

EFFECTS OF TEACHERS' CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ON CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KOGI STATE

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Abstract

This paper investigated the extent of teacher classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in the West and Central Education District of Kogi State. The design adopted in this study was descriptive survey. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The population of the study was three hundred and forty two (342) male and female teachers from 22 schools. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to use all 342 teachers. This was due to the fewness of the population size. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire containing 20 items. The instrument was properly validated by two experts in Educational Foundations and one from Measurement and Evaluation all of Kogi State University, Anyigba. The validated version of the instrument was trial tested to ascertain the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The internal coefficient of 0.73 and 0.79 for clusters 1 and 2 were obtained. The overall reliability was 0.77 which indicated that the instrument was reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion value was determined by the application of limit of real numbers: VGE 3.50-4.00, GE 2.50-3.00, LE 1.50-2.00 and VLE 50-1.00. The major findings revealed that: Classroom assessment methods if properly adopted are responsible for curriculum improvement. Social/ethical issues involved in classroom assessment engenders curriculum improvement. Base on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that secondary school principals should be that which stands by the teacher in his or her instructional task performance, that school authorities should make room for monitoring and feedback for stakeholders of students' progress, that school-based assessment component should be established, that teaching and learning resources be provided to avert difficulties to teachers and reduction of class size to solve the problem of overload for teachers who are required to mark and keep records of progress of all learners.

Keywords: Teacher, Classroom Assessment, Curriculum Improvement.

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Introduction

Education programme in any field of human endeavour has set aims/objectives. These aims and objectives form the root on which all efforts to ensure proper and adequate implementation of the programme goals are based. Educational aims refers to the general statement representing ideals or aspiration of what the teacher, students or an educational organization plans to achieve over a period of time. While goals refers to the end result, achievement or the learning outcomes where efforts are directed. Goals provides rational basis for determining what to teach, how to teach in what quantity and sequence, what to emphasize and what to evaluate (Onyemerkeya 2004 & Federal Republic of Nigeria 2013). It indicate direct target towards which one effort is geared.

Classroom assessment affects planning and instruction (what to teach and how to teach), classroom atmosphere, students motivation and mastery of knowledge (Ugwuja & Uchenna, 2009). This means that before beginning a new lesson, a teacher is expected to identify students prior knowledge and skills so as to know how best to proceed with the new topic. This is what is usually referred to as 'entry behaviour'. Entry behaviour tests students' level of knowledge before the commencement of a new lesson. If the teacher finds out that students do not have the requisite knowledge upon which to build the new one, he/she may decide to clarify areas of difficulty or even to re-teach what had earlier been taught. This kind of assessment primarily aims at identifying areas of problems that should be addressed and clarified, and the teacher needs a principal in order to produce the desired result (Okolo, 2015; Ogechi, 2016).

Assessments made by teachers during instructions are generally used for formative evaluation of the students while those used at the end of a course or programme of study are used for summative evaluation of students. Formative evaluation results are used for discovering the strengths and weaknesses of students as instruction progresses, while summative evaluation results are used for promotion purposes and certification at the end of programme(s).

There are a number of methods available for classroom assessment. Ibe (2016) states that they include paper and pencil tests, rating scales or checklists, interviews, observations, socio-grams and published or standardized tests. The curriculum conference 1969 holds on item eight of its objectives that; a balance curriculum programme for the individual is his social and other primordial considerations. These social and ethical issues include the following: Invasion of the Privacy of the Individual; Qualification of the Test User; Type of Teacher Environment; Health Condition of the Learner(s); Family background of the learner(s); Confidentiality and Protection of the Individual's Right in Testing, There are social/ethical issues that demand that teachers or anybody involved in assessment of any kind be very objective and fair (Ugwuja & Igbokwe, 2009).

The implementer of education programme is a teacher. A teacher according to Nwose in Kanno and Solomon (2016) is one who is worthy, efficient, excellent, relevant, literate and morally balance as well as one who is willing and committed to the job of teaching. Corroborating this, especially as it relates to the curriculum, a teacher is a trained person who helps a learner to acquire necessary knowledge, skills and attitude through a variety of ways. These according to Ormrod (2006) involves observing students' behavior during and after classes. For a teacher, assessment is done on a continuing and continuous basis. Its practices influence many aspects of classroom functioning. Classroom assessment is the process of gathering information about students' abilities and behaviour for the purpose of making decisions about the

students. Therefore, Nwanekezi and Ifonu, in Kanno and Solomon (2016) opine that a teacher is one who is effective in facilitating the curriculum content with a view of achieving the educational objectives through the combined efforts of the teacher and students. The teacher also needs to identify effective instructional procedures and other classroom management techniques that enhance students' learning. Assessment is an integral part of the curriculum evaluation (Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook & Travers 2000).

