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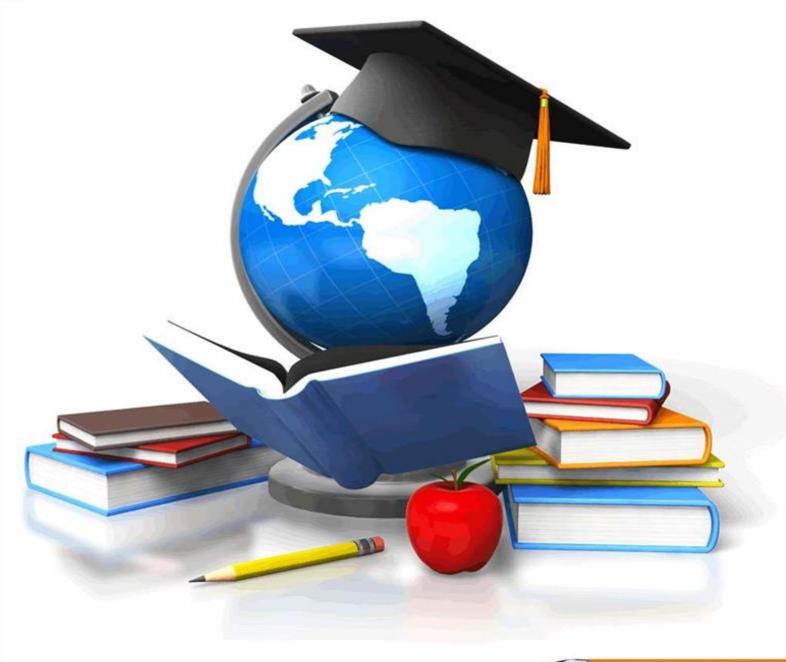
Influence of Assessment Practices on Business Education Students' Academic Performance in Nigerian Colleges of Education

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Abstract

Purpose: Serious complaints from lecturers and students concerning lackadaisical approach to assessment informed the decision of the researchers to examine the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance in colleges of education in Southwest Nigeria. Two purposes, two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study.

Methodology: The study adopted the descriptive survey research design while the population of the study consisted of 200 business education lecturers and 2000 Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) final year regular students registered for the 2020/2021 academic session. The sample comprised 132 lecturers as well as 322 students. The multi-stage sampling technique incorporating purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. The instruments for data collection Students Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) coupled with lecturers and students questionnaires titled; Influence of Assessment Practices on Business Education Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (IAPBESAPQ). The Cronbach Alpha formula was used to establish the internal consistency reliability coefficients of 0.77 for lecturers' questionnaire and 0.78 for students' questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using frequency tables, mean, standard deviation, t-test statistics and linear regression analysis.

Findings: The study found that, end of semester examination (ESE) (Mean = 4.00, SD = 0.61), written tests (Mean = 3.93, SD = 0.45) classroom exercises (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.44) and take-home assignment (Mean = 3.60, SD = 0.53) are the most commonly adopted assessment practices by business education lecturers in colleges of education. It was also revealed that assessment practices have significant influence on academic performance ($F_{(1.452)} = 1.609$, $p = 0.205$) of business education students in colleges of education.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: Finally, it was recommended among others that business education lecturers in colleges of education should adopt assessment practices that elicit autonomy, engagement, high-order thinking and increased proficiency in skill courses. As a contribution to theory, practice and policy, this study exposed an urgent need for a paradigm shift from traditional assessment practices to competency-based assessment practices which are essential ingredients for survival and advancement in this era of globalization.

