



## Research Article

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Received: 20 July 2024 / Accepted: 29 August 2024 / Published: 7 September 2024

# Classroom Assessment Practices of Junior High School Social Studies Teachers in Ghana: The Case of Ga East Municipality

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36941/mjss-2024-0042>

## Abstract

*Introduction: In Ghana, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment of the Ministry of Education considers assessment as an integral part of the standards-based curriculum. Teachers are therefore required to look at what they do as regards classroom assessment practices. This discourse reflects the classroom assessment practices of Junior High School (JHS) Social Studies Teachers in the Ga East Municipality. The paper relies on Title's (1994) Theory and Mohamad's (2009) framework for classroom assessment practices. A survey was conducted on 60 Social Studies teachers sampled via the census sampling technique. The Teachers Practice of Classroom Assessment Questionnaire (TPCAQ,  $\alpha = 0.81$ ) for data collection. Descriptive statistics (frequency count, percentage, mean), measures of dispersion and variability (standard deviation), and *t*-tests were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that classroom assessment practices of JHS Social Studies teachers were satisfactory, mean ( $\bar{X} \geq 2.95$ ), except for students' involvement in assessment practices ( $\bar{X} = 2.26$ ). The major practices of the teachers were: feedback practices ( $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ), revision of assessment practices ( $\bar{X} = 3.20$ ), and communication of assessment results to students ( $\bar{X} = 2.98$ ). Female teachers performed better than their male counterparts on all the classroom assessment practice constructs ( $p=0.000$ ). The study concludes that classroom assessment practices involving feedback practices, revision of assessment, communicating assessment results, and students' involvement in assessment are critical to Social Studies education in Ghana. Therefore, the Ga East Municipal Directorate of Education should periodically train Social Studies teachers on best practices in classroom assessment to improve their assessment practices.*

**Keywords:** Assessment, classroom assessment practices, curriculum, Social Studies

## 1. Introduction

One major aspect of the pedagogical practices of teachers is school or classroom assessment. Assessment may include both formal methods such as national assessment (for instance, basic education certificate examination, school education assessment, etcetera), and less formal classroom-based procedures such as class quizzes or tests, class projects, and written oral questioning during teaching. Black and William (1998a), as cited in Rahman (2016), asserted that assessment gives direction to the teaching and learning process. Supporting this assertion, McMillan (2008) argued that assessment of students at the classroom level is very critical because effective decision-making is

based to some extent on the ability of teachers to understand their students and to match actions with accurate assessments.

The three core aims of assessment are assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Suhaimi, Abdullah, Hamzah, Adnan & Noh, 2013). Assessment of learning is intended to inform parents or the public about the ability of students related to the curriculum while assessment for learning is to allow teachers to determine the next steps to be taken to enhance students' learning (Azizi, 2010). Assessment as learning is for students to monitor and self-assess their learning. Teachers can use portfolios, projects, written assessments and various forms of assessment to achieve these purposes. It could be deduced that assessment usually focuses on individual learning, learning environment, institutions involved, and learning systems.

School assessment is key to teaching and learning because it generates information for educational decision-making. Some researchers argued that its importance lies in the fact that it gives students guidance on their performance and contributes to improving the learning process (Goodrum, Hackling & Rennie, 2005; Kankam, Bordoh, Eshun, Bassaw & Korang, 2014). There is much evidence in the literature which points to the fact that classroom assessment improves the academic performance of students (Bekoe, Eshun & Bordoh, 2013; Crawford, 2002; Elmoore, 2002; Lapp, Fisher, Flood & Cabello, 2001; McAlpine, 2002; McMillan, 2007). Therefore, students' performance is a by-product of teachers' classroom assessment practices. Hence, there is a need for teachers to see to it that classroom assessment paves the way for teaching and learning.

School assessment symbolises in-class and out-of-classroom activities that teachers do to monitor and improve teaching and learning (Oduro, 2015). It involves assessment activities such as test construction, marking, scoring, grading, interpreting scores, communicating assessment results to pupils and other stakeholders, and using performance results for decision-making (Moss, 2013; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003). In this regard, teachers have a responsibility to design quality assessments that align with the learning outcomes as they are the most suitable people to assess their students and they have a better understanding of the context of the subject area (Salmiah, 2013). This provides opportunities for teachers to continuously monitor their students and to give constructive feedback to improve students' learning abilities (Mansor et al., 2013).

