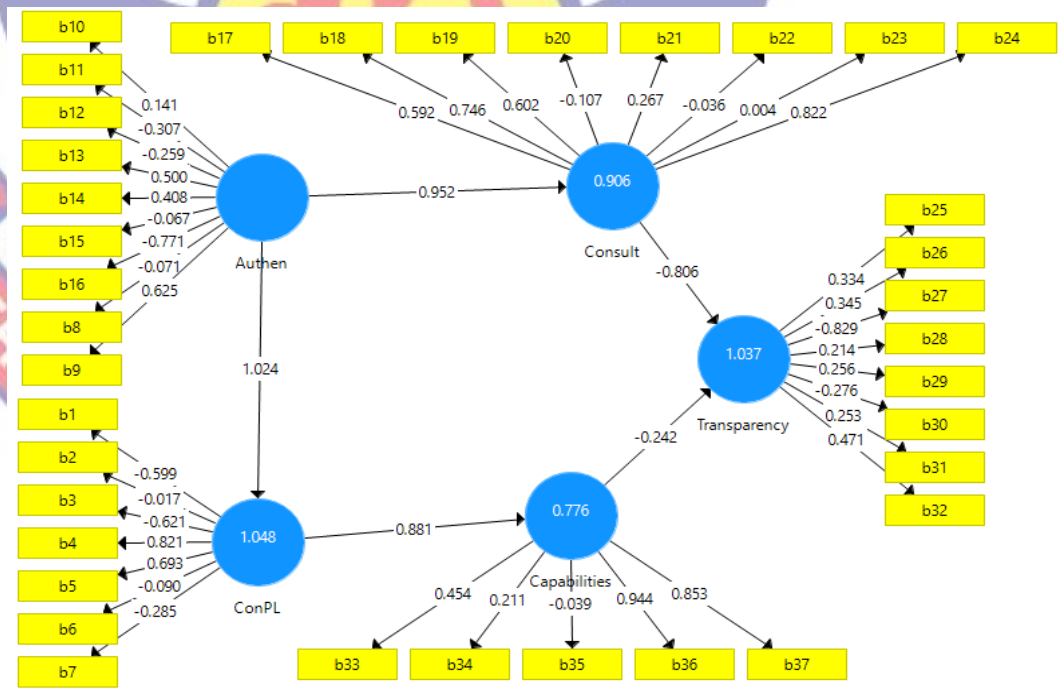

Figure 1- Measurement model for SPAQ

The model is a reflective measurement model for SPAQ. The model contains 37 items. However, after confirmation, all items with factor loadings below .30 were considered. This model shows the sub-dimensions of students' perception of assessment questionnaire. The sub-dimensions are authenticity (authen), consultation (consult), congruence with planned learning (ConPL), and capabilities. Based on this model, 20 items were finally confirmed and used for the analysis.

Table 5- *Factor Loadings, AVE, and Reliability for RASI*

Constructs	Items	Estimate	AVE	nAVE	rho_A
Deep learning	C1	0.686	.550	.60	.955
	C2	0.871			
	C3	0.985			
	C4	0.911			
	C5	0.976			
	C6	0.869			
	C7	0.140*			
	C8	0.370			
	C9	0.679			
	C10	0.385			
Strategic learning	C11	0.044*	.589	.542	.930
	C12	0.790			
	C13	0.791			
	C14	0.704			
	C15	0.883			
	C16	0.791			
	C17	0.894			
	C18	0.498			
	C19	0.773			
	C20	0.299			
Surface learning	C21	0.946	.709	.710	.965
	C22	0.812			
	C23	0.910			
	C24	0.844			
	C25	0.536			
	C26	0.910			
	C27	0.857			
	C28	0.884			
	C29	0.787			
	C30	0.864			

*Items to be deleted

As indicated in Table 5, two items (C7 and C11) had factor loadings below .30, and therefore discarded. In all, 28 items were deemed valid. The AVEs for all the three dimensions were greater than .50, hence convergent validity was achieved. Table 6 presents the results of the discriminant validity.

Table 6- *Discriminant Validity of the RASI*

		1	2	3
1	Deep learning			
2	Strategic learning	0.268		
3	Surface learning	0.475	0.373	

For discriminant validity, all the HTMT values for all the dimensions of learning approaches were below .95, hence discriminant validity was achieved. Further the internal reliability was estimated using rho A, and all the coefficients were above .70. In all, 28 items were used to measure students' learning approaches. Figure 2 presents the measurement model for the RASI.

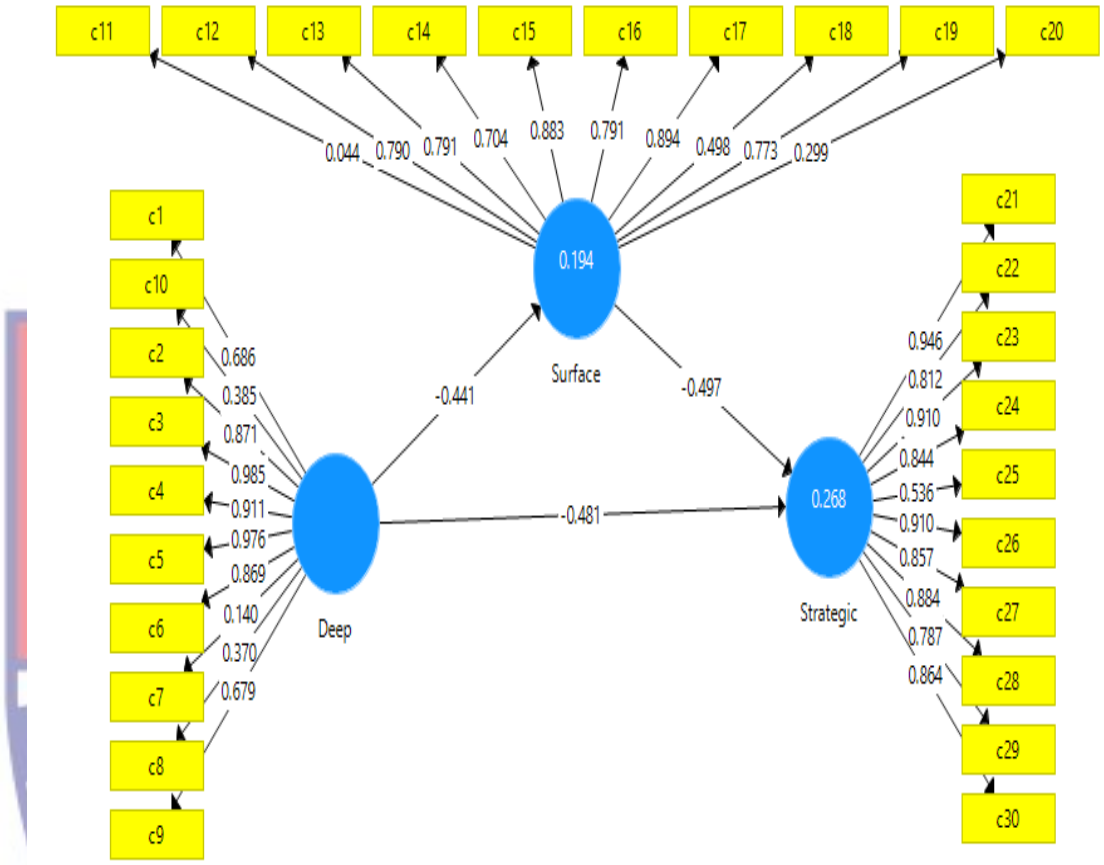

Figure 2- Measurement model for RASI

In the reflective measurement model for RASI (Figure 2), it is evident that two items had factor loadings below 0.30, and these are C7 and C11. These items were therefore deleted and not considered in the analysis. Twenty-two (22) items were therefore used to collect data for the analysis; this assisted in providing answers to the research questions as well as the testing the hypotheses.

Data Collection Procedures

The principal investigator was introduced to the various schools via an introductory letter from the Department of Education and Psychology. This was necessary to ensure that head masters and head mistresses of the schools were pre-informed about the data collection. A follow-up was done to arrange for

time and date which were convenient for the data to be collected and as well as take an opportunity to explain to the heads of the sampled schools what the study sought to achieve and the need for the study. The date and time were arranged and data collection commenced. On the prearranged dates, myself and three other research assistants visited the various schools for the data. The students were personally given the questionnaires.