Curriculum improvement for quality education is the development of an effective classroom organization. This is affirmed by Irondi in Ogbonnaya and Ogbonna (2016) that classroom management includes that of instruction, learners and the materials. No wonder, Ogbonnaya and Ogbonna opine that classroom management is the integration and effective use of the teacher's basic qualities his/her knowledge of the learner, good knowledge of the methods of instruction, the techniques the teacher use to ensure that every learner in the class learns and develops fully with a minimal interference when it occurs.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' ability to be sensitive to what goes on in the classroom is key in classroom management. Its ingredients include: teacher preparation of lesson plan, the entry behaviour, employment of classroom resources, teaching style, language, audio and audio-visual aids to make instruction simple, direct and easy to assess progress for quality.

But lots of teachers' assumption about their students, made learners quiet and passive because of the adoption of lecture method. Major classroom support are either lacking, in short supply and are often not put to use, these include; the absence of principals whose synergy with teachers to perform staggering ranges of roles of providing instructional leadership by coordinating curricular and co-curricular programmes in order to stimulate scholarship and best practices in curriculum delivery. The scarcity and non-employment of classroom resources or educational technology media to arouse all the senses in the learning process accounts for deterioration in academic achievement of learners, one wonders if low performance of learners is not a reflection of the ineffectiveness of teacher in the classroom.

On the part of the students, there are not serious with attendance to classes; handling in work by deadlines, completing assignments and task to an acceptable standard, time are not apportioned to relevant tasks and activities to support the realization of intended academic skills during and after academic time and as a result mass failure, hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which teachers' classroom assessment aid curriculum improvement and quality education in Central and Western Education Districts of Kogi State. The objectives of the study include:

- 1) To find out the extent available methods of teachers' classroom assessment enhance curriculum improvement in secondary school in Central and Western Education Districts of Kogi State.
- 2) To investigate the extent social/ethical issues involved in classroom assessment enhance curriculum improvement in secondary school in Central and Western Education Districts of Kogi State.

Research Questions

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following two research question guided the study:

1. To what extent are the available methods for teachers' classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State?
2. To what extent are the social/ethical issues involved in teacher classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State?

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male teachers and female teachers on the use of available methods in classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools western and central education district.

H02: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male teachers and female teachers on the use of social/ethical issues involved in classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools western and central education district.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The population of study consisted of the 200 male and 142 female teachers drawn from 22 selected grant aided schools and colleges that exist in western and central education district of Kogi State. The entire 342 male and female teachers selected in the zone were used as sample for the study. The entire population was used because it manageable.

A self designed questionnaire instrument entitled: Teacher Classroom Assessment on Curriculum Improvement and Quality Education (TCACIQE) was used for data collection. It was structured on a four point rating scale of and Very Great Extent (VGE) 4 points, Great Extent (GE) 3 points, Little Extent (LE) 2 points, Very Little Extent (VLE) 1 point. The instrument has two sections: section A contains personal data of the respondents while section B contains 2 clusters. Cluster A contains information on the extent teachers use forms and methods available for classroom assessment i.e. items 1-10, while cluster B contains information on the extent teachers use social/ethical issues involved in classroom assessment ranging from 11-20.

The instrument was properly validated by two experts in Educational Foundations and one from Measurement and Evaluation all of Kogi State University, Anyigba. Their comments led to the modifications before it was put to use. The validated version of the instrument was trial tested to ascertain the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The internal coefficient of 0.73 and 0.79 for cluster 1 and 2 were obtained. The overall reliability was 0.77 which indicated that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was sent to the 22 schools with the help of 4 assistants located in the 4 area councils under the instruction of the researchers. Data that came back was 340 i.e. 98% collected and enveloped by the research assistants and sent to the researchers for analyses.

The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The criterion value would be determined by the application of limit of real numbers: VGE 3.50-4.00, GE 2.50-3.00, LE 1.50-2.00 and VLE 50-1.00

Results

Research Question One

What are the results on the available methods of teachers' classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State?