Keywords: *Achievement, Assessment, Attitude, Competency, Teacher-Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are set up with specific mandate to undertake a number of functions and one of the core functions of educational institutions is the certification of individual learners under their auspices. In carrying out this core function, a major prerequisite is assessment. Ekaira (2013) defined assessment as the act of interpreting information about student performance collected through any of a multitude of means or practices. According to Esere and Idowu (2011), assessment can be described as the deliberate efforts of the teacher to gauge the impact of the instructional process and the overall impact of the school learning on the behaviour of students. It entails the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of learning. Assessment requires gathering information through different techniques such as observation, interview, questionnaire, classroom questioning, project, assignment, classwork and homework. Assessment is considered to be of good quality when it influences students' motivation and when it is valid, reliable, fair, ethical, uses multiple methods, incorporates technology as well as when it is feasible and efficient (Amesi, 2016). It is noteworthy that assessment is not mere testing, rather it is a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged. Closely linked to the concept of educational assessment is academic performance which has been and still remains a recurring decimal in the field of education. From the elementary level to the tertiary level, the goal of every educator is to see improved academic performance in the learners. Academic performance is the outcome of education and it reflects the level to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved predetermined educational goals. The term "academic performance" is synonymous with "academic achievement" because both constructs are interwoven.

School systems mostly define cognitive goals that apply across multiple subject areas for instance critical thinking, acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain such as numeracy, literacy science, history. Therefore academic performance is viewed as a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning. Because academic performance is an umbrella term that is very wide and covers a broad spectrum of education outcomes, the definition of academic performance depends on the indicators used to measure it. Among the many criteria that indicate academic performance, there are general indicators such as procedural and declarative knowledge acquired in an educational system, more curricula-based criteria such as grades or ratings in an educational achievement test and cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as degree and certificates. All criteria represent intellectual endeavours and thus more or less mirror the intellectual capacity of an individual. Academic performance can also be described as the scores or grades obtained by an individual from tests and other assessment techniques. In a nutshell academic performance refers to the outcome of education or the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved some stated educational goals. Academic performance may be rated high, average or low depending on the yardstick used for measuring the performance level.

The concepts of assessment and academic performance have always found full expression in the field of education generally. However an aspect of education to which the two aforementioned concepts are very germane is business education which has been described in different ways by different authors. According to Udo (2015), business education is an aspect of vocational and technical education which is designed to develop competencies in accounting, business management, banking and finance, marketing, bookkeeping, office technology, information and communication technology, business law, economics for business, business web-page design, desktop publishing, shorthand, keyboarding, digital business applications, word processing among others. He added that business education is a comprehensive activity-based education that is concerned with the acquisition of practical skills, understanding, attitudes, work habits and competencies that are required for success in a chosen business occupation. It is noteworthy that business education is work-focused, skill-based, result-oriented and technology-driven. That is why Ademiluyi and Ademiluyi (2018) asserted that business education enables recipients to imbibe high moral standards and acquire ethical rectitude at high professional or pedagogical standards.

With the emphasis placed on educational assessment and various reforms in the education industry in Nigeria, it has become imperative to examine the influence of assessment practices on the academic performance of business education students in colleges of education in Nigeria. At any rate the platform that reveals the outcome of learning, and academic performance is assessment. Without assessment academic performance cannot be measured and it is obvious that one's learning determine one's earning. Therefore there is a very strong bond between, academic performance and assessment practices.

Rana and Zubair (2019) conducted a study to find out the contributions of different assessment strategies to students' learning and performance. The study was conducted in Jubail University College at Al-Mustaqbal, Saudi-Arabia. The study sample included 150 students and 45 teachers. Data were gathered qualitatively and quantitatively using students' academic records and questionnaires. Findings revealed that the adoption of continuous assessment helps students to comprehend complex areas related to the English as Foreign Language (EFL) content. The study identified take-home assignment, written tests and recap exercises as strategies adopted by EFL teachers to assess how the EFL students learn English Language. It was equally discovered that assessment practices helps to boost students' confidence and prepare them for future challenges. Another related study was conducted by Iqbal et al. (2017) to determine the influence of continuous assessment techniques on students' performance at elementary level. The study sample comprised 60 students studying at a public secondary school for girls only in Lahore, Pakistan. These students were studying social studies as a compulsory subject. Post-test design of control and experimental groups was used. An achievement test was utilized to collect data from respondents. Independent sample test was used as test of significance. It was revealed that continuous assessment had positive influence on students' achievement. Furthermore, Amesi

(2016) explained that the advent of computer-based and on-line assessment procedures are appropriate for meeting the peculiar needs of diverse categories of students and dealing with the problem of large classes while Munoz and Araya (2017) opined that competency-based assessment helps to improve learning and pedagogical practices. It therefore became imperative to examine the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance in Nigerian colleges of education.

