

Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of School Based Assessment in Public Junior Secondary Schools in Benin City, Edo State

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Abstract

The school-based assessment system is a holistic assessment system conducted in schools by subject teachers to assess the students' cognitive (intellect), affective (emotional and spiritual) and psychomotor (physical) aspects in line with Nigeria's Philosophy of Education. The study examined the factors influencing effective implementation of the school based assessment. The validity was carried out by three expert in the area of measurement and evaluation, the cronbach alpha technique was used to test the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The sample of the study consisted of 150 teachers in public junior secondary schools in Benin, Edo State. 14-item questionnaire on the factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment was used as instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while the hypothesis was tested with t-test at 0.05 alpha level. Results show that teachers' level of awareness of school based assessment, school management's attitude towards school based assessment and teachers' classroom management were among the factors considered to have negative influence on effective implementation of school based assessment in secondary schools in Benin metropolis. The study therefore, suggests effective monitoring of educational policy implementation and timely in-service training for all teachers

Keywords: School Based Assessment, Formative Assessment, Summative Assessment.

Introduction

Assessment plays a significant role in the educational development of a person and a nation. It is a means of quality control, determining the level of accountability displayed by stakeholders in the industry and also determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning and also finding out student achievement. It

is a vital tool for educational evaluation, thus its importance as a quality assurance tool cannot be overemphasized. Assessment is said to be continuous when it is regular, cumulative and comprehensive. The concept of assessment in the Nigerian context became officially operative since 1985, consequent upon the production of a manual for its implementation as a result of the implementation of the Nigerian National Policy on Education which was introduced in 1977.

Assessment is not merely testing (Osokoya, 2016); it is a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged (Mwebaza, 2010). In relation to school setting, Greaney (2011, pg22) defines assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude, or skills of the learner or group of learners. Thus, in the context of education, assessment can be defined as a predetermined process through which the quality of a student's performance in the three domains of educational objectives (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) is judged. Assessment of students' learning of curriculum contents in the area of knowledge, skills, and values is a major pre-occupation of many educational reforms. This is because results from such assessment not only provide feedback regarding the educational progress of students but remains the authentic yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of the teacher, the quality of instruction, and in part the functionality of any curriculum reform.

The Nigeria National Policy on Education, therefore, recommends a change in assessment practices and schools should put more emphasis on "Assessment for Learning" as an integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle (Adediwura, 2012). Assessment for learning helps teachers to identify students' achievement level. Teachers would be able to evaluate students immediately as students demonstrate their knowledge and skills during the assessment process. According to the Assessment Reform Group (2002), assessment for learning provides teachers with the opportunity to evaluate how much the students have learned and how effective the teaching methods were. As such, teachers should possess as much knowledge as possible, especially in aspects of the concept and the implementation policy. According to Shepard (2012), teachers should be able to rate assessment and teaching to make the teaching process more interesting and to enhance the students' learning outcome. A teacher who is knowledgeable about the assessment would have confidence in the system. He or she would subsequently display a positive attitude and would be willing to implement the concept. It was against this background that a school-based assessment (SBA) component was added to the Basic School Certificate Examination (BSCE) and the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

With the launch of the nine-year basic education in 1999, the School Based Assessment (SBA) was introduced at the lower, middle and upper basic levels of Nigeria education.

According to Yusuf (2014), school-based assessment provides a cumulative teacher judgment about the performance of individual students' work, based on a systematic collection of grades or marks. If used appropriately, school based assessment can serve as a monitoring device by feeding back the information collected to teachers to adjust their teaching and to students to improve their learning. In Ahmed & Williams' (2014) definition, school-based assessment contains the following features: a wide range of assessment tasks and skills, flexibility in assessment form (written or oral), and the use of open ended questions. From these descriptions, it can be seen that views about school-based assessment are different, probably due to the different purposes that school-based assessment is used for in different educational settings. In school-based assessment (SBA), assessment for both formative and summative purposes is integrated into the teaching and learning process, with teachers involved at all stages of the assessment cycle, from planning the assessment programme, to identifying and/or developing appropriate assessment tasks right through to making the final judgments. As assessments are conducted by the students' teacher in their own classroom, students are meant to play an active role in the assessment process, particularly through the use of self and/or peer assessment used in conjunction with formative teacher feedback (Davison, 2007). The system is criterion referenced and progressive, with teachers making a judgment on the quality of students' learning against a specified performance standard through collecting evidence of students' learning over a period of time and collating the evidence in a student portfolio (Maxwell, 2014).

