

SCHOOLS- BASED ASSESSMENT: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the relevance of schools based assessment: A case study of selected public junior secondary schools in Ikpoba - Okha Local Government Area. The study also sought to examine the relevance of using school assessment as a strategy for the evaluation of teaching and learning specifically. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population comprised the teachers in the 24 public junior secondary schools in Ikpoba - Okha Local Government area of Edo State. The simple random sampling method was used to select the sample. Sixty questionnaires were administered and the entire questionnaires were returned and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The results revealed that teachers have a good perception of school-based assessment, and their application was to a low degree. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that teachers should apply various assessment techniques in teaching of any subjects. School authorities should make it compulsory that all schools must be involved in school-based assessment; and teachers should be encouraged to employ varieties of evaluation instruments in the assessments of students.*

KEYWORDS: assessment, school - based assessment, performance, assessment techniques, curriculum

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important and significant developments in Nigerian educational system was the introduction of school-based Assessment (SBA). In Nigeria, educational planners and administrators are now more conscious than ever before of their role in the nationwide scheme of curriculum innovation. Not only have new courses been introduced and new contents injected into existing subjects, a fundamental change in the system of assessment of students' performance has also emerged through the formalization of School-based Assessment as a major component of evaluation process (Idowu & Esere, 2009).

School-based assessment is an effective classroom assessment which requires skills and practices as students react to achieve their immediate objectives, it is the basic need of the teacher to improve the standard of learning because they have greater responsibility to design quality assessment that aligns with the students learning outcome, (Mkpae & Obowu, 2017). Teachers have opportunity to continuously monitor their students and give constructive feedback to improve students' learning abilities. Based on the assessment outcomes, the teacher can make further decisions whether to continue on the topic or move on to a new topic, give

necessary help or send more academically challenged students to remedial classes (Brown, 2001).

By implication, every teacher from primary to secondary level of education should understand and practice School-based Assessment (SBA). The emphasis on school-based assessment is not limited to Nigeria alone; other African countries notably Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, and Liberia have observed that the existing practice (in most institution of learning) of basing the assessment of students work on final examination and one-short examination only is no longer tenable. The policy further points out that the first school leaving certificate will ultimately be abolished and primary school leaving certificate will be issued by the headmaster of individual school and will be based on continuous overall guidance-oriented assessment of students and not based on the results of a single final examination. This policy got entrenched in the earlier versions of the NPE (1981,1983, 1994, and 2004 Eds.). The assessment of learners' progress and achievement academically is an important task for teachers in school. It is an instrument for progressive evaluation of the changes in the behaviour of individual learners and for determining the learner's level of achievement in a particular subject (Ehiametalor,1990); presented to them from time to time, rather than wait till the end of the term or academic year.

School-based assessment has been variously labelled. It is also seen as continuous assessment, course work assessment or internal assessment. According to Vitello and Williamson (2017) an assessment is defined as internal when at least one of the processes of setting, administering and scoring a test are controlled by the student's learning institution. In a school setting, the first form of internal assessment to be introduced is the course work. The course work is to facilitate the assessment of positive achievement (Tatersall et al in Barrance, 2019) and also test skills which could not be assessed with examination (Elwood, 1999). Bullock, Bishop, Martin and Reid (2002) believed that school-based assessment will also help to engender learning benefits, by enhancing communication skills and encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning

Assessment has been described in several ways by different scholars. Assessment according to Okoro in Ifeanyiyeze and Aneke (2013) means an evaluation that uses collected data to estimate the quality of a programme. Ukwujie cited in Ukwujie and Okpara (2013), opined that when assessment is applied to education, it is an all-embracing term covering the situation in which some aspects of pupil's education are measured by the teacher and the success of their instructional practices. It is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about students' learning achievement. Nitko cited in Onuka & Adesina (2007), defined assessment as a process of obtaining information that is used for making decisions about students, curriculum, programmes, and educational policies. All the activities which teacher use to help students learn and judge their progress is known as assessment. Assessment of learning occurs at the end of a class, topic or academic year (Earl, 2003). The term assessment in its widest meaning denotes a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of students which are used to provide information to students and parents about the progress made in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. It also provides support to teachers to modify their instructions and learning activities of their students.

