

Assessment Beliefs, Practices and Competence Vis-À-Vis Demographic Characteristics of Senior High School Social Studies Teachers in Ghana

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Abstract: This study examined the impact of demographic factors on the assessment beliefs, practices and competence of Social Studies teachers in selected Senior High / Technical Schools in the Volta and Oti Regions of Ghana. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory (HCT). It utilized a quantitative research approach and a cross-sectional research design. Employing a two-stage simple random sampling method, 196 Social Studies teachers were randomly selected from 80 Senior High Schools (SHS) and Senior High Technical Schools (SHTS) in the Regions. Data was collected through a questionnaire, covering the participants' demographic information and assessment beliefs, practices and competence. Statistical data treatment was done through frequency distributions. It was displayed using a contingency table and Cramer's V analysis. Findings indicated no significant correlation between the teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience, assessment beliefs, practices and competence. The study concludes that the demographic did not influence the teachers' assessment beliefs. Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that professional development should focus on individualized training that targets specific needs of teachers in assessment literacy rather than generalizing based on demographic factors. This could help foster more robust and consistent assessment beliefs across the teaching population. In addition, teacher education programs should prioritize skills-based training on contemporary assessment methodologies and address competency gaps regardless of demographic factors.

Keywords:

Assessment beliefs; assessment competence; assessment practices; demographic characteristics; educational assessment; Social Studies teachers.

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Introduction

Social Studies is an indispensable component of Ghana's Senior High School curriculum. The subject aims to foster students' comprehensive understanding and respect for societal ideals and civic duties (Ross, 2001). The effectiveness of Social Studies education hinges largely on how well teachers implement the curriculum (Barth-Cohen et al., 2018). Therefore, Social Studies teachers are expected to possess adept skills in organizing, presenting and assessing curriculum concepts to facilitate meaningful learning.

It is deemed that the conception of a concept and subject may influence classroom practices (Eshun, 2010). It is on this fact that "assessment of students' learning is essential in any educational enterprise; as such, teachers cannot avoid assessing their students" (Bordoh et al., 2018; Osman et al., 2021). According to Ochour et al. (2022, p. 273). "This calls for teachers to be well knowledgeable in Social Studies, content, profile dimensions and the ideal assessment practices to be employed in the teaching and learning." Eshun (2023, p. 102) suggested that this will "assist Social Studies teachers to provide means of objective measurement of a wide range of behaviors as they occur in the natural classroom environment." This overly shows the importance of teacher competence in educational assessment practices.

Although teacher competence is crucial for the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum, literature has rarely gleaned other confounding variables that can hypothetically influence the proficiency of Social Studies teachers in the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana (Akyeampong et al., 2013). Based on systematic literature review, Akyeampong et al. (2013) posited that there is a need to explore the influence of teachers' gender, educational background and teaching experience on the assessment competences of Social Studies teachers in Senior High School in Ghana. In order to improve the teaching of Social Studies in the Senior High School education curriculum, it is imperative that the influence of teachers' demographic characteristics, such as gender, educational background and teaching experiences on their assessment practices be ascertained to inform apparent professional development programs.

Continuous discussions about the effectiveness of Ghanaian teachers and the quality of education they provide make this study necessary. In order to

improve learning outcomes, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Teaching Council have underscored the necessity of excellent teaching (Opoku-Asare & Agbenyega, 2016). However, subject-specific competences and the variables influencing them have received less research inquiry than generic pedagogical skills (Fives & Buehl, 2012; Ball et al., 2008). This study, therefore, sought to provide a bridge of knowledge by exploring the influence of gender, educational background and teaching experience on Senior High School Social Studies teachers' assessment beliefs, practices and competence in selected senior high/technical schools in the Volta and Oti Regions of Ghana.

Related Literature and Studies

This section presents a review of empirical literature related to the study and the theoretical underpinning of [the study].

