

Innovations

School-Based Assessment Practices Among Primary School Teachers

Ajogbeje, O. James¹, Boris O. Olufunke² and Omoya, Olawale³

¹Department of Counselling Psychology, BamideleOlumilua University of Education, Science & Technology, IkereEkiti, Ekiti State.

Orcid ID: <https://0000-0003-4266-3657>

²Department of Science Education, BamideleOlumilua University of Education, Science & Technology, IkereEkiti, Ekiti State. Orcid ID: <https://0000-0002-5535-0257>

³Department of Counselling Psychology, BamideleOlumilua University of Education, Science & Technology, IkereEkiti, Ekiti State.

Corresponding Author: **Ajogbeje, O. James**

Abstract

This study investigates how primary school teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria, currently conduct school-based assessments in their various schools. All the primary school teachers in the three senatorial districts of the state constituted the study's population, and the research design was descriptive survey research. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 210 elementary school teachers as the sample. A school-based assessment questionnaire (SBAQ) developed by the researchers was used to gather all the necessary data for the study. Experts in testing and measurement confirmed the instrument's validity, calculating the instrument's reliability to be 0.81 via the Pearson moment correlation coefficient. The collected data were used to verify the veracity of the hypotheses using the mean, standard deviation, and t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings demonstrated, among other things, that teachers in primary schools understand the criteria for evaluating student progress towards learning goals, maintain accurate records of students' progress, and adapt their teaching methods to align with school-based assessment policy. The research also found that school-based assessment practices among primary school teachers were not significantly different on the basis of gender but significantly different on the basis of teachers' qualifications.

Keywords: *assessment, primary school, teachers, school-based assessment*

1. Introduction

Assessment is at the heart of the teaching and learning process, and it provides valuable insight into students' progress towards mastery of course material (Ajogbeje, 2012, 2023). According to Odiba (2017), assessment is the act of collecting evidence in order to draw conclusions about an

individual learner, a course of study, or a school's overall pedagogical approach. According to Ugakirine (2019), assessment is "a process of ascertaining the performance status of the learner" through a set of well-planned and systematic measurements that yield valid and reliable conclusions about the student's progress. Regular assessment of students is a standard practice in all classrooms, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (2018) sees it as student assessments that are regularly organised and administered by each educational institution. Assessment entails gathering data using a variety of methods before passing judgement on a student (Afemike, 2018). Teachers also view evaluation as information gathered about their lessons, while students see it as a process that gives them feedback on their progress (Mahmud & Yunus, 2018). Thus, assessment is the process by which teachers and educators gather data to evaluate student performance and also a means by which students use the collected data to assess their progress and pinpoint areas that need more study or improvement. Assessment's value to users cannot be overstated; it is used for anything from selecting students for further coursework to keeping tabs on employees and allocating funds. Assessment makes it easier to obtain information that classroom teachers can utilise to make decisions about their pupils and what they have learned (Ajogbeje, 2012). Several types of assessment are frequently used in education to evaluate learning outcomes, such as a student's mastery of a task or body of knowledge. According to Ajogbeje (2023), assessment is the method by which students' progress towards learning goals is determined in connection to the learning outcomes that were previously established as goals.

Internal and external assessments are two types of school assessments. An evaluation is considered internal when the student's school is involved in its development, administration, and grading (Vitello & Williamson, 2017). In a school setting, the first form of internal assessment is the course work which is designed to facilitate the assessment of positive achievement (Tatersall et al in Barrance, 2019). On the other hand, assessments conducted by independent organisations are known as "external assessment," and they include the likes of the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the National Examination Council (NECO), the National Business and Technical Board (NABTEB), and the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). Education researchers in Nigeria have been complaining about the current standardised assessment system for years. The Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) and other similar external tests only test students' knowledge in certain behavioural categories. Important educational aims, such as emotional and psychomotor development, are not being adequately addressed (Kolawole, 2010). They do not use cumulative grading or any kind of student counselling that minimises the importance of teachers in guiding their students to success in the classroom. Primary school teachers assess their students' progress towards learning outcomes using school-based evaluations, according to Anyiamuka (2018). Teachers monitor their pupils' academic growth through school-based assessment (SBA); thereby, their pupils feel more empowered to take charge of their own education when they participate in school-based evaluation. When pupils learn to study on their own, they build abilities in high-level recognition and trustworthy confidence in their own learning outcomes (Ajogbeje, 2023).

