

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS PERCEPTION OF THE CHALLENGES
FACING PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SHAMA DISTRICT**

LYDIA OFORIWAA TWUM

2016

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BY

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Dissertation submitted to the department of educational foundations of the school of Education, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Educational psychology

JULY 2016

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name:

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:

ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing preschool education in Shama District. Descriptive survey design was used in the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 200 preschool teachers teaching in Pre-schools in Shama District. Frequency counts, percentages, means as well as analysis of variance (ANOVA) were employed to analyze the data. The results revealed that most pre-schools within the Shama District do not apply good teaching strategies and also, they do not have adequate number of picture cards, number cards, drawing cards, sand tray, picture books, slates and alphabetic cards. The hypothesis tested proved that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of preschoolteachers' on the challenges facing pre-school education based on gender and age. It is recommended that GES organise in-service training for pre-school teachers to upgrade their pedagogical skills. Also, government, through the Ministry of Education, provides pre-schools with the necessary equipments, furniture, infrastructure, facilities, and teaching aids to aid their work. Again, training opportunities should be made available for pre-school teachers to up-grade their skills on how to improvise teaching aids and care for pr-scholars.

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DEDICATION

To my dear husband, Julien Ewiah and my sons, Abasuah, Somiah and
Anyimah Ewiah for their love.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Education is all activities and actions directed towards the development and cultivation of a person's mental abilities, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour. This will, in turn, develop the person's ability to the fullest possible extent (Atchoarena & Dellieu, (2001). Article 29 clause 1 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, on 29th November 1989 states that, "Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent". Thus education will prepare the child for an active life. Education is accepted all over the world as the bedrock for national development and major factor in development of human resource. It is also recognized as the single most important institution that influences and is influenced by other social institutions.

It is further believed that the social, economic, political and cultural development of any nation depends mainly on the quality of education their citizens have. This is the reason why globally, governments spend huge sums of money and other resources to provide education to meet the manpower needs of their citizens. Evans (1991) believes that the rise of nations like Japan, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia into economic giants came about as a result of huge investments they made in the education of their citizens.

Kudolo (1983) reports that formal education in Ghana which preceded the colonial era, emanated from the Western World. It started as a private

enterprise and the first recorded school was started at Elmina castle in 1529 by the Portuguese merchants for their “mulato” children. Before the attainment of independence, the country embarked on education expansion programme with the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for education in 1951. This was followed by the Education Act of 1961. Both tried to increase access to education (Graham, 1976). The educational reforms introduced in 1987, in addition to promoting the idea of previous policies of education for all, also sought to make the system skill-oriented. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy introduced in 1995 had the major aim of increasing access and participation in education for all school-going age children in the country. It sought not only to improve the quality of teaching and learning but also the quality of education management.

In building a house, the foundations are more important than the super-structures. The foundation has a lasting effect on the finished building. The same is true in the development of physical and mental traits of human beings (Hurlock, 1964). In the same vein, the importance of the quality of education cannot be overemphasized. Early childhood is a crucial period for the development of children's mental functions. This development, including the emergence of language, motor skills, psychosocial, cognitive, and learning abilities, is now known to be greatly influenced by exogenous factors, including the educational environment to which a child is exposed during the first 6 to 8 years of life (Bowman, Donovan and Burns, 2001). It is always believed that when a good foundation is laid right from the beginning of one's education, there is hope that the continuation becomes easier. That is why government spends larger sums of money to support basic education.

Erikson (1963) explains how children in their early years develop basic trust and mistrust depending upon their early experiences. This basic trust

colours their later social relations. Early childhood education is to provide a child with an environment that will promote optimum development at a time when growth is rapid and the child is most vulnerable. The brain cells are formed during the first two years of life.

Structurally, all governments of Ghana have always started the basic education from primary class one and formal policies on basic education had always started from primary class one (Mankoe, 2002).

The non-formal sector, however, had been in charge of the pre-school level, recognizing the immense benefits it adds to children's educational foundation (Berchie, 2006). The Social Welfare Department (SWD), for example had been training pre-school teachers while the Ministry of Education supervises pre-school activities. Mankoe (2002) reports that there have not been any clear-cut government policy on pre-school education in the pre-independence and post-independence era. Though Governor Gordon Guggisberg recommended a thorough education from the bottom, it is not clear whether the idea of pre-school was implied.

The Dzobo committee, in 1974, recommended an 18 – to 24- month kindergarten (KG) education for children. The proposal was accepted, but according to Mankoe (2002), it was not implemented before the government was toppled in a coup d'état in 1979. Its non-implementation was also due to lack of political will from the government. Again, it was not given prominence in the 1987 educational reform. In 2002, an education reform review committee set up by the government, had among its recommendations, a two-year kindergarten education for all children. This is in recognition of the crucial role that pre-school education plays in the formative years of the child.

It has, therefore, been made part of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education system. (White Paper Report on Education Review 2007). This recommendation was accepted by the government and made a state policy. The policy makes pre-school education formal and compulsory for all children with effect from 20007/20008 academic year. The facility will therefore be provided in all public primary schools (White Paper Report on Education Review 2004).

That government again started implementing the two-year kindergarten education, that was highlighted but not implemented in the 1987 education reform, means it is indispensable after all. Also, that private schools to stick to a policy of requesting for pre-school education, as a requirement for primary one admission in their schools, means that it had some benefits to offer. Examples of the benefits include laying a foundation for schooling, preparing the child to avoid the shock that comes from the sudden transition between home and school, and assisting him or her to have a smooth take-off in work in primary one.

Early childhood education provides services for a certain number of hours during the day and in a safe environment; this contributes to children's full development by complimenting the family environment and the formal education system. The experiences of the child in early years are therefore important in shaping the total personality of the child. Thus, early childhood takes place in a child's life a time in which small positive changes can generate long term social benefits and if all the necessary materials needed are not provided and put in place these benefits will not be achieved. Given the unquestionable benefits associated with early childhood education, it follows

therefore that attention should be paid to some of the challenges that might affect its successful implementation (Abdulai, 2014).

The seeming reluctance of government to provide pre-school education the needed support it needs has led the researcher to undertake this study which is expected to reveal the perceptions of the challenges facing kindergarten education. It is therefore necessary to find out what these challenges are in order to get a better understanding of them and also see how they can be solved.

Statement of the Problem

Early childhood is a crucial time for the development of children's mental functions. This development, including the emergence of language, motor skills, psychosocial, cognitive, and learning abilities, is now known to be greatly influenced by exogenous factors, including the educational environment to which a child is exposed during the first 6 to 8 years of life (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001).

There has been a concern over the declining standard of education in Ghana, especially in public schools. Many factors have been cited as being responsible for this unfortunate phenomenon, among which is weak foundation at the primary school. Many people have tried to link the problem to lack of logistics, infrastructure, trained and committed teachers among others (Gbate, 2001). This has made it necessary for it to be made part of the formal education system in Ghana.

The inclusion of pre-school as part of the formal education system must be seen as a welcome policy. The policy will increase the number of pre-schools because each primary school must have a pre-school attached to it. It is also

believed that pupils who pass through the kindergarten system before primary one develop better academically than those who do not. Implementing early childhood education as part of the formal education system entails, among other things, the necessary infrastructure, as well as requisite resources. This is because early childhood is not just about finding a place to keep children when parents are at work. It is about ensuring the child's total development through care, socialization and education in the community (UNICEF, 1993). Consequently, there is a critical need for such prerequisites. There is therefore the need to provide good and stimulating environment for the child in his/her early years in order for the child to develop well. Since these early years are spent in early childhood care and Education centers, the society puts this responsibility of providing a strong foundation upon which the educational super structure can be built safely at the doorsteps of these centers.

Most of these early childhood center operate under sheds, trees and in old church buildings. In the urban centers most proprietors of pre-school use their garages as classrooms; a very bad practice. Some centers are overcrowded and lack many facilities such as kitchen and toilet. Those who have kitchen facilities do not have qualified people to cook meals for children (Education International, 2010). Most of these centers lack qualified teachers and they do not follow the syllabus. The centers are accused of being inefficient and as lacking the necessary material and human resources needed for providing effective care and education (Boakye, 1993).

In fact, no matter what factors cause the problems, it is certain that they affect the educational environment. This study investigates teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education. These challenges

might create adverse effects on the quality of teaching and learning and total development of the children. There is therefore the need to understand what they are, so as to take necessary precautions to eliminate their negative effects through the recommendations that may come out of the results of this study. In other words, identifying pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education is a necessity because once the problems when detected could become easier to deal with and ways for addressing them could be found.

The researcher was concerned about the perception that pre-school teachers have about the challenges facing pre-school education and whether or not there are differences in such perceptions on the basis of pre-school teachers' gender, age, teaching qualification, department they graduated from, number of years of teaching, etc.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore the challenges that pre-school education teachers face. Another purpose of the study was to detect differences, if any, in the challenges faced by pre-school education with respect to pre-school teachers' educational level, the department they graduated from, their years of experience and type of school they are working in.

Research Questions

The main research questions raised to guide the conduct of the study were:

1. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to teaching strategies?

2. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to teaching aids?
3. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to staffing?
4. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to social environment?
5. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to equipment/furniture?
6. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to performances?
7. What is pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards infrastructure/facilities?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised to further guide the conduct of the study:

- H₀ 1: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on gender.
- H₀ 2: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on age.

H₀ 3: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on teaching qualification.

H₀ 4: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the department they graduated from.

H₀ 5: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the number of years they have been working at the pre-school level.

H₀ 6: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the number of pupils in their class.

H₀ 7: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the class they teach.

H₀ 8: There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the ownership of the school.

Significance of the Study

It is the hope of the researcher that the study would add to the existing knowledge concerning the challenges being faced by pre-school teachers in pre-school institutions as they unfold.

The outcome of the study may also provide immense help to government and proprietors of early childhood centers as data from the field will be available for such purposes.

The findings of the study may be used by the Early Childhood Unit of the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) to assist pre-school teachers.

Finally, it is the hope of the researcher that the findings of this study will serve as a useful source of reference for future researchers and others who would conduct studies in the area.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to pre-school teachers in Shama District.

Limitations of the Study

A noticeable limitation was related to the population of the study. Data were collected from pre-school teachers who were working in pre-schools under Shama District in the Western Region of Ghana. Those results can only provide us insights and general opinions from the specific sample. Hence, the data so obtained can only be pointers to the possibilities in other Districts in Ghana.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the meanings of the terms that follow are as they were operationally used in the study:

Early Childhood Education (ECE): This refers to the range of programmes designed for different age groups of children. This includes crèche, day care centres, nursery, preschool and kindergarten. These programmes are designed for babies, toddlers and preschoolers.

Equipment and Materials: These are furniture, toys, jig-saw puzzles, climbers, swings merry-go-round and other play items used by pre-schoolers in preschools.

Perception: This is any act or process of knowing objects, facts and truths whether by sense, experience or by thought, awareness of consciousness.

Pre-school/Kindergarten: The institutional education that is tailored to prepare four- and five- year- old children for primary school education.

Shama District: One of the eighteen districts in the Western Region of Ghana. Its administrative capital is Shama. The district is among the new districts and municipalities created in 2008 by the then President, John Agyekum Kufuor. It was inaugurated on 29 February 2008. It is located on the coast, about 200km west of Accra. It shares boundaries with Sekondi Takoradi Metro, Wassa East, and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem Municipal. It is a predominantly fishing community.

Organisation of the Rest of the Study

Chapter Two addresses the review of the literature related to the study. This includes Concept of Perception, Theories of Perception, Meaning of Early Childhood Education, Perceptions of Pre-school Education and Early Childhood Teachers' role. It also addresses General Education in Ghana and Pre-school Education in other parts of the world. Empirical studies related to pre-school education, the role of psychology in pre-school education and challenges facing pre-school education are reviewed as well.

Chapter Three describes the Methodology for the study, the Population, the Sample and Sampling Procedure, Instrumentation, Data

collection procedures and Data Analyses. Chapter Four presents the Summary and Discussion of major findings of the study. Finally, chapter Five deals with Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations or Suggestion for Further Studies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature will be reviewed under the following sub-headings:

1. Concept of Perception
 - Perceptual process
 - Instruments of perception
 - Factors that Influence Formation of Perception
 - Values and Perceptual Defense
2. The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception
3. Perceptions of Pre-School Education
4. General Education in Ghana
5. Pre-school education in Ghana: Origin, Nature and Policies
6. Theoretical Perspective of Early Childhood Education
7. Application of Theories in Early Childhood Education
8. The Importance of Early Childhood Education
9. Globalization and Early Childhood Education
10. Review of Empirical works
11. Role of Educational Psychology in Pre-School Education
12. Implication of Literature for the Study

Concept of Perception

Amissah and Agbeke (2015) defined perception as a process of building on our ill-defined and incomplete sensory experiences. Perception is any act or process of knowing objects, facts and truths whether by sense, experience or by thought; it is awareness of consciousness. Perception is a reference of sensation to an external object (Allport, 1995).

To Davidoff (1994) perception is a cognitive process, a way of knowing about the world. To her, perception is the point where cognition and reality meet-that is information must be taken into the mind before one can do anything else with it. Petry and Meyer (1987) said perception involves an interaction or transaction between an individual and his environment; the individual receives information from the external world which in some ways modifies his experience and behaviour.

The term perception refers to the ways in which organisations or individuals respond to the stimulus picked by their sense organ. It is used to be thought of as something analogous to such mechanical processes as photography of an object or recording sound on a record. That analogy of mechanical sequence is inadequate since it ignores the fact that perception is influenced by interest, needs and past experience (Lindesmith, 1998).

Yinger (1965) is of the view that perception in its general sense is an experience produced by an outside stimulation of the senses. Meador and Rogers (1979) also define perception as a hypothesis or prognosis for action that comes into being in awareness when stimuli impinge on the organism. Bruner (1965) explained perception as a decision process involving the placement of incoming information into a network of meaningful categories developed largely from prior learning.

It can be seen from the above that almost all the definitions point to the fact that perception is a process. It is a process in that it is on-going. It occurs over a period of time.

Perceptual process

During the perceptual process there is a completion of information. Sensory information is changed or modified by the addition of information drawn from memory; parts of sensory information are amplified or highlighted while others are pushed to the background. Some aspects are noted while others are ignored. This goes on until the last meaning is assigned to sensory experiences and judgments and interpretations are made (Amissah&Agbeke , 20015).

