AN APPRAISAL OF SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PRACTICE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

The social studies teacher is a key factor in implementing the social studies curriculum. Appraising the social studies teacher's practice and implementation strategies in schools is paramount. The study seeks to assess how school-based assessment (SBA) is practised and implemented in the Nigerian school system to identify the challenges social studies teachers encounter in practice and implementation to proffer solutions to the challenges. The population for the study consisted of six thousand (6000) Junior Secondary School (upper basic education level schools)social studies teachers in Delta and the Imo States. Sixty (60) Junior Secondary Schools and thirty (30) from each State were selected. Using the proportionate stratified random sampling techniques, fifteen (15) junior secondary school social studies teachers were drawn from each school, bringing the sample size to 900 social studies teachers. The instrument was designed using the modified four-point Likert scale, and experts validated content in measurement and evaluation and social studies education. The Rulon formula obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Three research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while three hypotheses were tested with independent t-test statistics at a 5% probability level. The results showed that: Firstly, the male social studies teachers were better equipped than their female counterparts in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment. Secondly, the trained social studies teachers in assessment techniques performed better than their untrained counterparts in assessment and implementation of school-based assessment (SBA). Third, social studies teachers in urban schools performed better than their counterparts in the rural areas in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment. Therefore, the researcher recommended pre-service and in-service training for female social studies teachers, untrained social studies teachers and social studies teachers in rural areas in assessment and implementation technique test construction. Proper monitoring by the appropriate agencies for effective and goal-oriented results and regular inspection of assessment materials, including moderating examination questions, should be done regularly.

Keywords: Social studies Teacher, Assessment, school-based assessment, practice and implementation.

Introduction

School-based assessment in every social studies classroom is essential for the effectiveness and efficiency of social studies teaching and learning. At the end of every social studies teaching and learning process, the social studies teacher needs to assess the students to ascertain if they have learnt or not. This will help in improving the teaching and learning standards and quality. The schools, in collaboration with the government, have vital roles to play. The Federal Government of Nigeria, in their quest for a better system of evaluating students' academic performances, recommended in the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), (2013) the adoption of a Continuous Assessment system as the

alternative mode for assessing the performances of the students in our educational system, especially at the secondary school level. Therefore, the continuous assessment technique is formulated to replace the former one-short and end-of-term or end-of-year examination that was accused of being responsible for the low academic performance of students at all levels of education.

There are various ways of looking at assessment. Assessment can be looked at from both the micro and the macro levels. These are the school-based assessment and certificate-oriented examinations. Therefore, by definition, assessment refers to gathering relevant information to help an individual or a group of individuals make decisions. In light of this, Rowland (2010) contends that assessment is a critical component of the educational process.

Furthermore, Rowland (2010) noted that assessment allows educators and other professionals to make relevant educational decisions. Rowland and Essen (2010) aver that "assessment as an integral part of the education process is used for both formative and summative evaluation in the school system". In buttressing his position, Essen argues that no matter how effective a teacher may be, no matter how highly intelligent a student may be and how adequate teaching aids may be, amidst other favourable conditions, if there is no provision for assessment of the students, the teacher's effort may be wasted. Asuru (2016), sharing Essen's view on the importance of assessment, sees it as a process of organising measurement data and fashioning them in an interpretable manner based on which judgment (evaluation) could be made. Therefore, assessment is regarded as any method used to understand a student's current knowledge. This involves collecting data to make value judgments about the quality of learning the student receives during a programme. Educational assessment is vital in the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, assessment is a mechanism whereby the evaluation of students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behavior are carried out systematically during a given period of schooling. To this extent, assessment is tailored towards being comprehensive, cumulative, systematic and diagnostic.

Therefore, school-based assessment is carried out in such a way that students undertake specified assignments in the course of the school year, under the guidance of the teacher who adds all the grades in the assignments as part of the grade in the final examination in a subject (Griffith, 2015). In line with this view, the Education Commission (2010) views school-based assignment as assessment administered in schools to assess students by their subject teachers, to include the results as part of the public assessment that the assessment results will be included as part of the public assessment.

