

## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN PUBLIC JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN CITY (NIGERIA)

Kingsley O. Omorogiuwa, Evelyn O. Aibangbee

*University of Benin, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria*

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### Abstract

The school-based assessment system is a holistic assessment system conducted in school by subject teachers to assess the students' cognitive (intellect), affective (emotional and spiritual) and psychomotor (physical) aspects in line with Nigeria's National Philosophy of Education. The study examined the factors affecting the effective implementation of school based assessment. The sample of the study consisted of 150 teachers in public junior secondary schools in Benin City. A 14-item questionnaire on the factors affecting effective implementation of school-based assessment was used as the instrument for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the research questions, while a hypothesis was tested with *t*-test at 0.05 alpha level. Results showed that teachers' level of awareness of school-based assessment, school management's attitude towards school-based assessment and teachers' classroom management were among the factors considered to have a negative effect on the effective implementation of school-based assessment in secondary schools in the Benin metropolis. The study therefore suggests effective monitoring of educational policy implementation and timely in-service training for all teachers.

**Key words:** *school-based assessment; teachers; classroom management; formative and summative assessment*

### INTRODUCTION

Assessment plays a significant role in the educational development of a person and, of course, a nation. It is a means of quality control, of determining the level of accountability displayed by stakeholders in the industry and also of determining the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as in finding out students' achievement. It is a vital tool for educational evaluation, thus its importance, as a quality assurance tool, cannot be overemphasized. Assessment is said to be continuous when it is regular, cumulative and comprehensive. The concept of assessment in the Nigerian

context has been officially operative since 1985 after the production of a manual for its implementation as a result of the implementation of the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2013) (which was introduced in 1977).

Assessment is not merely testing (Osokoya 1996). It is a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged (Mwebaza 2010). In relation to a school setting, Kelaghan and Greaney (2001) define assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude, or skills of the learner or group of learners. Thus, in the context of education, assessment can be defined

as a predetermined process through which the quality of a student's performance, in the three domains of educational objectives – cognitive, affective, and psychomotor, is judged. Assessment of students learning of curriculum contents in the area of knowledge, skills, and values is a major pre-occupation of many educational reforms. This is because results from such assessment not only provide feedback regarding the educational progress of students, but also remain the authentic yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of the teacher, the quality of the instruction, and in part the functionality of any curriculum reform.

The Nigeria National Policy on Education therefore recommends a change in assessment practices and indicates that schools should put more emphasis on “Assessment for Learning” as an integral part of the learning, teaching and assessment cycle (Adediwura 2012). Assessment for learning helps teachers to identify students' achievement level. Teachers would be able to evaluate students immediately as students demonstrate their knowledge and skills during the assessment process. According to the Assessment Reform Group (2002), assessment of learning provides teachers with the opportunity to evaluate how much the students have learned and how effective the teaching methods were. As such, teachers should possess as much knowledge as possible, especially pertaining to the concept and the implementation policy. According to Shepard (2005), teachers should be able to integrate assessment and teaching to make the teaching process more interesting and to enhance the students' learning outcome. A teacher, who is knowledgeable about the assessment, would internalize a belief in the system. He or she would subsequently display a positive attitude and would be willing to implement the concept. It was against this background that a school-based assessment (SBA) component was added to the Basic School Certificate Examination (BSCE) and the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). With the launching of the nine-year basic education programme in 1999, the School Based Assessment (SBA) was introduced at the lower, middle and upper basic levels of Nigerian education.

According to Anderson (1997), school-based assessment provides a cumulative

teacher judgment about the performance of individual students' work based on a systematic collection of grades or marks. If used appropriately, school based assessment can serve as a monitoring device for teachers by feeding back the information collected to adjust teacher's teaching and to students to improve their learning. According to Anderson et al. (1995), 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 judgments. As assessments are conducted by the students' own teacher in their own classroom, students are meant to play an active role in the assessment process, particularly through the use of self and/or peer assessment used in conjunction with formative teacher feedback (Aneke and Finch 1997). The system is criterion referenced and progressive, with teachers making a judgment on the quality of students' learning against a specified performance standard through collecting evidence of students' learning over a period of time and collating the evidence in a student portfolio (Broyles and Tillman 1985).