Teachers are expected to play a dual role of facilitating students' learning and implementing classroom assessment in a manner that will enhance meaningful learning outcomes. Their role in classroom assessment encompasses the whole process of constructing and administering assessment tasks to interpreting the results generated from assessment. Notwithstanding, a review of the literature indicates critical gaps in the practical application of classroom assessment by teachers. For instance, some researchers found that many teachers still rely solely on conventional methods of assessment such as homework, class exercise, and class test to seek pupils understanding (Al kharusi, 2007; Alsarimi, 2000; Suurtamm, Koch & Arden, 2010; Tadesse, 2015). Some researchers also observed that teacher assessment practices are often not consistent with the best practices because they focus on low-level cognitive questions, memorisation and recall (Anamuah-Mensah & Mereku, 2005; Nenty, Adedoyin, Odili & Major, 2007).

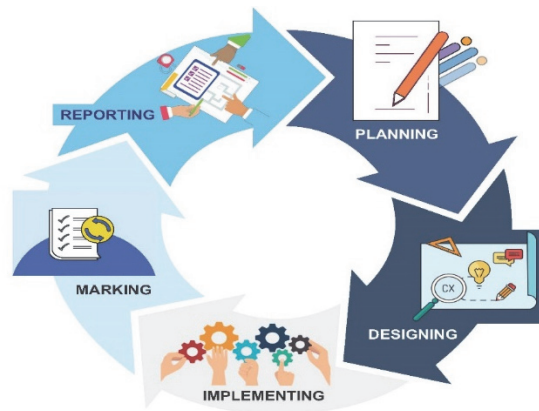
A plethora of research has been carried out on the assessment practices of teachers globally (Al kharusi, 2007; Allen et al., 2013; Alsarimi, 2000; Azizi, 2010; Beckmann et al., 1997; Crawford, 2002; Elmoore, 2002; Goodrum et al., 2005; Kitta, 2014; Koch & Arden, 2010; Lapp et al., 2001; Liu et al., 2016; Lissitz & Schafer, 2002; Mansor et al., 2013; McAlpine, 2002; McMillan, 2001; McMillan et al., 2002; McMillan, 2007; McMillan, 2008; Morgan & Watson, 2002; Moss, 2013; Nenty et al., 2007; Rahman, 2016; Suhaimi et al., 2013; Suurtamm et al., 2010; Tadesse, 2015; Tierney, 2013; Vandeyar, 2005; Van deWalle, 2001; William & Thompson, 2008; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) and in Ghana (Anamuah-Mensah & Mereku, 2005; Asare, 2014; Bekoe et al., 2013; Hattori & Saba, 2008; Kankam et al., 2014; Nabie, Akayuure & Sofu, 2013; Oduro, 2015; Somuah, Bentil & Nkansah, 2020; Oteng, Mensah, Babah & Swanzy-Impraim, 2023). Most of these studies found variations and contradictory findings on assessment practices by teachers. It is also clear that most teachers continue to struggle and are reluctant to accept the new policies on the basis that they conflict with their values, assumptions, and

beliefs (Vandeyar, 2005).

In Ghana, the new school curriculum which is standards-based demands that teachers adopt best classroom assessment practices. Teachers must approach assessment in a variety of ways that facilitate students learning. However, most teachers in Ghana engage use traditional assessment techniques such as class exercise, homework, and test; very little attention is given to the use of observation, project work, and, oral presentation (Hattori & Saba, 2008; Nabie et al., 2013). The empirical evidence in this discourse reflects the situation in the Ga East Municipality. It is on this premise this paper adopts the Title's (1994) Theory for classroom assessment practice, and Mohamad's (2009) conceptual framework of the assessment process to reflects on the classroom assessment practices of Junior High Schools Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality. The Title's (1994) Theory and Mohamad's (2009) inform and guide teacher professional expectations, knowledge, beliefs, standards, and values with regard to planning, designing, implementing, marking, and reporting of assessment activities.

For instance, it is observed that teacher belief systems are a crucial component that informs their general teaching practices (Koloji-Keaikitse, 2012; Vandeyar, 2005). Teachers are likely to hold beliefs about assessment on students before assessment (provide a focus on learning), knowledge about assessment effects on students during assessments (provide a sense of accomplishment, challenge, failure, or inadequacy), and knowledge about assessment effects on students after assessments (as fair, meaningful, useful providing information for continuing development or lack of it). Teachers may also have beliefs about the effects of assessment on teachers themselves, such as requiring instructions on particular topics or problems or providing or not providing useful information for instruction (Title, 1994, p. 152).

