

ATTITUDE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS ASSESSMENT OF PUPILS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the attitude of primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis towards assessment of their pupils. The stratified random sampling technique was used to sample 227 primary school teachers from 36 out of 65 schools in the metropolis for the study. The subjects responded to a questionnaire from which the data were collected. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and the independent t-test. The results showed that the teachers generally have positive attitude towards assessment of their pupils and that there is no significant difference between the attitudes of male and female teachers towards assessment. However, there are some aspects of the components of assessment that the teachers were not well disposed to or comfortable with. In view of this it was recommended that the Metropolitan Education Directorate, in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast should conduct in-service training on assessment for re-orientation of the primary school teachers.

Key words: Attitude, assessment, test construction, test administration, utilisation of assessment results, independent t-test, statistically significant difference.

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of every nation's development, therefore, any nation that intends to develop must strengthen its educational base. The quality of the educational system is reflected in the quality of education at the basic level, especially in the primary schools. An aspect of the curriculum delivery process that is designed to determine the educational quality of every school is the assessment system.

Of late, the demand for public accountability of education has risen. One way of satisfying such curiosity of the public is through the

use of assessment. The results of assessment inform the public of what is going on in the classroom in terms of teaching and learning. Such information may be used to evaluate the curriculum. This is achieved by using the results of assessment in stimulating analysis of educational objectives and encouraging a critical examination of the content and methods of instruction. Educational authorities are then informed about the suitability or otherwise of the prescribed content and instructional materials which lead to review of the curriculum and reformulation of educational goals. To make such information useful, teachers have to ensure that assessment results are highly reliable. This can be achieved by ensuring that the assessment processes are without errors.

Spearman (1913, cited in Crocker and Algina, 1986) established that any observed test score could be envisioned as the composite of two hypothetical components-true and error scores. Spearman (1913, cited in Crocker and Algina, 1986) further noted that any observed score is considered as a realisation of a random variable due to the effects of factors such as inattention, misreading of items, guesses, cheating and subjective scoring on the examinee. This is corroborated by Harlen (2010) when she admitted that measurement is subject to error but the error is greater in the case of educational assessment. Some of these errors are introduced as a result of the way tests are constructed, administered and scored. With regard to test administration, the American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) (2014), in discussing efforts in the Standards to ensure the integrity of test scores, prescribed among other things for test administrators to provide continuous monitoring of the testing process. This view goes to buttress Amedahe and Etsey's (2003) position that, invigilators should stand at a point where they could have a clear view of all students during test administration. If this advice is adhered to, it will minimise cheating in testing.

Assessment is, generally, used to refer to all activities teachers use to help students learn and to gauge students' progress (Black & William, 1998). The role assessment plays in the educational system cannot be overemphasized. It has been identified as a major component in the development of education. Anastasi and Urbina (2007) observed that for all types of learners, the periodic

administration of well-constructed tests may serve to facilitate learning. Such tests can reveal strengths and weaknesses in past learning, give direction to subsequent learning and motivate the learner. In addition, assessment provides a means of adapting instruction to individual needs. Teaching can be most fruitful when it meets the learner at whatever stage he/she happens to be (Anastasi & Urbina, 2007).

Apart from facilitating effective teaching and learning, teachers use assessment for very important decisions about placement, selection, guidance and counselling, and curriculum planning. Literature suggests that assessment results are used to make important educational decisions including evaluating students' overall achievement and growth in content domain, diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses, planning educational interventions and designing individualized instructional plans, and place students in appropriate educational programmes (Miller, McIntire & Lovler 2011).

For assessment to execute all its functions effectively, there is the need for efficient handling of the assessment processes which include test construction, test administration, marking, interpretation and utilization of test scores. Although standardized tests are known to have all the psychometric qualities, in the Ghanaian situation, the classroom teacher is directly responsible for handling them. Literature has shown that classroom teachers' assessments are of low quality. For example Miller, McIntire and Lovler (2011) noted that nonstandardised tests are usually constructed by a teacher in a less formal manner. This suggests that teacher-made tests may not meet all psychometric standards. Similarly, Anastasi and Urbina (2007) observed that the test constructor who plunges directly into item writing is likely to produce lopsided items. It is not surprising that, Amedahe (1989) in a study of assessment practices of secondary school teachers in the Central Region of Ghana, found that the teachers lacked skills and principles of test construction. Such is the situation of most classroom teachers.