Thus, school-based assessment (SBA) can be seen as formative assessments that count towards final grades in a public examination. It is not based on students' performance in a single-shot public examination. Capturing its nature more holistically, the NTI (2016) manual sees School-Based Assessment as one that broadens and extends in form, mode, means and scope to facilitate and enhance learning. Justifying the relevance of SBA, the National Teachers Institute (NTI) (2016) states that assessment as currently practised relies heavily on the outcome of (final) external examinations, and this has led to teachers concentrating on covering the syllabus in a hurry without recourse to learners' understanding.

In a related view, Adeyemi (2018) maintains that the primary purpose of school-based assessment is to enhance the validity of the assessment by including the assessment of outcomes that cannot be readily assessed within the context of one single shot public

examination. Apart from the comprehensive, cumulative, systematic and diagnostic nature of SBA, it can also use the feedback from learners' performance to find out the inadequacies in measuring instruments. This is the view of Onuka and Amoo (2017) when they claim that "SBA seeks to verify learner's performance and uses the feedback to find out the inadequacies in measuring instrument. This may improve the assessment for learners and enhance better learning outcomes". Therefore the SBA is a more functional way of enhancing the learning and teaching process in the school system. However, much as the SBA is seen as a very useful and result-oriented method in the learning and teaching process in the school, there are some problems with its practice and implementation in the Nigerian school system.

To Ojerinde and Falayajo (2014) and Ani (2018), the differences in the quality of tests and other assessment instruments used in different schools, as well as the differences in the procedures of scoring and grading the various assessments in the various schools, could pose problems of uniformity and comparability of standards. As they claim, some teachers may set difficult test items, which students may see as a threat to the class, other teachers may set very simple test items, and others may not give any test or assignment to their students at the same level. And so, as it is evident, the scores obtained by the students may not be uniform and are bound to have an adverse effect on their continuous assessment. Variations exist in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment. Some of such have been observed in the studies of Ajuonuma (2016), Feldeman (2017) and Egbulefu (2014), who found out that male teachers do better than their female colleagues in the use of formative assessment techniques. Also, UBEC (2003), Ugodulunwa and Mustapha (2015) and Opoola (2016) stated that at all levels, many teachers display incompetence in conducting an effective and efficient assessment of learners' achievement due to improper training in the administration of tests and assessment strategies.

Similarly, Kellagham and Greaney (2013) and Onuka (2017), in their separate studies, submitted that social studies teachers' approaches to the practice and implementation of SBA vary from school to school, which confirmed the studies of Edamur (2011) and Feldman (2017) who found out that school location significantly influenced teachers practice and implementation school-based assessment at all levels. These, as can be seen, pose the problem of securing uniform standards in the school-based assessment.

However, despite everything, many researchers have come to agree that if the school-based assessment is properly practised, there would be a far-reaching impact on the learning outcomes of social studies students at different levels of learning in Nigeria. It is, therefore, in response to the problems bedevilling the practice and implementation of school-based assessment by social studies teachers in the Nigerian school system, which of them, according to Abass (2010), include non-effective supervision, poor staffing of schools and non-effective practice that the researchers have decided to investigate the problems associated with teacher gender, social studies teacher' level of training and social studies teacher school location on their practice and implementation of school-based assessment in Delta and the Imo States, junior secondary schools (upper basic education level schools). On the ground of this, therefore, the following objectives and research questions/hypotheses are stated for the study.