Mohamad's (2009) conceptual framework (Figure 1) of the assessment process illustrates the cyclical nature of instructions and assessment. Mohamad (2009) developed this framework to guide teachers' assessment practices.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of Assessment Process

**Source:** Adapted from Mohamad (2009) and modify

## 2. Theoretical Overview

The theory that underpinned the study is the assessment for learning theory. Assessment for Learning (AFL) Theory was conceptualized by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam in the late 1990s (Flórez & Sammons, 2013). Hill and Edwards (2019) posited that this theory emphasizes the role of assessment in supporting and enhancing the learning process rather than merely measuring student

performance. Assessment for Learning is a pedagogical approach that involves teachers using assessment as a tool to support and enhance student learning. It focuses on providing feedback, involving students in the assessment process, and promoting communication between teachers and students regarding assessment results (Arnold, 2022). Assessment for Learning (AfL) Theory is particularly relevant to studying classroom assessment practices in the Ga East Municipality for several reasons. Firstly, AfL emphasizes using assessment to improve student learning, which aligns with the study's objective to evaluate and enhance classroom assessment practices. Also, the study highlights feedback practices and communication of assessment results as key areas of teacher practice. AfL provides a robust framework for understanding and improving these aspects. Again, AfL can be adapted to different educational contexts, making it suitable for the unique socio-cultural environment of the Ga East Municipality.

The study on classroom assessment practices of junior high school social studies teachers in Ghana aimed to investigate how teachers in this specific context were implementing assessment practices aligned with the principles of assessment for learning theory. The rationale behind this study was driven by the need to understand how assessment practices were being carried out in Ghanaian classrooms, particularly in the Ga East Municipality. By examining the classroom assessment practices of social studies teachers, the researchers sought to identify any gaps or challenges in implementing effective formative assessments that could support student learning and achievement. Understanding these practices will provide insights into areas where professional development or support may be needed to enhance teaching practices and ultimately improve student outcomes. Furthermore, by focusing on a specific geographical area like the Ga East Municipality, the study aimed to provide context-specific findings that could inform educational policies and practices at the local level. This localized approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how assessment for learning theory is being translated into practice within a particular educational setting in Ghana.

Several studies support the AfL theory and its application in educational settings. Willis (2007) study highlighted the importance of AfL in influencing actual learning in the classroom. It emphasizes the need for teachers to use assessment as a tool to improve student learning, rather than just to evaluate student performance. Willis (2007) study also suggested that AfL can be used to provide continuous feedback to students, helping them understand their progress and adjust their learning accordingly. Furthermore, Wolterinck, Poortman, Schildkamp and Visscher (2022), study emphasizes the importance of using AfL to make assessment an essential part of teaching and learning. It highlights the potential of AfL to provide continuous feedback to students and steer their learning. These studies provide a solid foundation for understanding the AfL Theory and its application in educational settings. They support the usage of AfL theory as a guide to the study on classroom assessment practices of junior high school social studies teachers in Ghana, highlighting the importance of using AfL to improve student learning and enhance teacher assessment practices.

Assessment for Learning (AfL) Theory provides a comprehensive and relevant theoretical framework for guiding this study. By focusing on formative assessment, feedback, student involvement, and instructional adjustments, AfL offers a robust lens through which to evaluate and improve current practices, ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes in this context.

### **3. Empirical Review**

The purpose of Sundeme (2019) study was to evaluate junior high school teachers in the Berekum Municipality of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana's knowledge and application of performance-based evaluation. The research design strategy used in the study was a quantitative descriptive survey. In order to sample 588 junior high school teachers in the Berekum Municipality, the study used census sampling methodologies. For the research study, a questionnaire and a documentation checklist were employed. According to the survey, junior high school instructors in the Berekum Municipality were not knowledgeable about the requirements of performance-based assessment. Based on the survey, it

was found that most instructors in the Berekum Municipality were not actually using performance-based assessment since they did not have the necessary background knowledge and abilities. It was also clear that junior high school instructors in the Berekum Municipality faced difficulties related to time constraints, inadequate knowledge, a lack of focus from decision-makers, an excessive workload, instructing huge classes, and a shortage of useful supplies. It was suggested that junior high school instructors in the Berekum Municipality receive refresher training on performance-based assessment in order to better understand its principles and practical applications. Ghana Education Service could handle this by coordinating with UCC measurement and evaluation specialists. This highlights a significant gap in assessment knowledge and practices among teachers. Similar issues might be present in the Ga East Municipality, suggesting a need to investigate and address these challenges to improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes.