Instruments of perception

According to Amissah and Agbeke (20015), as one interact with the environment his sense organs receive impressions which are later processed to become an awareness and therefore knowledge. To them man receives through the five senses, namely, visual(eyes), auditory(ears), tactile(skin), gustatory(tongue) and olfactory(nose) mechanisms. They act as transducers.

Factors that Influence Formation of Perception

In the 1950s, Bruner and his contemporaries performed a number of studies on perceptual set. Their findings marked the very beginning of what later became known as the cognitive revolution. Bruner and his contemporaries, and other psychologists who followed up this work, found that perception could be influenced by a variety of factors. These are cultural values, personal attitudes, expectation, and motivational states.

Cultural Values

Perceiving perspective-based drawings is a specific cultural skill, which is learned rather than automatic. People from several cultures worldwide seem to prefer drawings which do not show perspective but instead split so as to show both sides of objects at the same time (Deregowski, 1972). In one study, children and adults from traditional African backgrounds were shown to pictures of an elephant's legs splayed out unrealistically. The participants in the study preferred the split drawing, even though to Western eyes it looked quite unrealistic.

Deregowski further indicated that this split-style representation is universal, and is even found in young European children, before they are taught not to draw that way. One possible explanation, which Deregowski suggested, was that such a style might allow for all the important characteristics of the object to be shown. The drawing would then be a way of representing someone's real experience of an object far more fully than a standard perspective drawing would.

Mundy-Castle (1966) conducted a study on how traditional Ghanaian children interpreted line drawings. They were shown a series of sketches, each of which used only a limited number of depth cues: height in plane, superposition, and relative size. Each picture showed a man and a deer in the foreground, and an elephant in the background, and the pictures contained different combinations of these cues. Mundy-Castle established that the children's interpretations differed from those made by European children of the same ages (between five and ten years old). Mundy-Castle described these differences as "errors" in interpreting the drawing, but it was noticeable that

they were generally of the same kind. The studies by Deregowski (1972) and Mundy-Castle (1966) proposed that culture plays an important role in the perception of an individual or about something.

Personal Attitudes

Allport (1954) explained a study which showed how prejudice could affect perception. The experimenters used a stereoscope, which is a device for presenting a separate picture to each eye at the same time. They showed research participants mixed-race pairs of individuals, with one member of each pair shown to each eye. In general, people were most definite when they were categorizing people from other ethnic groups. But Afrikaners, who were noted for their racial prejudices, differentiated far more sharply between the races. They perceived subcategories or uncertainties in classifying people. Allport construed this as showing how the strongly racist views held by these people had affected their perceptions.

Expectation

Bugelski and Alampay (1961) conducted a study in which the participants in the research were shown either a series of animal pictures or a set of unrelated images – furniture, vehicles, and so on. When they were shown an ambiguous “rat man” figure, people were significantly more likely to perceive it as a rat than as a man if they experienced the prior exposure to animal pictures. Just seeing those figures had established an expectation that what would follow would be more of the same thing, and that expectation had directed how they would perceive the stimulus.

Bruner and Minturn (1955) showed how strongly expectation could influence perception. They began by showing people letters or numbers, one at

a time, and then showed them an ambiguous figure which could be read either as a B or 13. According to Bruner and Minturn, the research participants who had seen numbers unequivocally judged the figures- to be a 13, while those who had seen letters previously saw it as a B. Moreover, when they were asked to reproduce what they had seen, their drawings showed no ambiguities: the gap in the figure was enlarged by those who believed it to be a 13, but those who believed it to be a B did not include any gap. From the two studies it can be concluded that expectation influences perception to a large extent. This suggests that once an impression is created concerning an object or about something or somebody at the back of the mind it makes an ineradicable mark. The impression created affects an individual's perception about an object or someone either positively or negatively.

Motivation

Gilchrist and Nesberg (as cited in Hayes, 1998) asked people to rate pictures for brightness, and discovered that the longer they had gone without food, the brighter the food pictures were rated, even though the research participants' ratings of other picture showed no change.

Standford (as cited in Hayes, 1998) deprived research participants of food for various lengths of time up to four hours, and then showed them ambiguous pictures. Standford found that the longer the participants had been food-deprived, the more likely they were to interpret pictures as being something to do with food.

These studies, and others of the same kind, implied that internal motivational states, in this case starvation, could directly affect perception.

Other factors that influence perception with regards to this study includes:

Values and Perceptual Defense

According to Postman, Bruner and McGinnies (1948), sexual or other taboo words have higher recognition thresholds than ordinary words do. Their research participants were shown those words very quickly and they needed more microseconds to identify the taboo words than they did to identify neutral ones. The researchers used a device known as a tachistoscope, which presents stimuli for very brief, but measurable, periods of time.

Postman, Bruner and McGinnies (1948) argued that their findings were evidence for perceptual defense – the idea that our perceptual system tries to protect us against threatening or disturbing stimuli, by making them more difficult to identify. However, Bitterman and Kniffin (1953) found that the time difference in recognition disappeared if people were allowed to write down their responses instead of saying them out loud.

The discussion continued until a study by Worthington (1969) indicated that perceptual defense did seem to be a real phenomenon. The research participants in this study were not asked to say any words at all. Instead, words were presented subliminally – so faintly that the research participants were entirely unaware of them. They were embedded in the centre of a dot light projected on to a screen. Dots were presented in pairs, and all the research participants had to do was to say which dot was brighter or dimmer, or whether they were both the same. Worthington established that the dots with taboo words embedded in them were systematically rated as being dimmer than those with neutral words, even though the participants in the study were not aware of having seen any words at all.

Carpenter, Wiener and Carpenter (1956) asked people to complete sentences on sensitive topics, such as feelings of inadequacy, hospitality or sex. From this, the participants in the study were categorized as being either “sensitive” or “repressed” in those areas. They discovered that participants showed differences in their reactions to stimuli: “sensitive people perceived taboo or disturbing words more easily than normal ones; while “repressed people perceived such word less readily. This study, too, suggests that personal differences in values and attitudes can influence perception strongly.

The Sense-Datum Theory of Perception

The sense-datum theory holds that when a person has a sensory experience, there is something of which they are aware (Broad 1923). What the subject is aware of is the object of experience. The object of experience is that which is given to the senses, or the sense-datum: this is how the term “sense-datum” was introduced by many writers (Price, 1932). The sense-datum theory treats all phenomenal properties (properties which determine the phenomenal character of an experience) as properties of the immediate object of experience. So, when in the case of an illusion, an external object appears to have a property which it does not have in reality, the theory says that some other object, a sense-datum, really does have this property.

The things we take ourselves to be aware of are actually sense-data, although this may only be apparent on philosophical reflection (Harman, 1990). A consistent sense-data theorist can accept this fact, but insist that the objects of experience are really sense-data. The sense-datum theory can say, however, that we are indirectly aware of ordinary objects: that is, aware of them by being aware of sense-data. A sense-datum theorist who says this is

known as an indirect realist or representative realist, or as someone who holds a representative theory of perception (Lowe, 1992). A theorist who denies that we are aware of mind-independent objects at all, directly or indirectly, but only of sense-data, is known as a phenomenalist or an idealist about perception (Foster, 2000).

Idealists and indirect realists can agree about the nature of perception considered in itself, but will normally disagree on grounds independent of the philosophy of perception about whether the mind-dependent sense-data are all there is. Thus Foster (2000) argues for his idealism first by arguing for sense-data as the immediate or direct objects of perceptual experience, and then arguing that idealism gives a better explanation of the reality underlying this appearance, and of our knowledge of it. Hence, idealism and indirect realism are grouped together here as “the sense-datum theory” since they agree about the fundamental issue in the philosophy of perception. Hence this research is based on this theory because most pre-school teachers were aware of the challenges facing pre-school education.

Perceptions of Pre-School Education

Early year’s education went through many changes in the 20th century as the learning needs of young children gained greater status all over the world. The stage of a child’s learning is now recognized as an important stage in its own right, rather than simply as a springboard for learning in later years. For this reason, there is now a strong pressure from the public and from many educators for change at the lower end of the educational system (Green, 2002). The situation described above has come as a result of increasing participation of stakeholders in the pre-school education sphere. As such several people

have expressed their opinions about earlier child education according to their experience.

Stallings and Porter (1980), cited in Bartels (2004), contended that children who go through KG education are likely to stay longer in education, climbing higher, getting good jobs and supporting themselves and leading exemplary lives. This they think is possible because they (children) had earlier and better initial behavioural nurturing.

Plukrose (1997) noted that creativity is an important skill that pre-schoolers develop. During this period, a young child picks a crayon and scribble on a piece of paper a representation of his mum or turns an empty cornflakes packet into an imaginary car or he is conveying something of a universal need to create, make and build. In the 1990s, he believes many children grew up in societies which seem indifferent to aesthetic values in a climate which seemed to be marked by sensitivity to child needs. Drapper, Gonong and Goddell (1987) agree that where the pre-school is well organized, a child can take an ordinary box and turn it into a boat, castle or anything that he/she pleases. A plastic may become a telephone receiver, old wire lampshade hoop a steering wheel. Pre-school develops children flexible social characters. That is why they are ready to play with any child at first sight. At the same time they fight frequently (UNESCO, 1998).

Beaty (1994) posits that sharing and helping may be one of the most easily learnt behaviours which occur most frequently in the early childhood classroom, which is desirable, when one considers the many opportunities children in a group have to learn to share material with one another.

Drapper, et al (1987) posits that socialization is the process by which these young pre-schoolers learn how to function with other people in their society. The child learns these through his or her interaction with others. Landreth (1972) advises that training the child early in life is important because the child begins to learn in his or her first five years is the foundation for all later learning conditions that are his or her lot.

Balogun, Okon, Musaaazi and Thakur (1981) believe that before the child reaches age five, he or she has acquired number of skills. He or she is able to talk, move about, run and play. During his or her pre-school years, he or she also learns more about his or her own self, his or her surroundings and people around them. They think that perhaps no other activity is as important as the child's ability to move about. A child is greatly influenced by what happens around him or her and to him or her during their first few years. By their association with their parents, brothers and sisters and other people around them, they gradually develop attitudes about learning before they even start primary education.

Pre-school children need opportunities outside the home to acquire new experiences that aid their development and for that most of the time to keep them happy. Plato also advocated for early child training and education for preschoolers whereby the first instincts of virtue in children must be trained (Kudolo, 1983).

The fact that some children are naturally gifted from birth and that without pre-school education there will be an unproductive vacuum created is posited by Painter (1984). He imagines that to have a gifted boy/girl in the family or in a school class will be a source of unalloyed pride and pleasure for the child's

parents and for the school. A story reported by Sadker and Sadker (1994) is told of a 5-year old boy who wanted to enter school early when he was turned down; he spent his time in the public library doing research in astronomy and geography. His intelligence quotient (IQ) measured more than 180. That was in Chicago in New York City, a 5 year old boy was already emulating the language abilities of his parents. He was able to speak and read English, speaks French Hebrew, Spanish and mastered some Danish. Sadker and Sadker, therefore contended that pre-school is very important for such and other children.

According to Bruce and Maggit (2002), children need to learn particular things at specific times. It is therefore advisable that children are guided early through pre-school education.

Beaty (1988) says, for instance, that the formation of a positive self-concept begins at birth but very much in the developing stage during a child's pre-school years. How a child eventually comes to feel about himself is the result of an accumulation of contact and experience with other people and with the environment. If most of the contacts have been positive, the child feels good about himself. If an infant has been loved and cared for, picked up and cuddled, fed and changed properly, provided with stimulating environment, not neglected or left alone too much, not scolded too harshly or restricted too severely, both consciously and subconsciously, he develops a perception of himself as a likeable human being. In turn, he will tend to like other beings as they want him to. This is one of the reasons why it is important for children to attend pre-school.

Neaum and Tallack (1977) suggest that through well-guided play activities, children in their pre-school years develop strong creative fantasy which is a very important aspect of pre-school years. Through fantasy each child discovers and expresses their inner self, through a range of activities such as drawing, dancing movement and music. Language development is an important activity that is achieved at pre-school years. As children engage in diverse play activities, they are bound to express themselves thereby learning and using new vocabulary. According to Kudolo (1983), they are able to learn words learnt in school because they are repeated in many activities.

Newport (1990) cited in McDevitt and Omrod (2002), added that children appear to master the grammar of a language more completely if they are exposed to it in their early years before age four. UNESCO (1998) considers the fact that pre-school, being a type of programme in which children go to a centre for three to six hours a day, allows mothers some free time from child care. The organisation also believes that mothers do utilise this extra time in other productive activities.

In an attempt to advocate for pre-schools, Isbell and Raines (2003) perceive the activities of pre-schools as a means of refining the early unordered set of activities through co-operatively working together. Allen and Hard (1984) concluded that pre-schools are therefore designed to support and encourage children to express themselves, to explore their environment and to solve any physical and social problems that might arise. Children have to explore their surroundings for self knowledge and self-awareness. Cockburn (2001) says this awareness leads to growth and confidence as learners and pupils.

Melenze, Beck and Fletcher (2000) also believe that the ability to explore is important because they are the future of every society. Donaldson (1978) says that naturally, young children want to learn by exploring whatever is available near them. At a very early age, babies show signs of a strong desire to master their environment. It is through the varied experiences at pre-school that children discover a lot of what they need to know.

Cooper and Carter (1985) say that children are able to learn all these and more because throughout history, it has been demonstrated that younger persons learn best with guidance and encouragement of skilled and caring adults. Eliason and Jenkins (1994) say that in the pre-school, the trained pre-school teacher is able to continuously appraise the child's development physically, emotionally, socially and academically.

In spite of the numerous areas of strength enumerated above, Arango (1998) believes that pre-schools are usually expensive. Moreover, it is not effective for the intellectual and emotional development of the child as it will be if the mother took the time to play and interact with the child in the home. Arango believes that substituting a professional for the mother does not allow for the development of the mother's sense of self-worth and self-image in terms of the child's development. Again, Arango agrees with some psychologist that some children are too young to experience separation from their parents.

Tassoni (2002), for example, says that some countries, especially in Europe, frown upon every early schooling to show that successful learning outcomes in reading, writing and speaking skills do not depend on early formal start, but upon the readiness and maturity of the child.