Statement of the Problem

Social studies teachers in practice are those teachers trained to teach social studies in schools at various levels. They can be referred to as social studies educationists with various qualifications in social studies education. Unfortunately, the current situation of social studies

teachers in practice is such that every individual with qualifications in the social sciences – sociology, economics, political science, history, anthropology, and geography is engaged in teaching social studies in schools. These unprofessional social studies teachers, generalist social studies teachers, or social studies educators do not have the needed expertise, competence, and pedagogic prowess in teaching social studies effectively and efficiently and, by so doing, cannot effectively implement school-based assessment of social studies. All these have resulted in graduating social studies students without having insider knowledge of social studies. It has also increased the chain of having under-trained social studies teachers in Nigerian schools teaching social studies hence the need to appraise social studies teachers in practice and implementation of school-based assessment of social studies students, teaching and learning.

Purpose of the Study

This study is undertaken:

i. to investigate the influence of the gender of the social studies teachers on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.
ii. to investigate the influence of the level of training of the social studies teachers on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.
iii. to investigate the influence of the location of the junior secondary school on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does the gender of the social studies teacher influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?
2. To what extent does the level of training of the social studies teachers influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?
3. To what extent does the location of the junior secondary school influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?

Hypotheses

- Social studies teachers' performance in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their gender.
- Social studies teachers' performance in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their levels of training.
- Social studies teachers' performance in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on the location of their schools.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Descriptive survey research collects data from members of a population to determine the current status of that population. The population for the study consisted of six thousand (6,000) Junior Secondary School social studies teachers in Delta and Imo states. Sixty (60) selected junior secondary schools from two states, and thirty (30) were drawn from each State. The survey was conducted in junior secondary classes using the proportionate stratified random sampling techniques to select fifteen (15) junior secondary social studies teachers from each school. The sample size was nine hundred (900) social studies teachers.

The instruments for data collection were the researcher's self-constructed questionnaire using the modified four-point Likert scale. The instruments were made up of sections A and B, respectively. Section A contains the demographic information-name of school, gender of social studies teacher, social studies teacher's level of training and school location. Section B includes forty (40) items which focus on social studies teachers' practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

In this study, the face and content validities were used. Professionals in measurement and evaluation and social studies education validated the items on the questionnaire and considered them fit for the study. In determining the internal consistency of the measuring instrument, the reliability coefficient (r) obtained was 0.88 by the Rulon formula. Thus, the instruments were declared reliable.

The responses of the social studies teachers on the administered questionnaire generated data for the study. The mean and standard deviation were the statistical instruments used to answer the research questions, while independent t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses at a 5% probability level.

Results

The results of the study are presented in the tables below.

Research Question I

To what extent does the gender of the social studies teachers influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?

Table I: Statistical mean (x) and standard deviation (SD) scores on the influence of gender on the social studies teachers' practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Teachers' gender	N	mean x	SD
Male	520	57.00	21.00
Female	380	40.22	15.94
Total	**900**	**97.22**	**36.94**

In table I, the mean score for the male social studies teachers was 57.00, and the standard deviation was 15.6, while the female social studies teachers had a mean score of 40.22 and a standard deviation of 15.94. It could be deduced that the male social studies teachers are better disposed of in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment than their female counterparts, with a mean (x) and standard derivation influence of 40.22 and 15.94, respectively.

Research Question 2

To what extent does the level of training of social studies teachers influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?

Table 2: Statistical (X) and standard deviation (SD) scores of the influence of training of social studies teachers on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Level of social studies teachers' training	**N**	**mean X**	**SD**
Trained social studies teachers	300	66.67	20.60
Untrained social studies teachers	600	33.33	14.80
Total	**900**	**100.00**	**35.40**

Table 2 above shows the mean (X) of 66.67 and standard deviation (SD) of 20.60 for the influence of trained social studies teachers on their practice and implementation of school-based assessment in their schools. Mean (x) of 33.33 and standard deviation (SD) of 14.80 were obtained for the untrained social studies teachers.

These results showed that trained social studies teachers' practice and implementation of school-based assessment are better than the untrained social studies teachers.

Research Question 3

To what extent does the location of the junior secondary school influence the practice and implementation of school-based assessment?