Furthermore, classroom assessment and academic performance study by Awuah (2022) looked at the assessment methods used by junior high school social studies instructors in two Ghanaian districts. The study was carried out in the Eastern and Oti Regions' Asuogyaman and Krachi East districts, respectively. The study utilized 100 participants for the study, specifically chosen from the two districts. Semi-structured interviews, observation, and the distribution of questionnaires were used to gather data. The mixed-method technique was used in the research. The study's findings showed that junior high school instructors favoured and really employed traditional methods of assessment in their teaching activities. Their ideas and methods for assessment have their roots in the conventional paradigm of learning. It was advised that alternative or modern techniques to teaching educational evaluations be taught more heavily in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and that their curricula be reviewed. Additionally, it was suggested that in-service instructors take refresher courses to improve their understanding of and proficiency with alternative educational evaluation techniques. This indicates a broader trend across various regions in Ghana where traditional assessment methods prevail. Investigating whether this trend exists in the Ga East Municipality can provide insights into whether similar interventions are needed, thus emphasizing the importance of the proposed study.

Ochour, Opoku-Afriyie and Eshun (2022) study looked into social studies teachers' conceptions and practices of formative assessment in the Techiman Municipality of Ghana's Bono East Region. The goal of the research was to provide solutions and recommendations for enhancing formative assessment procedures, particularly in the field of social studies. In the Techiman Municipality in the Bono East Region, eighty-four (84) public junior high schools participated in a census. For the study, all ninety-five (95) Social Studies instructors from the Municipality's public junior high schools were chosen. For the teachers, a 50-item survey with two open-ended questions was created. The acquired data were examined using percentages, means, standard deviations, and frequencies. The study found that although the teachers understood the value of formative assessment and its application in the classroom, their assessment procedures lacked sufficient formative elements. External variables impacted on the assessment techniques of the teachers. In order to allow teachers to practice assessment as professionals, it was advised that demands such as the requirement for continuous assessment marks to grade pupils be eliminated. This study shows that even when teachers understand formative assessment, external pressures can hinder effective implementation. Exploring these dynamics in the Ga East Municipality can help identify specific barriers and opportunities for enhancing assessment practices in Social Studies education.

The studies reviewed provide substantial evidence that there are widespread issues with assessment practices among junior high school teachers in various regions of Ghana. These issues include a lack of knowledge, reliance on traditional methods, and external pressures that affect the implementation of effective assessment strategies. Therefore, a study on the classroom assessment practices of junior high school Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality is not only important but necessary to identify local challenges, inform policy, and improve educational outcomes in this specific context.

#### 4. Materials and Methods

The research approach utilized in this study is a descriptive quantitative survey design. This approach is appropriate as it involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to understand patterns and relationships related to Social Studies teachers' classroom assessment practices (Kwan, 2019). The survey design allowed the researchers to systematically gather standardized information from all participants, facilitating statistical analysis and generalization of findings within the Ga East Municipality (Siedlecki, 2020). As concurred by other studies, the study "school-based assessment practice of junior high school teachers in Bawku Municipality in the Upper East Region of Ghana" used a descriptive survey design, which is a quantitative research approach (Akugri, Nugba & Klomegah, 2024). Also, the study on Classroom Assessment of Learners: Assessment Practices of Junior High School Social Studies Teachers in two Districts of Ghana" also used a descriptive research design to collect data through questionnaires (Auwah, 2022). Furthermore, the choice of the research approach in this study is supported by Sundeme (2019) study on "teachers' knowledge and practice of performance-based assessment in junior high schools in the central region of Ghana". The study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a quantitative approach. Finally, the study on "school-based assessment practice of junior high school teachers in Bawku municipality in the Upper East Region of Ghana" by Akugri, Nugba and Klomegah (2024) used a descriptive survey design, which is a quantitative research approach. These studies demonstrate that the descriptive quantitative survey design is a suitable and commonly used approach for understanding classroom assessment practices of junior high school teachers, including social studies teachers in Ghana as used in this study.

The sampling technique used in this study is census sampling. Since the total population of junior high school Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality is small (60 teachers), census sampling was appropriate. This technique allowed collecting data from every member of the population, ensuring comprehensive coverage and eliminating sampling error. As evident in the study of Ochour et al., (2022) on formative assessment conceptions and practices of junior high school social studies teachers in the Techiman Municipality of Ghana used a census sampling technique to select all the Social Studies teachers in the public Junior High Schools in the Techiman Municipality. Also, Asante, (2023) study on "knowledge and practices of authentic assessment in junior high schools" also used a census sampling approach to collect data from 127 social studies teachers in 85 junior high schools.

These studies demonstrate that the census sampling approach, where data is collected from the entire population rather than a sample, is a suitable and commonly used technique for studies investigating classroom assessment practices of junior high school social studies teachers in Ghana. The census sampling method helped to ensure that all the necessary characteristics of the population are captured in the study. The data collection instrument used is the Teachers Practice of Classroom Assessment Questionnaire (TPCAQ). This five-point Likert-scale questionnaire is well-suited for the study as it allows the researchers to measure various dimensions of classroom assessment practices quantitatively.