Table 1: Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (S.D) on the forms of assessment by classroom teachers on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State

S/N	Items	Male Teachers' n = 200			Female Teachers' n = 140		
		\bar{X}_1	SD1	DEC1	\bar{X}_1	SD2	DEC2
1.	Informal Assessment: Involves spontaneous unplanned observation by the teachers	2.80	0.99	HE	3.49	0.89	HE
2.	Formal Assessment: Involves preplanned, systematic data gathering by the teachers	3.01	0.97	HE	2.84	0.88	HE
3.	Paper and pencil assessment: Involves written response	2.84	0.97	HE	2.89	0.94	HE
4.	Performance Assessment: This involves non written responses	3.33	0.97	HE	3.45	0.93	HE
5.	Traditional Assessment: Assessing learning separate from real world tasks	3.58	0.86	LE	1.25	0.55	LE
6.	Authentic Assessment: Assessing ability to apply learning to real world tasks	2.98	0.88	HE	3.98	0.16	HE
7.	Standardized Test: Test developed by experts for use in many schools or country	3.03	0.84	HE	3.39	0.68	HE
8.	Teacher Made Assessment: Developed for Teacher private use in his/her own classroom	2.65	0.96	HE	3.87	0.44	HE
9.	Criterion Reference Assessment: Extent of mastery or non-mastery of some predestined tasks	3.07	0.99	HE	3.47	0.97	HE
10.	Non-reference Assessment: Comparing Performance to those of classmate or age mate	3.11	0.86	HE	3.00	0.00	HE
Cluster mean		2.97	0.96		3.09	0.82	

Table 1, shows that the mean score of majority of the items for both male and female teachers was above 2.50. This is indicated that both groups of respondents use the available methods for classroom assessment on curriculum improvement and quality education in secondary schools. This is because they all agreed that: teachers involves spontaneous unplanned observation, written responses, non written

responses, ability to apply learning to real world tasks, Test developed by experts for use in many schools or country, the ones developed for Teacher private use in his/her own classroom, check extent of mastery or non-mastery of some predestined tasks and comparing performance to those of classmate or age mate. This agreement of male and female teachers are expressed by the mean values of each item and then the cluster mean of 2.97 and 3.09 for male and female teachers are the opinion that teachers use these methods in their assessments and both groups of respondents rated the traditional assessment method low.

Research Question Two

To what extent are the results of social/ethical issues involved in teachers' classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State?

Table 2: Mean (\bar{x}) and Standard Deviation (S.D) on social/ethical issues involved in the teachers' classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in Central and Western Education District of Kogi State

S/N	Items	Male Teachers' n = 200			Female Teachers' n = 140		
		X ₁	SD1	DEC1	X ₁	SD2	DEC2
11.	Teacher invasion of the privacy of learners	1.36	0.98	LE	1.63	0.63	LE
12.	Qualification of teacher	3.44	0.93	HE	3.02	0.99	HE
13.	Nature of learning environment	2.84	0.99	HE	3.15	0.88	HE
14.	Health condition of learners	3.07	0.94	HE	3.08	0.95	HE
15.	Family background of learners	2.73	0.97	HE	3.23	0.98	HE
16.	Degree of confidentiality of test result	3.80	0.96	HE	3.14	0.99	HE
17.	Accountability to stakeholders	3.90	0.94	HE	3.56	0.49	HE
18.	Teacher promotion of regularities	2.79	0.87	HE	3.49	0.94	HE
19.	Objectivity in Marking	3.12	0.99	HE	3.05	0.41	HE
20.	Protection of special need learners	2.94	0.91	HE	3.52	0.50	HE
	Cluster mean	2.43	0.93		2.04	0.94	

Table 2 shows that the value of male and female teachers on item 11 invasion on the privacy of learners is rated to a low extent. And on items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 which bothers on Qualification of test users, Nature of learning environment, Health condition of learners, Family background of learners, Degree of confidentiality of test result, Accountability to stakeholders, Teacher promotion of regularities, Protection of special need learners and Objectivity in scoring are rated to a high extent because they observe all these. The agreement of both male and female teachers are expressed by the mean value of each items and, perhaps a good number invade the privacy of learners then the cluster mean of 2.43 and 2.04 for male and female teachers are of the opinions that they employed the above socio-ethical issues involved in classroom assessment on curriculum improvement and quality education.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of male teachers and female teachers on the forms/methods of classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools.

Table 3: t-test Statistics of the Significant Difference in the Mean Ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of teachers' use of available methods for classroom Assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools

S/N	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	T	Sig(sp)	Decision
1	Male Teachers	200	3.45	0.55	3.38	-	0.09	Ho Fail to accept
2	Female Teachers	140	3.12	0.54		1.69		

Table 3 reveals that the male teachers had a response of 3.45 with standard deviation of 0.55 while the female teachers had a mean response of 3.12 with standard deviation of 0.54. The probability accepted with calculated value of t (252) i.e. 0.09 is positive. The value of t is significant at 0.09. This is because 0.09 is more than 0.05 i.e. $p = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$. Since the probability value is more than 0.05 level of significance $p > 0.05$; the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence there is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers in their opinion on the extent of use of forms/tools in their classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools.