Crook (2012) opined that from early childhood education to tertiary education, the responsibility of assessing individual students largely lies in the hands of their classroom teachers, except for the involvement of national examinations at the end of secondary education. The main purpose of school based assessment (SBA) is to enhance students' learning, provide feedback to parents and students, award senior secondary school qualifications, monitor overall nationwide educational standards, and identify learning needs to effectively allocate resources (Crooks, 2012). Among these various purposes, improving students' achievement is the first priority. School-Based Assessment (SBA) supplements external examinations, providing a more holistic and valid measurement of student abilities (Giddings, Hoftein & Lunetta, 2011). By assessing students on a broad range of objectives over an extended period, SBA removes many of the disadvantages of a 'one-shot' external examination. The

ongoing nature of school based assessment (SBA) also provides teachers with a formative view of the progress of individual students, and allows them to address more accurately the specific needs of their students. Despite such advantages, school-based assessment, like many other educational innovations, poses a number of problems to teachers and students. These include the possible increase in teacher workload, teachers' lack of expertise and confidence in undertaking the assessment tasks, and the undue pressure exerted on students through a large number of assessment activities.

Byabato and Kisamo (2014) investigated the implementation of school based Continuous Assessment (CA) in Tanzania Ordinary Secondary schools (O-level) and its implications on the quality of education. The results showed that the implementation of school based CA is not properly done; it is currently challenged by a number of serious problems such as lack of teachers' integrity (favouritism and inflation of marks), lack of uniformity in both the assessment tools used and procedures for CA recording and reporting. Othan, Salleh and Norani (2013), in their study, focused on teachers' readiness for the implementation of school based assessment (SBA) in the Malaysia Primary School Standard Curriculum. Teachers' readiness in the study was limited to four main aspects namely: teachers' understanding of SBA; teachers' ability to implement SBA; facilities given for SBA implementation; and time adequacy for SBA implementation. The result of the study showed that respondents have the readiness to implement SBA in the curriculum especially on the understanding of SBA; teachers' ability to implement SBA; and facilities given for SBA implementation.

Cheung and Yip (2014) looked at the particular situation of the teacher assessment scheme (TAS) for the advanced level practical Chemistry in Hong Kong and found out that Chemistry teachers were most concerned with workload, resources and support, moderation mechanism, student workload, difficulty in motivating students, and teacher collaboration. The root causes of these concerns are the large number of experiments required in Form 6 and Form 7, lack of support from the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority as well as the Curriculum Development Institute, reliance on theory marks to adjust TAS marks, the limited roles of group coordinators, and the narrow scope of assessment tasks included in the TAS. Bassey, Akpan, Ayang and Ifeji-Obetan (2013) in their study verified whether the best assessment practices of the teachers were influenced by teachers' characteristics. The results revealed that the assessment practices were not influenced by teacher's gender.

Statement of the Problem

School based assessment (SBA) gives all educational stakeholders, namely educators, parents, students and the community at large, the power to improve teaching and learning practices. The change in assessment in school has led to some challenges on teachers. Khairiah (2016) observed that teachers encountered problems completing the assessment according to schedule and ensuring the authenticity of assessment; hence leading to the question of whether the teachers are capable and have sufficient knowledge to carry out school based assessment (SBA). Another study by Chan, Sidhu & Md Rizal (2009) reported time constraint, increasing teacher work load, lack of knowledge, monitoring as well as supervision as obstacles to effective implementation of SBA. A study by Faizah (2011) echoed Chan et al. (2009) findings whereby the teachers are worried about several aspects of assessment including their abilities and roles to meet all the school based assessment (SBA) requirements.