Osunde and Ethe, (2007) defined school-based assessment as an assessment practice that broadens and expands the form, mode, means and scope of assessment in the school in order to facilitate and enhance learning. According to Ahmed and Williams' (1994), school-based assessment contains the following features: a wide range of assessment tasks and skills assessed, 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 program, to identifying and/or developing appropriate assessment tasks right through to making the final judgements. Ukwujie and Opara (2013) defined school-based assessment as a comprehensive, systematic, continuous, diagnostic, and integrative teacher directed assessment procedure. School-based assessment is an assessment procedure for a more responsive and valid assessment of learning. It is part of the teaching process requiring increase in personal contact with and observation of learners. It is a way of obtaining information about learning progress (Obioma, Junaidu, & Ajagun 2013). School-based assessment is a monitoring device which feedback the information collected to teachers to adjust their teaching and improve students' learning skills. Its process contains important features with wide range of assessment tasks and skills assessed, flexible with open ended questions (Ahmed & William, 1994). These descriptions indicate that school-based assessment is quite different based on its purpose in the educational system.

School-based Assessment is a means whereby the teacher obtains information about knowledge gains, behavioural changes and other aspects of the development of learners. It involves the deliberate effort of the instructional process as well as the overall effort of school learning on the behaviour of students. Assessment covers all aspects of school experience both within and outside the classroom. It covers the cognitive as well as the affective and psychomotor aspects of learning.

All through school-based assessment, all students must be appraised based on their natural understanding, ability and readiness. According to Davidson (2007), teachers are encouraged to use various methods such as quiz, question and answer sessions, short writing, drama, and role play to assess students learning outcomes.

In Nigeria, continuous assessment or internal assessment has been included as part of the requirement for any certificate examination in Nigeria. It was introduced to compliment the scores of prospective students for the award of certificates. It is a term which emerged from a change in the conception of assessment as a tool for only identifying students for further education, training and employment, to one geared towards enhancing knowledge. It involves a combination of centralized and school-based assessment. This change of interest is consequent on education not yielding the desired results; products of schools were certified but lacked the wherewithal enhancement of learning for the individual. The introduction of school-based assessment should engender a positive attitude and not a laissez-faire behaviour. School-

based assessment was given great impetus by the National Policy on Education (2004) when it was indicated that it will constitute a part of all examinations.

According to Ughamadu, (1991) Western education came into Nigeria Policy on Education with twin assessment methods in the form of internal and external examinations. Internal examination includes all tests that are conducted from time to time in schools. These tests were conducted firmly at the end of the school year and were used continually for the promotion of students from one class to another or from one level to another. Also, the internal system of assessment is to prepare the student for external examination purposes. External examinations on the other hand are those conducted by external bodies and agencies that had no hand in teaching the students. These bodies include the Ministry of Education, West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Board (NABTEB) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). The old system was found to be full of weakness because it concentrated on one aspect of human development which is cognitive domains.

The interest of school-based assessment is a shift from teaching for examination to teaching for acquisition of knowledge and understanding. It is expected to expand the form, the mode and the scope of the assessment in schools to facilitate and enhance learning (Osunde 2008). The implementation calls for the utilization of assignments, projects, practical work, group work, and the conventional assessment techniques, otherwise called authentic techniques. Unfortunately, the implementation has been described as a caricature (Afemikhe 1989, 1990, &2000) because of the shoddy nature in which it has been implemented in Nigeria.

There are good number of characteristics which distinguishes school-based assessment from other forms of assessment. For instance, school-based assessment requires teachers to plan assessment programme, identify appropriate assessment tests for students and be involved in making judgments. School-based assessment allows for the collection of samples of student's performance over a period of time. It can also be adopted and modified to match the teaching and learning of a particular class and the students assessed, (Mkpae, &Obowu, 2017).

Other characteristics of School-based Assessment is that it is comprehensive in nature. School-based assessment is also systematic, as well as cumulative and guidance oriented. In many educational systems around the world, assessment is used for summative, accountability, and evaluation purposes, and it plays an important and indispensable role to cater for the diverse and often competing demands of the various stakeholders and users of assessment information. For example, selecting the best students for the next level of education, monitoring school performance, or allocating limited resources to students (Pongi , 2004).