Statement of the Problem

In this era of globalization and universal competitiveness for job placement, it is obvious that academic performance is a major determinant of graduates' entry and survival in the world of work. Without any doubt, good academic grades will offer more prospects for business education students in the labour market. A critical determinant of academic performance is educational assessment which is fraught with multiple challenges, especially in the Nigerian context. According to Amesi (2016), effective assessment is not adequately carried out in the teaching and learning of business education courses due to large class size or population of the students. Similarly, Ubong and Wokocha (2013) observed that students do not attach as much serious to classwork and continuous assessment as they attach to end of semester examination. Most students always take their studies seriously at the eleventh hour when examination is approaching.

Moreover, it has been observed that scores (especially continuous assessment) are sometimes manipulated in order to reduce failure rate in business education courses, thus vitiating the validity and credibility of the assessment scores and by implication concealing the true picture of the students' ability or performance. Furthermore, the researchers observed that many business education lecturers have not been consistently meticulous in their assessment practices. Afenikhe (2017) reported incidents of poor assessment record keeping, missing and questionable scores, among others thus undermining the very purpose of assessment. Effective business education is indispensable to the economic health of any nation; therefore any problem which may inhibit students' good academic performance in business education courses must be empirically addressed. If this is not done the programme credibility may be impaired to the detriment of national progress, hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance in colleges of education in South-west Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Identify the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers for assessing their students.

2. Determine the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers in assessing their students?
2. How do assessment practices influence the academic performance of business education students in colleges of education?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho_1:   Lecturers and students do not differ significantly in their perception of the commonly adopted assessment practices in colleges of education.

Ho_2:   Assessment practices have no significant influence on business education students' academic performance in colleges of education.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design which was deemed as appropriate for the study because the design is suited for explaining or exploring the relationship between two or more variables at a given time which is the concern of this study. The population of the study comprised twelve colleges of education, 200 business education lecturers and 2000 final year business education students registered for the 2020/2021 academic session. The final year students were the focus of the study because they had spent at least four semesters in the colleges and had experienced diverse forms of assessments with corresponding outcome of academic performance. The sample for the study consisted of 132 business education lecturers and 322 final year business education students in public colleges of education in South-west Nigeria. The sample selection was based on the sample size selection of the Research Advisor (2006). The Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study. Three major instruments were used to gather data for the study. There were two sets of questionnaire, one set for lecturers and another set for students while the third instrument was the Students' Academic Performance Proforma (SAPP) used in collecting the 200 level results of students' academic performance for the 2019/2020 academic session. Both sets of questionnaire were structured in similar manner and designed on a 4-point rating scale. The questionnaire was tagged Influence of Assessment Practices on Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (IAPSAPQ). The instruments were given to three experts in business education and research methodology from the Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education, Kwara State University, Malete-Nigeria. The

observations and corrections by the experts were incorporated into the final draft of the research instruments. A pilot study involving 30 year three students and 10 lecturers form the Department of Business Education, Kwara State College of Education (Technical) Lafiagi was conducted. The College of Education (Technical) Lafiagi was chosen because it is outside the study area but has similar characteristics with the study institutions.