The study further observed that in-service teachers in Ghana have limited competency in assessment in general and continuous assessment in particular. In view of this, Anhwere (2009), in his study of assessment practices of tutors in the training colleges observed that there is lack of skills and knowledge of test construction among tutors

in the Training Colleges of Ghana. Furthermore, in Wales, Montgomery (2010), in a study of teacher assessment in the UK, observed that Wales had moved to the implementation of teacher assessment but certain issues remain problematic. In view of these situations, teachers' assessment is perceived as having low reliability (Harlen & Gardener, 2010).

To guard against fortuitous imbalance of item coverage, Anastasi and Urbina (2007) suggested that test specification table should be drawn up before any items are prepared. In support of this, Schmeiser and Welch (2006) noted that test specification table and review are important sources of validity.

With regard to continuous assessment, Tamakloe, Ata and Amedahe (1996) in discussing the shortcoming of continuous assessment observed that teachers' continuous assessment marks are highly subjective. To reduce the subjectivity of scoring, assessment experts have provided some principles for scoring which include marking in anonymity, the use of marking scheme and marking question by question instead of script by script (Ebel, 1972; Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989).

Continuous assessment plays a major role in promoting teaching and learning in the classroom. Bartels (2003) outlined the advantages of continuous assessment to include (a) obtaining comprehensive and more valid information on the student, (b) identification of the strengths and weaknesses of students at an early stage of a programme and their subsequent remediation, (c) assessing the entire personality of the student, (d) providing adequate data for the guidance of students and (e) minimization of students' fears and anxieties of examinations. To achieve these lofty results from continuous assessment and for that matter, assessment in general, depends on the expertise with which the assessment processes are handled. The extent to which the classroom teacher handles the assessment process has direct relationship with his or her attitude towards assessment. This is because literature suggests that the attitude of a person towards an attitudinal object predicts the behaviour of that person towards that attitudinal object (Tamanja, 2010). In addition, people's attitudes dispose them to either respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution or event (Seidu, 1998). This notion is carried out by Anastasi and Urbina (2007) in their definition of attitude which states that an attitude is a

tendency to react favourably or unfavourably towards a designated class of stimuli such as national or ethnic group, a custom or an institution.

A study by Mohiuddin, (2015) had shown that secondary and higher secondary school teachers in Bangladesh hold positive attitude towards assessment. It follows that if teachers have positive attitudes towards assessment, they are likely to handle the assessment processes efficiently and obtain desirable results. This is in conformity with Davis (2008) whose findings demonstrated that there is some degree of agreement between teachers' attitude towards mathematics teaching and their instructional practices. His finding was based on a survey he conducted on primary and junior secondary school teachers' attitude towards Mathematics and Mathematics teaching and the relationship between the two using questionnaire. The data was analysed using means, standard deviation and Pearson correlation. The results showed a positive attitude towards Mathematics and the teaching of Mathematics although, the relationship was found to be moderate.

There seems to be paucity in studies on gender related attitude of teachers towards assessment in Ghana. This concern arises as a result of Siamisang and Nenty (2012) study on analysis of gender-based differential item functioning in the 2007 TIMMS examination. The results of the study showed that there were few mathematics and science items which functioned significantly differently for male and female students. It is for the foregoing reasons that the investigator examined the attitudes of primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis towards assessment and the related gender comparison.

Purpose of the study

The study sought to investigate the attitudes of primary school teachers towards assessment in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The study further examined the gender differences in the attitude of the teachers towards assessment and made recommendations.

Research questions/hypothesis

The study was guided by the following research questions and hypothesis.

Research questions

1. What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards test construction?

2. What attitudes do primary school teachers have towards test administration?
3. What attitudes do primary school teachers have towards marking of test papers?
4. What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards utilization of assessment results?

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female primary school teachers' attitude towards assessment of pupils at the primary school.