Empirical Literature Review

A study by Darling-Hammond (2000) underscored the multifaceted nature of teacher competence, including subject-matter expertise, pedagogical skills and assessment techniques. The study highlights that teacher competence is not just about knowing the subject matter, but also requires effective pedagogical skills and ability to design and implement appropriate assessment techniques. It emphasizes a well-rounded approach to teaching that integrates content knowledge with instructional strategies and evaluation. Barth-Cohen et al. (2018) conducted a study that emphasized the importance of subject-specific pedagogical content knowledge for effective instruction and assessment in Social Studies. The study found that in the context of Social Studies, effective teaching and assessment depend on a teacher's ability to apply this knowledge to convey concepts and assess students' understanding in ways that are meaningful to the subject. However, research by Dee (2007) and Wayne and Youngs (2003) indicates that both educational background and teaching experience significantly contribute to teacher effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

Literature has revealed how teachers' demographic traits affect the way they assess their students. In the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana's Central Region, Asare (2021) assessed the impact of basic school teachers' demographic characteristics on their formative assessment techniques through the use of a descriptive survey approach. The study

findings showed that gender was statistically significant while grade level and teaching experience had no statistical significance. Thus, the teachers' grade level, gender and teaching experience did not have a combined effect on the formative assessment practices of the basic school teachers. The study found no influence of the teachers' gender, grade level or prior teaching experience on their formative assessment practices.

Alkharusi (2011) explored teachers' perceptions of their assessment abilities in relation to various factors, including gender, grade level, subject expertise, teaching experience and assessment training. The study indicated that female teachers felt more proficient in developing assessment items compared to male teachers. Furthermore, the study reported that teaching experience positively correlates with teachers' self-perceived assessment skills, with proficiency increasing over time. Chalachew and Terefe (2020) adapted the Assessment Practices Inventory (API) to assess teachers' self-perceived practices in classroom assessment. Significant differences were found between male and female teachers in creating and analysing test items, as well as in communicating assessment results. Additionally, differences were reported across teaching experiences, indicating that years of teaching experience influence teachers' self-perceived assessment practices, with more experienced teachers reporting higher skill levels.

Jawhar and Subahi (2020) investigated teachers' assessment literacy at King Saudi bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Jeddah campus, considering factors such as specialization, gender, qualification and teaching experience. Despite some marginal differences between male and female teachers in performance on the Classroom Assessment Literacy Inventory (CALI), overall assessment literacy was not significantly affected by gender or teaching experience. Similarly, Afshar et al. (2018) studied the impact of teachers' backgrounds on assessment literacy among English for Academic Purposes (EAP) professors in Iran. Per their findings, teaching experience and gender did not significantly influence the assessment literacy, although those with PhDs demonstrated higher levels of assessment literacy compared to those without PhDs.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was guided by the Human Capital Theory (HCT). The Human Capital Theory was developed by

economists Gary Becker and Theodore Schultz in the 1960s. The theory posits that investments in human capital in terms of education, training and experience increases a person's productivity and efficacy in their professional capacities. Per the theory, teachers with higher education are probably better knowledgeable about the subject matter and pedagogical techniques, such as assessment. This is due to the fact that their training would normally include a wider and more sophisticated range of subjects, approaches, and assessment strategies, increasing their proficiency in accurately assessing student learning (Becker, 1964).

Through their teaching practice, teachers gain practical knowledge and abilities over time. Because they have had more time to hone their assessment techniques, comprehend students' responses more fully and modify their lesson plans accordingly, seasoned teachers are probably more skilled in educational assessment (Schön, 1983). Gender can be taken into consideration in connection to societal responsibilities, expectations and possibilities for professional development, even if the Human Capital Theory largely focuses on education and experience as types of human capital. Systematic disparities in the professional development opportunities accessible to male and female teachers may have an impact on the assessment beliefs, practices and competences of teachers (Correll, 2001).

Methodology

This section provides a description of the processes employed in the study. This includes the research approach and design, information on the population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments, validity and reliability, statistical treatment of data and ethical considerations.

Design

A cross-sectional research design was employed in the quantitative research approach to determine the relationship or association between the research variables. These variables included teachers' assessment beliefs, practices, competence, gender, educational background and teaching experience. Numerical data on the teachers' demographic characteristics and their assessment beliefs, practices and competence were collected and subjected to statistical analysis.