Necessary ethical clearance and permissions were sought from the appropriate quarters throughout the study, whenever necessary (see Appendix A). The investigation followed the ethical principles of research. On the field of data collection, ethical principles including informed consent, volition, anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, and the freedom to withdraw, among others were adhered to. The data collected was kept confidentially, names of respondents or their schools were not disclosed in any part of the work, pseudonyms were used. Obtained data were analysed as a group, and, for that matter, it was not be possible to trace responses to respondents. The data collected were well-managed and kept secretly to avoid the accessibility of other people.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data collected was coded and entered with the help of SPSS software version 22.0. Means and standard deviations helped in analysing data on Research Questions 1 to 5. Upon the basis of the scale used (i.e., “Strongly Agree” = 4, “Agree” = 3, “Disagree” = 2, “Strongly Disagree” = 1), an average of 2.5 served as the benchmark. That is, average value exceeding 2.5 specifies that a greater proportion of respondents agreed to the statement. Conversely, an average value beneath 2.5 signifies that a greater proportion of respondents

disagreed to the statement. However, a mean of 2.5 depicted that the greater proportion of respondents were neutral about the statement.

Hypothesis 1 was tested using multivariate multiple linear regression analysis. For Hypothesis 1, students' perception of assessment practices (i.e., congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities) served as the predictor variables whereas student learning approaches (i.e., deep learning approach, surface learning approach and strategic learning approach) served as the criterion variables. All these variables were measured on a continuous scale. In testing Hypothesis 2, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis helped. The independent variable was gender which had two levels (i.e., male and female). Moreover, the dependent variable was the five dimensions of students' perception of assessment namely: congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities. All the dependent variables used in this hypothesis were measured on a continuous scale. All the inferential analysis was done at 95% confidence level.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. In this investigation, descriptive survey research design was utilised. In soliciting information from respondents, questionnaires were used. Out of a total of 357 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 260 of those retrieved had complete responses and thus all analysis conducted was based on this figure. This chapter is in two folds; the results together with discussion of the results. Regarding the results, respondents' demographic data was the first to be presented. The research questions and hypotheses were then added.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section outlines respondents' background information. The respondents' background information include gender, level of study, school and programme of study. Table 7 presents the details of demographic information of respondents.

Table 7-*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 260)*

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	136	52.3
Female	124	47.7
Level of study		
SHS 1	-	-
SHS 2	-	-
SHS 3	260	100
School		
Sefwi Wiawso SHS	86	33.1
Sefwi Wiawso S/TS	27	10.4
St. Joseph SHS	37	14.2
Asawinso SHS	110	42.3
Programme of Study		
General Arts	154	59.2
General Science	31	11.9
Business	18	6.9
Technical	13	5.0
Home Economics	12	4.6
Agricultural Science	19	7.3
Visual Arts	13	5.0

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 7 shows that the respondents were predominantly male (n = 136, 52%). All the respondents were in SHS 3 (n = 260, 100%). Table 7 also indicates that most (n = 110, 42.3%) of the respondents attended Asawinso SHS, followed by Sefwi Wiawso SHS (n = 86, 33.1%) with Sefwi Wiawso S/TS having the least (n = 27, 10.4%) representation. With respect to the study programme,

Table 7 indicates that majority (n = 154, 59.2%) of the respondents studied General Arts, followed by General Science (n = 31, 11.9%). Few (n = 12, 4.6%) of the respondents studied Home Economics.

Research Question 1

What is the perception of students on the congruence of assessment tasks with planned learning in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?

This research question aimed at ascertaining the impression of students on the congruence of assessment tasks with planned learning in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Seven statements were posed to solicit respondents' responses. In analysing this research question, means and standard deviations were utilised. For positive statements, the responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. For the negatively worded statement, however, responses were reverse coded as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree and 4 = strongly disagree. For positive statements, a mean score of 2.5 and above indicates that respondents perceive that assessment tasks with planned learning is congruent. Conversely, a mean score of less than 2.5 for positive statements indicate that respondents do not perceive that assessment tasks with planned learning is congruent. Table 8 shows the results of the perception of students on the congruence of assessment tasks with planned learning.

Table 8- *Perception of Students on the Congruence of Assessment Tasks with Planned Learning*

Statements	*M*	*SD*
Assessment tasks in my school assess what I memorise.	3.32	.87
Assessment tasks in my school mismatches what I learn as a student.*	2.12	1.18
Assignments in my school focuses on what I have done in class.	2.66	1.20
How I am assessed is similar to what I do in class.	3.29	.55
Mean of means	2.84	0.95

Source: Field Survey (2021), * = reverse coded item

Table 8 indicates that the students generally perceived that the assessment tasks with planned learning was largely congruent (*M* = 2.84; *SD* = 0.95). This implies that the students perceived the manner in which they were assessed to be largely in agreement with what they learned. This also manifested in their responses; for instance, the students agreed that the assessment tasks in their school assess what they know (*M* = 3.32; *SD* = 0.87). They also agreed that how they are assessed is similar to what they do in class (*M* = 3.29; *SD* = 0.55). To further confirm that the assessment tasks with planned learning was largely congruent, the students agreed to the statement that assignment in their school focuses on what they have done in class (*M* = 2.66; *SD* = 1.20).

Research Question 2

What is the perception of students on the authenticity of assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?

The purpose of Research Question 2 was to ascertain the perception of students on the authenticity of assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Nine statements were posed to elicit information regarding the perception of students on the authenticity of assessment tasks. Means and standard deviations were used as analytical tool for this research question. For positively stated statements, the responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. However, three items were reverse coded as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree and 4 = strongly disagree. For positive statements, a mean score of 2.5 and above indicates that respondents had a perception that the assessment tasks were authentic. Conversely, a mean score of less than 2.5 for positive statements indicates that respondents perceived that the assessment tasks were not authentic. Table 9 outlines the details of the perception of students on the authenticity of assessment tasks.

Table 9- *Perception of Students on the Authenticity of Assessment Tasks*

Statements	*M*	*SD*
Assessment tasks in my school are useful in my everyday life.	3.20	.68
Assessment tasks in my school assess my ability to apply what I know to real-life problems.	3.42	.84
Assessment tasks in my school does not reflect issues in real life situations.*	2.99	1.03
Assessment tasks in my school does not help me to apply what has been taught.*	2.77	.88
Assignments in my school do not offer me the chance to learn values and processes of team work.*	2.25	1.11
Mean of means	2.93	0.91

Source: Field Survey (2021), * = reverse coded item

Table 9 indicates that the students generally perceived the assessment tasks to be authentic (*M* = 2.93; *SD* = 0.91). This implies that the respondents perceived that assessment tasks included real life situations that were relevant to them. Specifically, the students agreed that the assessment tasks in their school assess their ability to apply what they know to real-life problems (*M* = 3.42; *SD* = 0.84). Respondents further indicated that the assessment tasks in their school are useful in their everyday life (*M* = 3.20; *SD* = 0.68). From Table 9, one can also realise that respondents also agreed that assessment tasks in their school reflect issues in real life situations (*M* = 2.99; *SD* = 1.03). The respondents further emphasised that assessment tasks in their school help them to apply what has been taught (*M* = 2.77; *SD* = .88).

Even though the students agreed to most of the statements, they also disagreed to one of the statements. The students disagreed that assignments in their school offer them the chance to learn values and processes of team work (M = 2.25; SD = 1.11).

Research Question 3

What is the perception of students on their involvement in assessment tasks decisions in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality?

Research Question 3 was purposed to examine the perception of students on their involvement in assessment task decisions in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Eight statements were posed to elicit information regarding the perception of students on their involvement in assessment task decisions. Means and standard deviations were used as analytical tool for this research question. The responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicates that respondents perceived that they were involved in assessment tasks decisions. Conversely, a mean score of less than 2.5 indicates that respondents perceived that they were not involved in assessment tasks decisions. Table 10 shows the results of the perception of students on their involvement in assessment tasks decisions.