The researchers ensured that all participating teachers were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and potential impacts of the study. Participants voluntarily agreed to participate without any coercion. The researchers protected the identities and responses of participants by anonymizing data and securely storing information. The researchers presented aggregate data to prevent identification of individual teachers. Also, the researchers informed participants that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences.

In summary, a survey design was conducted on sixty (60) junior high school (JHS) Social Studies teachers comprising 35 males and 25 females in the Ga East Municipality. The 60 JHS Social Studies teachers were chosen via census sampling technique for the study. The choice of 65 teachers as a sample size is based on the guidelines by Gay et al. (2012) who indicated that for smaller populations, where  $N = 100$  or less, there is no point in sampling; therefore, use the entire population as a sample.

With census, every, or all units (people, cases) in a particular population within the study area are selected, or included for the data collection (Hazra & Gogtay, 2016). A five-point Likert-scale Teachers Practice of Classroom Assessment Questionnaire (TPCAQ) was used to gather data from the 65 respondents. The TPCAQ ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ) had four sub-scales or constructs: revision of assessment ( $\alpha = 0.93$ ), students' involvement in assessment ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ), communicating assessment results ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ), and feedback practices ( $\alpha = 0.96$ ). The researcher relied on the Likert-type questionnaire because they are useful in generating frequencies of response amenable to statistical treatment and analysis. Internal consistency was tested on the questionnaire using Cronbach alpha reliability analysis via the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 28, and this yielded a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.96 which was in line with the guideline by Su, Denadai, Ho, Lai and Lo (2020), Terziev and Petkova-Georgieva (2019), Wu and Tsui (2020) that Cronbach alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) between 0.7 and 0.9 are considered reliable. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency count, percentage, and mean) and inferential statistics (t-test,) at a significance level of  $p < 0.05$  at a confidence interval (CI) of 95% and a margin of error of  $\pm 5$ .

## 5. Results

**Table 1:** Social Studies Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices in the Ga East Municipality (n = 60)

Statements	N (%)	OW (%)	S (%)	U (%)	A (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
<b>Revision of Assessment</b>								
I use the table of specifications in planning classroom assessment.	6 (10)	1 (2)	12 (20)	3 (22)	28 (47)	2.93	1.29	Reject
I conduct item analysis for tests and exams.	7 (12)	3 (5)	11 (18)	20 (33)	19 (32)	2.68	1.26	Reject
I revise a test based on the item analysis	0 (0)	0 (0)	13 (22)	21 (35)	20 (33)	3.22	1.78	Accept
I use assessment results when planning lessons.	0 (0)	0 (0)	14 (23)	11 (18)	35 (58)	3.35	0.84	Accept
I make sure the test adequately covers the material taught in class.	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (12)	52 (87)	3.82	0.59	Accept
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.15</b>	
<b>Students Involvement in Assessment</b>								
I invite students to have a say in the assessment methods to be used.	16 (27)	13 (22)	21 (35)	3 (5)	7 (12)	1.53	1.27	Reject
I assess students by observing classroom activities.	0 (0)	1 (2)	23 (38)	22 (37)	14 (23)	2.82	0.82	Accept
I allow students to choose an assessment tasks they want to work on in a class.	25 (42)	15 (25)	11 (18)	0 (0)	9 (15)	1.22	1.39	Reject
I encourage students to see mistakes as learning opportunities.	0 (0)	11 (18)	6 (10)	24 (40)	19 (32)	2.85	1.07	Accept
I develop an assessment that confirms what students know and can do.	3 (5)	5 (8)	11 (18)	18 (30)	23 (38)	2.88	1.17	Accept
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>2.26</b>	<b>1.11</b>	
<b>Communicating Assessment Results</b>								
I inform students in advance about how they will be assessed.	1 (2)	10 (17)	19 (32)	7 (12)	23 (38)	2.68	1.20	Reject
I communicate assessment results to students' timely	0 (0)	2 (3)	10 (17)	15 (25)	33 (55)	3.32	0.87	Accept
I communicate assessment results timely to parents of students	2 (3)	23 (38)	17 (28)	8 (13)	10 (17)	2.02	1.16	Reject
I use assessment results when making decisions about individual students and evaluating class improvement	0 (0)	4 (7)	7 (12)	13 (22)	36 (60)	3.35	0.94	Accept
I communicate classroom assessment results to students.	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (2)	20 (33)	38 (63)	3.57	0.69	Accept
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>2.98</b>	<b>0.97</b>	
<b>Feedback Practices</b>								
I provide written and oral feedback	0 (0)	0 (0)	15 (25)	20 (33)	25 (42)	3.17	0.81	Reject