General Education in Ghana

Globally, education is considered the pivot around which national development evolves. According to Evans (1991), it is the means by which human's capital development is achieved, it influences and is influenced by other social institutions. It is believed that the social, economic, political and cultural developments of nations depend to a large extent on the quality and quantity of formal education that their citizens receive. Governments in the world over therefore spend large sums of money and other resources to realize the man power needs of their nations. For example, the rise of Japan into the status of an economic giant today, according to Rannis (1990), cited in Evans (1991), as well as the emergence of Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Taiwan and Malaysia as economic world powers, have all been attributed to the great investments they made in the education of their citizens. This quest for development gingered Ghana to bring about The Education Act of 1961 which led to the establishments of several state owned schools including Ghana Education Trust Secondary Schools.

Formal education in Ghana which preceded the colonization came as a private enterprise and was first started in Elmina castle in 1529 by the Portuguese merchants for their mullato children (Kudolo, 1983). Later, some schools were opened in other parts of the country by the Catholics, the Basel, the Anglican and the Wesleyans missionaries. Demand for education became very high after the First World War (1914-1918), and during the trade slump (1930 to 1940s), which saw a rise in primary school enrolment from 53,000 to 88,000 by 1940 (Mcwilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Furthermore, the dwindling economic fortunes of the country made it difficult for the

government alone to meet the high demand for education. Consequently, an encouragement was given for private participation in education provision just before the Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) of 1951 (Kudolo, 1983).

Even before the attainment of independence in 1957, the country had embarked on educational expansion with the accelerated development plan for education in 1951. This was followed by the Education Act of 1961. Both were meant to increase access in education (Graham, 1976). The educational reforms introduced in 1987 in addition to promoting ideas of previous policies of education. This idea of providing practical skills in education was contained in the Dzobo committee recommendation of 1974.

The government continues to find ways to improve the quality of education in the country by instituting reforms and reviews of the education industry in the country. The latest of such reviews is the Education Review Committee of 2004 chaired by Prof. Jophus Anamoah-Mensah.

Pre-school education in Ghana: Origin, Nature and Policies

Origin of Pre-school Education in Ghana

Aggrey (1996) says that pre-school education before Ghana's independence was provided by the missionaries, villagers themselves or two or three patriotic citizens coming together and establishing one. This means that there was no government commitment to providing pre-school education. What individuals and groups of people could provide in terms of pre-school education was what was available. According to Dogoe (1997), cited in Bartels (2004), any meaningful pre-school education can be traced back to the work of the Basel missionaries in 1843 and that individual participation in the provision of KG education was available by the 1920s.

According to Kudolo (1983) the women's wing of the Conventions People's Party(CPP) also started six day care centers to commemorate the ascension of queen Elisabeth II to the British throne, Ghana (Gold Coast) being under Britain then. The day centers were established at the regional centers under the Department of Social Welfare (DSW).

The day care centers were given equal attention like other primary classes. They were to take care of children whose parent went to work during the day or who thought their children needed some sorts of care before they were ushered into the formal school system. The wives of expatriates also took advantage of the system to prepare their children for the "preparatory" or "international" schools.

Other bodies like universities and army, in the 1920s established more pre-schools with the idea of making the children enjoy a blissful childhood under congenial atmosphere. They became the second home of the children. Kudolo posits that by 1983, there about 400 of such schools scattered all over the country. The pre-schools were largely private enterprise but their supervision was strictly the responsibility of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and later the Ministry of Education (MOE) which took over the supervision.

According to MOE (1988), in 1980 a pre-school Need Assessment was conducted by the Learning Assessment Branch of MOE. The purpose of the need assessment was to gather a broad base of information on a number of issues relating to KG and to identify needs assessment perceived by teachers, administrators and parents. The information was made available to pre-school curriculum committee which was charged with reviewing the then existing

pre-school programme and making recommendations to improve the curriculum. The curriculum committee then received approval to write a new curriculum guide and revise the resource book for pre-school issued in 1973. The starting point for the project was the pre-school child. The committee studied the characteristics of children at that level to determine the many needs to be met through the pre-school programmes as outlined in the curriculum guide.

The Nature of Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is the concept of educative programmes put in place to get children ready for formal school or (before grade one) for children up to five years of age (Morrison, 1991). Here, it means sets of experiences through which the child goes to bridge the gap between home and school. The activities are organized by institutions and supervised closely by a teacher. A child must be under six years to be in the pre-school.

Sam (1973) also sees pre-school as the training that the child receives during the age before age six. He further adds that pre-school education is either given at home or in the nursery school. Specifically, pre-school education is the education which begins at age four and ends at about age six. It is likened to the foundations upon which future education is built (Kudolo, 1983). One may conclude that though pre-school semantically brings to mind any form of education that takes place before the formal schooling, it is the one provided in the two latter years (ages four and five) which is referred to as the “ children’s garden” or kindergaten. Here the founder Frederick Froebel, likened children to flowers growing happily in a garden (Gorden&Brown, 1989). In this type of education, children go to the Centre learning for three to

six hours in a day (UNESCO, 1989). In Ghana it is the few years (usually two to three) which some children go through before entering primary school. The education reforms launched in January 2006, recommended a two-year pre-school education for all children before primary class one.

The Policy of Pre-School Education

Ghana has made many attempts to reform the model of schooling bequeathed to it by the colonial masters. According to Mankoe (2002), the attempts came in the forms of reforms, review committees and reviews. All the reforms followed at the tail of grave dissatisfaction among the populace of the state of affairs at the education front. The reforms have largely aimed at improving access and efficiency in the delivery of education and, above all, making education more relevant to national development need. Dare (1998) says that what emerges from the reforms is frustration where youngsters graduate without minimal basic skills.

Dean (1990), talking about the inadequacy of leadership, says it is the institutional leadership that determines what happens and, therefore leadership should be held responsible for the lapses in education. Obeng (1996) urged teachers to help reverse the falling standard through curricular reform. Chiefs and other concerned citizens contributed to what would make the Ghanaian education a good one. Wiafe (2000) held a meeting with teachers with a view to identifying causes of poor performance of pupils in order to find a solution to it. He complained of the poor educational standards in his traditional areas.

In 1987, the Education Reform Committee re-echoed the need for kindergarten education which was recommended by the Dzobo Committee of 1974 (Mankoe, 2002). When the situation was found as not be the best,

another Education Reform Review Committee was set up in 2002 by the government. The content and structure of Ghana's education was assessed. Among their recommendations was the introduction of a two-year kindergarten education. The recommendation on kindergarten education was accepted and the policy was specifically captured thus; Recognising the crucial role that pre-school education plays in the formative years of the child, especially its potential for overcoming the educational disabilities of children from less favoured family backgrounds, government has decided that kindergarten education should progressively become part of the Universal Free and Compulsory Basic Educational structure (White Paper on the Report on Education Reform Review, 2004).

Theoretical Perspective of Early Childhood Education

According to Darkwah (2001), a child is a human being of the approximate age of eighteen years or below. The first six years of the child's life is referred to as early childhood. Early childhood education may therefore be defined simply as the type of education given to children during the first six years of their life. In an attempt to better understand early childhood education in terms of its nature, scope and purpose various writers have looked at the process and characteristics of early childhood development. The following paragraphs summarize the key ideas of contributors to early childhood education.

Comenius' Theory of Early Childhood Education

John Comenius, one of the first advocates of early childhood education, argued that whatever disposition the branches of an old tree possess, they must necessarily have been so formed from the first growth.

Therefore, the child, in the very formation of body and soul should be molded as he ought to be throughout his whole life (Saville-Troike, 1982). As if to prescribe a curriculum for early childhood education, Comenius further observed that too much sitting still or slowly walking about on the part of a child is not a good sign. Rather running or doing something is a sure sign of a sound body and vigorous intellect. At this stage, dialectics (reasoning) beyond the natural is obtained in practice and cannot be introduced. Comenius' theory is important in the development of early childhood educational methods and views, not just, because his ideas provided an escape from medieval backwardness, but because their revolutionary nature affects us today. For example, Comenius introduced a concept that says, "The single most important issue in early education today is developmental appropriateness in children's learning." (Cass, 1998, p.220), Comenius, cited in Silver (1982), disclosed that young children need help in understanding yesterday, today and tomorrow and they need to do this before trying to comprehend last years and beyond. Comenius further highlighted geography as a subject that can be used to enhance learning for children easily. He said, "Just as children first understand time in terms of today, they need to first understand space in relation to what they can see around them" (p.115).

Froebel's Theory of Early Childhood Education

The founding father of kindergarten, Fredirch Froebel, envisioned early learning as a sort of halfway house between home and school, infancy and childhood that would be attended by 4- to 6-year olds. Because it would be a place where children are to be nurtured and protected from outside influences, Froebel described this concept as plants in a garden (Cratty,

1982) by referring to it as 'kinder' (which means child) and 'garten' (garden). Cratty (1982) says "in order for Froebel's school to become successful, he proposed and supported a special teacher training in the area of early childhood education" (p.123). This lends support to the view that to run early childhood education programmes we must first meet the needs for trained manpower if the programmes are to produce quality outputs for society use. Cratty added that Froebel believed that new concrete materials must be developed to enhance the appropriateness of children's interest and have an underlying spiritual message.

For this to become a reality, the society must see the need for establishing a training institution that can enhance the readiness of early learning programmes. According to Feeney and Chun (1985), Froebel had several perceptions that could be of great help to children development. For this purpose, he introduced two groups of educational materials: "gifts" and "occupations." The first of the two ("gifts") were designed to be introduced in infancy by the mother, in Froebel's belief, it is at this point that babies begin to understand things as they play. Mothers sit by to supervise the play in such a way that the baby's sense and muscles would be stimulated.

Froebel theoretical concepts explained further that more gifts be introduced to the children in kindergarten, which are the small building blocks that would fit together in prescribed ways under the teacher's instructions. Here, it is important to note that Froebel considered these directed exercises with their specific goals as a form of play in comparison with what most children in those days dealt with in their daily lives. Today, however, we would not doubt that closed-ended, prescribed, teacher-directed

activities might be enjoyable but could not be described as play. Froebel further explained that occupations allowed children more freedom and include such things as weaving, bead-stringing, sewing, and stick-laying activities, as well as gardening. However, even these held underlying spiritual messages that could be learned in such simple steps as the required and careful clean up activity was considered a final concrete reminder to the child of God's plan for moral and social order.

Shapiro (1993) observed that the essential harmony of the gifts and occupations had its counterparts in the songs and games that focused on social harmony. For example, break up a circle of children and understanding of individuality will exist, then put it back together again and there is unity. Therefore, teachers are to undergo a special training to be able to point out these symbolic acts to the children, and it is likely that the children will understand the role each of them is playing in the circle.

Gestwicki (1995) explains that Froebel believed young children could understand the spiritual symbolism behind the games they play. Froebel further observed that the rigidly structured use of play materials is abandoned in most societies today. The finely detailed perfectly measured and produced learning materials have been replaced by mass production of toys. However, some things remain in the concept, that children of pre-primary years learn best through some form of play; the feeling that group games help children feel a part of the whole, and the idea that playing and working outdoors can lead to creativity and good health

Maria Montessori's Theory of Early Childhood Education

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) conceived of an early childhood education programme based on the principle that young children learn in a way that is fundamentally different from how adults learn. She felt that early childhood education should aim at allowing the child to cultivate his own natural desire to learn. This can be realized by allowing the child to experience the excitement of learning by his own choice rather than by being forced. Again, it is by helping the child to perfect all his natural tools for learning so that his ability will be maximum in future learning situations. According to Henry (1995), Montessori was particularly impressed with the great capacity of children to learn much during the first few years of life and she called this capacity the absorbent mind.

Montessori, cited in Helm (1996), felt that all children have a fundamental inborn and intellectual structure that unfolds gradually as they develop. Although individual differences are due to different environmental experiences, she observed that if children's absorbent minds are exposed to appropriate learning experiences in the developmental stages, the minds will grow.

Learning to write, read and calculate should emerge naturally as the child learns to walk and talk. In Montessori classroom, the equipment invites the child to activity at his own period of interest and readiness. This is especially true at sensitive periods and times when children are most receptive to absorbing specific learning. And as such, the hands and eyes become the chief teacher for the child. In order to learn there must be concentration and

the best way a child can concentrate is by fixing his attention on some task he is performing with his hand.

Application of Theories in Early Childhood Education

According to Evans (1982), the work of human development theorists is important to early childhood education if their concepts are translated into practice and methods. This has happened over the years as a number of early childhood education models founded on a particular theoretical view were developed. Such models represent a coherent approach to working with young children, including a philosophical and theoretical base, goals, curriculum design, methods and evaluation procedures. Evans further observed that most models were designed to examine different ways of helping children at risk to improve school performance. But models have implications for all children as well.

According to Pipes (1984), we should not however, assume that all early childhood programmes pursue a carefully prescribed theoretical view. In fact, the majority of programmes and teachers of young children probably do not follow a stated philosophical foundation and preference, or they adhere only to a vaguely recognized theory. He indicated that an open mind and a practical approach to teaching borne out of sensitive observation and interaction with children are equally important.

Hooper (1987) also observed that our theories of growth and development, learning and instruction or optimal teaching application are hidden and not consciously recognized as theories in the usual sense. Good teachers, like all effective professionals, have sets of guiding principles and outcome expectations that may certainly be considered as theories, at least in

a general sense. Therefore, an early childhood programme should meet and be able to apply at least 85% of the theories in the field of early childhood education.

The Importance of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education, within the last few decades, attracted attention from different fields (Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005) such as developmental psychology, cultural psychology, childhood studies, cultural anthropology, history and philosophy. This was because recent studies showed that babies and young children are born with the capacity to understand (Nutbrown, 2006). In other words, their brains are ready to learn when they came to the world and during this process; both the environment and genes take an important role which in turn, builds the brain (Levitt, 2008). This view regarding children, perceiving them as competent learners rather than empty slates changed the disciplines' way of looking at the education of children or early childhood education.

The readiness of the children to learn immediately after birth triggered the ideas of necessity of early childhood education both for the individual child and for the society as a whole, in a broader sense.

Longitudinal studies have showed that early childhood education is the period when children's development was rapid and when children were affected more from environmental factors. In addition, two thirds of the brain development is completed between the years of 0-4 (Essa, 2003). Therefore, education in this crucial period is significant for the development of children. In a study conducted by Barnett (1995), it was found that getting an early childhood education provided an increase in the IQ level of children in the short term and in the long term; it increased the child's school achievement. Early childhood is a crucial time period for the development of

children's mental functions. This development, including the emergence of language, motor skills, psychosocial, cognitive, and learning abilities, is now known to be greatly influenced by exogenous factors, including the educational environment to which a child is exposed during the first 6 to 8 years of life (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001).