Hi: There is statistically significant difference between male and female primary school teachers' attitude towards assessment of pupils at the primary school.

Methodology

Research design

The design for the study was a cross sectional survey. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) defined survey as an attempt to obtain data from members of a population or a sample to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. They indicated that for a cross sectional survey, information is collected at one point in time from a sample drawn from a predetermined population. The choice of the design is justified for the fact that data for the study were collected from a sample of primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The subjects were made to respond to questionnaire for the collection of data to determine the current attitudes of primary school teachers of the Cape Coast Metropolis towards assessment of pupils.

Population and sample

The population for the study consisted of teachers in all the 65 primary schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis. Using the multi stage sampling technique, two hundred and twenty-seven (227) teachers from thirty-six (36) constituting 55% of the primary schools were selected to participate in the study. There are six circuits in the metropolis which served as strata and six schools from each of the circuits were selected by means of stratified random sampling

technique considering the different school characteristics. Once a school was sampled, all the teachers were selected to participate.

Instruments

A questionnaire consisting of a five-point likert scale was constructed to collect data from subjects. The questionnaire, comprising twenty-nine (29) items was constructed by the researcher. The items were classified into five sections, comprising background information, attitude towards test construction, attitude towards test administration, attitude towards marking and attitude towards utilization of test scores.

The section on background information requested respondents to provide information on their teaching experience and background in assessment. The test construction section explored the attitude of the teachers concerning the processes of test construction. On test administration, the items covered provision of conducive testing environment and good practices in test invigilation while the section on marking involved investigations into the attitude towards marking conditions. The final section was concerned with utilization of test scores.

In order to obtain reliability of the instrument, the items were administered to teachers at the University Primary School, UCC. Using the Cronbach alpha, a reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The instrument was validated by two senior lecturers, one in assessment and the other in Mathematics, who reviewed and provided useful suggestions which reshaped the current standard. By so doing content validity evidence was achieved.

Data collection

The researcher trained six assistants for the administration of the questionnaire. They were given letters to the respective head teachers. The letters introduced the research assistants and asked permission for the teachers from the schools to participate in the study. In each school, all the teachers participated. Consequently, arrangements were made for the participants to assemble during break time to respond to the items. The administrators explained the purpose of the study and the instructions for responding to the items to the respondents. The respondents were also assured of confidentiality of their responses. In view of this arrangement, the return rate was 100%.

Data analysis

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics comprising means and standard deviations were computed and used for the analysis and discussion. In addition, inferential statistical analysis was carried out to investigate whether a significant difference existed between the attitudes of male and female teachers' towards assessment, using the independent t-test.

For purpose of analyses, the responses of the positive items were weighted as follow; strongly agree=5, agree=4, undecided=3, disagree=2 and strongly disagree=1. On the other hand, the negative items were weighted as; strongly disagree=5, disagree=4, undecided=3, agree=2 and strongly agree=1. For each of the individual items a mean score greater than 3 indicate a positive attitude and less than 3 indicate unfavourable attitude. However, a mean score of 3 indicate attitude which was neither positive nor negative. The overall mean scores were also used to discuss the overall attitude of primary school teachers towards assessment. For the overall mean scores, the most positive attitude will have an overall mean score which is equal to the number of items times 5 and the most unfavourable attitude will have an overall mean score equal to the number of items times one. Attitudes which are neither positive nor negative will have an overall mean score of 3.

Results

The results of the study are presented in five sections. These were teachers' attitude towards test construction, teachers' attitude towards test administration, teachers' attitude towards scoring of test scripts, teachers' attitude towards utilization of test scores and a comparison between male and female primary school teachers' attitude towards assessment of pupils at the primary school.

Research question 1:

What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards test construction?

Results of teachers' attitudes toward test construction are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean scores of teachers' attitude towards test construction.