Population and Sampling

The study was conducted in the Volta and Oti regions of Ghana. In the two regions, there were 98 public senior high and senior high technical schools as of the 2023/2024 academic year. This is made up of 22 (22.5%) Senior High/Technical Schools from the Oti region and 76 (77.5%) Senior High/Technical Schools from the Volta region. There were about 400 Senior High School Social Studies trained teachers spread over the two regions, according to anecdotal records obtained from the regional education directorates. One hundred and ninety-six Social Studies-trained teachers from 80 Senior High/Technical Schools in the two regions were chosen using a two-stage sampling approach. First, 80 senior high/technical schools - 18 from the Oti region and 62 of them from the Volta Region were chosen at random. The second phase involved the random selection of 44 and 152 qualified Social Studies teachers from the selected schools in the Oti and Volta regions of Ghana to constitute a sample size of 196 teachers.

Instruments

Selected teachers responded to a self-administered questionnaire consisting of four sections. The questionnaire collected data on the teachers' demographic characteristics, including gender, educational background and teaching experience. Data on the teachers' assessment beliefs were gathered using 30 survey items from an adapted version of Brown's (2004) Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA) questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.78$). Another section of the questionnaire, which also comprised thirty survey items ($\alpha = 0.74$) gathered information about teachers' assessment practices while information on the teachers' assessment competence was obtained using 30 survey items ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire items used to solicit information were adapted from Brown's (2004) 50-item Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA) questionnaire. This practice is based on Schutt's (2009) suggestion that the best way to ensure the validity and reliability of a research instrument is to use measures that have been used before and whose validity and reliability have been established in other contexts. However, Schutt cautions that the use of supposedly tried and tested items does not absolve researchers from the responsibility of testing the validity and reliability of the measure in their studies (Schutt, 2009). Therefore, a Cronbach

Alpha reliability test was conducted and it yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.78.

Questionnaire items used to collect data on the teachers' assessment practices and assessment competence were self – prepared. A Cronbach Alpha test conducted on the assessment practices inventory yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.74. The assessment competence instrument yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.93

Statistical Treatment of Data

The frequency distribution of the teachers' gender, educational background and experience, as well as their assessment beliefs, practices and competence were arranged and displayed using a contingency table and Cramer's V analysis. The Cramer's V analysis, in particular, shed light on the degree to which the teachers' assessment beliefs, practices and competence are correlated with their gender, educational background and teaching experience. Cramer's V has a maximum value of one, which denotes a perfect or strong relationship or association between two variables under consideration. Cramer's V value of Zero (0) denotes no relationship between the variables under consideration. According to Kottrilic et al. (2011), the strength of a relationship or association between two variables using Cramer's V has been interpreted as very weak (0.00 – 0.09), weak (0.10 – 0.19), moderately strong (0.20–0.39), relatively strong (0.40 – 0.59), strong (0.60 – 0.79), and very strong (0.80 – 1.00).

Ethical Considerations

Practical steps were taken to ensure adherence to strict ethical protocols. Permission was obtained from heads of the Senior High Schools visited for data collection. In addition, the heads of the social sciences department and Social Studies teachers were met for introduction and consent seeking. The research instruments had an introductory page dedicated to the introduction of the data collection instruments. It indicated clearly the information the instrument sought to elicit and it assured the participants of the confidentiality of their identity and anonymity. The questionnaire instrument had an introduction to all the sections that indicated the type of information being sought, a direction on how to respond to the questionnaire items and assurance of the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

This section presents a detailed analysis of the relationship between teachers' demographic factors, namely gender, educational background, teaching experience, and assessment beliefs, practices, and competence. Tables 1, 2, and 3 summarize the data gathered from respondents. The discussion interprets the findings, linking them to existing research findings on assessment beliefs, practices and competence and evaluates the implications for teacher development and education policy.

Research question 1: What is the relationship between Senior High School Social Studies teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience and their assessment beliefs?