Statements	N (%)	OW (%)	S (%)	U (%)	A (%)	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
to students.	(0)	(0)	(25)	(33)	(42)			
Providing timely feedback to Students	0 (0)	3 (5)	5 (8)	23 (38)	29 (48)	3.30	0.83	Accept
I protect students' confidentiality with regard to informing assessment results.	1 (2)	2 (3)	17 (28)	23 (38)	17 (28)	2.88	0.92	Reject
I encourage students to do better after informing them of their results	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (10)	9 (15)	45 (75)	3.65	0.66	Accept
I follow the required procedures (time limit, no hints, no interpretation) when administering the assessment.	2 (3)	0 (0)	10 (17)	23 (38)	25 (42)	3.15	0.94	Reject
I discussed students' strengths and weakness with them	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (17)	10 (17)	40 (67)	3.50	0.77	Accept
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.82</b>	

Note: \*Teacher classroom assessment practice is positive; the figures in parentheses are in percentage.

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Key: A= Always, U = Usually, S=Sometimes, OW = Once in a While, N = Never,  $\bar{X}$  – weighted mean; SD – Standard Deviation.

Table 1 presents information on Social Studies Teachers' Classroom Assessment Practices in the Ga East Municipality. The assessment practices measures include four constructs: revision of assessment practices, students' involvement in assessment practices, communication of assessment results, and feedback practices.

With the cut-off mean and standard deviation ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.20, SD = 1.15) for revision of assessment practices, the results indicate high scores for revision of tests based on item analysis by teachers ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.22, SD = 1.78), use of assessment results by teachers when planning lessons ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.35, SD = 0.78), and teachers ensure that tests adequately covers lessons taught in class ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.82, SD = 0.84). However, the results revealed low scores for the use of the table of specification in planning classroom assessment ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.93, SD = 1.29). Item analysis for tests and examinations by teachers also recorded low scores ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.68, SD = 1.26).

With the cut-off mean and standard deviation ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.26, SD = 1.11) for students' involvement in assessment practices, teachers assess students through observation of classroom activities. ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.82, SD = 0.82), teachers encourage students to see mistakes as learning opportunities ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.85, SD = 1.07), and teachers develop an assessment that confirms what students know and can do ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.88, SD = 1.17). The study revealed low scores for teacher invitation of students to have a say in the assessment methods to be used ( $\bar{X}$  = 1.53, SD = 1.27), and teachers allowing students to choose assessment tasks to perform in class ( $\bar{X}$  = 1.22, SD = 1.39).

Concerning the communication of assessment results by teachers (cut-off  $\bar{X}$  = 2.98, SD = 0.97), teachers timely communicate assessment results to students ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.32, SD = 0.87), teachers use assessment results when making decisions about individual students as well as in evaluating class improvement ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.35, SD = 0.94), and teachers communicate classroom assessment results to students ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.57, SD = 0.69). Conversely, the results revealed low scores about teachers informing students in advance how they will be assessed ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.68, SD = 1.20), and how timely the teachers communicate assessment results to parents of students ( $\bar{X}$  = 2.02, SD = 1.16).

In terms of feedback practices to students on assessment results (cut-off  $\bar{X}$  = 3.28, SD = 0.82), the study revealed high scores for teachers providing timely feedback to students. ( $\bar{X}$  = 3.30, SD =



0.83), teachers encouraging students to do better after informing them of their assessment results. ( $\bar{X}=3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.66$ ), and teachers discussing the strength and weaknesses of students with the students ( $\bar{X}=3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). The results indicate low scores for teachers providing written and oral feedback to students ( $\bar{X}=3.17$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), and teachers confidentially informing students of their assessment results. ( $\bar{X}=2.88$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ), and teachers following the required procedures when administering classroom assessments ( $\bar{X}=3.15$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ).

It could be inferred from the results of this study that Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality performed satisfactorily as regards classroom assessment practices related to revision of assessment (revision of test based on item analysis, using assessment results when planning lessons, and making sure assessment adequately covers lessons taught in class), student involvement in assessment (assessing students through observation of classroom activities, encouraging students to see mistakes as learning opportunities, developing assessment that confirms what students know and can do), communicating assessment results (timely communication of assessment results to students, using assessment results when making decisions about individual students and evaluating class improvement, communicating classroom assessment results to students), and feedback practices (teachers providing timely feedback to students, motivating students to do better after informing them of their assessment results, discussing the strength and weaknesses of students with the students). Based on the results of the study, the researchers hypothesized (H<sub>A</sub>) that there will be no significant gender differences in classroom assessment practices of teachers. The sub-hypotheses were that a) H<sub>1</sub>: There will be no significant gender differences in revision assessment practices of teachers; b) H<sub>2</sub>: There will be no significant gender differences in students' involvement in assessment practices of teachers; c) H<sub>3</sub>: There will be no significant gender differences in communication of assessment results practices of teachers; d) H<sub>4</sub>: There will be no significant gender differences in feedback practices of teachers.