It has been argued that testing only motivates teachers and students to work towards performance goals rather than learning goals (Adediwura, 2012). Greater value has been placed on testing since the inception of formal education based on the fact that tests are the basic reporting mechanism for the yearly progress of the children. Before the introduction of

school-based assessment, the testing of students through a single examination administered at the end of the year had been regular practice throughout our educational system (Mkpae, & Obowu, 2017). According to Yusufu (1994), school-based assessment provides a cumulative teachers judgement about the performance of individual student's work based on collection of grades. The performance of students in recent times have been on the decline, this has brought about the initiation of school-based assessment. Teachers now see the importance of school-based assessment as it helps them to measure the extent to which the subject taught has been comprehended and plan the next step of teaching and learning.

With school-based assessment, significant changes in teachers' perception of teaching and the role they play have been identified. Teachers have started to see teaching as a facilitator of student's learning rather than merely completing the curriculum (Black et al, 2003). In other development, the perception of teachers on students as having a fixed level of ability have also started to change as they begin to observe that their students are able to own up their works and are free to take more responsibility for their learning and become more independent learners and enjoy the freedom they have in the assessment process (Adediwura, 2012). When students become more independent learners, skills are developed in extreme recognition with reliable confidence in learning outcomes.

School-based assessment is relevant and important to both the teachers and the learners but it is still being undermined especially by the teachers. According to Yussufu (1994), school-based assessment provides a cumulative teacher judgement about the performance of individual student's work based on a systematic collection of grades. The performance of students in recent times have been on the decline, this has brought about the initiation of school-based assessment. Therefore, this study examined the perception and application of school-based assessment by public junior secondary school teachers in Ikpoba-Okha local government area, Edo state.

Research Questions

- i. What is the perception of public junior secondary school teachers in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area of school-based assessment?
- ii. To what extent do teachers apply school-based assessment techniques in teaching subjects?
- iii. Do demographic variables of sex, location, experience, age and qualification of teachers predict usage of school-based assessment?

METHODS

The design of the study is descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of teachers in the 17 public junior secondary schools in Ikpoba Okha Local Government Area of Edo State. All the teachers in the schools which was 250 were used. A structured questionnaire was use for the study. It has two sections. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents which includes, sex, age, educational qualification, location of school and years of

experience. Section B consisted of 20 items which elicited information that bothers on perception of SBA, and techniques adopted. The face and content validity were used to validate the instrument. This was done by three experts in measurement and evaluation. The reliability of this study was ascertained using the Cronbach Alpha statistics. It gave a reliability index of 0.88. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count, mean and standard deviation and ordinal logistic regression. The choice of ordinal logistic regression was the fact that four of the demographic variables were nominal, (sex, qualification, years of experience and school location), while age was a continuous variable, and the dependent variable perception of teachers was ordinal.

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean ratings of the teachers' perception of school-based assessment in Ikpoba-Okha local government area

| Items | Mean | Standard deviation | Remarks |
|--|--------------|--------------------|----------|
| School - based assessment is systematic | 4.18 | 0.93 | Agree |
| School based assessment is cumulative | 4.26 | 0.94 | Agree |
| School based assessment is guidance oriented | 4.17 | 0.97 | Agree |
| School based assessment is used once a term for examination | 2.93 | 1.05 | Disagree |
| Secondary teachers use school-based assessment always | 4.05 | 0.98 | Agree |
| School-based assessment enhances students' performance | 3.96 | 0.99 | Agree |
| School-based assessment develops cognitive abilities | 4.23 | 0.99 | Agree |
| School-based assessment is meant to enhance psychomotor skills | 3.54 | 1.40 | Agree |
| School-based assessment promotes examination malpractice | 2.87 | 1.15 | Disagree |
| School-based assessment provides spurious results | 2.67 | 1.22 | Disagree |
| Cluster | 33.69 | 3.15 | |

Table 1 shows that the teachers agreed that school - based assessment is systematic, cumulative, and guidance oriented. They also believed that school-based assessment is used always, as it enhances students' performance, develops cognitive abilities and is meant to enhance psychomotor skills. However, they disagree that school-based assessment is used once a term for examination, promotes examination malpractice and provides spurious results. The cluster mean of 33.69 and standard deviation of 3.15 implied that the public junior secondary school teachers in Ikpoba – Okha local government area have a good perception of school-based assessment.