Table 10-*Perception of Students on their Involvement in Assessment Tasks Decisions*

Statements	*M*	*SD*
In my school I am clear about the format of assessment being used.	1.60	.70
I am given details on how assessment tasks are marked.	1.84	.88
I am involved in deciding the form of assessment tasks to be used by teachers.	1.74	.79
The assignments/exercises I submit are quickly marked and brought back.	2.28	1.16
Mean of means	1.87	.88

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 10 shows that on a whole, the students perceived that they were not involved in assessment task decisions (*M* = 1.87; *SD* = .88). This means that the students perceived they were not adequately informed about the forms of assessment that were used. This also showed in their responses to the individual statements. For instance, the respondents indicated that in their school, they are not clear about the format of assessment being used (*M* = 1.60; *SD* = .70). Similarly, the respondents indicated that they were not given details on how assessment tasks are marked (*M* = 1.84; *SD* = .88). The respondents also disagreed that they are involved in deciding the form of assessment tasks to be used by teachers (*M* = 1.74; *SD* = .79). Moreover, the respondents disagreed that the assignments/exercises they submit are quickly marked and brought back (*M* = 2.28; *SD* = 1.16).

Research Question 4

What perception do students hold on transparency in assessment tasks?

Research Question 4 sought to examine the perception that students have regarding the transparency in assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Eight statements were posed to elicit information regarding the perception of students on transparency in assessment tasks. Means and standard deviations were used as analytical tool for this research question. The responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. However, one of the items was reverse coded as 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree and 4 = strongly disagree. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicates that respondents perceived that assessment tasks were transparent. Conversely, a mean score of less than 2.5 indicates that respondents perceived that assessment tasks were not transparent. Table 11 shows the results of the perception of students on the transparency in assessment tasks.

Table 11-*Perception of Students on the Transparency in Assessment Tasks*

Statements	*M*	*SD*
I understand what is needed in all my assessment tasks.	2.65	.72
I am told in advance when I am being assessed.	3.42	.70
I am informed in advance on what I am being assessed.	2.24	1.07
I am not given the chance to see my marked examination scripts even when I request for it. *	2.57	.99
Mean of means	2.72	.87

Source: Field Survey (2021), * = reverse coded item

Table 11 shows that the students generally perceived that the assessment tasks were transparent (*M* = 2.72; *SD* = .87). This means that the students perceived that the assessment tasks, purposes and forms of assessments were well-defined and clear to them. Specifically, respondents agreed that they understood what was needed in all their assessment tasks (*M* = 2.65; *SD* = .72). Additionally, the respondents affirmed that they are told in advance when they are being assessed (*M* = 3.42; *SD* = .70). Moreover, the respondents confirmed that they are informed in advance on what they are being assessed on (*M* = 2.24; *SD* = 1.07). Respondents also agreed that they are given the chance to see their marked examination scripts when they request for it (*M* = 2.57; *SD* = .99).

Research Question 5

What perception do students have on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment tasks?

Research Question 5 sought to examine students' perception on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment task in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Five statements were posed to elicit information regarding the perception of students on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment task. Means and standard deviations assisted in addressing this research question. The responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicates that respondents perceived that assessment tasks were aligned with their capabilities. Conversely, a mean score of less than 2.5 indicates that respondents perceived that assessment tasks were not aligned with their capabilities. Table 12 shows the results of the perception of students on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment task.

Table 12-*Perception of Students on the Alignment of their Capabilities with Assessment Task*

Statements	*M*	*SD*
I am able to complete the assessment tasks by the given time.	2.17	1.13
When I am confused about an assessment task, I am given enough clarification in answering it.	2.78	.92
Students are given equal chances of seeking for clarification for given assessment tasks.	2.78	.93
Mean of means	2.58	0.99

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 12 indicates that respondents, generally, perceived that assessment tasks were aligned with their capabilities (*M* = 2.58; *SD* = 0.99). This implies that the students were of the perception that they were capable of handling the assessment tasks that were given to them. Specifically, the respondents agreed that when they are confused about an assessment task, they are given enough clarification in answering it (*M* = 2.78; *SD* = 0.92). Also, the respondents indicated that they are given equal chances of seeking for clarification for given assessment tasks (*M* = 2.78; *SD* = 0.93). Notwithstanding, the students disagreed that they are able to complete the assessment tasks by the given time (*M* = 2.17; *SD* = 1.13).

Students' Learning Approaches

This aspect of the results examines the learning approach that was employed by the students in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. In all, 30 items under three different dimensions (i.e., Deep Learning Approach, Surface Learning Approach and Strategic Learning Approach) were initially used to

elicit respondents' responses. The Deep Learning Approach dimension consisted of nine items of which one was reverse coded. The Surface Learning Approach also consisted of nine items of which five were reverse coded. The Strategic Learning Approach also consisted of 10 items.

Means and standard deviations were used as analytical tool for determining the learning approach employed by the students. The responses followed a four-point Likert scale type of measurement as 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and 4 = strongly agree. A mean score of 2.5 and above indicates the employment of the learning approach whereas a mean score of less than 2.5 indicates that respondents did not use the particular learning approach. Table 13 shows the results of the learning approaches employed by the students.

Table 13-*Students' Learning Approaches*

Dimensions	Number of items	*M*	*SD*
Deep Learning Approach	9	2.56	1.11
Surface Learning Approach	9	2.53	1.05
Strategic Learning Approach	10	2.65	1.06

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 13 indicates that the students employed all the three learning approaches (*M* = 2.58; *SD* = 1.07). Specifically, the Strategic Learning Approach was the most employed learning approach (*M* = 2.65; *SD* = 1.06), followed by Deep Learning Approach (*M* = 2.56; *SD* = 1.11). The least employed learning approach was Surface Learning Approach (*M* = 2.53; *SD* = 1.05). The finding that the students mostly employed the Strategic Learning Approach implies that they devised effective ways in learning. Some of the

ways included finding a quiet place to learn which helped them to learn smoothly. Moreover, they tried to utilise their time judiciously by learning during day time.

Subsequent hypotheses had students' perception of assessment practices and learning approaches as dependent variables, hence, testing the normality of these variables were necessary. The mean, median, 5% trimmed mean, z-skewness and normal Q-Q plot were used. Table 14 shows the results of the normality test.

From Table 14, the mean, 5% trimmed mean and median of congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency, student capabilities, deep learning approach, and surface learning approach were approximately the same with the exception of strategic learning approach which slightly deviated from the trend. Moreover, the $Z_{skewness}$ coefficients of all the variables with the exception of transparency were within the range of -3.29 and +3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), suggesting that the variables were normally distributed.

Table 14-*Test for Normality*

Variables	*M*	*SD*	5% trim. *M*	Median	Skewness	Std. Error	$Z_{skewness}$
Congruence	11.44	2.03	11.37	12.0	.21	.13	1.62
Authenticity	14.36	2.22	14.6	15.0	.11	.14	.79
Student Involvement	7.47	2.74	7.33	8.0	.28	.17	1.65
Transparency	10.88	1.62	10.85	10.0	.50	.10	5.0
Student Capabilities	7.73	2.23	7.66	8.0	.17	.14	1.21
Deep Learning Approach	23.06	6.44	22.99	21.0	.26	.40	.65
Surface Learning Approach	22.75	2.44	22.63	22.0	.15	.15	1.0
Strategic Learning Approach	26.42	8.99	26.47	22.5	.11	.56	.20

Source: Field Survey (2021); *M* = Mean; *SD* = standard deviation; 5% trim. *M* = 5% trimmed mean

Additionally, the normal Q-Q plots for all the variables were further generated to test the normality (see Appendix C). The normal Q-Q plots for all the variables indicated that the distribution of all the scores were very close to the straight line. This gives strong evidence that all the variables were normally distributed. Satisfying the normality test assumption for the various variables, parametric tests were employed for the testing of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1

H_0: SHS Students' perception of assessment practices will not predict their learning approaches.

H_1: SHS Students' perception of assessment practices will predict their learning approaches.

Hypothesis 1 sought to examine whether the students' perception of assessment practices could predict their learning approaches. In testing this hypothesis, multivariate multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. In this hypothesis, students' perception of assessment practices (i.e., congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities) served as the predictor variables whereas student learning approaches (i.e., deep learning approach, surface learning approach and strategic learning approach) served as the criterion variables. All these variables were measured on an interval scale. Before the analysis, the normality of the variables were checked (see Appendix C). Table 15 presents the regression coefficients for students' perception of assessment practices.