**Table 2.** T-test Results for Social Studies Teachers Sex and Classroom Assessment Practices (n=60)

Variables	Sex	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	df	p-value
Revision of Assessment Practices	Male (n=35)	2.66	.804	-7.964	58	.000
	Female (n=25)	3.95	.087			
Students Involvement in Assessment Practices	Male (n=35)	1.53	.642	-10.984	58	.000
	Female (n=25)	3.29	.569			
Communicating Assessment Results Practices	Male (n=35)	2.40	.721	-9.495	58	.000
	Female (n=25)	3.81	.196			
Feedback Practices	Male (n=35)	2.80	.659	-10.999	58	.000
	Female (n=25)	3.95	.079			
Classroom Assessment Practices	Male (n=35)	2.37	.690	-9.731	58	.000
	Female (n=25)	3.76	.215			

\*Test variables - Dependent variable (classroom assessment practices) & independent variable (gender).

\*\* df (58) - degrees of freedom

\*\*\* t-test is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

In Table 2, significant differences exist between male and female Social Studies teachers in their classroom assessment practices [ $t(58) = -9.731$ ,  $p=0.000$ , 2-tailed] at a confidence interval (C.I) of 95%. Generally, a comparison of the mean differences indicates that female Social Studies teachers ( $M= 3.76$ ,  $N= 25$ ,  $SD= .215$ ) were more likely to implement classroom assessment practices satisfactorily as compared with their male counterparts ( $M= 2.37$ ,  $N= 35$ ,  $SD= .690$ ).

It could also be inferred from the results that a negative but statistically significant marginal sex difference in a revision of assessment practices of the teachers. It could be noticed in Table 2 that, mean scores for the revision of assessment practices sub-scale were higher among female teachers (M

= 3.95; N = 25; SD = .087), and lower among male teachers (M = 2.66; N = 35; SD = .804).

Also, mean scores for students' involvement in assessment practices were skewed toward female teachers (M = 3.29; N= 25; SD = .569) compared with male teachers (M= 1.53, N = 35, SD= .642). Hence, male and female Social Studies teachers differ significantly on students' involvement in assessment practices [t (58) = -10.984, p=0.000, 2-tailed].

Similarly, mean scores for communication of assessment results practices were higher among female teachers (M = 3.81; N = 25; SD = .196) as compared to their male counterparts (M = 2.40; N = 35; SD = .721). The t-test output indicates that the observed difference in the means is significant; t (58) = -9.495, p= .000.

More female teachers (M = 3.95; N = 25; SD = .079) were more likely to provide feedback on assessment to students as compared with their male students (M = 2.80; N = 35; SD = .659). Hence, male and female Social Studies teachers differ significantly in feedback practices [t (58) = -10.999, p=0.000, 2-tailed].

## 6. Discussions

The study revealed that the classroom assessment practices of Junior High School Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality were generally satisfactory, with a mean score of 2.95 (SD = 0.878). This finding suggests that while there are areas of strength, there is still room for improvement in certain aspects of assessment practices.

One of the strongest aspects of assessment identified in the study was teacher feedback practices, with a mean score of 3.28. This high score indicates that teachers are effectively using feedback to guide and improve student learning. Feedback is a critical component of formative assessment, as it helps students understand their progress and identify areas for improvement. Effective feedback practices are aligned with the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), which emphasize the role of feedback in enhancing student learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

The study also found that teachers frequently revise their assessment practices, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.20. This practice is essential for ensuring that assessments remain relevant and effective in measuring student learning. The willingness to revise and improve assessment methods reflects a commitment to continuous improvement, which is a key tenet of AfL. Regular revision of assessment practices allows teachers to adapt to the evolving educational needs of their students and to incorporate new strategies and tools that can enhance the assessment process.

Communication of assessment results was another area where teachers performed well, with a mean score of 2.98. Effective communication of assessment results is crucial for ensuring that students understand their performance and can take appropriate steps to improve. It also helps parents and guardians to be aware of their children's progress and to support their learning at home. This practice is consistent with the AfL principle that emphasizes the importance of clear and constructive communication in the assessment process.