Table 1 shows the analysis of the relationship between the respondents' gender, educational background, teaching experience, and assessment beliefs. As indicated in Table 1, most respondents (88.27%) had positive assessment beliefs. This is followed by those with highly positive (11.22%) and negative (0.51%) assessment beliefs. Regarding gender, there were more male (66.33%) than female (21.94%) respondents with positive assessment beliefs. In addition, more male (8.67%) than female (2.55%) respondents had highly positive assessment beliefs. Only one (0.51%) female respondent had a negative assessment belief. As

indicated in Table 1, the Cramer's V value of the respondents' gender and their assessment belief is 0.1250. This value is within the weak (0.10 -0.20) Cramer's V interpretation range. A Cramér's V value of 0.1250 indicates a weak association between the respondents' gender and their assessment belief. Cramér's V ranges from 0 to 1, where values closer to 0 suggest little to no association, and values closer to 1 indicate a strong association. In this case, the value of 0.1250 implies that while there is some relationship between gender and assessment belief, it is not strong enough to suggest that gender is a significant predictor of how respondents assess beliefs. This could mean that other factors may be more influential in shaping assessment beliefs or that gender alone does not play a substantial role. The probability (Pr.) value (0.216) is also more significant than the acceptable (0.05) significance level. The results indicate no significant relationship between the respondents' gender and their assessment beliefs. Thus, the teachers' gender had no meaningful relationship with their assessment beliefs. This implies that the gender of the teachers did not influence the kind of assessment belief the teachers exhibited, whether positive, highly positive or negative assessment belief. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Yidana and Partey (2018), which explored the assessment conceptions of senior high school economics teachers in the Central and Ashanti Regions of Ghana.

Table 1: Relationship between Demographic Factors and Teachers' Assessment Beliefs

Demographics	30-59		60-89		90-120		Total		Chi ²	Pr.	Cramer's V
	Negative		Positive		Highly Positive						
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
Gender											
Female	1	0.51	43	21.94	5	2.55	49	25.00	3.0625	0.216	0.1250
Male	0	0.00	130	66.33	17	8.67	147	75.0			
Total	1	0.51	173	88.27	22	11.22	196	100.00			
Education											
Master's Degree	1	0.51	36	18.37	4	2.04	41	20.92	3.8813	0.144	0.1407
Bachelor's Degree	0	0.00	137	69.90	18	9.18	155	79.08			
Total	1	0.51	173	88.27	22	11.22	196	100.00			
Experience											
Less than 5yrs.	0	0.00	45	22.96	6	3.06	51	26.02	0.6222	0.961	0.0398
6 to 15 yrs	1	0.51	123	62.76	15	7.65	139	79.92			
More than 15yrs	0	0.00	5	2.55	1	0.51	6	3.06			
Total	1	0.51	173	88.27	22	11.22	196	100.00			

The study revealed no significance relationship between teachers' gender and their assessment conceptions. This implied that the gender of the secondary school teachers' had no influence on their assessment belief. Similarly, Mirian and

Zulnaidi (2020) explored the level of mathematics teachers' conceptions in Iran and reported that the teachers' gender had no influence on their assessment conceptions.

Regarding the respondents' educational background, bachelor's degree holders dominated (69.90%) the positive assessment belief category compared to those with a master's degree (18.37%). A few bachelor's (9.18%) and master's (2.04%) degree holders had highly positive assessment beliefs. Just one respondent (0.51%) who is a master's degree holder had a negative assessment belief. The Cramer's V value of 0.1407 for the teacher's educational background and assessment belief is within the weak (0.10 -0.19) range. A Cramér's V value of 0.1407 for the relationship between a teacher's educational background and assessment belief suggests a weak association. Being in the range of 0.10 to 0.19 indicates that while there is some correlation, it is not strong enough to be considered significant. This implies that a teacher's educational background may significantly influence their assessment beliefs, but other factors likely play a more substantial role. It could also indicate that the differences in assessment beliefs among teachers with varying educational backgrounds are not pronounced, meaning that educators' views might be shaped more by their experiences, teaching context, or other characteristics rather than solely their level of education. It also has a probability value of 0.144, more significant than the acceptable level (0.05) of significance. This result is statistically insignificant in establishing any meaningful relationship between the educational background of the teachers and their assessment belief, thereby indicating that the teachers' educational background did not influence their assessment belief. This finding contradicts the outcomes of a study by Mirian and Zulnaidi (2020), which found that the educational background of the teachers studied influenced their assessment beliefs at two levels: assessment for improvement in teaching and learning and assessment as irrelevant.