Table 15- *Influence of Students' Perception of Assessment Practices on their Learning Approaches*

Dependent Variable	Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Deep Learning Approach	Intercept	16.544	3.80	4.25	.000
	Congruence	.038	.253	.15	.880
	Authenticity	.267	.187	1.43	.153
	Student Involvement	.062	.192	-.32	.746
	Transparency	.192	.281	.69	.494
	Student Capabilities	.070	.244	.29	.774
Surface Learning Approach	Intercept	20.123	1.43	14.08	.000
	Congruence	-.179	.093	-1.924	.055
	Authenticity	.128	.069	1.860	.064
	Student Involvement	.190*	.071	2.69	.008
	Transparency	.120	.103	1.16	.25
	Student Capabilities	.011	.090	.118	.91
Strategic Learning Approach	Intercept	12.260	5.33	2.30	.02
	Congruence	-.310	.346	-.90	.37
	Authenticity	.521	.26	2.04	.04
	Student Involvement	.093	.26	.36	.72
	Transparency	.481	.38	1.251	.21
	Student Capabilities	.550	.33	1.65	.10

Source: Field Survey (2021); * Significant, $p < .017$ (Bonferroni's alpha)

Table 15 indicates that congruence (B = .038, p = .880); authenticity (B = .267, p = .153); student involvement (B = -.062, p = .746); transparency (B =

.192, p = .494); and student capabilities (B = .070, p = .774) did not significantly predict their use of deep learning approach. With surface learning approach, congruence (B = -.179, p = .055); authenticity (B = .128, p = .064); transparency (B = .120, p = .25); and student capabilities (B = .011, p = .91) were not significant predictors of their use of surface learning approach. However, only student involvement (B = .090, p < .017) was a positive significant predictor of their use of surface learning approach. Moreover, congruence (B = -.310, p = .37); authenticity (B = .521, p = .04); student involvement (B = .093, p = .72); transparency (B = .481, p = .21); and student capabilities (B = .550, p = .10) did not significantly predict their use of strategic learning approach.

The finding that student involvement (B = .090, p < .017) was a positive significant predictor of students' use of surface learning approach implies that, the more the students were consulted or involved in assessment task decisions, the more likely they were to employ the surface learning approach. Based on this finding, the null hypothesis that stated that "SHS Students' perception of assessment practices would not predict their learning approaches" was rejected.

Hypothesis 2

H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in students' perception of assessment practices based on gender.

H_1: There is a statistically significant difference in students' perception of assessment practices based on gender.

Hypothesis 2 was purposed to examine whether any gender difference existed among the students with regard to their perception of assessment practices. In testing this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) analysis was conducted. The independent variable was gender

which had two levels (i.e., male and female). The dependent variable on the other hand was the five dimensions of students' perception of assessment namely: congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities. All the dependent variables used in this hypothesis were measured on an interval scale. Before the analysis, the normality of the variables was checked (see Appendix C). Subsequently, the homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices assumption was checked. The results of Box's M test for variance-covariance was not statically significant, Box's M = 22.20, $F(15, 263116.833) = 1.45$, $p = .155$. This indicates that the assumption was met hence, the Wilk's Lambda test was used. Table 16 presents the multivariate results.

Table 16- *Multivariate Test of Gender Difference in Students' Perception of Assessment Practices*

	Value	F	df1	df2	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept						
Pillai's Trace	.989	4730.511	5	254	.000	.989
Wilks' Lambda	.011	4730.511	5	254	.000	.989
Hotelling's Trace	93.120	4730.511	5	254	.000	.989
Roy's Largest Root	93.120	4730.511	5	254	.000	.989
Gender						
Pillai's Trace	.038	2.017	5	254	.077	.038
Wilks' Lambda	.962	2.017	5	254	.077	.038
Hotelling's Trace	.040	2.017	5	254	.077	.038
Roy's Largest Root	.040	2.017	5	254	.077	.038

Source: Field Survey (2021); df1 = Hypothesis df; df2 = Error df

Table 16 shows that there is no significant gender difference in the combined scores of students' perception of assessment practices, Wilk's Lambda V = .96, $F(5, 254) = 2.02$; $p = .08$, partial eta squared = .038. This implies that only 3.8% of the variance in the combined scores of students'

perception of assessment practices is attributed to gender. Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed using Bonferroni's alpha of .01. Table 17 presents the results.

Table 17-*Univariate Test of Gender Difference in Students' Perception of Assessment Practices*

Source	Dependent Variable	df	Mean Square	*F*	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Congruence	1	33906.741	8215.469	.000	.970
	Authenticity	1	55454.407	11311.814	.000	.978
	Student Involvement	1	14481.908	1921.392	.000	.882
	Transparency	1	30749.851	11719.240	.000	.978
	Student Capabilities	1	15556.765	3132.910	.000	.924
Gender	Congruence	1	5.202	1.260	.263	.005
	Authenticity	1	6.007	1.225	.269	.005
	Student Involvement	1	4.092	.543	.462	.002
	Transparency	1	4.343	1.655	.199	.006
	Student Capabilities	1	9.565	1.926	.166	.007
Error	Congruence	258	4.127			
	Authenticity	258	4.902			
	Student Involvement	258	7.537			
	Transparency	258	2.624			
	Student Capabilities	258	4.966			
Total	Congruence	260				
	Authenticity	260				

Student Involvement	260
Transparency	260
Student Capabilities	260

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Using the Bonferroni's alpha of .01, Table 17 shows that there was no statistically significant gender difference in each of the dimensions of students' perception of assessment practices: congruence, $F(1, 258) = 1.26$, $p = .26$, partial eta squared = .005; authenticity, $F(1, 258) = 1.23$, $p = .27$, partial eta squared = .005; student involvement, $F(1, 258) = .54$, $p = .46$, partial eta squared = .002; transparency, $F(1, 258) = 1.66$, $p = .20$, partial eta squared = .006; student capabilities, $F(1, 258) = 1.93$, $p = .17$, partial eta squared = .007. These results imply that 0.5%, 0.5%, 0.2%, 0.6% and 0.7% of the variances in congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities, respectively, are attributable to gender.

It can be concluded that male and female students did not differ in terms of their perceptions of assessment practices. Put differently, the students perceive the assessment practices in a similar manner. On the basis of this finding, the null hypothesis that states that "There is no statistically significant difference in students' perception of assessment practices based on gender" could not be rejected.

Discussion

The first part of this chapter has already presented the results and their respective interpretations. This part presents a discussion of the findings in

relation with other previous studies as well as the inferences made from the present study.

Students' Perception of Assessment Practices

The study found that the students, generally, perceived that the assessment tasks with planned learning was congruent. This implies that the students perceived that the manner in which they were assessed were in agreement with what they learned. This also manifested in their responses, for instance, the students agreed that the assessment tasks in their school assess what they know. They also agreed that how they are assessed is similar to what they do in class. To further confirm that the assessment tasks with planned learning was largely congruent, the students agreed to the statement that assignment in their school focuses on what they have done in class.

On a whole, this study revealed that students perceived that the assessment tasks with planned learning was congruent and this finding is consistent with literature (Geo, 2012; Ibrahim & Khairuddin, 2019; Dhindsa et al., 2007). For instance, Geo examined high school students' perceptions of mathematics classroom assessments in the Northeast of Arkansas. The finding of the study revealed that the students felt a strong congruence between mathematics assessment, planned learning and adequate transparency regarding the purpose and forms of the assessment. In essence, most of the students (85%) indicated that the assignment or tests given to them by their mathematics teachers were congruent with their learning activities.

In furtherance, a study by Ibrahim and Khairuddin (2019) investigated students' perception of Classroom Assessment Practices (CAPs) in Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (MHEIs). It was evident in the findings of the

study that, MHEIs students' perception of classroom practices were congruent with planned leaning. In a related study, Dhindsa et al. (2007) evaluated upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the dimensions covered in SPAQ. The study discovered high mean scores for congruence with planned learning. This suggests that the students perceived that assessment covered what they learned in their classes.

A possible reason for this finding could be attributed to similarities in the methodological approaches employed in this current study and that of previous studies (Geo, 2012; Ibrahim & Khairuddin, 2019; Dhindsa et al., 2007). For example, the use of the quantitative means of research might have been a reason for this observed pattern. Another possible reason for this finding may be as a result of the technical training and grooming that the teachers received as part of their professional training, which manifested in their practice.

This finding is not surprising as teachers are expected to assess their students in line with the learning objectives couched from the entire curriculum or programme. Essentially, it would be unprofessional on the part of teachers to teach a set of objectives and assess students on what has not been taught. Moreover, as teachers have been taken through the rudiments of best practices in student measurement and assessment, it makes sense to practice what they have learned as teachers. Additionally, as teachers get involved in the constantly organised seminars and workshops, they become more aware and conscious about the best practices regarding student assessments.