Early childhood education becomes more beneficial especially, for the children coming from low socio-economic background. Bassok, Bridges, Fuller, Loeb and Rumberger (2007) identified benefits of being exposure to early education for the children coming from low-income families as cognitive growth and school readiness. Besides children from low socio-economic background, good quality of early childhood education provides early reading and math skills to children from high and middle socio-economic status.

Early education cultivates children in terms of socialization rather than purely academic enhancement such as math and reading. Webb (2003) elaborated on the fact that children learn cooperation through education in child care centers and such skills help them to obey rules and stay safe in a society. Regarding socialization, parents also share the same perspective. In the study of Webb (2003), it was revealed that one of the biggest reasons for parents sending children to early childhood education center is to get them socialized. In fact, in a longitudinal study, Kagitcibasi (1991) explained that children who received early childhood education became emotionally and socially more competent adults compared to the ones whom did not received early education.

In terms of children, in addition to social emotional and academic benefits, early education provides them a better future in the long term such as preparing them for school and increase in high school graduation rates.

Inevitably, knowing the benefits of early education for the individuals in the short and long term brings the discussion of early childhood necessity in society as a whole.

Modern societies, as Durkheim clarified, are composed of many institutions and there is a dynamic relationship among these institutions. Each institution depends on each other to survive and to create the harmony within the society (Greve, 1998). Keeping this logic in mind, societies need individuals who function well within that system.

Governments start to put early childhood education into their agendas, especially after it was proved that good quality of early education has long-lasting effects on the children's later life productivity for the society. To illustrate, Oppenheim and MacGregor (2002) distinguished that children who received early education are less likely to get involved in crime and more likely to complete their high school education and get into a college education. In another studies such as Chicago, Longitudinal study and the Cost, Quality and Child outcome study indicated that getting high quality early childhood education make children become successful students and citizens in their later lives (Reynolds, 2004).

On the other hand, according to the World Bank Report (2005), between 0 and 6 years of age, each dollar invested on children will be returned back as 7.6 dollars in the future as a result of the productivity gained through early childhood education. Parallel to that study, Everingham, Karoly, and Kilbourne (1997) indicated that the rate of return of the investment in people in early childhood period is higher compared to investment in other periods of human life.

In addition, research results which supported the fact that the earlier children are exposed to good quality of experience, the more the connections in their brains develop, triggered early childhood education to gain greater importance in the society. Such results opened the way to start education of brains as early as possible.

In one study conducted by Knudson (2004), it was elaborated that developmental flexibility of brain wiring or its ability to change due to influences of experience were affected by both genes and early environmental factors. So, it became necessary for educators, policy makers and others in the society helping children to construct their initial brain architecture by providing education for them in their early years.

Findings of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies (Barnett, 1995; Openheim & MacGregor, 2002; Reynolds, 2004) concerning the benefits of early childhood education provided logical reasons to emphasize on early education for a better society. Besides all, in the last twenty years, socio-cultural changes such as getting into the information age and changes in the world order through globalization triggered early childhood education to be the concern of many societies.

Globalization and Early Childhood Education

Globalization has reshaped many issues, international relations, population growth, development, human rights, the environment, labor, health care and poverty(Grant & Grant, 2007; Koggel, 2003). It has also affected and reshaped education as well. Beginning from early childhood education to college education, we may see the influences of globalization.

Effect of globalization seemed to be have become more evident in all countries more, after 1985s, when the world entered into an information age by the mass spread of computers and internet all around the world, education and information became more crucial. In other words, knowledge became power. Hence, people are now valued on the basis of their being active, productive, and having the knowledge to produce the technology, as well as being skilled at several foreign languages. So, countries started to reshape their curriculums at all levels of education (from early childhood to college) towards cultivating those types of people (Dulger, 2000). As this cultivation process starts from the first level which is early education, the countries are looking for the best curriculum model in early childhood education.

In addition to the need for competent individuals having the skills and knowledge of dealing with the new world's demands, changes in the family units (Morrison, 2007) such as more mothers entering the work force or rich parents looking for the best educational places for their children as early as possible, caused early childhood education to become a growing concern.

On the other hand, more women have now been favored in employment than in the past (Anning & Edwards, 2006). As manufacturing industries declined, service industries expanded. Employers seeking a more flexible, part-time, cheaper, nonunionized workforce found that women fitted more into such patterns of employment than men. Women also traditionally have better 'people skills' and that quality was both useful and profitable for industries serving the public at a face-to-face level. So, as more women entered the work force, the problem of educating those women's children arose.

As the need for education of working mothers' children and the necessity of cultivating individuals being able to deal with the new world's demands raised the issue of the most beneficial curriculum model for the educating of young children. So, countries started to make investigations on enhancing the quality for early childhood education such as developing early childhood curriculum models.

Review of Empirical works

The foregoing theoretical perspectives reflect the influences of certain psycho-social variables on the perceptions of Early Childhood Education Programmes. Following these, it is necessary to examine the literary perceptions of researchers on the Early Childhood Education as they relate to this study. Though it is not possible to involve all variables here, this study intends to at least situate the views and ideology of past researchers on the subject under study.

Falks'(1987) study revealed the following findings:

1. The issues of qualified teachers for the ECE.
2. The issues of poor learning environment
3. Lack of play equipment for the children at the centre
4. Lack of resting rooms for the children at the centre
5. Class over-crowdedness for a teacher

This is one of the comprehensive research works on Early Childhood Education Practices undertaken by Falks. His findings established that the reliability of the findings cannot be guaranteed. He even pointed out that research assistants used in the study were students who had had no training in research procedures. In similarity to this study, most of the ECE centre in

the Shama District settings, children learn under a situation that is highly dominated by harshness, confusions and deprivations under unqualified teachers. Unlike this study, Falks' accessible population for the study was 3 schools out of 40 schools in a community and for data collection she used a interviews. The researcher used 67 respondents out of 540 respondents as the sample for the study. Similarly, the data analysis went through the same scientific methods, use of Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) to get frequency and simple percentage.

Williams (1996), in a study, "Factors that Influence the Quality of Early Learning" revealed the followings findings:

1. The playground was too small for the children.
2. Although teachers were swift in attending to children's toilet needs but they were unqualified for effecting ECE teaching practices.
3. The classrooms were equipped but were very small for the children's learning.
4. The contribution of Parent Teachers Association was rather poor.
5. The teachers had no pre-service education in Early Childhood Education programme.

The focus of her study was on various important factors that can hinder quality learning of children. In the literature review, she pointed out that quality learning helps build concrete foundation for children in the early years. Her concern was on the social development, motivation, psycho-motor and physical development of a child. It was argued further that these social factors encourage learning for children and all of these factors require qualified teachers to facilitate learning for children. Research questionnaire guides was

used to collect the data for the study, and the sample for her study was 22 selected out of 45 respondents. Random sampling method, frequency and simple percentage were also used to analyze the data. The major focal points were to assess the qualification of teachers and the availability of physical infrastructures.

In her findings, Williams (1996) clarified that she was not certain of the reliability neither of the data nor of whether the results were a true reflection of the actual conditions of the situation within the area under study. The above short comings also make this work deficient, with regard to its universal applicability.

Education International (2010) revealed the following findings in its study, “Early Childhood Education: A Global Scenario”. These include:

1. The majority of teachers are young female high school graduates who are preparing for higher education.
2. ECE centers that are based in rural areas often have poor infrastructure, and lack appropriate facilities, materials and equipment.
3. Teaching staff working in earlychildhood education tend to be underpaid and earn (much) lower salaries compared to teachers at the primary level or higher
4. Child-teacher ratios are higher in ECE centres (around 34 children per teacher).
5. There is a large proportion of unqualified teachers employed in ECE.

Education International focused its study on both developed and developing countries. The purpose of its study was to investigate early childhood education policies, programmes and activities across the globe, with

a view to making this information available to EI member organisations to facilitate evidence-based policy-making and information exchange. Its main challenge was limited amount of information available on ECE and sources of data, particularly at the global level. Data were collected from 17 countries. Data were collected by the ECE Task Force from government and other sources, and complemented by previously published reports, studies and online resources.

In another study conducted by Shapiro (1995) it was found that more young people are now building interest in early childhood development programmes, unlike two or three centuries ago, when older people were found in Day-Care and pre-school programmes with the notion that older people have vast experience and have the capability to care for younger children. He also said that age can also be used as indicators to measure the quality of knowledge dissemination.

Almy et al. (1984) also underscores the importance of the role of early childhood caregivers, by listing some attributes dictated by what they termed as “common senses”, which include patience, warmth, nurturance, and energy. They further describes maturity, openness to new ideas, and tolerance for certain amount of ambiguity as necessary quality, therefore, if a young person possesses these characteristics, he/she will be able to move easily between the child’s concrete level of thinking and the abstract. They added that newly trained teachers are very young and this may be due to the cutting down of the duration of schooling in the country. It also means that majority of the new teachers would be with the service for a longer time and would help produce human resource of the country.

Balaban (1992) in a study also listed out some important personal qualities and abilities to enable Early Childhood Educators anticipate and plan; provide an interesting environment; elicit language, problem solving, and play; protect, listen, and watch; “smooth jangled feelings”; comfort; cope; facilitate social interactions; facilitate parent-child separation; and care for the whole family. According to him, young people possess certain levels of thinking ability and energy needed to perform these tasks.

The quality of an educational system depends on the quality of its teachers. A specially trained teacher for the ECE programme will help in many ways to lay the proper foundation of a child early learning process.

Siegel (1987, p.51) said, “due to the many functions performed by the ECE teacher; he/she must possess certain quality of education, greater theoretical knowledge of child development and early childhood education.” According to Clark-Stewart (1984) an early childhood teachers or administrators who provide a high quality Early Childhood Programmes must possess certain specific training in early childhood education and development. People are in certain position or field due so many reasons.

Sheldon (1983, p.12) disclosed that “the quality of an early childhood programme depends on the availability of trained teachers”

In one of the studies (Berry, Tout & Zaslow, 2006), was elaborated that higher levels of teacher education were generally linked with higher classroom quality in elementary and higher levels, but in terms of early childhood education, there is no great distinction. In other words, it cannot be concluded that the higher level of education early childhood teachers have, the higher quality classrooms with fewer problems.

In addition, Alva, Benden, Bryant, Burchical and Maxwell (2008) detected no association with higher teacher education level and higher classroom quality in early childhood education. Preschool teachers with less or more education levels are exposed to problems in teaching as the effective pedagogy is complex and do not depend on one single criteria (Field, Clifford & Maxwell, 2006).

Hyson, Morris and Tomlinson (2009), mentioned the significance of having a degree in early childhood education. However, they did not make a comparison among teachers based on the name of the degree obtained. For them, the quality of the program is more critical than the degree itself, because they added that degree alone does not guarantee teacher competence. In other words, either departments that preschool teachers graduate from or the degree they have, does not guarantee having more qualified classrooms with fewer problems. As a matter of fact, we cannot conclude that preschool teachers who graduate from certain departments deal with fewer or more problems during teaching and learning. A study by Azzi-Lessing (2009) also revealed that the adequate infrastructure is crucial in early childhood education.

Teaching experience can be a differentiating aspect among preschool teachers in classroom management skills (Reid, Stoolmiller & Webster-Stratton, 2008; Martina, Mayall & Yin, 2006) or selecting and using appropriate methods for teaching in their classrooms. The teachers, regardless of their teaching experience, may feel uncomfortable when writing an evaluation about a child if the parents show serious reactions for the evaluation written for their child. So, this may lead teachers to soften or change their comments related children in evaluation part. As this is a new

aspect both for experienced and inexperienced teachers, this might be one of the reasons why there is no significant difference among preschool teachers in relation to their years of teaching experience.

In conclusion, the studies reviewed in some ways were in similarity to this current study, and it satisfied some of the indicated problems.'

Role of Educational Psychology in Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is the first step in a child's educational journey (Ball, 1994). Early childhood experts are of the opinion that attending high quality preschool programme helps to promote children's social and emotional development and prepare them for kindergarten and beyond. Studies have shown that children who attended quality early education programs are more likely to have better test scores and grades. A great number of educators and researchers are of the view that early childhood education is highly beneficial for the children's cognitive and educational development and well-being of young children in terms of their individual needs and characteristics.

Broman (1982) stated that during the normal pre-school year, the child undergoes a distinct, although very gradual change. He seems to leave his boyhood completely behind, and if he is developing along suitable lines, he emerges as a natural, likeable child whom it is a real joy to meet.

Gammage (1996) is of the view that "by three, children have turned the corner away from boyhood and are 'on the straight' with the Kindergarten and the infant school ahead of them. Before the year is out they begin to talk about going to school and to look forward to it. Socially while children are happy to have two or three others around, each child is generally content to carry on with his individual activity. Children learn many essential facts about the

universe, people and objects simply by playing. Play may be seen, therefore as one of the 'miracles' of childhood by means of which children discover things essential to their well-being and thoroughly enjoy the process of discovery. Play provides children with a variety of essential experiences: sensory, exploratory, emotional, and social experiences as well as experiences of mastery or achievement (Tassani & Hucker, 2000).

Hendricks (2007) holds the position that "for more than a decade, research on approaches to early childhood education has sought to investigate the effectiveness of various kinds of programmes in changing the behavior and enhancing the development of young children. All good pre-school programmes are built on the foundations of sound human relationships. Warmth and empathic understanding have been shown to be effective means of influencing young children's positive adjustment to nursery school, and it is apparent that genuine caring about the children and about other adults in the programme is fundamental to success" (p. 15).

At this stage of development, children learn and absorb information very rapidly, and do take keen interest in every type of new discovery. It is a well-known fact that the most important years of learning are started at birth. At this stage, the brain of a child develops such imprints which will last for the rest of his life. The environment also has a great influence on the rapid development on the ideas grasping power and emotional skills of the young children. The extensive studies which have been carried out on the high quality pre-schools education have long term fruitful effects on a child and especially for those who are weak in studies. Pre-school shares with parents

the responsibility for promoting sound growth in a period when growth is rapid and important.