Items	Mean	SD
Stating the purpose of a test before writing the items is useful to item writing	3.89	1.33
Deciding on the item format(s) to use helps in writing good items	4.23	0.89
Test specification table helps to improve the quality of test papers	4.18	0.88
Constructing test specification table prior to item writing is a waste of time	3.34	1.37
Without test specification table I can write equally good items	2.95	1.19
Selecting questions from textbooks and past questions makes item writing easier	3.94	1.12
Review of test items is time wasting	2.42	1.14
Overall mean score	3.55	0.68

Table 1 shows that the overall mean score of teachers' attitude towards test construction was 3.55 out of 5 (24.36 out of 35) and a standard deviation of 0.68. This shows that Cape Coast Metropolitan primary school teachers have positive attitude towards test construction. The overall standard deviation of 0.68 suggests that the teachers have almost the same attitude towards the various stages of test construction.

None of the individual positive items had a mean score of less than 3.8 out of 5. This indicates a high positive attitude towards these items. However, among the negative items, two (without test specification table, I can write equally good items and review of test items is time wasting) had mean scores less than 3 suggesting negative attitudes towards these categories. On the other hand, the other two (constructing test specification table prior to item writing is a waste of time and review of test items is time wasting) had mean scores greater than 3 implying positive attitudes towards these stages of test construction.

Research question 2:

What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards test administration?

Table 2 presents responses of respondents on attitude towards test administration.

Table 2: Mean scores of teachers' attitude towards test administration

Items	Mean	SD
Providing information in advance to pupils about test to be conducted helps the pupils to perform well	4.09	1.09
Vigilance of the teacher during test invigilation is good to improve the performance of pupils	3.99	1.08
Ensuring adequate ventilation for the conduct of a test facilitates pupils' performance	3.96	1.05
Ensuring adequate lighting system for the conduct of a test is necessary for pupils to do well in the test	4.03	1.04
It is convenient for the invigilator to stand at one place during invigilation	3.78	1.23
During test administration, it is good to make frequent announcement of time	2.61	1.23
Searching pupils prior to the conduct of a test is abuse of pupils' human rights	2.75	1.34
Ensuring spacious seating arrangement for the conduct of a test is an added responsibility for the teacher	3.44	1.28
Overall mean score	3.58	0.68

From Table 2, the overall mean scores of teachers' attitude towards test administration is 3.58, with a standard deviation of 0.49. This shows that teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis have a trend towards positive attitude for test administration. The standard deviation of 0.49 shows that the attitude of the teachers towards the various categories of test administration is almost the same. None of the positive statements had a mean score less than 3.9, suggesting high

positive attitude towards these categories. For the negative statements the mean scores of two of them (it is convenient for the invigilator to stand at one place during invigilation and searching pupils prior to the conduct of a test is abuse of pupils' human rights) were less than 3.0. This implies negative attitude towards these categories of test administration. However, the other two (during test administration, it is good to make frequent announcement of time and ensuring spacious seating arrangement for the conduct of a test is an added responsibility for the teacher) have mean scores greater than 3.0 indicating positive attitude towards them.

Research question 3:

What attitudes do primary school teachers have towards marking of tests scripts?

The results of the attitude of teachers towards marking of test scripts are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' attitude towards marking of test scripts

Items	Mean	SD
Marking scheme is necessary for marking	4.58	0.77
The use of index numbers in examination helps the teacher to mark well	3.07	1.40
Pupils' names on test papers are disturbing in the award of marks during marking	2.97	1.50
Marking question by question instead of pupil by pupil (script by script) improves the quality of marking	2.83	1.32
Marking scheme preparation is tedious	3.17	2.43
Pupils' names on test papers make it easy for the teacher to know the marks obtained by each pupil	2.43	1.34
Marking question by question is more tedious than marking script by script	3.15	1.38
Overall mean score	3.17	0.52

The overall mean score of 3.17 for teachers' attitude towards marking of test scripts shows that in the Cape Coast Metropolis, primary school teachers have a trend in the direction of positive

attitude towards marking of test scripts. The overall standard deviation of 0.52 suggests that the teachers have almost the same attitude towards the various categories of marking of test scripts.

With the exception of one (Pupils' names on test papers are disturbing in the award of marks during marking) all the individual positive items had mean scores greater than 3.0. However, the mean scores of two of these items (the use of index numbers in examination helps the teacher to mark well and marking question by question instead of pupil by pupil) were less than 3.2. This indicates a trend towards positive attitude for these items. It was only one positive item that had a mean score greater than 4.0 which indicated a high positive attitude.