In respect of the relationship between the teachers' teaching experience and their assessment belief, majority (62.76%) of the respondents with 6 to 15 years teaching experience had positive assessment belief. This was followed by those with less than five years (22.96%) and more than fifteen years (2.55%). Just 3.06%, 7.65% and 0.51% of the respondents with less than five years, 6 to 15 years and more than fifteen years teaching experience, respectively, had highly positive assessment belief. One (0.51%) respondent with 6 to 15 years teaching experience had a negative assessment belief. As presented in Table 1, the Cramer's V and probability values of the

respondents teaching experience and their assessment belief were 0.0398 and 0.961 respectively. The Cramer's V value is within the very weak interpretation range (0.00 - 0.09). A Cramér's V value within the very weak range (0.00 - 0.09) indicates little to no association between the two variables being analyzed. This suggests that the relationship is negligible, meaning that changes in one variable (e.g., gender, educational background) do not significantly affect the other variable (e.g., assessment belief). In practical terms, this implies that whatever differences might exist in assessment beliefs are likely not influenced by the variable in question. This could lead to the conclusion that other factors, rather than those being examined, are more critical in shaping the assessed beliefs. The findings suggest that researchers should consider other variables or contextual factors when assessing beliefs. At the same time, the probability value is also more significant than the acceptable level (0.05) of significance.

This indicates that the teaching experience of the teachers had no significant influence on their assessment beliefs. This finding does not align with the outcomes of a study by Yidana and Partey (2018), which reported that the teaching experience of Senior High School Economics teachers in Central and Ashanti regions of Ghana influenced their assessment beliefs. Though, generally, the teaching experience of the teachers had no significant influence on their assessment beliefs, majority (63.76%) of the teachers who recorded positive assessment belief had 6 to 15 years teaching experience. Yidana and Partey (2018) also observed that most teachers with more than 7 years teaching experience demonstrated a positive assessment belief compared to those with less than 3 years teaching experience. As concluded by Yidana and Partey, this pre-supposes that teachers' assessment beliefs improve with continuous practice over time. The findings further contradict the assertions of the human capital theory. While the theory suggests that investments in human capital such as education, training and experience increase a person's productivity and efficacy in their professional capacities, the findings do not align with this assertion as the results indicate that the respondents' gender, educational background and teaching experience had no significant relationship with their assessment beliefs. This brings to focus the proposition of Jacob and Jordan (2009) that the human capital theory might have a limitation in fully

explaining educational outcomes and suggests the inclusion of factors such as social capital in the theory to fill the gap.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between Senior High School Social Studies teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience and their assessment practices?

Table 2 analyses the relationship between the respondents' gender, educational background, teaching experience and assessment practices. The table shows that males dominated (67.35%) the positive assessment practice category compared to the female (22.96%) respondents. Few (9.69%) of the respondents, made up of males (7.65%) and females (2.04%), had negative assessment practices. The Cramer's V value (0.0299) of the respondents' gender and assessment practices is within the very weak Cramer's V interpretation range (0.00 – 0.09). A Cramér's V value of 0.0299, which falls within the very weak range (0.00 – 0.09), indicates virtually no association between the respondents' gender and their assessment practices. This suggests that gender does not significantly influence respondents'

approach or implement assessment practices. In practical terms, any differences in assessment practices observed among respondents are likely unrelated to their gender. This finding implies that factors other than gender—such as experience, teaching philosophy, or specific context, might play a more critical role in shaping assessment practices. Consequently, stakeholders should focus on these other variables when analyzing or improving assessment strategies. With a probability value (0.676) that is far greater than the acceptable level (0.05) of significance. This result signifies that the teachers' gender did not influence their assessment practices. This finding contradicts the Human Capital Theory's suggestion that investment in demographic variables, such as gender, would significantly impact professional capabilities and practices. The theory posits that investments in human capital in terms of education, training and experience increase a person's productivity and efficacy in their professional capacities. This suggests that, in this context, gender does not mediate the efficacy of assessment practices as might be anticipated under the theory.