Children come to pre-school endowed with inherent potentials. These potentials serve children in their progress from sensory experience to perceptual experience and to the acquisition of concepts. The protected environment of nursery schools allows children to orient themselves gradually to the realities of their world, by encouraging their expression of fantasy through play. A well planned environment can direct children into acceptable behavior, emotional equilibrium, integrated development and progressive learning (Barnett, 1995) which are all areas of special interest to Educational Psychology as an academic specialty.

Gardner (1965) summarised that children between 3 and 6 need a school experience that contributes to all aspects of their total development in effective programs for young children, whether they be called day care, laboratory-nursery schools, private or cooperative nurseries, there are provisions in the form of physical plant, materials and equipment, program and, especially, qualified personnel, which contribute to that total development.

Summary of Literature for the Study

In this chapter, the researcher has reviewed theories and empirical studies on perception and Early Childhood Education. From all the empirical studies reviewed for this study, the pictures that emerged were that the various writers seem to agree on the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the process of children's education and development. Almost of the writers outlined factors that can enhance the smooth learning of children. Firstly, they

all underscored the importance of qualified ECE staff in ECE programmes. Secondly, they all considered the availability of instructional materials as a major factor that can enhance a successful implementation of ECE programmes. Also these researchers are unanimous in their position that the absence of these factors provides a pitfall for the education and development of children in any society.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents detailed information on the techniques and processes used in identifying pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District in Western Region. In particular, the research design, the description of population, sample, sampling procedure and the research instrument used in the study are described. The data collection and data analysis procedures are also presented.

Research Design

The research design for the study was descriptive survey design. This design was chosen because the study involves systematic collection and presentation of data on teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District. It is the descriptive survey design that gives a clear picture of the situation on the ground. Descriptive survey is the survey that seeks to collect data in order to test hypotheses or answer research questions concerning the status of the study (Gay, 1987). Thus, the survey was non-interventional since no measure or manipulation was put in place in the cause of the study.

Furthermore, a descriptive survey, as proposed by Babbie (1990), and cited by Adentwi (1998), was used in this study because of its disposition for easy generalization from sample to a population, so that inferences could be made about characteristic attitudes of behaviour of a population. According to Best and Khan (1998, p28), "descriptive research is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, such as conditions, practices and attitudes, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, or trends that are

developed.” Descriptive designs are intended to obtain more information about a particular characteristic within a particular field of study. A descriptive study may be used to develop theory, identify problems within current practice, justify current practice, and make judgements or identify what others in similar situations may be doing. This type of design is used to study relationships between non-manipulated variables in a natural, rather than, an artificial setting. It involves administering the same set of questions to a large number of individuals. Their responses are tabulated, analysed and reported usually in the form of frequencies or percentages of those who answered in a particular way to each of the questions.

Also, the descriptive design was chosen as the most suitable type for data collection procedure for this work because of its relative low cost. The instrument was administered to all the members of the group almost at the same time, making group administration possible and the return rate higher. The data collection time was relatively short and also it did not involve any manipulation of variables. The researcher was interested in this type of survey because she wanted to have a clear and comprehensive picture of what the opinions of pre-school teachers concerning the challenges of per-school education are.

In order to get or obtain the desired data for the research, the researcher ensured that:

- (a) Questions were clear, unambiguous and not misleading.
- (b) Respondents provided thoughtful answers to the items.

(c) Sufficient numbers of questions were completed and returned for meaningful analysis of the data obtained. Two hundred questionnaires were given out and all were retrieved back.

Good as it is, the descriptive survey is not without some inherent weaknesses. Fraenkel and Wallen (2002) have identified three difficulties associated with this design. They include the difficulty in ensuring that questions to be answered are clear, getting the respondents to answer questions thoughtfully and honestly and the difficulty in getting sufficient number of questionnaires completed and returned. For example, if the questions are not clearly written out, respondents will find it difficult to respond to items in the questionnaire. Hence, adequate consultations were made by the researcher by ensuring that the questionnaire was validated by experts go through appropriate procedures of validation.

Population

Population, according to Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (1999), refers to the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested. It may be finite, where its members can presumably be counted and a finite number obtained. Or, it may be infinite when the elements of the population cannot be definitely known. Hummelbrunner, Rak and Gray (1996) also explain that population is the total of all items in the group of items in which the researcher is interested.

According to Fink (2003), the criteria for including a unit in a survey refers to the characteristics of respondents who are eligible for participation in

the survey. For the purpose of this study, the population of interest for the study is all pre-school teachers and head teachers at the pre-school visited.

In this research, the target population was all pre-school teachers including head teachers of pre-schools in Shama District. The aforementioned population was targeted for this investigation because its members are directly involved in pre-school education, consequently they are in a better position to know and provide concrete information on the various challenges that confront them in their individual daily task. According to Ghana Education Service (Statistical Unit, 2015), the population of pre-school teachers in the district was 406.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The term sampling according to Kerlinger as cited in Amengor (2010, p.32), “means taking any portion of a population or universe as representative of that population or universe”. Often it is difficult to identify all the subjects of a population of interest. So samples are chosen for a study. Sampling helps to channel time, money and effort to producing better and quality research.

Since the entire population could not be used for the study, to make it more representative, simple random sampling procedure was used to select 40 out of the 82 pre-schools from the five circuits in the district. This is because all the target population has an equal chance of being selected. The circuits in Shama Districts are Shama, Inchaban, Aboadze/Abuesi, and Assorko-Essaman

The lottery method was then used to select eight pre-schools from each of the circuit. A sample frame consisting of lists of all the pre-schools in the district was then obtained from the Early Childhood Education Unit of the Shama District Education Office which constitutes 82 pre-schools by writing

names of the various schools on pieces of paper. To make sure the sample was a true reflection of the population, 8 preschools were selected from each circuit. This was to make sure that the findings of the sample could be generalized as the perception of the population. A single-stage sampling design was adapted. This means that the researcher had access to names in the population and could sample the schools directly. According to Ary et al. (2002) a simple random sampling is the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample of a study. Assorko-Essaman had 14 pre-schools, Shama had 18 pre-schools, Aboddze-Abuesi had 17 pre-schools, Inchaban had 16 pre-schools and Beposo had 17 pre-schools. 8 schools were randomly selected from each circuit. For each circuit, the researcher had a bowl with the circuit name labeled; the names of the schools were written on a piece of paper, folded and placed into the bowl for selection. The researcher did the selection one at a time. For each name that came out of the bowl was unfolded and recorded, the process continued until the researcher got the needed number of schools for the study. The sample size used for the study was 200 pre-school teachers. 4 pre-school teachers and 1 pre-school head teacher were given questionnaires to fill.

Research Instrument

The research tool that was used to collect the data was a questionnaire. Frankel and Wallen (2000) say the collection of data is extremely important because the conclusion of the study is based on what the data reveal. According to them, the kind of data collected, the methods of data

collection to be employed and the scoring of the data need to be considered with care.

In considering the instrument for data collection for this study, the researcher made a thorough consideration of the factors that determined the appropriateness of the instruments for the study. The researcher found that questionnaire was feasible in collecting the data for the study. According to Nwana (1992, p.133), as cited in Amengor (2010, p.33) questionnaire is used “if the respondents cannot give information in the project unless complete anonymity is guaranteed....and the respondents are literates.....” This is true of this study, hence, the choice of questionnaire as the instrument. The questionnaire method also offers fewer opportunities for bias or errors. They are stable, consistent and of uniform measure without variation. They offer a considered and objective view on the issue since respondents can consult their files and many respondents prefer to write rather than talk about certain issues. questionnaires also promise a wider coverage (Creswell, 1994).

The questionnaire used for this study was self administered and consisted of two Sections, A and B. Section A of the questionnaire was for gathering demographic information of respondents. It had a total of twelve items. Section “B” was on pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended items and a few open-ended items. The close-ended items were used to prevent respondents from deviating or giving superfluous responses while the open-ended items were used to elicit more useful but unanticipated information from respondents since they were given the opportunity to reveal their frame of reference and possibly the reason for their responses. The items were on a

four-point Likert-type scale. The Likert-type questionnaire has been found to be the suitable for the measurement of attitudes and perceptions. This is because it enables respondents to indicate the degree of their belief in a given statement (Best & Khan, 1998). They said that Likert scales have a high degree of validity and reliability.

Pilot Testing

To determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher checked the content validity of the questionnaire before undertaking the pilot-testing. The testing of the instruments can reveal ambiguities, poorly worded questions, questions that are not understood and unclear choices and can also indicate whether, the instructions to the respondents are clear (Frankel & Wallen, 2000). Pilot testing, therefore helped the researcher to verify whether the items were appropriate for the study.

According to Frankel and Wallen (2000), it is advisable to try the questionnaire out on a small sample similar to the actual respondents. It was also aimed at finding out the internal consistency of the various scales. A pilot testing was therefore conducted at Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly with 40 pre-school teachers in 8 pre-schools and the results analysed before the actual study took place. This ensured that the sample, the questionnaire, the data collection procedure, among others, would be appropriate for the actual study. Pre-school teachers from Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly were chosen for the pilot-testing because their schools bear similar characteristics as those of Shama District. These schools have similar problems with those of Shama District.

According to De-Vellis (2003), the Cronbach alpha coefficient of a scale should be above 0.7 while Briggs and Cheek (1986) also recommend an optimal range for the inter-item correlation of 0.2 to 0.4. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .91 while all the inter-item correlation coefficients fell within 0.2 to 0.4.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher personally administered the questionnaire in the various schools. Before administering the instrument, a letter of introduction was given to the researcher from the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast, to the Shama District Education Office in order to seek permission to do the research. The office then endorsed the letter and gave a photocopy of it to the Heads of the selected pre-schools. The purpose of the study was stated in the letter and co-operation of the schools authorities and teachers was sought. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the Headteachers and pre-school teachers. Respondents were also assured of anonymity with instructions on confidentiality of any information given by them on the questionnaire guide. After the distribution of the questionnaires the researcher left the forms with the respondents and implored them to complete the forms after which she collected them.

Data Analysis

Data analysis, as suggested by Frankel and Wallen (2000), is the process of simplifying data in order to make it comprehensive. According to them, data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques. Since the study was a descriptive survey, the researcher did both

quantitative and qualitative analysis. Descriptive statistics involves tabulating, depicting and describing a collection of data (Amedahe, 2002).

The data that were obtained were described and analysed using percentages, frequencies and. The Statistical Product and Services Solution (SPSS) Computer Software was used for the data analysis. In this way computer tallied the responses given by the respondents, put them into frequencies and a frequency distribution table was prepared. Frequencies obtained for the items were converted into percentages in order to determine the different responses given by specific proportions of the study sample. The 0.5 alpha level was chosen as a criterion of statistical significance for all statistical procedure performed. Research hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistic and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The main objective of the study was to determine teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in Shama District, Western Region, Ghana. The analysis was based on the responses given to the questionnaire. Information obtained is presented in the form of tables and figures where appropriate. The data analysis has been presented in two main parts: the demographic data and the analysis of data on the research questions and hypotheses testing.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Here, the respondents were asked to indicate their gender, age, highest level of teaching qualification, the department they graduated from, the number of years they have worked at the pre-school level, the ownership of their school, the class they teach, the number of pupils in their class, whether or not they have had training in early childhood education, whether or not they like their job, and what makes them like or dislike their job. The results are presented in Tables 1- 11.

Gender of Respondents

The first item on the questionnaire sought to find out the gender of respondents. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	17	8.5
Female	183	91.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 1 indicate that 17 (8.5%) of participants who took part in the study were males while 183 (91.5%) were females. This means that more females participated in the study than males. The gender imbalance implies that the pre-school education system within the Shama District is highly dominated by female teachers. This is possibly due to the apparent apathy which males have for taking up teaching appointment at the KG level. It is hoped that more male teachers will be employed to teach at the pre-school level as indicated by Education International (2010) which advocates that more men should be attracted to early childhood teacher education, and more qualified male teachers to ECE.

Age of Teachers

Item 2 of the questionnaire sought to find out the age of the respondents. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Age Range of Respondents in Shama District

Age	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
20-24	74	37.0
25-30	77	38.5
31-34	15	7.5
35-40	23	11.5
Above 40	11	5.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 2 show that out of 200 pre-school teachers who participated in the study, 77 (38.5%) were between the ages of 20 and 30, 74 (37.0%) were between the ages of 20 and 24, 23(11.5%) were between the ages of 35 and 40, 15 (7.5%) were between the ages of 31 and 34. The remaining 11(5.5%) were above 40 years. The results from Table 2 clearly show that greater proportion of pre-school teachers in the Shama District are within the age range of 25 and 30 years and are therefore predominantly young adults and energetic. This is in support with Rogers (1995) and Jennings & Onwuegbuzie (2001) that more young people are now building interest in early childhood development programmes, unlike two or three centuries ago, when older people were found in Day-Care and pre-school programmes with the notion that older people have vast experience and have the capability to care for younger children. Similarly Shapiro (1995) is of the opinion that characteristics of age can also be used as indicators of quality of knowledge dissemination.

Teaching Qualification

Item 3 of the questionnaire sought to find out the highest level of teaching qualifications of the pre-school teachers in the Shama District. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Highest Level of Teaching Qualification

Highest level of teaching qualification	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
MSLC/GC "O"/SSCE	55	27.5
GCE "A"	4	2.0
Teacher's Cert "A"	19	9.5
Diploma in Education	110	55.0
Degree in Education	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 3 reveals that 110 (55.0%) of the pre-school teachers within the Shama District are Diploma in Education holders, 55 (27.5%) are MSLC/GC "O"/SSCE holders, 19 (9.5%) are Teacher's Cert "A" holders, 12 (6.0%) are Degree holders, and 4 (2.0%) are GCE "A" holders. The results clearly shows that majority of the pre-school teachers in the Shama District are holders of Diploma in Education Certificate.

This is in agreement with Siegel (1987, p.51) who said that "due to the many functions performed by the ECE teacher; he/she must possess certain quality of education, greater theoretical knowledge of child development and early childhood education." According to Clark-Stewart (1984), an early childhood teachers or administrators who provide a high quality Early Childhood Programmes must possess certain specific training in early

childhood education and development. People are in certain position or field due so many reasons.

Sheldon (1983, pg.12) also disclosed that “the quality of an early childhood programme depends on the availability of trained teachers.” Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001), also commented that many early childhood teachers enter the field with little education beyond high school and minimal specialized education or early childhood education.