Among the negative items, two (Pupils' names on test papers make it easy for the teacher to know the marks obtained by each pupil and marking question by question is more tedious than marking script by script) had mean scores less than 3.0, suggesting negative attitudes towards these categories. On the other hand, the other one (Marking scheme preparation is tedious) had a mean score just about 3 (3.17) implying a trend towards positive attitude towards this statement. However, two of the negative items (pupils' names on test papers make it easy for the teacher to know the marks obtained by each pupil and marking question by question is more tedious than marking script by script) recorded mean scores less than 3, indicating negative attitude towards these items.

Research question 4:

What are the attitudes of primary school teachers towards utilization of assessment results?

Table 4 presents responses of respondents on attitude towards utilization of assessment results.

Table 4: Teachers' attitude towards utilization of assessment results

Items	Mean	SD
Analysis of test scores is useful in taking educational decisions	4.20	1.07
Applying statistics to test scores helps to take good decisions about pupils	4.23	0.85
Remedial teaching based on item difficulty indices is effective	4.08	0.89
Analysis of test scores is helpful in teaching and learning	4.38	0.75
Analysis of test scores is tedious	2.94	1.21
Remedial teaching based on test scores does not benefit pupils	3.58	0.95
Analysis of test scores is a waste of time	4.09	0.95
Analysis of test scores is complicated	3.31	1.16
It is not necessary to determine the statistics of test scores	3.66	1.30
Overall mean score	3.83	1.30
Total score of all components of assessment	3.53	0.60

Results in Table 4 show that the overall mean score of the attitude of teachers in the Cape Coast Municipality is 3.83, indicating a high positive attitude. The overall standard deviation of 0.37 shows that the difference in the attitude towards the various items under utilization of assessment, results is minimal. All the positive statements had mean scores greater than 4.0, indicating a high positive attitude towards these items. Among the negative statements, it was only one respondent who admitted that "analysis of test scores is tedious" which resulted in a mean score of less than 3.0, showing a negative attitude. The mean score of the negative item, analysis of test scores is complicated. It is 3.31 out of 5, only indicating a trend towards positive attitude.

Hypothesis 1:

Ho: There is no statistically significant difference between male and female primary school teachers' attitude towards assessment of pupils at the primary school.

Table 5 shows a comparison of the attitude of teachers towards assessment by gender.

Table 5: Comparison of the attitude of teachers towards assessment by gender.

Categories	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Independent t-test		
					t	df	sig
Test construction	Male	81	3.48	0.80	-1.174	222	0.241
	Female	143	3.59	0.60			
Test Administration	Male	81	3.50	0.51	-1.764	222	0.079
	Female	143	3.62	0.48			
Marking	Male	81	3.32	0.50	1.325	222	0.186
	Female	143	3.13	0.53			
Utilization of test scores	Male	81	3.76	0.65	-1.356	222	0.175
	Female	143	3.88	0.56			
Overall mean	Male	81	3.49	0.42	-1.201	222	0.231
	Female	143	3.56	0.35			

Table 5 shows that the overall mean score of the females (3.56 out of 5) is greater than that of the males (3.49 out of 5). This shows that the females have higher positive attitude towards assessment in the Cape Coast Metropolis than the males. However, the mean scores for both males and females in each component of assessment is greater than 3.0 out of 5, indicating that both males and females have positive attitudes towards the various components of assessment.

The sig (p) value of the overall mean of 0.231 in Table 5 shows that the mean difference in the attitude towards assessment between males and females is not statistically different at 0.05 level of significance [$t(222) = 1.201, p > 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected at 0.05α . The p-values of the various components are equally greater than 0.05, indicating that the mean differences between male and female in the various components are not statistically significant.