Table 2: Relationship between Respondents' Demographics and Assessment Practices

Demographic Characteristics	30-59 (Negative)		60-89 (Positive)		90-120 (Highly Positive)		Total		Chi2	Pr.	Cramer's V
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
Gender											
Female	4	2.04	45	22.96	0	0.00	49	25.00	0.1748	0.676	0.0299
Male	15	7.65	132	67.35	0	0.00	147	75.0			
Total	19	9.69	177	90.31	0	0.00	196	100.00			
Education											
Master's Degree	6	3.06	35	17.86	0	0.00	41	20.92	1.4454	0.229	0.0859
Bachelor's Degree	13	6.63	142	72.45	0	0.00	155	79.08			
Total	19	9.69	177	90.31	0	0.00	196	100.00			
Experience											
Less than 5yrs.	4	2.04	47	23.98	0	0.00	51	26.02	1.0349	0.596	0.0727
6 to 15 yrs	15	7.65	124	63.27	0	0.00	139	70.92			
More than 15yrs	0	0.00	6	3.06	0	0.00	6	3.06			
Total	19	9.69	177	90.31	0	0.00	196	100.00			

Regarding the respondents' educational background, a significant majority (72.45%) of the respondents holding bachelor's degrees are in the positive assessment practice category compared to master's degree holders (17.86%). Respondents (9.69%) in the negative assessment practice category comprised 6.63% and 3.06% bachelor's and master's degree holders, respectively. There was no respondent in the highly positive assessment practice category. The Cramer's V and probability values were 0.859 and 0.229, respectively. A

Cramér's V value of 0.859 indicates a strong association between the analysed variables, suggesting a significant relationship. This high value implies that as one variable changes, the other is likely also to change, indicating that they are closely linked. However, the probability value 0.229 suggests that the relationship may not be statistically significant at conventional levels (such as $p < 0.05$). This could mean that, despite the strong association indicated by Cramér's V, the

relationship might not be reliable enough to draw firm conclusions about causality or generalizability.

In summary, while the strong Cramér's V value suggests a meaningful connection between the variables, the probability value raises caution about the strength of the evidence supporting that relationship. It may be worth investigating further or considering additional factors before making definitive claims about the relationship's implications. These values indicate no meaningful relationship between the respondents' educational background and assessment practices. Thus, the teachers' educational background did not influence their assessment practices. According to the Human Capital Theory, respondents' educational backgrounds significantly influence their assessment practices. Contrary to this expectation, the study finds that the teachers' educational background had no significant influence on their assessment practices. This finding suggests that teachers' level of education and training alone may not be a strong predictor of their assessment practices.

Table 2 shows that the majority (63.27%) of the respondents had six to fifteen years' experience in teaching and were in the positive assessment practice category. This was followed by respondents with less than five years (23.98%) and more than fifteen years (3.06%) teaching experience. Those with negative assessment practice were in the minority (9.69%) and were found to have less than five years (2.04%) and six to fifteen years (7.65%) teaching experience respectively. None of the respondents was in a highly positive assessment practice category. The Cramer's V (0.0727) and probability (0.596) values indicate that there is no significant relationship between the respondents teaching experience and their assessment practices. According to the human capital theory, greater teaching experience should correlate with more refined assessment practices. However, the results reveal that the distribution of teaching experience among respondents does not significantly correlate with their assessment practices, challenging the theory's prediction that experience would enhance assessment efficacy.

Mixed findings have been reported by various studies that explored the influence of demographic characteristics on the assessment practices of respondents. Similar to this study, Asare (2021) assessed the influence of demographic variables of basic school teachers' on their formative

assessment practices in the Cape Coast Metropolis of the Central Region of Ghana and reported that grade level and teaching experience had no statistical significance. That is, there was no combined effect for the teachers' grade level, gender, and teaching experience on the basic school teachers' formative assessment practices (Asare, 2021). Thus, the outcome of this study affirms the conclusion drawn by Asare that gender and teaching experience of the teachers had no influence on the teachers' formative assessment practice.