Table 2: Frequency of teachers use of variety of instruments in the assessment of students

| Items | Mean | Standard deviation | Remarks |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|
| Testing | 4.07 | 0.98 | Frequently |
| Observation | 3.38 | 1.16 | Sometimes |
| Interviews | 3.11 | 1.46 | Sometimes |
| Socio metric techniques | 2.48 | 1,23 | Rarely |
| Rating scale | 3.33 | 1.34 | Sometimes |
| Projects | 3.26 | 1.38 | Sometimes |
| Anecdotal records | 2.14 | 1.34 | Rarely |
| Checklists | 2.07 | 1.98 | Rarely |
| Personality inventories | 2.29 | 1.01 | Rarely |
| Attitude scales | 2.42 | 1.16 | Rarely |
| Cluster | 29.86 | 4.28 | |

Table 2 shows the teachers' use of variety of assessment tools in the assessment of students. It further shows that the teachers frequently use test as assessment techniques. They sometimes use observation, interviews, rating scales, and projects, as assessment techniques. However, the teachers rarely use socio metric techniques, anecdotal records, checklists, personality inventories and attitude scales in the assessment of students. The cluster mean of 29.86 and standard deviation of 4.28 implied that the application of school-based assessment was to a low degree.

Table 3: Demographic variables as predictors of teachers' knowledge and application of school base assessment

| | | N | Marginal Percentage |
|---------------|---------------------|-----|---------------------|
| Knowledge | Undecided | 1 | 0.7 |
| | Strongly disagree | 7 | 4.7 |
| | Disagree | 8 | 5.4 |
| | Agree | 71 | 47.2 |
| | Strongly agree | 63 | 42.0 |
| Sex | Male | 44 | 29.3 |
| | Female | 106 | 70.7 |
| Location | Urban | 17 | 11.3 |
| | Rural | 133 | 88.7 |
| Qualification | NCE | 30 | 20.0 |
| | Bachelor degree | 80 | 53.3 |
| | Other higher degree | 40 | 26.7 |
| Experience | Below 10 years | 63 | 42.0 |
| | 10 years & above | 87 | 58.0 |

Table 3 shows that 0.7%, 4.7%, 5.4%, 47.2% and 42.0% of the respondents were undecided, strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agreed that public junior secondary school teachers apply school-based assessment. Also, 29.3% of the teachers sampled were male while 70.3% were females. 88.7% of the teachers were in rural schools while only 11.3% were in urban schools. 20.0% of the sampled teachers had highest qualification as NCE, 53.5% had bachelor's degree while 26.7% had higher degrees. With respect to experience, 42.0% of the teacher had below 10 years' experience, while 58.0% had 10 years and above.

Table 4: Test of Parallel Lines

| Model | -2 Log Likelihood | Chi-Square | df | Sig. |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|----|------|
| Null Hypothesis | 208.830 | | | |
| General | 172.368 ^b | 36.462 ^c | 36 | .447 |

Table 4 shows the test for the suitability of the data for ordinal regression. This was used to test the assumption of proportional odd. Since the p-value of 0.447 was greater than 0.05, the main assumption of ordinal regression was not violated.

Table 5: Model Fitting Information

| Model | -2 Log Likelihood | Chi-Square | df | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|----|------|
| Intercept Only | 402.303 | | | |
| Final | 208.830 | 193.473 | 6 | .000 |

The model fit table shows a p-value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This shows that the model is a very good finding on how well the model fit the data.

Table 6 Goodness-of-Fit

| | Chi-Square | df | Sig. |
|----------|------------|-----|-------|
| Pearson | 750.731 | 729 | .281 |
| Deviance | 193.449 | 729 | 1.000 |

Table 6 shows the Pearson and Deviance values greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, the model is a good fit.