However, in another study by Berry, Tout and Zaslow, (2006), it is elaborated that higher levels of teacher education were generally linked with higher classroom quality in elementary and higher levels, but in terms of early childhood education, there is no great distinctions. In other words, it cannot be concluded that the higher level of education early childhood teachers have, will guarantee higher quality classrooms with fewer problems.

On the other hand, a study conducted by Education International (2010) indicated that a large number of pre-school teachers in Ghana have low academic qualification which gives a gloomy picture to the pre-school education in Ghana. This is because the pre-school stage is the most critical period of a child’s life and needs well qualified teachers to handle them professionally and effectively it is therefore, not surprising to have some pre-school teachers who have not done any course in Earlychildhood education but are teaching at the pre-school level. By implication, the majority of the teachers know how to handle the teaching of children at the kindergarten level.

Department of Graduation

Item 4 of the questionnaire was designed to find out the department from which the pre-school teachers graduated. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Department Pre-School Teachers Graduated From

Department	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Early childhood	83	41.5
Basic education	59	29.5
Votec	3	1.5
No department	55	27.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 4 indicate that 83(41.5%) of the pre-school teachers within the Shama District graduated from the Department of Early childhood Education, 59(29.5%) graduated from the Department of Basic Education, 55(27.5%) did not go through tertiary education(“No department”) while only 3(1.5%) graduated from the Department of Votec. This means that majority of pre-school teachers have the requisite skills to handle children as most of them graduated from the Early Childhood Education Department. This is in agreement with a study conducted by Reid, Stoolmiller and Webster-Stratton (2008) which stated that kindergarten teacher needs to have solid professional knowledge in child language development, emergent literacy and the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing children’s literature. Barnett (2004), also observed that better-educated preschool teachers with specialized training are more effective than teachers with low educational qualifications and therefore lacked specific preparation in preschool education.

This is further backed by Hyson, Morris and Tomlinson (2009), who mentioned the significance of having a degree in early childhood education. However, they did not make a comparison among teachers based on the name of the degree obtained.

Number of Years Taught

Item 5 of the questionnaire sought to find out the number of years for which each respondent has been working at the pre-school level of education. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Number of Years the Pre-School Teacher has been working at the Pre-School Level

Number of Years	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
2 years or less	104	52.0
3-5 years	47	23.5
6-10 years	30	15.0
Above 10 years	19	9.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 5 show that majority of the teachers 104 (52%) of them have been working at the pre-school level of education for two years or less. This was followed by those who have been working at the pre-school level of education for 3-5 years, 6-10 years, and above 10 years. They constituted 47(23.5%), 30(15.0%), and 19(9.5%) of the teachers respectively. The results therefore suggest that most of the pre-school teachers in the Shama District are newly appointed teachers and do not have enough experience to handle children. As a result, they may have some challenges due to their limited experience. However in a study by (Reid, Stoolmiller & Webster-

Stratoon, 2008) it was found that teaching experience can be differentiating aspect among preschool teachers in classroom management skills or selecting and using appropriate methods for teaching in their classrooms.

Ownership of the School

Item 6 of the questionnaire sought to find out the ownership of the various schools that the pre-teachers work in. The outcome of their responses is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Ownership of Pre-schools in Shama District

School	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Government	159	79.5
Community	5	2.5
Church	13	6.5
Individual	23	11.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 6 show that majority of the pre-schools constituting 159 (79.5%) in the Shama District are owned public. Twenty-three (11.5%) of the pre-schools in the District are owned by individuals, 13(6.5%) are owned by churches while the remaining 5(2.5%) are owned by the communities. This is almost in total support of the findings of Education International (2010), which indicated that 75 percent of services for the 0 to 3-year age group (nurseries and crèches) are provided by the private sector in Ghana and in developing countries in particular, international agencies, NGOs, faith-based organisations, local communities and private institutions are often involved in the organisation, provision and funding of early childhood education services and in private ECE services, the costs are often borne entirely by parents.

Class Taught by a Pre-School Teacher

Item 7 of the questionnaire sought to find out the class that the pre-school teachers teach. The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Class that Pre-school Teachers Teach

Class	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Nursery	17	8.5
KG1	103	51.5
KG2	80	40.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 7 indicate that majority of the pre-school teachers, thus 103(51.5%) in the Shama District teach at KG 1. Followed quite closely are those who teach at KG 2. They formed 80(40%) of the teachers. A few of them representing 17 (8.5%) teach at the nursery level.

Class Size

Item 8 of the questionnaire was aimed at finding the number of pupils in the class of the pre-school teachers. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Number of Pupils that a teacher Handles

Number of pupils	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
30 or less	92	46.0
31-40	43	21.5
41-50	30	15.0
50 above	35	17.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 8 show that 92(46.0%) of the pre-schools teachers have a class size of 30 or even less. Forty-three constituting 21.5% have a class size of 31-40, followed by those who have class sizes of 41-50 and above 50. They made up of 30 (15.0%) and 35 (17.5%) of the respondents respectively. The result implies that most of the pre-school teachers in the Shama District have standard class sizes that they should be able to effectively handle or control.

In-Service Training (staff development)

Item 9 of the questionnaire sought to find out whether or not an in-service training is organized for them. The result is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

In-Service Training for Pre-School Teachers Shama District

Training	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	170	85.0
No	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 9 indicate that majority of the pre-school teachers (85%) stated that in-service training is organized for them to equip them with pedagogy. This implies that majority of the pre-school teachers know and understand the principles of child learning. This is however not in agreement with what Education International (2010) stated in their study that staff development is considered to be of low quality, and more focused on in-service training. Generally, in-service training and professional development tend to be fairly short, if they are offered at all.

Analysis of Main Data

Research Question 1

“What is Pre-School Teachers’ Perception of the Challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to teaching strategies?”

It is known that perception of something informs behaviour towards it. Research Question One sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to teaching strategies. The result is presented in Table 10

Table 10

Challenges with Respect to Teaching Strategies

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Poor teaching strategies	45	22.5	68	34.0	68	34.0	19	9.5	200
Poor school organization	35	17.5	85	42.5	62	31.0	18	9.0	200	100.0
Inadequate supervision	30	15.0	67	33.5	70	35.0	33	16.5	200	100.0
Inappropriate methods	50	25.0	63	31.5	52	26.0	35	17.5	100	100.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Data presented in Table 10 indicates that most pre-schools within the Shama District do not apply good teaching strategies. Also, the activities of the majority of the schools are poorly organized, and most of the schools do not tailor their teaching strategies to the age of the children. However, they have adequate supervision. These assertions were made from the responses of

the pre-school teachers to the items that sought to find out the challenges they face when it comes to teaching strategies. From the table, 68(34.4%) and 45(22.5%) indicated that poor teaching strategy was “challenging” and “strongly challenging” respectively. Also, 85(42.5%) and 35(17.5%) of the teachers revealed that improper organization of the school’s activities was “challenging” and “strongly challenging” respectively. Moreover, 63(31.5%) and 50(25%) of the teachers stated that teaching strategies were not tailored to the age of the children were “challenging” and “strongly challenging” respectively. A study conducted by Palmer (1966), whose findings were similar to the findings of the present study, emphasized that Pre-schools organisation and supervision are poor; methods used are generally suitable for a particular age group. Also most methods used at the primary schools are used at the pre-school level. It was further supported by Education International (2010) that methods used at the primary schools are used at the pre-school level.

Research Question 2

“What is Pre-School Teachers’ Perception of the Challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to teaching aids?”

Research Question two sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to teaching aids. The result is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Challenges Regarding Teaching Aids

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Inadequate picture cards	64	32.0	78	39.0	43	21.5	15
Inadequate number cards	56	28	73	36.5	52	26	19	9.5
Inadequate drawing cards	62	31.0	68	34.0	48	24.0	22	11.0
Inadequate crayons	44	22.0	58	29.0	63	31.5	35	17.5
Inadequate sand tray	56	28.0	78	39.0	38	19.0	28	14.0
Inadequate picture books	46	23.0	71	35.5	61	30.5	22	11.0
Inadequate slates	37	18.5	73	36.5	45	22.5	45	22.5
Inadequate alphabetic cards	47	23.5	64	32.0	54	27.0	35	17.5

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 11 indicates that a number of pre-schools in the Shama District do not have adequate number of picture cards, number cards, drawing cards, sand tray, picture books, slates and alphabetic cards. These challenges can impede smooth and effective learning in these schools. With regard to the number of crayons available for use by the children, however, majority of the schools have adequate number of them. This finding is in

support with that of Education International (2010), that the challenges pre-schools especially in the rural areas face are poor infrastructure, inadequate and inappropriate furniture and toys and play equipment.

Tassoni et al. (1999) also stated that as part of the smooth running of any preschool setting, it is important that there is a constant, adequate and regular supply of equipment and materials for effective teaching and learning.

Research Question 3

“What is Pre-School Teachers’ Perception of the Challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to Staffing?”

Research Question three sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to Staffing. The result is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: *Challenges with Regard to Staffing*

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Inadequate staff	33	16.5	55	27.5	61	30.5	51	25.5
Untrained teachers	42	21.0	60	30.0	46	23.0	52	26.0
Lack of teaching assistants	52	26.0	73	36.5	38	19.0	37	18.5
Lack of trained cooks	86	43.0	52	26.0	30	15.0	32	16.0
Lack of school doctor/nurse	109	54.5	45	22.5	24	12.0	22	11.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 12 show that majority of the schools in the Shama District have adequate staff which means that staffing is not a challenge to the

pre-school teachers. However, there are more untrained teachers compared to trained teachers. Also, there is lack of teaching assistants in most of the schools. As a result, the teachers teach and also attend to the children's needs. A report by Education International (2010) indicated that Ghana Education pre-school unit, proprietors and managers were untrained professionally including ancillary staff such as cooks. According to them, this state of affairs gives a gloomy picture to the pre-school education in Ghana. Pre-school stage is the most critical period of a child's life and needs well qualified teachers to handle them professionally and effectively. In Ghana however, most pre-school teachers and attendants are not professionally trained. A large number of pre-school teachers have low academic qualification.

Research Question 4

“What is Pre-School Teachers’ Perception of the Challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to Social Environment?”

Research Question four sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to Social Environment. The result is presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Social Environment Challenges

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Cooperation with colleagues	39	19.5	40	20.0	68	34.0	53
Inadequacy of classroom materials	65	32.5	77	38.5	41	20.5	17	8.5
Cooperation with the school's head	26	13.0	41	20.5	67	33.5	66	33.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 14 indicate that there exists cordial relationship between school heads and the teachers as well as among the teachers themselves. This means that there is high degree of harmony in the schools. However, most of the schools do not have adequate classroom materials. The inadequate classroom materials could greatly hinder the achievement of successful classroom learning.

Research Question 5

“What is Pre-School Teachers’ Perception of the Challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to Equipment/Furniture?”

Research Question five sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to Social Environment. The result is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Challenges in Relation to Equipment/Furniture

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Seesaw	103	51.5	45	22.5	32	16.0	20
Merry-go-round	94	47.0	54	27.0	31	15.5	21	10.5
Car tyres	93	46.5	54	27.0	32	16.0	21	10.5
Balls	69	34.5	51	25.5	49	24.5	31	15.5
Swingers	96	48.0	54	27.0	38	19.0	12	6.0
Slides	90	45	59	29.5	28	14	23	11.5
Toys	76	38	58	29.0	43	21.5	23	11.5
Jigsaw puzzles	69	34.5	65	32.5	39	19.5	27	13.5
Lego	73	36.5	57	28.5	46	23.0	24	12.0
Bottle tops	45	22.5	68	34.0	55	27.5	32	16.0
Hand wash basin	39	19.5	67	33.5	54	27.0	40	20.0
Beds	40	20.0	56	28.0	72	36.0	32	16.0
Litter bins	51	25.5	64	32.0	50	25.0	35	17.5
Furniture	49	24.5	56	28.0	67	33.5	28	14.0
First aid box	41	20.5	56	28.0	60	30.0	43	21.5
Towel	32	16.0	47	23.5	83	41.5	38	19.0
Drinking cups	21	10.5	55	27.5	75	37.5	49	24.5

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 15 indicate that the pre-school teachers in the Shama Districts are faced with the challenge of insufficient number of seesaw, merry-go-round, car tyres, balls, swingers, slides, toys, jigsaw puzzles, lego, bottle tops, hand wash basin, and litter bins. Conversely, beds, furniture, first aid box, towel and drinking cups are not a challenge to the pre-school teachers. This was indicated in the study conducted by Education International

(2010) that most of the pre-schools especially in the rural areas face the challenge of poor infrastructure, inadequate and inappropriate furniture, toys and play equipment. They further said most also operate under trees, sheds, bamboo structures, old cocoa sheds and chapels. Some private schools in urban centers also operates in garages and in homes where there are little or inadequate spaces. Another problem most of the pre-schools especially in the rural areas face are poor infrastructure, inadequate and inappropriate furniture, toys and play equipment. Most also operate under trees, sheds, bamboo structures, old cocoa sheds and chapels. Some private schools in urban centers also operates in garages and in homes where there are little or inadequate spaces. There is a problem of overcrowding in these centers. They lack urinal and toilet facilities as well as lack kitchen facilities (National Workshop report on promotion of ECCD 1988).

Clayton (2001) also indicated that a child centered preschool environment must be planned around physical features such as a child-size furniture and age-appropriate learning materials and toys and thoughtfully arranged. The provision of age-appropriate equipment and materials would enable the preschoolers develop physically, cognitively and socially.

Research Question 6

“What is pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District with regards to performances of P.T.A, SMC, Community, and the Government?”

Research Question six sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with

regards to the Performance of PTA, SMC, Community, and the Government.

The result is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Challenges with Regardsto the Performance of PTA, SMC, Community and the Government

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	P.T.A	33	16.5	52	26.0	76	38.0	39
S.M.C	37	18.5	59	29.5	73	36.5	31	15.5
Community support	69	34.5	69	34.5	43	21.5	19	9.5
Small Salary	78	39.0	70	35.0	29	14.5	23	11.5
Late payment of salaries	68	34	65	32.5	39	19.5	28	14.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 16 show that the PTA and SMC of the schools have been doing well in terms of support to the pre-schools in the Shama District. However, the support from the community cannot be said to be the best as most of the pre-schools indicated community support was a challenge. Small salary was also found to be a great challenge to the pre-school teachers. In addition to poor salary for their work, it was also found that the pre-school teachers are faced with the challenge of late payment of salary. In a study conducted by Education International (2010) it was found out that workers in early childhood education tend to be underpaid and earn (much) lower salaries compared to teachers at the primary level or higher.