The data obtained from the pilot study were statistically analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficients computed for the two sets of questionnaires are 0.77 for lecturers' questionnaire and 0.78 for students' questionnaire. The research team visited all the twelve colleges personally to administer copies of the questionnaires and obtained the second semester 200 level results for the 2019/2020 academic session from the office of the Head of Department of Business Education in each college of education.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the analysis of data gathered for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics and Linear Regression Analysis (LRA) were used to test the null hypotheses. The decision rule for the research questions was that mean scores of 2.50 and above were rated as agreed while those with less than 2.50 were rated as disagreed. For the test of hypotheses, the rule is if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained but if the p-value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is not retained.

RESULTS

Research question one: What are the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers in assessing their students?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of responses on the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers in assessing their students.

	Descriptive Statistics				
S/N	**Assessment Practice**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Remarks**
1	Oral test	454	1.91	0.50	Not Commonly Adopted
2	Written test	454	3.93	0.45	Commonly Adopted
3	Assignment	454	3.65	0.45	Commonly Adopted
4	Projects	454	1.83	0.50	Not Commonly Adopted
5	Classroom exercise	454	3.73	0.44	Commonly Adopted
6	Checklists	454	1.75	0.50	Not Commonly Adopted
7	Observation	454	2.05	0.48	Not Commonly Adopted
8	Questionnaires	454	1.84	0.48	Not Commonly Adopted
9	Class presentation	454	3.00	0.41	Commonly Adopted
10	Quizzes	454	1.41	0.49	Not Commonly Adopted
11	Peer assessment	454	1.84	0.50	Not Commonly Adopted
12	Practical work	454	2.61	0.55	Commonly Adopted
13	Self-assessment	454	2.08	0.50	Not Commonly Adopted
14	Examination	454	4.00	0.61	Commonly Adopted
	Weighted Mean/SD		**2.55**	**0.49**	

Decision rule = 2.50, N= 454

Table 1 shows the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers in assessing their students. The result shows that item number 14 which is, end of semester examination with 4.00 mean score and 0.61 standard deviation is the most commonly adopted assessment practice for business education students by their lecturers. This was followed by item number 2 which is, written test (Mean =3.93, SD = 0.45), classroom exercise (Mean =3.73, SD =

0.44) and take-home assignment (Mean = 3.65, SD = 0.45) and class presentation (Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.41) respectively. Thus, classroom presentation, end of semester examination, written test, classroom exercise and take-home assignment respectively are the assessment practices commonly adopted by business education lecturers in assessing their students while oral tests, projects, checklists, observation, questionnaires, quizzes, peer assessment, practical work and self-assessment are not commonly adopted.

Research question two: How do assessment practices influence the academic performance of business education students in Nigeria colleges of education?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation (SD) of responses on the influence of assessment practices on the academic performance of business education students in colleges of education.

S/N	Items/Statements	Mean	SD	Rank	Decision
1.	Assessment practices help business education students to acquire saleable skills.	3.04	0.75	1st	Agree
2.	Assessment practices reveal business education students' level of academic performance	3.00	0.81	3rd	Agree
3.	Assessment practices help to boost business education students' competency level in skill courses	3.02	074	2nd	Agree
4.	Assessment practices help to reveal deficient aspects of business education students' academic performance	2.98	0.79	4th	Agree
5.	Assessment practices help business education students to be mentally alert.	2.85	0.87	6th	Agree
6.	Assessment practices help to boost business education students' retentive ability	2.92	0.72	5th	Agree
	Weighted mean/ SD	**2.97**	**0.78**		

Decision rule: 2.50, N = 454

Analysis of data in Table 2 highlighted the mean responses on the influence of assessment practices on academic performance of business education students in colleges of education. The maximum and minimum mean scores obtained from the data analysis are 3.04 (item number 1) and 2.85 (item number 5). The weighted mean of 2.97 and standard deviation of

0.78 indicated that the respondents agreed that assessment practices influence the academic performance of business education students in colleges of education in South-west, Nigeria.

Hypothesis one: Business education lecturers and students do not differ significantly in their perception of the commonly adopted assessment practice.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of differences in lecturers' and students' perception of the commonly adopted assessment practices.