Regarding students' perception on the authenticity of assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality, it was found that the students, generally, perceived that assessment tasks were authentic. This implies that the

respondents perceived that assessment tasks featured real life situations that were relevant to them. Specifically, the students agreed that the assessment tasks in their school assess their ability to apply what they know to real-life problems. Respondents further indicated that the assessment tasks in their school are useful in their everyday life. It was realised that respondents also agreed that assessment tasks in their school reflect issues in real life situations. The respondents further emphasised that assessment tasks in their school help them to apply what has been taught.

Even though the students agreed to most of the statements, they also disagreed to one of the statements. The students disagreed that assignments in their school offer them the chance to learn values and processes of team work. This notwithstanding, the study in general terms revealed that the students were of the perception that assessment tasks were authentic. This finding corroborates the finding of another previous study (Ibrahim & Khairuddin, 2019). Ibrahim and Khairuddin investigated students' perception of CAPs in MHEIs. The study revealed that the students had the perception that classroom assessment tasks conformed to assessment authenticity.

Contrary to the above observations, Geo (2012) examined high school students' perceptions of mathematics classroom assessments in the Northeast of Arkansas. The findings of the study also revealed that 78% of the respondents felt that the mathematics assessments were not applicable to real-life situations. That is to say, there was inadequate authenticity in mathematics assessment tasks assigned to students in the classroom.

Dhindsa et al. (2007) also evaluated upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the dimensions covered in SPAQ.

The study discovered a low mean score for students' perception on the authenticity of assessment tasks. This suggests a weak link between assessment and application of knowledge to daily life.

A likely explanation that could have accounted for the variations in the current finding and some available literature (Geo, 2012; Dhindsa et al., 2007) may be the difference in geographical location. Students from the Ghanaian context may have different perceptions of assessment tasks as compared with their counterparts from other western countries. Even though it was not explored, cultural differences might have also played a role in this current finding. Another possibility for this finding could be the use of a relatively smaller sample size which might have influenced the finding.

Since education generally seeks solutions for real life happenings, it was expected that most of the real life situations that students usually encounter would be used in their assessment tasks. And this was exactly what the study revealed. In most cases, some educational concepts and ideas seem abstract and not easily understood by many students unless they are put in a real world scenario. When tasks are based on real issues it is better understood by students compared with those that seem abstract. Besides, the problems that may arrive in real life situations may come in diverse ways that require different solution strategies.

In connection with the perception of students on their involvement in assessment task decisions in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality, the study revealed that the students perceived that they were not involved in assessment task decisions. This means that the students perceived they were not adequately informed about the forms of assessment that were used. This also showed in

their responses to the individual statements. For instance, the respondents indicated that in their school, they are not clear about the format of assessment being used. Similarly, the respondents indicated that they were not given details on how assessment tasks are marked. The respondents also disagreed that they are involved in deciding the form of assessment tasks to be used by teachers. Moreover, the respondents disagreed that the assignments/exercises they submit are quickly marked and brought back.

The general finding that the current study revealed that the students had the perception that they were not involved in assessment tasks decisions is similar to some previous studies (Geo, 2012; Dhindsa et al., 2007). For example, Geo aimed at examining high school students' perceptions of mathematics classroom assessments in the Northeast of Arkansas. The findings of the study also indicated that most students had little or no say in the assessment planning process. Thus, students were rarely involved in the assessment planning process.

Similarly, Dhindsa et al. (2007) evaluated upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the dimensions covered in SPAQ. The study discovered a low mean score for Student Consultation on Assessment (SCA) dimension of the scale. The low mean value for SCA suggests a low-level consultation with students regarding classroom assessment.

However, Quansah et al. (2017) examined students' perception regarding their involvement in assessment decisions in the University of Cape Coast Distance Education. The findings of the study revealed that students were clear about the assessment types being used and details were given on how assessment tasks were scored. It was also evident in the findings of the study

that although students reported that they received feedback from assessment, this feedback was not provided quickly. Thus, the students reported that their scripts were not quickly marked and returned. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that management of College of Distance Education should consider providing prompt feedback for students concerning their assessment.

It could be that the observed similarities between the current finding and other studies (Geo, 2012; Dhindsa et al., 2007) is as a result of the similarities in the respondents. For example, this current study and the earlier mentioned studies were conducted among students below the tertiary education level and this reflects what happens in the high schools where students take what their teachers have to say. Unlike pre-tertiary students, students in the university are relatively considered as adults hence, the system sees them as such. This may account for the discrepancy among this current study and that of Quansah et al. (2017).

This finding was not expected because, any proper assessment in my view should include the learner. Specifically, the forms of assessment practices and how the scores are to be allocated should be made available to students prior to the assessment. Teachers are made to understand the importance of involving students in assessment task, particularly, informing them about the assessment forms and how marks will be apportioned during their professional training and even at seminars and workshops. I think that assessment practices that focus on the student could yield better outcomes compared to those that are teacher-centred.

The fourth research question examined the perception that students have regarding the transparency in assessment tasks in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. It was evident that the students, generally, perceived that the assessment tasks were transparent. This means that the students perceived that the assessment tasks, purposes and forms of assessments were well-defined and clear to them. Specifically, respondents agreed that they understood what was needed in all their assessment tasks. Additionally, the respondents affirmed that they are told in advance when they are being assessed. Moreover, the respondents confirmed that they are informed in advance on what they are being assessed. Respondents also agreed that they are given the chance to see their marked examination scripts when they request for it.

Corroborating the observations of some few existing literature (Ibrahim & Khairuddin, 2019; Dhindsa et al., 2007), this study generally revealed that students perceived that the assessment tasks were transparent. For example, Ibrahim and Khairuddin investigated students' perception of CAPs in MHEIs. The study revealed that the students reported transparency regarding the classroom assessment tasks. Also, in Dhindsa et al.'s study which evaluated upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the dimensions covered in SPAQ. Dhindsa et al. discovered high mean scores for the transparency dimension of assessment process. This suggests that students perceived that there was often transparency in their assessment.

The utilisation of similar methodological approach might have accounted for the observed similarity in the findings. For example, the use of questionnaires which had closed ended responses might have denied respondents to provide their lived experiences regarding classroom

assessments. Moreover, the finding may be a manifestation of the training that teachers receive regarding assessment practices.

This finding was not too much of a surprise since teachers are expected to clearly define assessment tasks to their students. As part of their professional development as teachers, they are taught as a best practice to clearly define assessment task to learners. This will reduce confusion among students and their classroom instructors. Moreover, since some of the teachers may forget or intentionally deviate from the standard practices such as making assessment task conform to clarity as a result of certain reasons best known to them, periodic seminars and workshops to update and remind teachers on some of these best practices are held.

For students' perception on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment task in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality, it was found that the students generally perceived assessment tasks to be aligned with their capabilities. This implies that the students were of the perception that they were capable of handling the assessment tasks that were given to them. Specifically, the respondents agreed that when they are confused about an assessment task, they are given enough clarification in answering it. Also, the respondents indicated that they are given equal chances of seeking for clarification for given assessment tasks. This notwithstanding, the students disagreed that they are able to complete the assessment tasks by the given time.

Ibrahim and Khairuddin's (2019) study agree with this current study. Ibrahim and Khairuddin's study investigated students' perception of CAPs in MHEIs. The findings of the study also revealed that classroom assessment practices helped students to develop and improve their level of capability and

their soft skills. This suggests that classroom assessment tasks were appropriate and best suited students' capabilities.

On the contrary, Dhindsa et al. (2007) in evaluating upper secondary students' perception of assessment processes based on the dimensions covered in SPAQ, discovered low mean scores for students' perception on the alignment of their capabilities with assessment task. This suggests that students perceived that classroom assessment did not cater for students' diversity.

The differences in the findings of the current study and that of Dhindsa et al. (2007) may be attributable to the relatively smaller sample size used in this study. While the current study used 260 respondents, Dhindsa et al. sampled 1,028 which might have influenced the finding. Differences in geographical location and students' understanding of the questions might have also accounted for this finding.