Table 7: Parameter Estimates

| | | Estimate | Std. Error | Wald | df | Sig. |
|-----------|-------------------|----------|------------|--------|----|------|
| Threshold | [Knowledge = 1] | 12.827 | 2.124 | 36.478 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 2] | 16.785 | 2.123 | 62.485 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 3] | 17.185 | 2.150 | 63.885 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 3] | 19.775 | 2.479 | 63.649 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 4] | 20.850 | 2.593 | 64.670 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 4] | 27.788 | 3.313 | 70.374 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Knowledge = 5] | 28.918 | 3.372 | 73.543 | 1 | .000 |
| Location | Age | .713 | .084 | 72.430 | 1 | .000 |
| | [Sex=1] | -.099 | .426 | .054 | 1 | .817 |
| | [Sex=2] | 0 | . | . | 0 | . |
| | [Location=1] | -.122 | .641 | .036 | 1 | .849 |
| | [Location=2] | 0 | . | . | 0 | . |
| | [qualification=1] | -1.090 | .598 | 3.317 | 1 | .069 |
| | [qualification=2] | -.618 | .466 | 1.761 | 1 | .184 |
| | [qualification=3] | 0 | . | . | 0 | . |
| | [experience=1] | .870 | .395 | 4.848 | 1 | .028 |
| | [experience=2] | 0 | . | . | 0 | . |

In Table 6, we have that a statistically significant relationship existed between teachers' knowledge and application of school-based assessment and the age of the teacher ($p < 0.05$). This was also the same with the years of experience of the teachers ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant relationship between, sex of teacher, location of teachers' school, and teacher's qualification and their knowledge and application of school-based assessment. The estimated value of 0.713 and 0.870 for teachers' age, and years of experience, indicated that the age of teachers and experience increases the likelihood of the knowledge and application of the teachers in the art of school-based assessment

DISCUSSION

The study assessed public junior secondary school teachers' perception and application of school-based assessment in Ikpoba-Okha local government area, Edo state. The study showed that public junior secondary school teachers in Ikpoba – Okha local government area have a good perception of school-based assessment. This result is in agreement with Black et al (2003) who opined that teachers have started to see teaching as a facilitator of student's learning rather than merely completing the curriculum. It also collaborates with Adediwura (2012), who stated that the perception of teachers on students as having a fixed level of ability have also started to change as they begin to observe that their students are able to own up their works and are free to take more responsibility for their learning and become more independent learners and enjoy the freedom they have in the assessment process. The study also showed that the application of school-based assessment by public junior secondary school teacher was to a low degree. This result is in consonance with the work of Adediwura, (2012) who argued that testing only motivates teachers and students to work towards performance goals rather than learning goals and that greater value have been placed on testing since the inception of formal education based on the fact that tests are the basic reporting mechanism for the yearly progress of the children. Before the introduction of school-based assessment, the testing of students through a single examination administered at the end of the year had been a regular practice throughout our educational system (Mkpae, & Obowu, 2017) and this practice had not given effective measurement of the level of students' performance.

The study further revealed that a significant relationship existed between teachers' perception and application of school-based assessment and the age of the teacher ($p < 0.05$). This was also the same with the years of experience of the teachers ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no significant relationship between, sex of teacher, location of teachers' school, and teacher's qualification and their knowledge and application of school-based assessment. More so, the age of teachers and experience increases the likelihood of the perception and application of the teachers in the art of school-based assessment

CONCLUSION

It is observed that teachers show much interest in the assessment process and had better understanding of the characteristics of school-based assessment in secondary schools. This

study has shown the importance of School-based Assessment (SBA) based on the immense benefits to the students as well as the teachers in terms of teaching and learning. Students usually like to play, therefore the SBA tools such as drama, group project work, role play, questioning and answering session with immediate feedback procedure and classroom interactions could impress on their interest to practice for maximum skills development among them. However, the challenges of poor standard of our education need to be examined. Consideration should be focused on the application of SBA to facilitate the teaching and learning processes in the schools.

Therefore, it is noteworthy that teachers should shift from the ordinary testing in the testing and termly examination to the one that suit the requirement of the school-based assessment system which is performance assessment. School supervisors should monitor the implementation of SBA in all schools in the country.

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