Hill et al. (1997) held that from early childhood education to tertiary education, the responsibility of assessing individual students largely lies in the hands of their classroom teachers, except for the involvement of national examinations at the end of secondary education. The main purposes of school based assessment (SBA) are to enhance students' learning, provide feedback to parents and students, award senior secondary school qualifications, monitor overall nationwide educational standards, and identify learning needs to effectively allocate resources (Hill et al. 1997). Among these various purposes,

improving students' achievement is the first priority. School-Based Assessment (SBA) supplements external examinations, providing a more holistic and valid measurement of student abilities (Jenkins 1995). By assessing students on a broad range of objectives over an extended period, SBA removes many of the disadvantages of a 'one-shot' external examination. The ongoing nature of school based assessment (SBA) also provides teachers with a formative view of the progress of individual students, and allows them to address more accurately the specific needs of their students. Despite such advantages, school-based assessment, like many other educational innovations, poses a number of problems to teachers and students. These include the possible increase in teacher workload, teachers' lack of expertise and confidence in undertaking the assessment tasks, and the undue pressure exerted on students through a large number of assessment activities.

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

Cheung and Yip (2004) looked at the particular situation of the teacher assessment scheme (TAS) for the advanced level practical Chemistry in Hong Kong and found that

Chemistry teachers are most concerned about workload, resources and support, moderation mechanism, student workload, difficulty in motivating students, and teacher collaboration. The root causes of these concerns are the large number of experiments required in Form 6 and Form 7, a lack of support from the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority as well as the Curriculum Development Institute, reliance on theory marks to adjust TAS marks, the limited roles of group coordinators, and the narrow scope of assessment tasks included in the TAS. Bassey et al. (2013) in their study verified whether the best assessment practices of the teachers were influenced by teachers' characteristics. The results revealed that the assessment practices were not influenced by a teacher's gender.

### **Statement of the problem**

School-based assessment (SBA) gives all educational stakeholders, namely educators, parents, students and the community at large, the power to improve teaching and learning practices. Teachers are responsible for carrying out the school-based assessment (SBA) process needed to follow all the steps and procedures for assessment. The change in assessment in school has led to some challenges on the teachers' part. Azleena (2007) discovered that teachers encountered problems completing the assessment according to the schedule and ensuring the authenticity of the assessment; hence leading to the question of whether the teachers are capable of and have sufficient knowledge to carry out school-based assessment (SBA). Another study by Chan et al. (2009) reported time constraints, increasing teacher workload, lack of knowledge, monitoring, and supervision as obstacles to effective implementation of SBA. A study by Majid (2011) echoed Chan et al. (2009) findings whereby the teachers are worried about several aspects of assessment including their abilities and roles to meet all the school-based assessment (SBA) requirements.

Moreover, in Nigeria, there are major differences between the school-based assessment (SBA) practices in primary schools and those in secondary schools, in the form of the feedback provided to students and the use of marks (Adediwura 2012). In primary schools,

teachers keep a record of their observation and evaluation of some of their student's work and provide feedback to students while the work is in progress. Usually, especially in the earlier years of primary schooling, no end-of-term or end-of-year grades or marks are given. In contrast, much of the feedback students receive in secondary schools comes along with formal marks or grades. A final mark or grade is given based on the accumulated and aggregated marks in a number of significant pieces of work (Hill et al. 1997). In view of this, it is necessary to identify the factors responsible for the poor implementation of school-based assessment. It has become necessary to embark on studies taking a perspective on the implementation at the school level with a focus on secondary teachers and students as the most important link in the implementation chain.

### **Purpose of the study**

The study is aimed at examining the factors affecting the effective implementation of school-based assessment in the Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study is aimed at:

1. Examining the factors affecting the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State, Nigeria.
2. Establishing the roles of gender on the factors affecting the effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary Schools in Edo State, Nigeria.

### **Research questions**

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

1. Does teachers' level of awareness of school-based assessment (SBA) affect the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Benin City, Nigeria?
2. Does school managements' attitude towards school-based assessment (SBA) affect the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Benin City, Nigeria?
3. Does teachers' classroom management (SBA) affect the effective implementation

of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Benin City, Nigeria?

4. Is there a difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors affecting effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Benin City, Nigeria?