Influence of Students' Perception of Assessment Practices on their Learning Approaches

Hypothesis 1 examined whether the students' perception of assessment practices could predict their learning approaches. It was found that congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency, and student capabilities did not significantly predict their use of deep learning approach. This finding is important to educators in the sense that, it presents a firm ground for educators to understand that for students to use deep learning approach, students' perceptions regarding the assessment practices do not have any contributory role. With surface learning approach, congruence, authenticity, transparency and student capabilities were not significant predictors of their use of surface learning approach. This finding is also useful for teachers to understand that for

students to adopt surface approach to learning, the way they perceive the assessment practices (particularly with congruence, authenticity, transparency and student capabilities) do not have any contributory role. However, only student involvement was a positive significant predictor of their use of surface learning approach. Based on this finding, it is important for teachers to understand that the more students think that they are involved in assessment practices, the more likely they are to employ surface learning approach. And the less students think they are involved in assessment practices, the less likely they are to employ surface learning approach.

Moreover, congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities did not significantly predict their use of strategic learning approach. This finding also is useful for educators to understand that students' perceptions regarding assessment practices have no influence in their employment of strategic learning approach.

The finding that student involvement was a positive significant predictor of students' use of surface learning approach implies that, the more the students were consulted or involved in assessment task decisions, the more likely they were to employ the surface learning approach. On a whole, since at least one of the dimensions of students' perception of assessment practices (i.e., student involvement) predicted the use of at least one learning approach (i.e., surface learning approach), it can be said that students' perception of assessment practices predicted their use of learning approach. Similar findings were observed in other studies (Beausaert et al., 2013; Scouller, 1998; Gulikers et al., 2006).

Beausaert et al. (2013) undertook a study in two different secondary schools in two different cities in the Netherlands. The study sought to examine how students in secondary education perceive their teachers' approaches to teaching in different disciplines, and how this influence their learning approaches. Beausaert et al. found that a teacher-centred approach predicted a surface approach to learning while a student-centred approach predicted a deep approach to learning. This implies that students who perceive their teachers as exhibiting teacher-centered characteristics in their assessment processes, are more likely to adopt a surface learning approach. Similarly, students who perceive their teachers as exhibiting student-centered characteristics in their assessment processes are more likely of adopting a deep learning approach.

In another study, Scouller (1998) investigated the influence of assessment method on students' learning approaches. The study found that students were more likely to employ surface learning approaches in the multiple-choice question (MCQ) examination context and to perceive MCQ examinations as assessing knowledge-based (lower levels) of intellectual processing. That is to say, poorer performance in the MCQ examination was associated with the employment of deep learning strategies. The study further revealed that, students were more likely to employ deep learning approaches when preparing their assignment essays which they perceived as assessing higher levels of cognitive processing.

Gulikers et al. (2006) also examined the relationships between students' perceptions of assessment authenticity and alignment on their study approaches and learning outcome. The findings of the study revealed that when assessment tasks are more authentic and aligned with real-life situations, there is also an

evidence of more deep learning and/or an increase in generic skill development. The study also discovered that authenticity perceptions regarding assessment tasks did not affect surface learning. This implies that, there was no relationship between students' perception regarding authenticity assessment and surface learning approach. That is to say, students were less likely of adopting a surface learning approach when they perceive that assessment tasks assesses their ability to apply what they learn to real-life problems.

A possible reason for the observed predictive relationship between student involvement and their use of surface approach to learning could be that involving students in assessment task makes students lazy and relax, making them only to concentrate or pay attention to those areas that the teacher has indicated during lessons. This situation increases students' propensity to use memorisation or rote learning without actually understanding the concepts. Moderating or varying how students are involved in the assessment task decisions from time to time could be helpful. This might encourage students to employ a better learning approach which will positively influence their academic performance.

Gender Difference in Students' Perception of Assessment Practices

The second hypothesis examined whether any gender difference existed among the students with regard to their perception of assessment practices. It was found that there was no statistically significant gender difference in each of the dimensions of students' perception of assessment practices: congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities. This was surprising as the thinking patterns of male and female about issues may vary as a result of differences in mood at a particular time. In terms of practical

significance, 0.5%, 0.5%, 0.2%, 0.6% and 0.7% of the variances in congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities, respectively, are attributable to gender. It can be concluded that male and female students did not differ in terms of their perceptions of assessment practices. Put differently, the students perceive the assessment practices in a similar manner. This finding contradicts the findings of other empirical studies (Gao, 2012; Alkharusi et al., 2014).

For instance, Gao (2012) examined high school students' perceptions of mathematics classroom assessments. Gao found a statistically significant gender difference in assessment authenticity and transparency. For authenticity, more female students than males were of the view that assessment did not reflect real life setting. On transparency, more female students than male students felt the assessment in Mathematics was not transparent. The study, however, found non-significant gender difference in the other (i.e., congruence with planned learning, student consultation, and student diversity) dimensions of the scale.

Also, Alkharusi et al. (2014) sought to develop a model that would describe the role of gender in the multivariate connection among the impression of learners regarding assessment tasks and assessment in classroom. The findings of the study revealed substantial gender variations in the perception of female students about assessment tasks and assessment in classroom. Additionally, the study's result indicated that a learning-oriented assessment environment has a link with high levels of "congruence with instruction", "authenticity", "student consultation", and "diversity" for male and female students. Nevertheless, in male and female classrooms, the link between an

achievement assessment environment and perspectives of assessment tasks varied.

A major reason that could have accounted for the differences in the current finding and that of the aforementioned studies may be the employment of wrong statistical procedures. For example, in examining gender difference in students' perception of mathematics classroom assessment, Gao (2012) conducted a chi-square test which is used for finding the association among variables measured dichotomously. Also, the use of relatively smaller sample size in this study compared to Alkharusi et al.'s (2014) study might have influenced the current study's finding.

Even though some studies have indicated that male and female students have different perceptions about assessment practices. This study has found the direct opposite. This finding therefore disproves the common notion that male and female students have different perceptions about assessment practices that their teachers adopt. This study has therefore contributed to existing knowledge in measurement and evaluation and at the same time created a new knowledge that has implications for educational practice. One of the implications is that there is a changing trend in perceptions of male and female students. Suggesting that male and female students now have similar impressions about assessment practices in classrooms.

Chapter Summary

The study examined the influence of SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. The study found that the students, generally, perceived that the assessment tasks with planned learning was congruent. This implies that

the students perceived that the manner in which they were assessed were in agreement with what they learned. Secondly, it was found that the students, generally, perceived that assessment tasks were authentic. This implies that the respondents perceived that assessment tasks included real life situations that were relevant to them.

Moreover, the study revealed that the students perceived that they were not involved in assessment tasks decisions. This means that the students perceived they were not adequately informed about the forms of assessment that were used. It was also evident that the students generally perceived that the assessment tasks were transparent. This means that the students perceived that the assessment tasks, purposes and forms of assessments were well-defined and clear to them. Again, this study revealed that the students generally perceived that assessment tasks were aligned with their capabilities. This implies that the students were of the perception that they were capable of handling the assessment tasks that were given to them.

Further, the study found that with the exception of student involvement which was a positive significant predictor of students' use of surface learning approach, none of students' perception of assessment practices substantially predicted their use of a learning approach. The implication of this is that, the more the students were consulted or involved in assessment task decisions, the more likely they were to employ the surface learning approach. Finally, this study found that there was no statistically significant gender difference in each of the dimensions of students' perception of assessment practices: congruence, authenticity, student involvement, transparency and student capabilities. This

implies that male and female students did not differ in terms of their perceptions of assessment practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the influence of SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. In this chapter, a summary of the study, conclusions derived from the study and the recommendations made thereof are presented.

Summary

Overview of the study

The study examined the influence of SHS students' perception of classroom assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality. Five research questions were posed and two hypotheses were tested. The descriptive survey research design was employed. A total population of 4514 students were identified for the study. A sample size of 357 was used for the study, however, data was analysed with 260 completed responses. Questionnaires (i.e., SPAQ and Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory) were adapted for the study. Permissions were sought from the appropriate quarters at every stage of the data collection and all data collected from responses were kept confidential. The data collected were analysed with descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (i.e., MANOVA and multivariate multiple linear regression).

Key findings

The following findings were derived from the study:

1. The students generally perceived that the assessment tasks with planned learning was congruent.

2. The students generally perceived that assessment tasks were authentic.
3. The students perceived that they were not involved in assessment tasks decisions.
4. The students generally perceived that the assessment tasks were transparent.
5. The students generally perceived that assessment tasks were aligned with their capabilities.
6. With the exception of student involvement which was a positive significant predictor of students' use of surface learning approach, none of students' perception of assessment practices substantially predicted their use of a learning approach.
7. There was no statistically significant gender difference in each of the dimensions of students' perception of assessment practices.