Academic status	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	P-value	Decision
Lecturers	132	43.01	5.85				
Students	322	43.04	7.13	452	1.56	0.230	Accept

Source: Field Survey, 2022

The independent sample t-test results presented in Table 3 reveal calculated t-value of 1.56 and p-value of 0.230. Since the p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis one was accepted. This means that there is no significant difference in business education lecturers' and students' perception of the most commonly adopted assessment practices.

Hypothesis Two: Assessment practices have no significant influence on business education students' academic performance in Nigerian colleges of education.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis on Influence of Assessment Practices on Business Education Students' Academic Performance in Colleges of Education

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	72.647	1.456		49.884	.000
Assessment Practices	-.649	.511	-0.759	-1.268	.205

R=0.759; R^2=0.576; Adjusted R^2=0.571; F$_{1, 452}$ = 1.609, p=.205

Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Table 4 shows assessment practice influence on business education students' academic performance in colleges of education. The result showed positive correlation between assessment practice influence and business education students academic performance (R=759). The result also revealed that independent variable accounted for 58% ($R^2 \times 100$) of any variance observed in business education students academic performance. The remaining unexplained 42% of the variation could be due to other variables not covered in this study.The result also revealed that the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance is statistically significant (F(1,452) =1.609; p = 0.205). Consequently the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the assessment practices have significant influence on business education students' academic performance in colleges of education.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study was conducted to examine the influence the assessment practices on business education students' academic performance in Nigerian colleges of education. The findings of this study based on research question one and table one revealed that end of semester examination, written tests, classroom exercise and take-home assignments are the most commonly adopted assessment practices by business education lecturers in Nigeria colleges of education. Results from the test of hypothesis one revealed no significant difference in lecturers' and students' perception of the commonly adopted assessment practices. This finding supported the findings of Rana and Zubair (2019) that take-home assignment and recap exercises are the most common assessment practices adopted by lecturers for Saudi EFL University students. Amesi (2016) also observed that the advent of computer-based and on-line assessment procedures has helped in meeting the peculiar needs of diverse categories of students and dealing with the problem of large classes.

Research question two sought to determine the influence of assessment practices on business education students' academic performance. The results in table two indicated that assessment practices help business education students to acquire saleable skills and also boost business education students' competency in skill courses. Findings form the test of hypothesis two indicated that assessment practices have significant influence eon the academic performance of business education student sin Nigerian colleges of education. This finding buttressed the explanation of Munoz and Araya (2017) that competency based assessment helps to improve learning and pedagogical practices. The finding also buttressed the findings of Iqbal et. al. (2017) that continuous assessment had positive effects on students achievement. The researchers opined that assessment practices significantly influence academic performance of business education students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings it was concluded that, end of semester examination, written tests, classroom exercises and take-home assignments are the most commonly adopted assessment practices by business education lecturers in Nigerian colleges of education. It was also concluded that assessment practices have significant influence on business education students' academic performance. The implication of this is that if result –oriented and highly effective assessment practices are not adopted by business education lecturers to boost students' students' academic performance it might be extremely difficult to achieve the lofty objectives of the business education programme in colleges of education. Another implication is that over-emphasis on acquisition of grades and certificates will over-ride employability and self-reliant skills and this is detrimental to national economic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study it was recommended that:

1. Business education lecturers should adopt assessment practices that suit the peculiarities of their institutions and students. Lecturers should endeavour to embrace a variety of assessment practices so as to overcome monotony and to ensure that all the domains of educational objectives (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) are adequately assessed.
2. Emphasis should be placed on competency-based assessment for business education students in Nigerian colleges of education. Business educators should engineer a paradigm shift from traditional assessment to competency-based assessment that stimulate divergent thinking, application of knowledge and problem-solving skills, self-management skills, communication skills, team-work, critical analysis and self-directed inquiry which are essential ingredients for survival and advancement in this era of globalization.

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