Discussion

Each of the overall mean scores of the attitude of primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis towards test construction, test administration, marking of test scripts and utilization of assessment results was greater than 3.0 out of 5 (Tables 1-4). This shows that the teachers have positive attitude towards these components of

assessment, indicating that the teachers' overall attitude towards assessment was positive. This is illustrated by the overall mean score of 3.53 out of 5. This is in conformity with the result of Mohiuddin's (2015) study of educational assessment of secondary and higher secondary teachers of Bangladesh. The results showed that the teachers held a favourable attitude towards educational assessment. The overall standard deviation of 0.37 shows that the attitude of the teachers towards the various components of assessment, is similar. With the exception of the overall attitude towards marking of test scripts ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.52$), the overall mean scores of their attitude towards the assessment components ranged between 3.55 and 3.83.

The implication is that generally, teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis are conscious of the good practices of assessment. However, there are some of the negative items under some of the assessment components that the teachers are either not conversant with or uncomfortable with. They consequently expressed negative attitudes towards them. This is in conformity with available literature that assessment practices of teachers are problematic and that teachers have limited competency in assessment in general (Amedahe, 1989; Montgomery, 2010; Harlen & Gardener, 2010).

Under test construction the items the teachers indicated negative attitudes were 'without test specification table I can write equally good items' ($M=2.95$, $std. dev.=1.19$) and 'review of test items is time wasting' ($M=2.42$, $SD=1.14$). In the case of test specification table, the high mean score of the item 'test specification table helps to improve the quality of test papers' ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.88$) suggests that the teachers are aware of the relevance of test specification table but they are not comfortable using it in their test construction, as more than half of the respondents indicated that without it, they could write equally good items ($M=2.95$, $SD=1.19$). Schmeiser and Welch (2006) have, however, noted that test specification provides direction for test construction and identified test specification as one of the sources of validity evidence of a test. If test developers avoid test specification in their test construction process, they are likely to provide lopsided tests (Anastasi & Urbina, 2007). This means that, while some content areas will be overrepresented, others will be underrepresented and some will remain untouched. This means that the relevance of test specification table in test construction lies in its implication for test validity.

The purpose of test review is for appropriateness of content, skills and relevance for the purpose of the test. Consequently, Schmeizer and Welch (2006) described test review as an important early source of validity evidence intended to affirm or refine preliminary test design. It is not good for teachers to show negative attitude towards test specification table and review because the omission of these steps in test construction may have serious implication for validity of the test. The negative attitude of the teachers towards these stages in test construction confirms Amedahe's (1989) finding that secondary school teachers in the Central Region of Ghana lacked skills and principles of test construction, and his conclusion that such is the situation of most classroom teachers. In addition, Montgomery (2010), observed that the implementation of teacher assessment in Wales remained problematic. All these support the perception of teachers' assessment as having low reliability (Harlen & Gardener, 2010).

With regard to test administration, the items towards which the teachers indicated negative attitudes were 'it is convenient for the invigilator to stand at one place during invigilation' ($M=2.61$, SD 1.23) and 'searching pupils prior to the conduct of a test is abuse of pupils' human rights' ($M=2.75$, $SD=1.34$). When an invigilator stands at one place during invigilation, there is the tendency that he/she may not have clear view of all the students' writing the paper. Students, seeing this, may take advantage to engage in cheating. Since they are not likely to be caught, their scripts will be marked to earn scores. This will introduce errors in the scores and subsequently affect the reliability of the test scores. It is in view of this that Amedahe and Etsey (2003) indicated among other things that, for effective test administration, invigilators are expected to stand at a point where they would have a clear view of all students but make occasional tours to ensure that the testing process has continuous monitoring in order to maintain the integrity of the scores (AERA, APA & NCME, 2014).

Another action during test administration with similar effect is the failure to search students before they enter the examination room. Students are likely to equip themselves with already prepared notes and with the least opportunity refer to the notes, thus influencing the reliability of the test. This supports an observation made by Spearman (1913, cited in Crocker & Algina, 1986) that any observed score is considered as a realization of a random variable (with an error

component) due to factors including cheating. This means that cheating introduces error into the observed scores which is described by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) as measurement error. Such errors create wide variation between students' observed and true scores. This undermines the effectiveness of assessment.