Conclusions

From the findings, it can be concluded that the students perceived that the manner in which they were assessed were in agreement with what they learned. Also, it can be said that the students perceived that assessment tasks included real life situations that were relevant to them. It can also be inferred that the students perceived they were not adequately informed about the forms of assessment that were used. not considered as critical decision makers in assessment-related tasks. Additionally, it can be concluded that the students perceived that the assessment tasks, purposes and forms of assessments were well-defined and clear to them. Again, the students were of the perception that they were capable of handling the assessment tasks that were given to them.

It can also be inferred that the more the students were consulted or involved in assessment task decisions, the more likely they were to employ the surface learning approach and vice versa. It can also be concluded that male and female students did not differ in terms of their perceptions of assessment practices. In other words, the students perceived the assessment practices in a similar manner.

Recommendations

In line with the findings, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to continuously assess their students in line with the planned teaching and learning objectives.
2. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to continuously adopt real-life situations when assessing their students.
3. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to adequately inform their students about the forms of assessment that will be used when necessary.
4. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to continuously ensure that the purposes and assessment forms are well-defined at all times.
5. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are encouraged to continuously assess students taking into consideration, their capabilities to handle the assessment tasks.
6. Teachers in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality are entreated to moderate or vary how students are involved in assessment task decisions as and when it is necessary since this study has found that involving them too

much could cause them to employ the surface approach to learning or rote learning.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Future studies should consider using a larger sample size to assess students' perceptions of assessment practices and their use of learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality to provide a relatively robust inference about the phenomena.
2. Future empirical investigations in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality should consider employing other research designs (such as the qualitative research design) to better understand students' experiences of assessment practices and their subsequent use of learning approaches.

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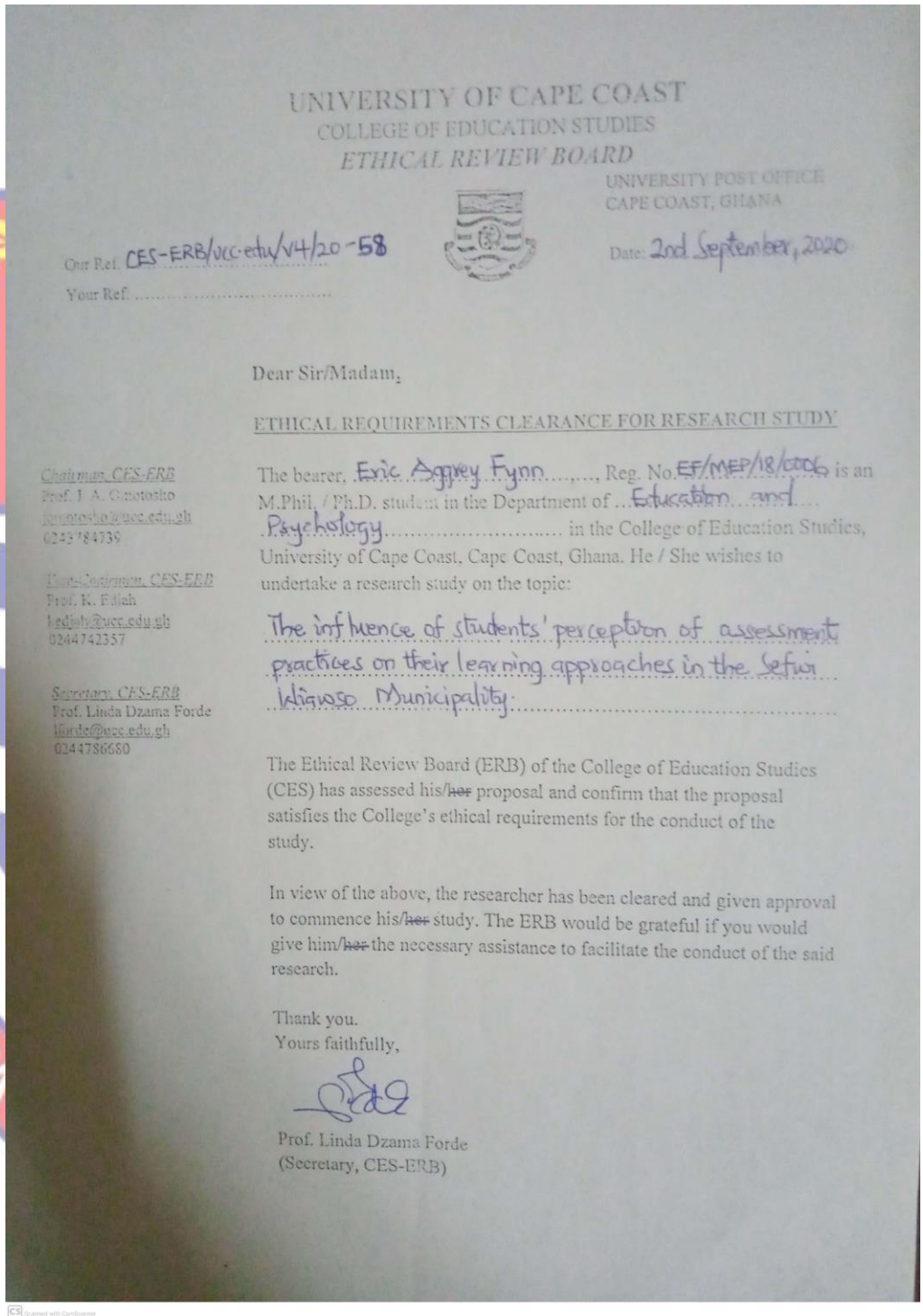
APPENDIX A

ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref. CES-ERB/ucc-edu/V4/20-58

Date: 2nd September, 2020

Your Ref. .....

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Ampotosho
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Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
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Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
ldforde@ucc.edu.gh
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The bearer, Eric Aggrey Fynn ..... Reg. No. EF/MEP/18/0006 is an M.Phil. / Ph.D. student in the Department of ... Education and Psychology ..... in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

The influence of students' perception of assessment practices on their learning approaches in the Sefwi Wiawso Municipality.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed his/~~her~~ proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/~~her~~ study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/~~her~~ the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Questionnaire for Students (Before Pilot Testing)

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Questionnaire for Students (Before Pilot Testing)

This questionnaire seeks to elicit information on your perception of the assessment practices in your school as a student, and how they influence your learning approach(es). The information you provide in this questionnaire is strictly for academic purposes. The information provided will be treated as a group, and for that matter, you will not be associated with any of the responses. Participation in this study is not compulsory. Any information you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. Please provide responses as honestly as possible.

SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Instruction: Please check (√) or write where necessary.

1. Gender
   a. Male [ ]
   b. Female [ ]
2. Level of study:
   a. SHS 1 [ ]
   b. SHS 2 [ ]
   c. SHS 3 [ ]
3. School
   a. Sefwi Wiawso SHS [ ]
   b. Sefwi Wiawso S/TS [ ]
   c. St. Joseph SHS [ ]
   d. Asawinso SHS [ ]
4. Programme of study:.....

SECTION B- STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ASSESSMENT

Please read the following statements carefully and check [√] the option which best applies to you using the following options: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

No.	Statements	Options			
----	**Congruence with Planned Learning**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
1.	Assessment tasks in my school assess what I memorise.				
2.	Assessment tasks in my school tests my understanding of issues.				
3.	Assessment tasks in my school mismatches what I learn as a student.				
4.	Assignments in my school focuses on what I have done in class.				
5.	How I am assessed is similar to what I do in class.				
6.	I am assessed on areas I understand most.				
7.	Assessment tasks in my school focuses more on learning past questions.				
----	**Authenticity**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
8.	Assessment tasks in my school helps me to apply my learning to real-life situations.				
9.	Assessment tasks in my school are useful in my everyday life.				
10.	I find assessment tasks in my school relevant to what I do outside of school.				
11.	Assessment tasks in my school assesses my ability to apply what I know to real-life problems.				
12.	Assessment tasks in my school examines my ability to answer practical questions in my field of study.				
13.	Assessment tasks in my school does not reflect issues in real life situations.				
14.	Assessment tasks in my school does not help me to apply what has been taught.				
15.	Assessment tasks in my school does not give me the chance to demonstrate my abilities on wider learning tasks.				
16.	Assignments in my school do not offer me the chance to learn values and processes of team work.				