### **Hypothesis**

The following hypothesis was stated: "There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors affecting the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria". To guide this study, one hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significance level.

## **MATERIAL AND METHODS**

The research design adopted for this study is the survey research design. This design is considered appropriate because only a part of the population will be studied and findings are generalized for the entire population. The population for the study consisted of 876 teachers from the 45 Public Junior Secondary Schools in Benin City, Nigeria. There are three local Government Areas in Benin City, namely Oredo, Ikpobah Okha and Egor. The sample for the study was 150 teachers in public secondary schools in the Benin metropolis. The stepwise disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was used; first, 5 public secondary schools were randomly selected from each of the three Local Government Areas in Benin City; and second, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 10 teachers from each of the fifteen selected public secondary schools in Benin City.

The instrument used to gather data is a structured questionnaire constructed by the researchers. This questionnaire was divided into two sections of A and B. Section A contains items on demographic information such as, name of school and gender. Section B contained fifteen items that centre on the factors influencing the effectiveness of school-based assessment in secondary schools. The items were designed in a 4-point forced choice Likert scale. The questionnaire subjected to content validity, to this end, three experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation

modified the instrument by removing certain items that were not necessary and the recommended amendments were duly effected. The questionnaire was then administered to 30 teachers who were not involved in the main study and the data obtained from the administration was analysed using Cronbach Alpha technique and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The items in the questionnaire are therefore internally consistent. The instrument was administered on the teachers by the researchers. The answered questionnaires were collected immediately. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while independent *t*-test analysis will be used

to test hypotheses one at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The analysis will be done using SPSS version 22.0.

## RESULTS

### Research question number one

Table 1 shows the results in testing the posed research question: “Does teachers’ level of awareness of school based assessment (SBA) affect the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?” It reveals a grand mean of 1.84 which falls within 1.00 to 1.99, showing a low level of awareness of school-based assessment.

**Table 1 – Effect of teachers’ level of awareness on the effective implementation of school-based assessment (SBA)**

| S/N | Items                                                          | Mean        | Standard deviation | Decision   |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1   | I have attended a workshop on SBA in the last six months       | 1.79        | 0.64               | Low        |
| 2   | I have conducted a personal study on SBA                       | 1.71        | 0.74               | Low        |
| 3   | I have a good understanding of the procedures of SBA           | 1.89        | 0.75               | Low        |
| 4   | Continuous assessment is synonymous with SBA                   | 2.05        | 0.61               | Low        |
| 5   | SBA enables better assessment of students' overall performance | 1.79        | 0.69               | Low        |
|     | <b>Teachers' awareness</b>                                     | <b>1.84</b> | <b>0.40</b>        | <b>Low</b> |

**Key:** 1.00–1.99 = Low; 2.00–2.99 = Moderate; 3.00–4.00 = High. *N* = 150.

### Hypothesis

Table 2 shows the results of the tested hypothesis: “There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the male and female

teachers on factors affecting the effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria.”

**Table 2 – Independent t-test of difference on factors affecting the effective implementation of school-based assessment by sex ( $\alpha = 0.05$ )**

| Sex    | <i>N</i> | Mean | Standard deviation | <i>t</i> | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--------|----------|------|--------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Male   | 90       | 4.32 | 0.36               | 0.56     | 0.74            |
| Female | 60       | 4.3  | 0.29               |          |                 |

The Table shows *t*-value as 0.56 and *p*-value as 0.74. Testing the hypothesis at the alpha level of 0.05, the *p*-value is greater than the alpha value, so, the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant

difference in the mean scores of the male and female teachers on factors affecting effective implementation of school-based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria” is retained.

### Research question number two

Table 3 shows the results in testing the posed research question: “Does school managements’ attitude towards school based assessment (SBA) affect the effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary

schools in Edo State, Nigeria?” It reveals a grand mean of 2.18 which falls within 2.00 to 2.99, showing a moderate level of school managements’ attitude towards school-based assessment.