The focus has shifted from SBA in secondary schools to primary schools in an effort to permanently address the aforementioned issues and the high failure rate that characterises Nigeria's external examinations (Kolawole, 2010). When used in schools, it evaluates not just how well a student does on academic tests but how well they do on tests that measure skills

outside of the classroom as well. Traditional methods of assessing students' academic achievement failed to take into account their growth in areas such as cognition, psychomotor skills, and emotion, which is why school-based assessment was developed. When teachers or instructors have little time to get their students ready for an examination, they may merely go over the specific topics that will be tested. There is a growing recognition that better student learning can be achieved through teachers' interactions with and use of assessments developed in the classroom (Ajogbeje, 2023). The harmful effects of one-day examinations prompted educators to differentiate between assessment of learning and assessment for learning. Learning is evaluated either at the end of the time allotted for learning or at the end of the course, as stated by Ajogbeje (2023). According to Ajogbeje (2023), formative assessment is used to give the teacher and the student information on how things are going as far as the learning process is concerned. As a result of the national plan on education's centrality of formative assessment to the educational process at all grade levels, school-based assessment has become standard practice across the board.

Ajogbeje (2012, 2023) says that assessment is an integral part of the school learning process, and here is where school-based assessment comes in. According to Mkpae&Obowu (2017), school-based assessment is an effective form of classroom assessment that requires students to apply knowledge and abilities in order to attain short-term aims. The teacher has a higher obligation to raise the bar of learning by creating high-quality assessments that are aligned with students' learning outcomes. United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (2018) reports that when students receive feedback and assessments on school-based projects from classroom teachers and/or other stakeholders with the intent of including those results in the public examination. Teachers can tailor their lessons to the requirements of their students, and students can use the feedback to improve in areas where they scored lower.

Because they are administered in a context that is both familiar and relevant to the pupils, school-based evaluations in elementary school have been found to boost students' confidence and enthusiasm to learn, create greater classroom autonomy, and provide better results. Teachers and students in Nigeria must play an integral part in the success of SBA if the goals are to be met (Mahmud, 2019). Teachers have a responsibility to use the data gleaned from student evaluations to help their students do better in the classroom (Mahmud & Yunus, 2018). Teachers are not prepared to meet the need for assessment in the classroom, according to research on teachers' assessment practices (Mahmud et al., 2020b). This tends to suggest that educators are not in favour of using formative assessment in the classroom. Consequently, most educators still do not know how to properly implement formative assessment, particularly in terms of incorporating formative assessment strategies into the classroom (Moss & Brookhart, 2019).

School-based assessment examinations for elementary school pupils use rigorous approaches to evaluate the students' cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor abilities. In primary school, students' academic progress is measured by school-based assessment, which involves a teacher's systematic accumulation of grades or marks to construct an overall judgement of each student's performance in class. This data shows that SBA continues to grow and persist. Therefore, educators in the classroom must be well-equipped to provide students with a range of supports and to measure their progress in a variety of ways. Teachers' participation in and understanding of the assessment process are crucial to the effectiveness of school-based evaluation. Therefore,

it is crucial to take the competence of teachers into account when introducing school-based evaluation in primary schools. According to research by Mkpae and Obowu-Adutchay (2017), most educators are enthusiastic about implementing SBA into their classrooms, and many have a favourable attitude towards assessment and see it as a means to better their students' education. Despite this acknowledgement, many teachers still struggle to effectively carry out their assessment responsibilities due to insecurities stemming from confusion about assessment's meaning, its various forms, and its place within the larger instructional and evaluative framework.

The capacity of educators to develop valid and reliable assessment tools is intrinsically linked to the quality of the test items they use. The validity of exams and the reliability of such an evaluation are compromised when teachers demonstrate ineptitude and a lack of experience in test construction (Amedahe&Asamoah-Gyimah, 2016). Therefore, educators in the classroom should be able to create an evaluation tool that can tell which students have learned the material and which have not. If this is not the case, then educators won't be able to give each student the attention and resources they need to succeed in school. The capacity of tests to differentiate between high and low achievers in a particular subject is, however, impacted by test-related features (format and design faults) that are linked to the test construction expertise of classroom teachers. Item analysis approaches, which are based on the principles of the classical true-score theory, can be used to verify the accuracy of educators' responses on any self-reported measure used to assess their competence in test construction.

Teachers and educators often engage in shoddy evaluation practices; therefore, the question today is whether or not school-based assessment has been adequately implemented in our primary schools. The goal of this research is to find out if and how primary school educators in Ekiti State are incorporating school-based evaluation into their teaching practices. The study's overarching goals were to determine (1) how gender influences teachers' use of school-based assessment in Ekiti State primary schools and (2) how teachers' levels of education and experience influence their use of school-based assessment in Ekiti State primary schools. The research aimed to find out this information and verify these hypotheses.