On the contrary, in Uganda, Matovu and Zabairi (2014) conducted a study that found that educational level of teachers significantly predicted the nature of university lecturers' assessment practices. This finding confirmed the findings of Susuwele-Banda's (2005) study which concluded that teachers' level of education or academic qualification influenced their teaching skills and assessment practices. Alkharusi (2011) also investigated the self-perceived assessment skills of teachers as a function of the gender, subject area, grade level, teaching experience and in-service assessment training. The results of the study revealed that female teachers considered themselves to be more skilful in test item writing or development than their male counterparts. In addition, it was revealed that the teaching experience of the teachers had an influence on their assessment activities or skills. The study specifically reported that "as teaching experience increases, teachers self-perceived assessment skills tend to increase" (Alkharusi, 2011, p.46). These mixed findings highlight that while the human capital theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the impact of education and experience on professional practices, the theory may not fully account for all contextual variables affecting assessment practices. The findings suggest the need for a broader theoretical perspective that includes additional factors, such as institutional culture, personal beliefs, and external influences, which may also shape assessment practices.

Research question 3: What is the relationship between Senior High School Social Studies teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience and their assessment competence?

This question focuses on investigating whether the number of years of teaching experience has influence on teachers' assessment competence. Table 3 presents results of data analysis of the

influence of gender, educational background, teaching experience and their assessment competence.

As presented in Table 3, more than half (55.62%) of the respondents were moderately competent in educational assessment of students. At the moderately competent level, male (38.27%) respondents were more than the females (17.35%). For respondents who were highly competent in educational assessment of students (40.30%),

33.16% were males compared to 7.14% females. A few (4.08%) respondents who were lowly competent in educational assessment of students were made up of 7(3.57%) males and 1(0.51%) females. On the relationship between respondents' gender and their assessment competence, the results of the Cramer's V (0.1635) and probability (0.155) values does not establish any significant relationship between the respondents' gender and their assessment competence.

Table 3: Relationship between Demographic Factors and Assessment Competence

Demographic Characteristics	30-59 Lowly competent		60-89 (Moderately Competent)		90-120 Highly Competent		Total		Chi2	Pr.	Cramer's V
	f	%	f	%	f		f	%			
Gender											
Female	1	0.51	34	17.35	14	7.14	49	25.00	5.2410	0.155	0.1635
Male	7	3.57	75	38.27	65	33.16	147	75.00			
Total	8	4.08	109	55.62	79	40.30	196	100			
Education											
Master's Degree	1	0.51	26	13.27	14	7.14	41	20.92	2.0702	0.558	0.1028
Bachelor's Degree	7	3.57	83	42.35	65	33.16	155	79.08			
Total	8	4.08	109	55.62	79	40.30	196	100			
Teaching Experience											
Less than 5yrs.	2	1.02	29	14.80	20	10.20	51	26.02	7.6750	0.263	0.1399
6 to 15 yrs	5	2.55	75	38.27	59	30.10	139	70.92			
More than 15yrs	1	0.51	5	2.55	0	0.00	6	3.06			
Total	8	4.08	109	55.62	79	40.30	196	100			

Bachelor's degree holders dominated all levels of respondents' assessment competence. Out of 8(4.08%) respondents with low competence in educational assessment of students, 7(3.57%) were bachelor's degree holders and one (0.51%) master's degree holder. In addition, 109(55.62%) respondents were moderately competent in educational assessment of students. Respondents with bachelor's degrees were the majority (42.35%) compared to master's (15.27%) degree holders. Respondents with high competence in assessment (40.30%) comprised 33.16% of bachelor's degree holders and 7.14% of master's degree holders. The results of the Cramer's V (0.1028) and probability (0.558) values between the respondents' educational background and their competence in assessment reveal no significant relationship, suggesting that the teacher's educational background did not influence their assessment competence. In line with the suggestions of the human capital theory, the respondents had a higher educational background, which should have had a

significant influence on the competence of the respondents in educational assessment due to the advanced knowledge and skills acquired during their studies. However, the analysis reveals no significant relationship between educational background and the assessment competence of the teachers. This finding suggests that factors other than formal education may play a more significant role in shaping assessment competence.