HO2: There is no significance difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on socio-ethical issues that bothers on classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools.

Table 4: t-test Statistics of the Difference in the Mean Ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of use of socio-ethical issues for classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools

S/N	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	T	Sig(sp)	Decision
1	Male Teachers	200	3.63	0.65	3.38	-	0.09	Ho Fail to accept
2	Female Teachers	140	3.32	0.85		1.69		

Table 4 revealed that the male teachers had a mean response of 3.63 with standard deviation of 0.65, while the female teachers had a mean response of 3.32 with standard deviation of 0.85. The probability associated with calculated value of t (252) i.e. 0.09 is positive. The value of t is significant at 0.09. This is because 0.09 is more than 0.05 i.e. $p = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$. Since the probability value is more than 0.05 level of significant $p > 0.05$; the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence there is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of use of socio-ethical issues available for classroom assessment on curriculum improvement in secondary schools.

Discussion of Findings

It was revealed that proper use of assessment tools by teachers is responsible for curriculum improvement. This is in consonance with Black and Williams (1998) who use metaphor as a black box to describe what the public, school administrators, and the

media often focus on regarding assessment. In this model, inputs (for example, curriculum requirements) go into the black box and outputs (for example, test results) come out. Thus informal/formal, paper and pencil/performance, traditional and authentic assessment, as collection of data, in conjunction with performance tasks and standardized tests, provides a more complete picture of what students have learned, increase their sense of inclusiveness, provides students with a constant stream of opportunities to prove their mastery of material and sends the message that everyone can succeed if given enough time and practice. This reduces the anxiety and finally around testing and heightens the emphasis on the learning itself.

The finding from research question two on social/ethical issues involved in classroom assessment on curriculum improvement is hinged on the fact that quality does not just happen but there are some social indices that determines it. This is in line with Agbakwuru (2017) whose socio-metric technique gives a picture of social relationship within a group. Socio-metric technique specifies the degree of acceptance, roles as well as interactions of members then identifies the stars, isolates, neglects and cliques in any group. This helps the assessor to adopt necessary intervention strategies to socialize the isolates, neglects and cliques taking cognizance of the uniqueness to be valued in the students who he/she assesses. Thus, teacher qualification, learning environment, health condition of learners, and their family background are social considerations for improvement. Furthermore, accountability in education demands that school management and staff should be for every amount of money which parents/guardians, government and other stakeholders in education spend towards the development of learners. One way through which management and staff can show their accountability is through the provision of reliable data about the level of progress and adjustment of each student entrusted to their care. The basis for the provision of this information is students' assessment reports (Gibson & Mitchell, 1986).

The t-test analysis sort to find out whether a significance difference exists between the male teachers and female teachers on the extent of use of available methods of assessments in grant aided schools and colleges located in Kogi Central and Western Education Districts. The result showed that the probability associated with calculated value of t (252) that is 0.09 is positive. The value of t is significant at 0.09. The value t is equaled significant at 0.05. This is because 0.09 is more than 0.05 i.e. $p = 0.09$, $p > 0.05$. Since the probability of 0.05 level of significant $p > 0.05$ the null hypothesis is not rejected. Hence there is significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent of use of available methods of classroom teachers to engender curriculum improvement in grant aided schools and colleges in central and western education districts of Kogi State.

Conclusion

Teacher's classroom assessment is a roadmap to curriculum improvement and quality education for secondary schools because it facilitates students' learning whether it is done through formative or summative evaluation. When students know what they tested on, any class material that the results obtained may be used to determine their future career in school, they tend to learn the material more, and hold themselves accountable for the lapses. In this wise, assessment acts as motivator especially when they are 'criterion referenced' and closely related to classroom instructional goals and objective thereby related to classroom instructional goals and objectives thereby challenging students to put in their best. Students' self-efficacy influences the way they

handle challenging tasks since they believe that successful execution of any task depends on the amount of effort the students put into the task as well as learning strategies employed. We must note however, that the motivation provided by classroom assessment is basically extrinsic and may direct students only to performance goals thereby undermining their intrinsic motivation to learn. Students should not be able to see classroom assessment only as a way of evaluating their performance, but also as a mechanism for helping them to learn.

Recommendations

- 1) Secondary school principals should stand by the teacher in his or her instructional tasks performance
- 2) School authorities should make room for monitoring and feedback to stakeholders of students' progress.
- 3) School - based assessment component should be established.
- 4) Teaching and learning resources such as stationeries, computer and photocopiers be provided to avert difficulty to the teacher in conducting classroom assessment.
- 5) There should be reduction of class size to solve the problem of workload for teachers who are required to mark and keep records of progress of all learners.

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