----	**Student Consultation**				
17.	In my school I am clear about the types of assessment being used.				
18.	I am given details on how assessment tasks are marked.				
19.	I am involved in deciding the form of assessment tasks to be used by teachers				
20.	Teachers do well to explain to me how each assessment type is used.				
21.	I have a say on how I am assessed in my school				
22.	It takes a lot of time before my exams papers are marked.				
23.	I do not receive feedback from submitted assignments.				
24.	The assignments I submit are quickly marked and brought back.				
----	**Transparency**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
25.	I understand what is needed in all my assessment tasks.				
26.	I am told in advance when I am being assessed.				
27.	I am informed in advance on what I am being assessed.				
28.	I am clear about what my teacher wants in my assessment tasks.				
29.	I am clear on how assessment tasks in my school are marked.				
30.	Marking of assignments/quizzes/exams in my school is unfair				
31.	Clear answers are not given for assessment tasks				
32.	I am not given the chance to see my marked examination scripts even when I request for it.				
----	**Students Capabilities**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
33.	I am able to complete the assessment tasks by the given time.				
34.	I am given a chance to choose the assessment tasks I prefer.				
35.	I am given assessment tasks that suit my ability.				
36.	When I am confused about an assessment task, I am given enough clarification in answering it.				
37.	Students are given equal chances of seeking for clarification for given assessment tasks.				

SECTION C – STUDENTS' LEARNING APPROACHES

Please read the following statements carefully and check [√] the option which best applies to you using the following options: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
	Deep Learning Approach				
1.	I am not prepared just to accept things I am told; I have to think them out for myself.				
2.	Sometimes I find myself thinking about ideas from the course when I'm doing other things.				
3.	I try to relate ideas I come across to other topics or courses whenever possible.				
4.	When I am reading an article or book, I try to work out for myself exactly what is being said.				
5.	I usually make time to understand for myself the meaning of what we have to learn.				
6.	When I am working on a new topic, I try to see in my own mind how all the ideas fit together				
7.	Ideas in course books or articles often activate a long chain of thoughts about what I am reading.				
8.	Whenever I am reading, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what is being said.				
9.	It is important for me to follow the argument or see the reasoning behind what I read.				
10.	I look at the evidence carefully and then I try to reach my own conclusion about things I am studying.				
	Surface Learning Approach				
11.	I hardly critically examine what I read whenever I sit to study.				
12.	I often have troubles making sense of the things I have to remember.				
13.	Often I stay awake worrying about the amount of material to read, I think I won't be able to do so.				
14.	Although I can remember the facts and details, I often can't see the overall picture of what I read.				
15.	I always concentrate on what is required for assessment whenever I sit to study.				

16.	I spend quite a lot of my time repeating or rewriting out things I learn to help me remember them.				
17.	Often I find myself reading things without really trying to understand them.				
18.	I often accept information and ideas passively whenever I read my books.				
19.	I think I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what I have to learn.				
20.	I often find it difficult to relate ideas to what I have learnt previously whenever I sit to study.				
	Strategic Learning Approach				
21.	One way or another, I manage to get hold of books or whatever I need for studying.				
22.	I make sure I find a quiet environment for studying which makes me learn my books easily.				
23.	I put a lot of effort into making sure that I have the most important details at my fingertips when I read.				
24.	I organise my study time carefully to make the best use of it.				
25.	I know what I want to get out of this course and I am determined to achieve it.				
26.	I work hard when I am studying and I generally try to keep my mind on what I am doing.				
27.	I seek to learn what is expected for a particular course, in order achieve the highest grade possible.				
28.	I think I am quite systematic and organised in the way I go about studying my notes.				
29.	I generally try to make good use of my time during the day.				
30.	I work gradually throughout the course, rather than leaving everything to the last minute.				

Final Questionnaire (After Pilot Testing)

This questionnaire seeks to elicit information on your perception of the assessment practices in your school as a student, and how they influence your learning approach(es). The information you provide in this questionnaire is strictly for academic purposes. The information provided will be treated as a group, and for that matter, you will not be associated with any of the responses. Participation in this study is not compulsory. Any information you provide will be kept anonymous and confidential. Please provide responses as honestly as possible.

SECTION A – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Instruction: Please check (√) or write where necessary.

4. Gender
   a. Male [ ]
   b. Female [ ]
5. Level of study:
   a. SHS 1 [ ]
   b. SHS 2 [ ]
   c. SHS 3 [ ]
6. School
   a. Sefwi Wiawso SHS [ ]
   b. Sefwi Wiawso S/TS [ ]
   c. St. Joseph SHS [ ]
   d. Asawinso SHS [ ]

4. Programme of study:.....

Final Questionnaire (After Pilot Testing)

SECTION B- STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF ASSESSMENT

Please read the following statements carefully and check [√] the option which best applies to you using the following options: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

No.	Statements	Options			
----	**Congruence with Planned Learning**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
1.	Assessment tasks in my school assess what I memorise.				
2.	Assessment tasks in my school mismatches what I learn as a student.				
3.	Assignments in my school focuses on what I have done in class.				
4.	How I am assessed is similar to what I do in class.				
----	**Authenticity**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
5.	Assessment tasks in my school are useful in my everyday life.				
6.	Assessment tasks in my school assesses my ability to apply what I know to real-life problems.				
7.	Assessment tasks in my school does not reflect issues in real life situations.				
8.	Assessment tasks in my school does not help me to apply what has been taught.				
9.	Assignments in my school do not offer me the chance to learn values and processes of team work.				
----	**Student Consultation**				
10.	In my school I am clear about the types of assessment being used.				
11.	I am given details on how assessment tasks are marked.				
12.	I am involved in deciding the form of assessment tasks to be used by teachers				
13.	The assignments I submit are quickly marked and brought back.				
----	**Transparency**	**SA**	**A**	**D**	**SD**
14.	I understand what is needed in all my assessment tasks.				
15.	I am told in advance when I am being assessed.				
16.	I am informed in advance on what I am being assessed.				
17.	I am not given the chance to see my marked examination scripts even when I request for it.				

----	Students Capabilities	SA	A	D	SD
18.	I am able to complete the assessment tasks by the given time.				
19.	When I am confused about an assessment task, I am given enough clarification in answering it.				
20.	Students are given equal chances of seeking for clarification for given assessment tasks.				

SECTION C – STUDENTS' LEARNING APPROACHES

Please read the following statements carefully and check [√] the option which best applies to you using the following options: SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
	Deep Learning Approach				
1.	I am not prepared just to accept things I am told; I have to think them out for myself.				
2.	Sometimes I find myself thinking about ideas from the course when I'm doing other things.				
3.	I try to relate ideas I come across to other topics or courses whenever possible.				
4.	When I am reading an article or book, I try to work out for myself exactly what is being said.				
5.	I usually make time to understand for myself the meaning of what we have to learn.				
6.	When I am working on a new topic, I try to see in my own mind how all the ideas fit together				
7.	Whenever I am reading, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what is being said.				
8.	It is important for me to follow the argument or see the reasoning behind what I read.				
9.	I look at the evidence carefully and then I try to reach my own conclusion about things I am studying.				
	Surface Learning Approach				
10.	I often have troubles making sense of the things I have to remember.				
11.	Often I stay awake worrying about the amount of material to read, I think I won't be able to do so.				

12.	Although I can remember the facts and details, I often can't see the overall picture of what I read.				
13.	I always concentrate on what is required for assessment whenever I sit to study.				
14.	I spend quite a lot of my time repeating or rewriting out things I learn to help me remember them.				
15.	Often I find myself reading things without really trying to understand them.				
16.	I often accept information and ideas passively whenever I read my books.				
17.	I think I have to concentrate on memorising a good deal of what I have to learn.				
18.	I often find it difficult to relate ideas to what I have learnt previously whenever I sit to study.				
	Strategic Learning Approach				
19.	One way or another, I manage to get hold of books or whatever I need for studying.				
20.	I make sure I find a quiet environment for studying which makes me learn my books easily.				
21.	I put a lot of effort into making sure that I have the most important details at my fingertips when I read.				
22.	I organise my study time carefully to make the best use of it.				
23.	I know what I want to get out of this course and I am determined to achieve it.				
24.	I work hard when I am studying and I generally try to keep my mind on what I am doing.				
25.	I seek to learn what is expected for a particular course, in order achieve the highest grade possible.				
26.	I think I am quite systematic and organised in the way I go about studying my notes.				
27.	I generally try to make good use of my time during the day.				
28.	I work gradually throughout the course, rather than leaving everything to the last minute.				

APPENDIX C

NORMALITY TESTS