Moreover, in Nigeria, there are major differences between the school based assessment (SBA) practices in primary schools and those in secondary schools, in the form of the feedback provided to students and the use of marks (Adediwura, 2012). In primary schools, teachers keep record of their observation and judgment of some of their pupils' work and provide feedback to them while the work is in progress. Usually, especially in the earlier years of primary schooling, no end-of-term or end-of-year grades or marks are given. By contrast, much of the feedback students receive in secondary schools comes along with formal marks or grades. A final mark or grade is given based on the accumulated and aggregated marks in a number of significant pieces of work (Crooks, 2012). In view of these, it is necessary to identify the factors responsible for the poor implementation of school based assessment. It has become necessary to embark on studies taking a perspective on the implementation at the school level with a focus on secondary teachers and students as the most important link in the implementation chain.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the factors influencing the effective implementation of school based assessment in the Senior Secondary Schools in Benin City, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. the factors that influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary School in Benin City, Nigeria;
2. roles of gender on the effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary Schools in Benin City, Nigeria.

Research Questions

To carry out this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. Does teachers' level of awareness of school based assessment (SBA) influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?
2. Does school management's attitude towards school based assessment (SBA) influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?
3. Does teachers' classroom management (SBA) influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?
4. Is there any difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

To guide this study, one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because only a part of the population will be studied and findings from this will be used to generalize for the entire population.

Population of the Study

The population for the study consisted of 876 public junior secondary school teachers in Benin metropolis, Benin City, Edo State. This population includes male and female teachers in the public junior secondary schools in Benin metropolis, Edo State. There are three Local Government Areas in Benin metropolis and they are Oredo, Ikpobah Okha and Egor Local Government Areas. There are 45 public secondary schools in the three Local Government Areas.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study was 150 teachers in the public secondary schools in Benin metropolis. Firstly, stratified random sampling technique was used; 5 public secondary school were randomly selected from each of the three Local Government Areas in Benin metropolis; secondly, simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 teachers from each of the fifteen selected public secondary schools in Benin metropolis.

Research Instrument

The instrument that was used to gather data is a 14-item scale designed by the researcher to measure the factors influencing the effectiveness of school based assessment in secondary schools in Benin metropolis. This questionnaire was divided into three sections of A, B and C. Section A contained items on demographic information such as, name of school and gender. Section B contained fifteen items that centers on the factors influencing the effectiveness of school based assessment in secondary schools. The items were designed in a 4-point Likert scale, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity is the extent to which a test fulfills the purpose for which it was designed and suitable to the group for which it was designed (Omorogiuwa, 2006). Validation was carried out on the questionnaire. To this end, three experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation modified the instrument by removing certain items that were not necessary and the recommended amendments were duly effected.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire was administered on 30 teachers who were not involved in the main study and the data obtained from the administration was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha technique and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The reliability coefficient was found to be internally consistent.

Administration of the Instrument

The instrument was administered on the teachers by the researcher. The questionnaire was collected immediately.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test analysis was used to test hypothesis one at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The analysis was done using SPSS version 22.0.

Results

Research Question One

Does teachers' level of awareness of school based assessment (SBA) influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Effect of teachers' level of awareness on school based assessment (SBA)

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
1	I have attended a workshop on SBA in the last six months	1.79	0.64	Negative
2	I have conducted a personal study on SBA	1.71	0.74	Negative
3	I have a good understanding of the procedures of SBA	1.89	0.75	Negative
4	Continuous assessment is synonymous with SBA	2.05	0.61	Negative
5	SBA enables better assessment of students' overall performance	1.79	0.69	Negative
	Teachers' Awareness	1.84	0.40	Negative

Criterion Mean = 2.5; N=150

Data in table 1 revealed a grand mean of 1.84 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5. This depicts that teachers' level of awareness of school based assessment is negative.

Research Question Two

Does the school managements' attitude towards school based assessment (SBA) influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Influence of school managements' attitude towards school based assessment (SBA)

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
6	School management provides materials needed for effective discharge of our duties	2.11	0.98	Negative
7	The materials provided are sufficient for carrying out SBA	1.95	0.77	Negative
8	School management monitors the implementation of SBA	2.49	1.01	Negative
9	Teachers are motivated by school management to implement SBA	2.04	0.97	Negative
10	Educational administrators often organize workshops for teachers on how to effectively practice SBA	2.31	1.00	Negative
	School managements' Attitude	2.18	00.62	Negative

Criterion Mean = 2.5; N=150

Data in Table 2 revealed a grand mean of 2.18 which is lower than the criterion mean of 2.5. This depicts that school managements' attitude towards school based assessment is negative.