Table 3: Mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) scores of the influence of junior secondary schools' location on the social studies teachers' practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

School location	**N**	**Mean X**	**SD**
Urban Areas junior secondary schools	400	50.00	20.50
Rural Areas junior secondary schools	500	38.89	15.30
Total	**900**	**88.89**	**35.80**

In Table 3, the results showed that the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) influence of social studies teachers in the urban areas were 50.00 and 20.50, while the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) influence of social studies teachers in the rural areas were 38.89 and 15.30 respectively. From the results, it could be deduced that social studies teachers in the urban areas were more committed and exposed to the practice and implementation of school-based assessment than their counterparts in rural areas.

Hypothesis I

Social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their gender.

Table 4: The t-test statistical analysis of mean and standard deviation scores of social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of SBA is not significantly dependent on gender.

Social studies teachers Gender	**N**	**X**	**SD**	**Df**	**Standard Error**	**T-call**	**T-Crit**
Male	520	57.00	21.52	898	1.25	13.44	1.96
Female	380	40.22	15.94				
Total	900	79.22	37.46				

5% probability level

In table 4, the result showed the mean (X) 57.00, standard deviation (SD) 21.52 for the influence of male social studies teachers, while for the influence of female social studies teachers, the mean (x) and the standard deviation (SD) were 40.22 and 15.94 respectively. Furthermore, at 898 degrees of freedom (df), the standard error was 1.25, t-calculated value 13.44 and t-critical value 1.96. Thus, the t-calculated value of 13.44 is greater than the table critical value of 1.96; hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This showed that the gender of the social studies teachers significantly influenced the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Hypothesis 2

Social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their levels of training.

Table 5: The t-test analysis of mean and standard deviation scores of social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on levels of training.

Level of training	**N**	**X**	**SD**	**DF**	**Standard error**	**t-cal**	**t-crit**
Trained social studies teacher	300	66.67	20.60	898	1.18	26.54	1.96
Untrained social studies teacher	600	31.33	14.80				
Total	**900**	**97.00**	**35.40**				

5% probability level

Table 5: Results show that the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) of trained and untrained social studies teachers' influences on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment were 66.67, 31.33 and 20.60, 14.80, respectively.

The table also showed the standard error of 1.18, the t-calculated value of 26.54 and the critical table value of 1.96. The t-calculated value of 26.54 was greater than the table critical value of 1.96; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. The implication of the foregoing is that there was a significant difference between trained and untrained social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Hypothesis 3

Social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their school location.

Table 6: The t-test statistical analysis of mean and standard deviation scores of social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment is not significantly dependent on their school location.

School location	N	X	SD	DF	Standard Error	T-cal	T-crit
Urban Areas	400	50.00	20.50				
Rural Areas	500	38.89	15.30	898	1.19	7.31	1.96
Total	900	88.89	35.80				

5% Probability level.

Table 6 shows that social studies teachers' influence in urban and rural areas have mean and standard deviations of 50.00, 38.89 and 20.50, 15.30, respectively. Consequently, the standard error of 1.19, t-calculated value of 7.31 and table critical value 1.96 at 898 df were observed. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected because the t-calculated value was greater than the table critical value, so the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This showed a significant difference between urban and rural social studies teachers in practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Discussions

The result, as revealed in tables 1 and 4, showed the mean and standard deviation of male and female social studies teachers' influence as 57.00, 40.22 and 21.00, 15.94, while the standard error of 1.26, t-calculated value of 13.44 and t-critical value 1.96 at 898 df. Therefore, the null hypothesis tested was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted in favour of male social studies teachers' outstanding performances in the practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

Thus, the finding of this study is in agreement with Ajuonuma (2016), Feldeman (2017) and Egbulefu (2014), who in their studies found that male teachers performed better than female teachers in formative assessment techniques. The better practice and implementation of school-based assessment by male social studies teachers could be attributed to their high degree of dedication, commitment and job satisfaction in their teaching career.