Research Question 7

“What is pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in Shama District with regards to infrastructure/facilities?”

Research Question seven sought to determine the perception of pre-school teachers regarding the challenges they face in the Shama District with regards to infrastructure/facilities. The result is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Infrastructural/facilitiesChallenges

Item	Strongly Challenging		Challenging		Unchallenging		Strongly Unchallenging	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Poor infrastructure	66	33.0	65	32.5	48	24.0	21	10.5
Inadequate classrooms	66	33.0	65	32.5	37	18.5	32	16.0
Inadequate spaces in the classrooms	65	32.5	56	28.0	52	26.0	27	13.5
Overcrowding	67	33.5	60	30.0	33	16.5	40	20.0
Lack of toilet/urinal	61	30.5	52	26.0	52	26.0	35	17.5
Lack of kitchen	61	30.5	54	27.0	51	25.5	34	17.0
Small play ground	47	23.5	66	33.0	51	25.5	34	17.0
Lack of store room	45	22.5	56	28.0	65	32.5	34	17.0

Source: Field Data, 2015

Table 16 reveals that poor infrastructure, inadequate classrooms, inadequate spaces in the classrooms, overcrowding, lack of toilet/ urinal facilities, lack of

kitchen, small playground, and lack of store room are all challenges to pre-school teachers in the Shama District. The results imply that challenges of poor infrastructure cut across all the pre-schools in the Shama District. Most also operate under trees, sheds, bamboo structures, old cocoa sheds and chapels. Some private schools in urban centres also operates in garages and in homes where there are little or inadequate spaces. There is a problem of overcrowding in these centers. They lack urinal and toilet facilities as well as lack kitchen facilities (National Workshop report on promotion of ECCD, 1988). In early childhood education, adequate infrastructure is crucial to provide high quality education because infrastructure, within a complex system, serves as a foundation for the rest (Azzi-Lessing, 2009). A school without a proper infrastructure opens the doors to other challenges.**Hypotheses Testing**

In order to further examine how pre-school teachers perceive the challenges they face in Shama District, eight hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Hypothesis One

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on gender.”

Hypothesis onesought to compare the perception of male and female pre-school teachers’ regarding their perceptions of the challenges they face in the Shama District. The results from the analysis are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Independent Samples t-test Results Comparing Pre-school Teachers' Perception of Challenges facing Pre-School Education on Various Factors on the Basis of Gender

Challenge	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p
Teaching strategies	Male	17	9.76	3.56	198	-.897	.382
	Female	183	10.56	2.49			
Teaching Aids	Male	17	21.00	5.36	198	-.673	.502
	Female	183	21.90	5.31			
Staffing	Male	17	13.29	3.82	198	-.479	.633
	Female	183	13.71	3.39			
Social Environment	Male	17	6.82	2.01	198	-1.131	.260
	Female	183	7.46	2.26			
Equipment/ Furniture	Male	17	44.94	11.94	198	-.806	.421
	Female	183	47.28	11.39			
Performance	Male	17	13.52	3.79	198	-.237	.813
	Female	183	13.74	3.53			
Facilities	Male	17	20.59	6.88	198	-.903	.368
	Female	183	21.97	5.97			

Source: Field Data, 2015

The analysis shown in Table 17 indicates that there was no significant difference in scores for male and female pre-school teachers on the various challenges. From the table, the mean values for males and females regarding the various challenges facing the pre-school education system in the Shama were almost the same. Although, there were some differences, those differences were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance.

This implies that gender does not have any influence on pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education. In other words, male and female pre-school teachers perceive the challenges facing pre-school education in the same way.

Hypothesis Two

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on age.”

Hypothesis Two sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District based on their age. The results from the analysis are presented in Table 18

Table 18

Results of One Way ANOVA Comparing Pre-school Teachers' Perception of Challenges Facing Pre-School Education on the Basis of their Age

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	3.712	4	.928	.135	.969
	Within Groups	1342.268	195	6.883		
	Total	1345.980	199	34.5889	1.234	.298
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	138.354	4	28.020		
	Within Groups	5463.866	195			
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	127.947	4	31.987	2.830*	.026
	Within Groups	2203.928	195	11.302		
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social Environment	Between Groups	48.452	4	12.113	2.492*	.044
	Within Groups	947.928	195	4.861		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	865.160	4	216.290	1.680	.156
	Within Groups	25111.560	195	128.777		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	104.717	4	26.179	2.135	.078
	Within Groups	2391.158	195	12.262		
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between Groups	172.928	4	43.232	1.187	1.187
	Within Groups	7099.867	195	36.410		
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

The results of ANOVA presented in Table 18 indicates that on the basis of age, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regard to teaching aids, teaching strategies, equipment, performance and facilities. However, significant differences were found in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regardsto staffing and social environment. Thus [F(4, 195) =2.830, p< .05 for staffing, and F(4, 194) = 2.492, p<.05)] for social environment . In other words, when teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of staffing and social environment, significant differences exists.

Since there was a significant difference found in the ANOVA results presented in Table 21 on the basis of staffing and social environment, it became necessary to discover the direction or source of the significant differences. The method used for this was the Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis. The Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis are presented in Tables19 and 20 for staffing and social environment respectively.

Table 19

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test on Staffing

Age Range	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Above 40	11	10.7273	
35-40	23	13.0435	13.0435
25-30	77		13.7532
20-24	74		14.0405
31-34	15		

Source: Field Data, 2015

It can be seen from the results in Table 19 that the “Above 40” age group had a mean of 10.7273, which was significantly smaller than the mean of each of the other age groups that ranged from 13.0435 to 14.6000. Hence, the “Above 40” age group was the source of the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results of Table 18.

Table 20

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Test on Social Environment

Age Range	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Above 40	11	6.1818	
35-40	23	7.1652	7.1652
25-30	77	7.3896	7.3896
20-24	74	7.7297	7.7297
31-34	15		8.1333

Source: Field Data, 2015

It can be seen from the results in Table 20 that apart from the “Above 40” age range which had significantly lower mean of 6.1818, all the other age groups had similar means that range from 7.1652 to 8.1333. Hence, the “Above 40” age group was the source of the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results in Table 18.

Hypothesis three

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on teaching qualification.”

Hypothesis Three sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on their teaching qualification. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 21.

Table 21
Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-School Teachers' Perception of Challenges Facing Pre-School Education on the basis of their Teaching Qualification

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	15.298	4	3.825	.560	.692
	Within Groups	1330.682	195	6.824		
	Total		199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	72.779	4	18.195	.642	.633
	Within Groups	5529.441	195	28.356		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	101.286	4	25.322	2.214	.069
	Within Groups	2230.589	199	11.439		
	Total	2331.875				
Social Environment	Between Groups	15.843	4	3.961	.788	.534
	Within Groups	980.537	195	5.928		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	1481.539	4	370.385	2.949*	.021
	Within Groups	24495.181	195	125.616		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	24.060	4	6.015	.475	.754
	Within Groups	2471.815	195	12.676		
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between Groups		4	39.449	1.081	.367
	Within Groups		195	36.487		
	Total		199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

*Sig, $p < 0.05$

Results from Table 21 indicate that on the basis of the highest level of educational qualification, there was no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on teaching strategies, teaching aids, staffing, social environment, performance, and infrastructure facilities. Notwithstanding, there was a statistically significant differences in the pre-school teachers' perception based on equipment or furniture: $F(4, 195) = 2.949, p < .05$. In other words, if teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of equipment, a significant difference exists. This goes to confirm a study conducted by Education International (2010) that early childhood education in Ghana lacks good infrastructure in most rural areas, and disadvantaged urban communities.

Since there was a significant difference in the ANOVA results of Table 21 on the basis of equipment/ furniture, it became necessary to carry out a Post-Hoc analysis on the mean values of the Teacher Qualification to find out the source of the difference. The method used for this test was the Tukey HSD. The results from the Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test are presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis on Equipment / Furniture

Highest Level of Teaching Qualification	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05t
		1
Teacher Cert. 'A'	19	40.4737
Degree in Education	12	43.5833
GCE 'A'	4	46.0000
MSLC/GCE 'O'/SSCE	55	46.1455
Diploma in Education	110	49.1091

Source: Field Data, 2015

It can be seen that the only mean values that were close to each other were those of GCE 'A' (Mean=46.0000) and MSLC/GCE 'O'/SSCE (Mean=46.1455). Apart from these two, all the other means were significantly different from one another and so each of them contributed to the significant difference observed in the ANOVA results in Table 24.

Hypothesis Four

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the department they graduated from.”

Hypothesis Four sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on the department they graduated from. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-School Teachers' Perception of Challenges Facing Pre-School Education on the Basis of the Department they Graduated From

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	21.358	3	7.119	1.053	.370
	Within Groups	1324.622	196	6.768		
	Total	1345.980	199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	148.579	3	49.526	1.780	.152
	Within Groups	5453.641	196	27.825		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	61.545	3	20.515	1.771	.154
	Within Groups	2270.330	196			
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social Environment	Between Groups	23.560	3	11.583	1.582	.195
	Within Groups	972.820	196	7.853		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	77.304	3	25.768	.195	.900
	Within Groups	25988.416	196	132.140		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	40.355	3	13.452	1.074	.361
	Within Groups	2455.520	196			
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between Groups	195.628	3	65.209	1.806	.147
	Within Groups	7077.167	196	36.108		
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 23 reveal that there was no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education on the basis of the department that one graduated from. In other words, the department that teachers graduated from does not have any

effects on a teacher's perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District.

In a study conducted by Hyson, Morris and Tomlinson (2009), the researchers mentioned the significance of having a degree in early childhood education; however, they did not make a comparison among teachers based on the name of the degree obtained. For them, the quality of the program is more critical than the degree itself, because they added that degree alone does not guarantee teacher competence.

Notwithstanding this, Sean (1987) identified the need of kindergarten teachers having professional knowledge in child language development, emergent literacy and the skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing children's literature.

Hypothesis Five

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the number of years they have been working at the pre-school level.”

Hypothesis Five sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on the number of years that they have been working at the pre-school level. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 24.

Table 24
Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-School Teachers' Perception on the Basis of the Number of Years Working at Pre-school Level

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	18.274	3	6.091	.899	.443
	Within Groups	1327.706	196	6.774		
	Total	1345.980	199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	31.242	3	10.414	.366	.777
	Within Groups	5570.978	196	28.423		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	98.497	3	32.832	2.881	.037
	Within Groups	2233.378	196	11.395		
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social Environment	Between Groups	20.523	3	6.841	1.374	.252
	Within Groups	975.857	196	4.979		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	623.653	3	207.884	1.607	.189
	Within Groups	25353.067	196	129.352		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	47.686	3	15.895	1.273	.285
	Within Groups					

	Within	2448.189	196	12.491		
	Groups					
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between	122.261	3	40.754	1.117	.343
	Groups					
	Within	7150.534	196	36.482		
	Groups					
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

*sig, $p < 0.05$

The results of ANOVA presented in Table 24 indicate that on the basis of the number of years that a teacher has been working at the pre-school level, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on teaching aids, teaching strategies, equipment, social environment, performance and facilities.

However, significant differences were found in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on staffing: $F(4, 196 \text{ df}) = 2.881, p < .05$. In other words, if teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of staffing, a significant difference exists. Since there was a significant difference found in the ANOVA results presented in Table 27 on the basis of staffing, it became necessary to discover the direction or source of the that significant differences. The method for this was the Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis. The results from the Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test on Staffing

Number of years worked	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Above 10 years	19	11.7895	
3-5 years	47	13.2766	13.2766
2 years or more	30	13.9000	13.9000
3-5 years	104		14.1346

Source: Field Data, 2015

It can be seen that the mean of above 10 years group was significantly different from each of the means from the other groups (13.2766, 13.9000, and 14.1346). Hence, the above 10 years group caused the significant difference observed in the ANOVA result of Table 24.

Hypothesis six

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the number of pupils in their class.”

Hypothesis six sought to determine whether or not there is a significant difference in pre-schools teachers’ perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on class size. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 26.

Table 26
Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-School Teachers' Perception on the Basis of the Number of Pupils in their Class

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	17.476	3	5.825	.859	.463
	Within Groups	1328.504	196	6.778		
	Total	1345.980	199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	83.558	3	27.853	.989	.399
	Within Groups	5518.662	196	28.156		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	4.412	3	1.471	.124	.946
	Within Groups	2327.463	196	11.875		
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social Environment	Between Groups	11.993	3	3.998	.796	.497
	Within Groups	984.387	196	5.022		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	1091.246	3	363.749	2.865*	.038
	Within Groups	24885.474	196	126.967		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	86.647	3	28.882	2.350	.074
	Within Groups	2409.228	196	12.292		
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between Groups	371.453	3	123.818	3.516*	.026
	Within Groups	6901.342	196	35.211		
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

Sig, $p < 0.05$

The results from the ANOVA presented in Table 26 indicates that on the basis of the number of pupils in a class, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on teaching aids, teaching strategies, social environment, staffing, and performance. However, significant differences were found in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on equipment /Furniture and Infrastructural/ facilities, thus $[F(3, 196) = 2.865, p < .05$ for equipment, and $F(3, 196) = 3.516, p < .05$ for facilities]. In other words, if teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of equipment/ furniture and infrastructure/ facilities, a significant differences exists. This confirms a study by Education International (2010) that in Ghana, child-teacher ratios are approximately 34 children per teacher. Child-teacher ratios are another indicator of the quality of early childhood education, in terms of whether children receive enough attention and stimulation.

Since significant differences were found in the ANOVA results presented in Table 26 on the basis of equipment and facilities, it became necessary to discover the direction or source of that significant difference. The method for this was the Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis. The results from the Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis are presented in Tables 27 and 28 for equipment and facilities respectively.

Table 27

Tukey HSD Post Hoc Analysis on Equipment / Furniture

Number of pupils	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	
30 or less	92	45.5000	
31-40	43	45.9535	
41-50	30	48.0333	
Above 50	35	51.8000	

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 27 indicate that each of the groups caused a significant difference. In other words the mean values for all the groups were significantly different from each other. However, the mean values for 30 years or less (mean=45.50), and 31-40 (mean=45.95) groups were close to each other.