However, the study highlighted a significant area of concern: the low level of student involvement in assessment practices, with a mean score of 2.26. Involving students in the assessment process is a key component of AfL, as it encourages students to take ownership of their learning and to develop self-assessment and peer-assessment skills. Low student involvement in assessment practices can limit the effectiveness of feedback and the overall learning experience. Strategies to increase student involvement might include incorporating self-assessment checklists, peer reviews, and student-led conferences, which can empower students and make the assessment process more interactive and reflective. The study also found a significant gender difference in the implementation of classroom assessment practices, with female Social Studies teachers in the municipality more likely to implement these practices satisfactorily than their male counterparts ( $p \leq 0.05$ ). This finding suggests that there may be differences in training, attitudes, or support systems that influence how male and female teachers approach assessment.

The findings of this study are consistent with existing research on classroom assessment

practices. For instance, Al Kharusi (2007), Koloï-Keaikitse (2012), and Zhang & Burry-Stock (2003) all highlighted the importance of test construction, grading, interpretation, and dissemination of assessment results as key components of effective assessment practices. The parallels between this study and previous research reinforce the validity of the findings and underscore the importance of these practices in promoting student learning.

## 7. Conclusions

The study concludes that Junior High School Social Studies teachers in the Ga East Municipality implement different assessment practices. The major and satisfactory classroom assessment practices of the teachers include feedback practices, revision of assessment, and communication of assessment results. However, students' involvement in assessment practices by teachers was unsatisfactory. While teacher feedback practices, revision of assessment methods, and communication of results are areas of strength, there is a clear need to enhance student involvement in the assessment process. Addressing the gender differences in assessment practices is also crucial for ensuring that all teachers are equipped to implement effective assessment strategies. By leveraging the principles of Assessment for Learning, educators can further improve their assessment practices and ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.

## 8. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Ga East Municipal Directorate of Education may organize periodic continuous professional development programmes on classroom assessment practices for Social Studies teachers to enhance their assessment practices, especially students' involvement in assessment practices.

## 9. Implications for the Research

The findings from the study have several important implications for educational practice, policy, and future research. The findings suggest that curriculum developers and policymakers need to ensure that curriculum guidelines emphasize the principles of Assessment for Learning, encouraging practices that involve continuous assessment, student participation, and effective feedback mechanisms and also develop policies that mandate regular professional development on assessment practices and provide resources for teachers to implement innovative assessment methods. Furthermore, the study opens several avenues for further research. Future studies should investigate the underlying reasons for the gender differences in assessment practices observed in this study. Understanding these factors could inform more effective professional development and support strategies. Also, research should examine the impact of increased student involvement in assessment on learning outcomes. Studies could explore specific strategies for engaging students and measure their effectiveness in different educational contexts. Additionally, researchers may conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of improved assessment practices on student learning outcomes and teacher development.

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## APPENDIX A: Teachers Practice of Classroom Assessment Questionnaire (Tpcaq)

### Section A: Demographic Information

Instruction: Please tick (√) as appropriate.

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

### SECTION B: TEACHERS' CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Directions: For each statement below please use the following scale to indicate how often you used the assessment practice described by each item. Please tick '√' in the appropriate box Please check '√' in the appropriate box. Such that A= Always, U = Usually, S=Sometimes, OW = Once in a While, N = Never), rate your agreement to the following statements. (Please rate EVERY option according to the scale).

	As a Social Studies teacher	Choose ONLY ONE Option for each Statement				
		A	U	S	OW	N
2	I use the table of specification in planning classroom assessment					
3	I conduct item analysis for tests and exams					
4	I revise a test based on item analysis					
5	I use assessment results when planning lessons					
6	I make sure the test adequately covers the material taught in class					
7	I invite students to have a say in the assessment methods to be used.					
8	I assess students through observing classroom activities					
9	I allow students to choose assessment tasks they want to work in a class					
10	I encourage students to see mistakes as learning opportunities					
11	I develop assessment that confirms what students know and can do					
12	I inform students in advance how they will be assessed					
13	I communicate assessment results to students' timely					
14	I communicate assessment results to students' parents timely					
15	I use assessment results when making decisions (e.g., placement, promotion) about individual students and evaluating class improvement.					
16	I communicate classroom assessment results to students.					
17	I provide written and oral feedback to students.					
18	Providing timely feedback to students					
19	I protect students' confidentiality with regard to informing assessment results.					
20	I encourage students to do better after informing them of their results					
21	I follow required procedures (time limit, no hints, no interpretation) when administering assessment.					
22	I discussed students' strengths and weakness with them					