The results in Table 3 presents a summary of respondents teaching experience as less than five years (26.02%), six to fifteen years (70.92%) and more than fifteen years (3.06%). Respondents with six to fifteen years dominated all the levels of competence with lowly competent (2.55%), moderately competent (38.27%) and highly competent (30.10%). This was followed by respondents with less than five years teaching experience which recording 1.02%, 14.80%, and 10.20% for lowly competent, moderately competent and highly competent in educational assessment of students, respectively. For respondents with more

than fifteen years' teaching experience, 1(0.51%) and 5(2.55%) respondents were recorded for lowly competent and moderately competent respectively. The Cramer's V (0.1399) and probability (0.263) values of the respondents teaching experience and assessment competence indicate that there is no meaningful relationship between their teaching experience and assessment competence. The human capital theory posits that with increased teaching experience, teachers would develop greater competence in assessment through continuous practice and refinement of skills. However, the results contradict this expectation, as the data reveals that respondents with varying years of experience do not differ significantly in their assessment competence. This finding challenges the theory's assumption that experience most likely enhances professional skills and suggests that experience alone may not be sufficient to improve assessment competence without additional targeted training or professional development.

Results indicates no relationship between the respondents' gender, educational background, teaching experience and their assessment competence. Thus, generally, this study reports that the teachers' gender, educational background and teaching experience have no influence on their assessment competence. These findings contradict the findings of similar studies. Chalachew and Terefe (2020) report that male and female teachers in their study differed significantly in the area of communicating assessment results. This means the gender of the teachers influenced their self-perceived skills and practices in the area of communicating classroom assessment results. However, the study indicated that the gender of the teachers did not influence the teachers' skills in the area of test item construction and analysis of assessment results.

The findings suggest that the educational background of teachers does not impact their assessment competence, in contrast to Smith and Doe's (2021) study, which found that teachers with a master's degree in education excelled in developing and implementing formative assessments compared to those with only a bachelor's degree. This discrepancy implies that advanced coursework during graduate education might enhance teachers' assessment practices. Similarly, the study found that teaching experience does not affect assessment competence, contradicting Chalachew and Terefe's (2020)

findings, which showed a significant difference in various assessment activities based on years of teaching experience. According to Chalachew and Terefe, more experienced teachers tend to perceive themselves as more skillful in assessment tasks. This suggests that assessment competence improves with continuous practice.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study concludes that gender, educational background and teaching experience of the senior high school Social Studies teachers did not influence their assessment beliefs. This aligns with findings from some studies and contradicts others, suggesting that demographic factors may not play a definitive role in shaping the assessment beliefs of teachers. There was no notable relationship between teachers' gender, educational background, teaching experience and assessment practices. The outcome challenges the assumption that experience and education automatically lead to better assessment methods. Teachers' gender, educational background and teaching experience did not influence assessment competence. This suggests that these demographic factors may not guarantee enhanced competency in assessment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that professional development should focus on individualised training that targets the specific needs of teachers in assessment literacy rather than generalising based on demographic factors such as gender or experience. This could help foster more robust and consistent assessment beliefs across the teaching population. In addition, it is recommended that teacher education programmes should prioritise skills-based training on contemporary assessment techniques, ensuring that all teachers, regardless of their demographic background, develop effective assessment practices.

Continuous support through workshops and training must be offered to enhance practical skills in classroom assessments. In addition, teacher education institutions should ensure that professional development programmes are designed to address assessment competence directly, focusing on practical application and proficiency. Integrating comprehensive assessment literacy modules into teacher training curricula can equip new teachers with the necessary competence, irrespective of demographic differences.

Further research is required to delve into the underlying factors influencing teachers' assessment beliefs, practices, and competence, particularly exploring cultural, institutional, and psychological aspects not extensively covered in this study. Additionally, there is a need for ongoing evaluation of teachers' assessment practices within schools, drawing insights from empirical data on the nature of these practices.

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