Among the principles of scoring emphasized by assessment experts includes grading one question at a time for all papers before scoring another (Ebel, 1972; Lindquist, 1951; Mehrens & Kaminski, 1989; Tyler, 1950, cited in Anhwere, 2009). This way, they believed, the halo effect would be reduced. However, with regard to marking of test scripts, the item that the teachers indicated negative attitude was towards 'marking question by question instead of pupil by pupil (script by script) improves the quality of marking' ($M=2.83$, $SD=1.32$). When an examiner grades one question at a time for all students, he remains focused and remains stable in grading the responses. But the response to one question influences the reader's evaluation of quality of the responses to subsequent questions.

Miller, McIntire and Lovler (2011) identified the educational decisions that are made based on assessment results by citing the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) to include evaluating students' overall achievement and growth in a content domain, diagnosing students' strengths and weaknesses, planning educational interventions and to design individualized instructional plans and place students in appropriate educational programmes. Such decisions are meant to promote effective teaching and learning and overall educational system. For these decisions to be effective requires that the analysis and interpretation of assessment results are effectively handled. Literature has shown that the extent to which the classroom teacher had handled the assessment process has direct relationship with his or her attitude towards assessment. For example, Tamanja, (2010) observes that the attitude of a person on an issue explains and predicts the behaviour of that person toward the issue.

From Table 4, the mean scores of all the positive items of the categories under utilization of assessment were greater than 4.0 out of 5 indicating high positive attitudes towards them. However, one of the negative items, 'analysis of test scores is tedious' ($M=2.98$, $SD=1.21$) recorded a mean score less than 3.0 indicating a negative attitude. However, with the item 'analysis of test scores is complicated.' ($M=3.31$, $SD=1.16$) the respondents expressed a trend towards a

positive attitude. These show that there is the likelihood that the teachers were not well inclined to analysis of test scores, which constitute the backbone of utilization of assessment results. The overall mean score of 3.83 out of 5 suggests that most of the teachers might be aware of the benefits and what is entailed in utilization of assessment results but their responses might have been influenced by their dislike for statistics, since analysis of test scores makes use of statistics.

The study also sought to compare the attitude of the teachers towards assessment by gender. Table 5 shows that there are differences in all the four components of assessment. With the exception of marking, in which the difference was in favour of males, all the other three were in favour of females. However, in all the assessment components, both male and female mean scores were greater than 3.0 indicating positive attitudes toward test construction, test administration, marking of test scripts and utilization of assessment results.

In order to determine whether the differences were statistically significant, the independent samples t-test was computed. The results show that the overall difference was not statistically different $t(df=222) = -1.201, p > 0.05$ (Table 5). The study therefore fails to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. This means that both male and female teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis have similar attitude towards assessment. That is, there is no gender difference in the teachers' attitude towards assessment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study revealed that generally, primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis have positive attitude towards assessment. This means that the teachers have what it takes to conduct effective assessment in their schools to enjoy the many benefits associated with assessment including facilitating effective teaching and learning. However, the results indicate negative attitudes towards some aspects of the components of assessment. These include construction and use of test specification table, and review of tests under test construction. Under test administration, the negative attitudes expressed were about the position of the invigilator in the examination room and searching students before the enter the examination room for the examination. The only item that the teachers showed negative attitude under

marking of test scripts was on the principle of marking question by question instead of script by script. In the case of utilization of assessment results the teachers indicated that they were not well inclined to analysis of test scores. These aspects are very important in assessment delivery and therefore raise some concerns. The results have also shown that both males and females have positive attitude towards assessment and that the difference between the two is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

Based on the finding of this study, it is recommended that the Cape Coast Metropolitan Education Directorate, in conjunction with the University of Cape Coast, conducts in-service training on assessment for teachers in the Metropolis to re-dispose the teachers to assessment principles. The training should place emphasis on test construction, test administration, marking of assessment scripts and utilization of assessment results with emphasis on statistical analysis and interpretation of test scores. It is also recommended that further studies could be replicated in other districts, metropolitan and municipal areas in Ghana. This will help determine how widespread the findings are related to the whole nation since the Cape Coast Metropolis is one out of the many districts, municipal and metropolitan areas in Ghana. In addition, studies can be conducted on the relationship between the attitude of teachers towards assessment and assessment practices to find out how the attitudes of the teachers towards assessment impact on their assessment practices.

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