**Table 3 – Effect of school managements’ attitude towards school-based assessment (SBA)**

| S/N | Items                                                                                               | Mean        | Standard deviation | Decision        |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 6   | School management provides materials needed for effective discharge of our duties                   | 2.11        | 0.98               | Moderate        |
| 7   | The materials provided are sufficient for carrying out SBA                                          | 1.95        | 0.77               | Low             |
| 8   | School management monitors the implementation of SBA                                                | 2.49        | 1.01               | Moderate        |
| 9   | Teachers are motivated by school management to implement SBA                                        | 2.04        | 0.97               | Moderate        |
| 10  | Educational administrators often organize workshops for teachers on how to effectively practice SBA | 2.31        | 1.00               | Moderate        |
|     | <b>School managements’ attitude</b>                                                                 | <b>2.18</b> | <b>00.62</b>       | <b>Moderate</b> |

**Key:** 1.00–1.99 = Low; 2.00–2.99 = Moderate; 3.00–4.00 = High. *N* = 150.

### Research question number three

Table 4 shows the results in testing the posed research question: “Does teachers’ classroom management affect the effective implementation of school based assessment in Senior Secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria?” It reveals a grand mean of 3.46 which falls within 3.00 to 4.00, showing a

high level of teachers’ classroom management affects the effective implementation of school-based assessment. This shows that overloaded classrooms, heavy teaching workload, insufficient time to carry out SBA and inflation of SBA and favouritism do affect the effective implementation of school-based assessment.

**Table 4 – Effect of teachers’ classroom management on the effective implementation of school based assessment (SBA)**

| S/N | Items                                                             | Mean        | Standard deviation | Decision    |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| 11  | Overloaded classes affect my implementation of SBA                | 3.14        | 1.78               | High        |
| 12  | Heavy teaching workload affect my implementation of SBA           | 3.75        | 2.75               | High        |
| 13  | There is insufficient time to carry out school-based assessment   | 3.42        | 1.01               | High        |
| 14  | Inflation of SBA marks and favouritism are practiced in my school | 3.54        | 1.93               | High        |
|     |                                                                   | <b>3.46</b> | <b>1.87</b>        | <b>High</b> |

**Key:** 1.00–1.99 = Low; 2.00–2.99 = Moderate; 3.00–4.00 = High. *N* = 150.

## **DISCUSSION**

Results in research question one show that the teachers' level of awareness of school-based assessment is negative, and this affects the effective implementation of school-based assessment in the secondary schools in the Benin metropolis. This finding is in agreement with the summations of Ruzlan et al. (2015), who in their study on the implementation of school-based assessment in Malaysia, found out that the respondents lacked the knowledge about SBA. The finding of this study also negates the findings of Nair et al. (2014), who found in their study that teachers had satisfactory knowledge of planning an SBA tailored lesson. It was also found in the study that the teachers showed a satisfactory knowledge of developing SBA.

Results in the research question two show that school managements' attitude towards SBA are negative. This is in line with the findings of Owoyele and Kareem (2011) who investigated school-based assessment practices of teachers in Ogun State and found that teachers indicated the need for assistance on some assessment procedures such as: directing students to assess their own progress, skill of test construction and item development procedure. This finding is also in agreement of the findings of Wolcott (2004), who found that school management is the greatest factor that affect teachers' implementation of school based assessment.

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

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

## **CONCLUSION**

In the course of the study we discovered that views about school-based assessment are different. These differences can be attributed to the different purposes that School-Based Assessment serves in different educational settings. In previous studies, some researchers reported time constraints, lack of knowledge, monitoring as well as supervision. Other researchers showed that teachers encountered problems completing the assessment according to the schedule and ensuring the authenticity of assessment.

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

## **Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

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

carrying out all they have learnt, as it relates to the procedure of school-based assessment.

4. Adequate teaching materials should be made available to schools in order to enhance and enrich the academic experience and ultimately the achievement of learners.
5. Teachers should be closely monitored and supervised to ensure that they are

punctual, regularly in the classroom, and actually teach based on the prescribed curriculum.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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**Contact:**

Kingsley Osamede Omorogiwa, Ph.D., University of Benin, Faculty of Education,  
Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Benin City, Edo State,  
Nigeria

Email: [kingsley.omorogiwa@uniben.edu](mailto:kingsley.omorogiwa@uniben.edu); [kingsomorogiwa@yahoo.com](mailto:kingsomorogiwa@yahoo.com)