Research Question Three

Does teachers' classroom management influence the effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Influence of teachers' classroom management on the effective implementation of school based assessment (SBA)

S/N	ITEMS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	DECISION
11	Overloaded classes affect my implementation of SBA	3.14	1.78	Positive
12	Heavy teaching workload affect my implementation of SBA	3.75	2.75	Positive
13	There is insufficient time to carryout school based assessment	3.42	1.01	Positive
14	Inflation of SBA marks and favouritism is practiced in my school	3.54	1.93	Positive
		3.46	1.87	Positive

Criterion Mean = 2.5; N=150

Data in Table 3 revealed a grand mean of 3.46 which is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. This depicts that overloaded classrooms, heavy teaching workload, insufficient time to carry out SBA and inflation of SBA and favouritism affects the effective implementation of school based assessment.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary schools

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Male	90	4.32	0.36	0.56	0.74
Female	60	4.30	0.29		

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table 4 showed that the male teachers' mean= 4.32; standard deviation= 0.36 and the female teachers' mean= 4.30; standard deviation= 0.29; t= 0.56 and

p-value= 0.74. Testing the hypothesis at the alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is greater than the alpha value, this shows that there is no significant difference; hence the null hypothesis is retained. Conclusively, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in senior secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Result in research question one showed that teachers' level of awareness of school based assessment is negative and this affects the effective implementation of school based assessment in the secondary schools in Benin metropolis. This finding is in consonance with the summations of Ruzlan, Arsaythamby & Harifaran (2015) who in their study on the implementation of school based assessment in Malaysia found that the respondents lacked the knowledge about SBA. The finding of this study also contrasts the findings of Nair, Setia, Samad, Zahri, Luqman, Vadeveloo & Ngah (2014) who found in their study that teachers had satisfactory knowledge of planning an SBA tailored lesson. It was also found in the study that the teachers showed satisfactory knowledge of developing SBA.

Results in research question two showed that school managements' attitude towards SBA is negative. This is in line with the findings of Owoyele & Kazeem (2011) who investigated school based assessment practices of teachers in Ogun State and found that teachers indicated the need for assistance on some assessment procedures such as: directing students to assess their own progress, skill of test construction and item development procedure. This finding is also in agreement with the findings of Aidarwati & Abdul (2013) who found that school management is the greatest factor that is influencing teachers' implementation of school based assessment.

Results in research question three showed that overloaded classrooms, heavy teaching workload, insufficient time to carry out SBA, inflation of SBA and favouritism do influence the effective implementation of school based assessment. The finding is in agreement with the findings of Byabato & Kisamo (2014) who investigated the implementation of school based continuous assessment in Tanzania ordinary secondary schools (O-level) and its implications on the quality of education. The results showed that the implementation of school based CA is not properly done; it is currently challenged by a number of serious problems such as lack of teachers' integrity (favouritism and inflation of marks), lack of uniformity in both the assessment tools used and procedures for CA recording and reporting.

Hypothesis one results showed that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors influencing effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Bassey, Akpan, Ayang & Iferi-Obetan (2013) who, in their study, verified whether the best assessment practices of the teachers were influenced by teachers' characteristics. The results revealed that the assessment practices were not influenced by teacher's gender.

Conclusion

Taking perspectives from the data analyses and the results generated, it is concluded that teachers' level of awareness on the implementation of SBA, school management, overloaded classrooms, heavy teaching workload, insufficient time to carry out SBA, inflation of SBA and favouritism are factors that influence the effective implementation of school based assessment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Seminars, workshops and training should be organized for teachers to enlighten them on the school based assessment principles, methods, procedures and relevance in the educational system.
2. School management should step up the monitoring and supervision of teachers in order to ensure strict adherence to the principle and procedures of school based assessment.
3. Teachers should be evaluated after training to ascertain that they are satisfactorily carrying out all they have learnt, as it relates to the procedure of school based assessment.

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