Table 28

Turkey HSD Post Hoc Analysis on Facilities

Number of pupils	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
30 or less	43	20.6977	
31-40	92	21.4022	
41-50	30	21.5333	
Above 50	35		24.7429

Source: Field Data, 2015

Result from Table 28 indicate that the mean values for class size 30 or less (mean=20.67), 31-40 (mean=21.40), and 41-50(mean=21.53) were similar but they were all significantly different from the mean value of 24.74 for above 50 class size group. Hence, the above 50 years group caused the

significant difference in the pre-school teachers' perception on the basis of the number of people in the class.

Hypothesis seven

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the class they teach.”

Hypothesis Seven sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on the class the teachers teach. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 28.

Table 29

Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-school Teachers' Perception of Challenges facing Pre-school Education on the Basis of the Class that a Teacher Teaches

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	.110	2	.055	.008	.992
	Within Groups	1345.870	197	6.832		
	Total	1345.980	199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	60.364	2	30.182	1.073	.344
	Within Groups	5541.856	197	28.131		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	16.082	2	8.041	.684	.506
	Within Groups	2315.793	197	11.755		
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social Environment	Between Groups	41.932	2	20.966	4.327*	.014
	Within Groups	954.448	197	4.845		
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between Groups	452.195	2	226.098	1.745	.177
	Within Groups	25524.525	197	129.566		
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between Groups	35.052	2	17.526		
	Within Groups	2460.823	197	12.491		
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between Groups	18.181	2	9.091	.247	.781
	Within Groups	7254.614	197	36.825		
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

*sig, p<0.05

Results from Table 29 indicate that on the basis of the class that a pre-school teacher teaches, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on teaching aids, teaching strategies, equipment, performance and facilities. However, significant differences were found in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on social environment: $F(2, 197 \text{ df}) = 4.237$ $p < .050$. In other words, if teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of social environment, a significant difference exists.

Since there was a significant difference found in the ANOVA results presented in Table 32 on the basis of social environment, it became necessary to discover the direction or source of the that significant difference. The method for this was the Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis. The results from the Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis are presented in Table 29.

Table 30

Tukey Hsd Post-Hoc Test on Social Environment

CLASS	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
		1
KG 2	80	6.8500
Nursery	17	7.7059
KG 1	103	7.7961

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 30 indicate that mean values for pre-school teachers who teach at the Nursery and KG 1 level are almost the same, thus 7.7059 and 7.7961 for Nursery and KG 1 respectively. However, the mean value for the pre-school teachers who teach at KG 2 is significantly lower.

Hence, KG 2 group caused the significant difference in the teachers' perception facing the pre-school education system.

Hypothesis Eight

“There is no statistically significant difference in pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education based on the ownership of the school.”

Hypothesis Eight sought to determine whether or not there is a statistically significant difference in pre-schools teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system in the Shama District based on the ownership of the school. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 30.

Table 31

Results of One Way Analysis of Variance Test Comparing Pre-School Teachers' Perception of Challenges facing Pre-school Education on the Basis of the Ownership of the School

Challenge	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Teaching strategies	Between Groups	2.607	3	.869	.127	.944
	Within Groups	1343.373	196	6.854		
	Total	1345.980	199			
Teaching Aids	Between Groups	403.676	3	134.559	5.073*	.002
	Within Groups	5198.544	196	26.523		
	Total	5602.220	199			
Staffing	Between Groups	10.564	3	3.521	.297	.827
	Within Groups	2321.311	196	11.843		

	Groups					
	Total	2331.875	199			
Social	Between	4.707	3	1.569	.310	.818
Environment	Groups					
	Within	991.673	196	5.060		
	Groups					
	Total	996.380	199			
Equipment/ Furniture	Between	2165.614	3	721.871	5.942*	.001
	Groups					
	Within	23811.106	196	121.485		
	Groups					
	Total	25976.720	199			
Performance	Between	152.058	3	50.686	4.239*	.006
	Groups					
	Within	2343.817	196	11.958		
	Groups					
	Total	2495.875	199			
Facilities	Between	102.943	3	34.314	.938	.423
	Groups					
	Within	7169.852	196	36.581		
	Groups					
	Total	7272.795	199			

Source: Field Data, 2015

*sig, $p < 0.05$

The findings of this analysis presented in Table 30 indicates that on the basis of ownership of a school, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regard to teaching strategies, social environment and facilities. However, based on ownership of the pre-school, significant differences were found in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regard to teaching aids, equipment and performance: $[F(3, 196 \text{ df}) = 5.073, p < .05]$ for staffing, $F(3, 196 \text{ df}) = 5.942, p < .05$ for equipment, and $F(3, 196 \text{ df}) = 4.239, p < .05$

for performance)]. In other words, teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education, considered on the basis of staffing and social environment, significant differences exist. This is supported by a study conducted by Education International (2010), the research states that's "In Ghana, 75 percent of services for the 0-3 year age group (nurseries and crèches) are provided by the private sector. Moreover, in developing countries in particular, international agencies, NGOs, faith-based organisations, local communities and private institutions are often involved in the organisation, provision and funding of early childhood education services and in private ECE services, the costs are often borne entirely by parents".

Since significant differences were found in the ANOVA results presented in Table 30 on the basis of teaching aids, equipment, and performance, it became necessary to discover the direction or source of the significant differences. The method for this was the Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Analysis. The results from the Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis are presented in Tables 32, 33, and 34.

Table 32

Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test on Teaching Aids

Ownership of school	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Community	5	15.2000	
Church	13	19.4615	19.4615
Individuals	23	20.3478	20.3478
Government	159		22.4465

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 32 show that the mean values for church and for individuals were close to each other (cf. 19.4615 and 20.3478). However, the means for community and Government were each significantly different from these. Hence, community and Government means were the sources of significant differences observed in the ANOVA results of Table 31.

Table 33

Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test on Equipment

Ownership of school	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Community	5	34.2000	
Church	13	38.6923	38.6923
Individuals	23	44.9130	44.9130
Government	159		48.48.4843

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 32 show that the mean values for the various forms of ownership are different from one another. In other words, a mean value of 34.20, 38.69, 44.91, and 48.48 were recorded for community, church, individual, and government owned schools respectively. Hence, they all contributed to the significant difference in the pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education system on the basis of equipment.

Table 34

Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Test on Performance

Ownership of school	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Community	5	9.0000	
Church	13		13.0769
Government	159		13.7484
Individuals	23		14.9565

Source: Field Data, 2015

Results from Table 34 indicate that community owned pre-school teachers group caused the significant difference in the perception of the teachers of the challenges facing the pre-school education system on the basis of performance noted in the ANOVA results of Table 31. In other words, the mean value for the community owned pre-school teachers (Mean=9.00) was significantly lower than that of church (Mean=13.08), government (Mean=13.75), and individuals (Mean=14.96) ownership schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the previous chapter, the results obtained were presented and discussed. This final chapter summarizes the findings and conclusions of the study. It also offers some recommendations.

Summary

The aim of the study was to examine the Pre-school teachers' perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in the Shama District. In order to achieve this aim, an in-depth portrayal of the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, significance of the study as well as a comprehensive literature review was done.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving pre-school teachers in the Shama District. The simple random sampling procedure was used to select 40 out of the 82 pre-schools from the five circuits in the district. The study adopted questionnaire as the instrument. It was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 18). The study revealed that most pre-schools within the Shama District have positive perception of the challenges facing pre-school education even though there are negative ones.

Summary of Findings

The study revealed that most pre-schools within the Shama District do not apply good teaching strategies. Also, the activities of the majority of the schools are poorly organized, and most of the schools do not tailor their teaching strategies to the age of the children. However, they have adequate supervision.

Also, the study shows that a number of pre-schools in the Shama District do not have adequate number of picture cards, number cards, drawing cards, sand tray, picture books, slates and alphabetic cards. Majority of the schools in the Shama District have adequate staff which means that staffing is not a challenge to the pre-school teachers. However, there are more untrained teachers compared to trained teachers. Also, there is lack of teaching assistants in most of the schools. As a result, the teachers teach and also attend to the children's needs.

Pre-school teachers in the Shama Districts indicated they are faced with the challenge of insufficient number of seesaw, merry-go-round, car tyres, balls, swingers, slides, toys, jigsaw puzzles, lego, bottle tops, hand wash basin, and litter bins. The study revealed that poor infrastructure, inadequate classrooms, inadequate spaces in the classrooms, overcrowding, lack of toilet/urinal facilities, lack of kitchen, small playground, and lack of store room are all challenges to pre-school teachers in the Shama District.

It evidently came out that, there was no statistically significant difference in preschool teachers' perception of on the challenges facing pre-school education based on gender, meaning both male and female pre-school teachers perceive the problem the same way. Based on Age, significant differences exist when teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of staffing and social environment. On the highest level of educational qualification, if teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education is considered on the basis of equipment, a significant difference exists.

There was no significant difference in preschool teachers' perception of on the challenges facing pre-school education based on the department that teachers graduated from. This means that the department that teachers graduated from does not have any effects on a teacher's perception of the challenges facing pre-school education in Shama District. If teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regards to the Number of years working at Pre-school Level, a significant difference exists on the basis of staffing.

Furthermore, there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on the based on the number of pupils in their class with regards to teaching aids, teaching strategies, social environment, staffing, and performance. However, significant differences were found on equipment /Furniture and Infrastructural/ facilities.

Again, there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education on the basis of the Class that a teacher teaches regarding teaching aids, teaching strategies, equipment, performance and facilities. However, significant differences were found on social environment.

On the ownership of the school, there was no significant difference in teachers' perception of challenges facing pre-school education with regard to teaching strategies, social environment and facilities. However, significant differences were found on teaching aids, equipment and performance.

Conclusion

As a result of the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most pre-schools within the Shama District do not apply good teaching strategies and this can have adverse effect in the future.
2. There are insufficient number of seesaw, merry-go-round, car tyres, balls, swingers, slides, toys, jigsaw puzzles, Lego, bottle tops, hand wash basins, and litter bins. These ought to be provided to ensure successful implementation of the Earlychildhood Education programme in the District.
3. Poor infrastructure is a challenge that cut across all the pre-schools in the District and this must be addressed since it can hinder teaching and learning.
4. Teaching and learning materials which are inadequate in the District can impede smooth and effective learning in schools.
5. Inadequate number of trained early childhood educators in the preschools for preschools in the District has created the avenue for more untrained teachers to be employed in the schools.
6. Activities should be well organised organized and developmentally appropriate practices should be used.
7. Parents need to adequately provide for their wards needs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. GES should organise in-service training for pre-school teachers to upgrade their pedagogical skills.
2. Headteachers in the District must identify other sources of funding with a view to assisting in purchasing teaching aids for their

schools. Lobbying with local and international organisations to donate modern textbooks and other learning resources to pre-schools could do this.

3. Teaching aids should be upgraded to meet the current standards.
4. Government should employ and recruit teaching assistants who will help pre-school teachers in handling and taking care of children.
5. In-service training must be organised for those who are already teaching but lack the requisite skills to handle young children.
6. The community, SMC and PTA must be encouraged to support teachers. This will go a long way to boost their moral as well as motivate them to put in their best to ensure effective teaching and learning.

Suggestions for Further Research

The current study is limited in scope because it was based on samples from only pre-schools in Shama District. To make the study more representative and the results generalisable for the whole country, there is the need to replicate this study among population groups using larger geographic areas.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on Teachers' Perception of the Challenges Facing Pre-School Education in Shama District, Western Region, Ghana

Dear Respondent,

Attached is a questionnaire designed to collect data on the teachers' perception of the challenges faced by pre-school education challenges in Shama District.

It is for research purpose only.

Your school is one of the schools chosen for the research. Any information given will be used purely for academic work. Additionally, all information you give will be treated as confidential. Therefore you do not need to write your name on the questionnaire.

Please supply appropriate answers to each of the following items. You can make a tick () where necessary.

SECTION A: PERSONAL RECORD

1. Gender Male () Female ()

2. Age..... (in years)

3. Which is your highest level of teaching qualification?

MSLC/GCE 'O' Level () GCE 'A' Level ()

Teacher Cert. 'A' () Diploma in Education ()

Degree in Education ()

4. Which department did you graduate from?

5. State the number of years you have been working at the pre-school level
6. Who owns your school?
 Government ()Community()Church()Individual ()
7. Which class do you teach?
8. How many pupils do you have in your class?.....
9. Have you had any training in early childhood education?
 Yes () No ()

SECTION B: CHALLENGES FACING YOUR SCHOOL

Instruction: Please indicate the degree/extent each of the following conditions is a challenge you face.

13. TEACHING STRATEGIES

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	Strongly Unchallenging
Poor teaching strategies				
Improper organisation of school activities				
Lack of supervision				
Teaching methods not tailored to age-				

groups needs				
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14. TEACHING AIDS

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	Strongly Unchallenging
Inadequate Picture cards				
Inadequate number cards				
Inadequate Drawing cards				
Inadequate Crayons				
Inadequate Sand tray				
Inadequate Picture books				
Inadequate Slates				
Inadequate Alphabets cards				

15. STAFFING

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	Strongly Unchallenging
Inadequate staff				
Untrained teachers				
Lack of teaching assistance				
Trained cooks				
School doctor/nurse				

16. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	
cooperation with colleagues				
Inadequacy in classroom materials				
cooperation with the school's head				

17. EQUIPMENT/ FURNITURE

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	Strongly Challenging
Seesaw				
Merry-go-round				
Car tyres				
Balls				
Swingers				
Slides				
Toys				
Jigsaw puzzles				
Lego				
Bottle tops				
Hand wash basin				
Beds				
Litter bins				
Furniture				
Firstaid box				
Towel				
Drinkingcups				

18. PERFORMANCE

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly challenging	challenging	unchallenging	Strongly challenging
P.T.A				
S.M.C				
Natives of community support to the school				
Small salary				
Late payment of salary				

19. INFRASTRUCTURE / FACILITIES

CHALLENGE	DEGREE OF THE CHALLENGE			
	Strongly Challenging	Challenging	Unchallenging	Strongly Unchallenging
Poor infrastructure				
Inadequate classrooms				
Inadequate spaces				
Overcrowding				
Lack of toilet/urinal facilities				
Lack of kitchen				
Small play ground				
Lack of Store room				