The results from tables 2 and 5 revealed that the mean and standard deviations of trained social studies teachers' influence were 66.67 and 20.60, while that of the untrained social studies teachers' influence were 31.33 and 14.80, respectively. Furthermore, the standard error of 1.18, t-calculated value of 26.54 and t-critical value of 1.96 at 898 df was observed. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted in favour of better performance of trained social studies teachers in practice and implementation of school-based assessment. According to the researcher, the above results, the possession of basic idea in assessment techniques and test constructions in Continuous Assessment (CA) by the trained social studies teachers were responsible for the better performance of the trained social studies teachers.

This result confirms with results of the study carried out by UBEC (2003), Ugodulunwa and Mustapha (2015) and Opoola (2016), who in their studies submitted that many practising teachers at all levels of education are incompetent in conducting an effective and efficient assessment of learners achievement because they lack proper training in the administration,

test constructions and assessment strategies. All these factors could be seen as responsible for social studies teachers' poor practice and implementation of school-based assessment.

The study from tables 3 and 6 showed the mean urban influence was 50.00 standard deviation was 20.50, the rural mean influence was 38.89, and the corresponding standard deviation was 15.30, while the standard error was 1.19. In testing the hypothesis, the t-calculated value of 7.31 and t-critical value of 1.96 at 898 df were observed. Consequently, the calculated t-value of 7.31 obtained was greater than the table critical value of 1.96. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternate hypothesis was accepted in favour of urban social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment. These results showed that the location of schools significantly influenced the practice and implementation of school-based assessment. It was indicated that social studies teachers in urban areas performed better in practice and implementation of school-based assessment than the social studies teachers in rural areas.

Social studies teachers in the urban areas are closer to the seat of the government, have regular monitoring teams and regular visits of supervisors to schools, and attend more workshops/ training. The researcher, therefore, noted that some of these factors were responsible for the more effective practice and implementation of school-based assessment by social studies teachers in urban areas. The results of this study were in line with the findings of Feldman (2017) and Edanur (2011). Their conclusions submitted that schools' location significantly influenced social studies teachers' performance at all levels of education. Consequently, the researcher emphasised that this showed that social studies teachers in urban areas keyed in better the practice and the implementation of school-based assessment than their counterparts in the rural areas.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, social studies teachers' gender significantly influences the practice and implementation of school-based assessment in both states. The social studies teachers' levels of training significantly influenced the practice and implementation of school-based assessment in both states. The social studies teachers' influence on the practice and implementation of school-based assessment significantly depends on the locations of their schools in both states. Therefore, gender should be prioritised in social studies teachers' training (pre-service and in-service). Furthermore, every educational stakeholder, including social studies professionals and professional association(s), ensures that there are not many gaps in the availability of whatever makes social studies teaching and learning effective and efficient in both urban and rural areas.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the result of the findings:

1. Pre-service and in-service training and refresher courses should periodically be organised for serving and intending social studies teachers, especially for female social studies teachers untrained and social studies teachers in rural areas. This would help them in the handling of various techniques in school-based assessments.
2. Social studies teachers should build class assessments into their lesson plans and prepare various types of assessment instruments. These measures would help them to identify students' prior knowledge before teaching, discover their difficulties in the process of teaching, and so, help them to provide remedial measures.

3. The educational curricula for students at the tertiary levels should be reviewed to include topics such as test construction, item analysis, standard scores and basic concepts in measurement and evaluation.
4. The continuous assessment committee (CAC) in each school should monitor what social studies teachers do in their classroom to ensure that students are assessed using various instruments and when due.
5. Assessment benchmarks across all the schools should be set. They should be the prerequisites for social studies students' progression and promotion from one class to another as well as their certification.
6. School-based assessment should not only be focused on the cognitive domain but should also be made to cater to the other learning domains.
7. Government should equip and furnish the offices of guidance councillors to enable them to handle the challenges of record keeping associated with school based-assessment.
8. Social studies teachers' promotion should be tied to their effective practice and implementation of SBA regularly.
9. Social studies teachers should not be assigned to specific classes to teach all subjects.

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