1.1. Research Questions

The following research question was raised to guide the investigation:

What are the practices of school-based assessment among teachers of primary schools in Ekiti State?

1.2. Research Hypotheses

The study was designed to test the validity or otherwise of the following hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance

1. Primary school teachers in Ekiti State show no substantial gender-based differences in their practice of school-based assessment.
2. Teachers with and without teaching qualifications do not significantly differ in their use of school-based assessment tools

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

The research design for the study is a descriptive survey design method.

2.2. Participants

All the primary school teachers in the Ekiti South Senatorial District of Ekiti State constitute the study's population. A stratified sampling technique was used to select 210 elementary school teachers as the study sample.

2.3. Measures

A structured school-based assessment questionnaire (SBAQ) was used for the study. It has two sections. Section A elicited demographic information about the respondents, which includes gender, age, and educational qualifications. Section B consisted of 22 items that elicited information about the practices and techniques of SBA and teachers' experiences with school-based assessment. Three experts in tests and measurement validated the instrument using face and content validity. The reliability coefficient of the instrument (0.78) was computed using the Cronbach alpha.

2.4. Procedure and Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using frequency count, mean, standard deviation, and a t-test at the 0.05 level of significance. A mean criterion value of 2.50, which was the arithmetic mean of the weight assigned to the 4-point Likert scale, was used to make a decision on the items. A mean score of 2.50 or above indicated acceptance, while a score below 2.50 indicated rejection.

3. Results

3.1. Primary School Teachers and School-Based Assessment Practices

The mean score and standard deviations of the respondents' responses to school-based assessment techniques in Ekiti State primary schools is shown in Table 1 below

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of School Based Assessment practices among primary school teachers

S/N	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1	I understand the objectives of SBA in primary school.	2.2	0.72	Agreed
2	I have a good knowledge of SBA from primary school.	3.4	0.73	Agreed
3	I am always in regular conversation with my students about SBA processing and scoring criteria.	3.2	0.84	Agreed
4	I am well acquainted with the primary SBA regulation system.	2.8	0.68	Agreed
5	I am familiar with the guiding evaluation principles of the SBA in primary school.	2.9	0.91	Agreed
7	I use my students' responses or information to improve their learning outcomes.	2.2	0.89	Disagreed
8	I instruct my pupils using the SBA guidelines.	3.5	0.90	Agreed
9	I place more emphasis on the merging of pupils' skills.	3.4	0.81	Agreed
10	I place more importance on giving my students comments.	2.1	0.78	Disagreed
11	I used the checklist form to record my pupils' achievement progress.	3.3	0.75	Agreed
12	I usually provide grades for every assignment or assessment I give to my pupils.	2.4	0.86	Disagreed
13	During or after instruction, I encourage self-evaluation among my pupils.	3.2	0.67	Agreed
14	I use my students' SBA feedback to enhance their learning process.	3.3	0.69	Agreed
15	I keep track of students' learning development with respect to learning goals.	2.96	0.84	Agreed
16	I evaluate students work and inform them of their weaknesses or strengths.	2.2	0.68	Disagreed
17	I am very knowledgeable about SBA requirements in primary school.	3.5	0.91	Agreed
18	I have regular conversations about the SBA process and scoring criteria with my students.	3.4	0.89	Agreed
19	I am well-versed with the SBA in the primary school regulation system.	2.1	0.90	Disagreed
20	I am familiar with the guiding evaluation principle of the SBA in primary school.	3.3	0.81	Agreed
21	I have had the opportunity to participate in SBA seminars, workshops, and other primary school professional-related courses.	2.4	0.78	Disagreed
22	I usually monitor and grade students' involvement and participation in classroom activities and exercises.	3.2	0.68	Agreed

Items 7 and 10 with low means show that elementary school teachers are not using students' responses to school-based assessments to inform instruction and raise test scores. Item 10's mean

score of 2.1 supports the notion that elementary school educators do not place a premium on providing students with feedback. Similarly, scores of 2.4, 2.2, and 2.4 for items 12, 16, and 21 indicate that teachers in these grades do not see commenting on student work as particularly important. This suggests that primary school educators are not using school-based assessment best practices, as evidenced by their failure to grade every assessment they administer, their lack of familiarity with the school-based assessment's regulation system, and their lack of participation in school-based assessment-related professional courses. The mean score was higher for other items, this suggests that teachers are doing things like keeping track of students' progress toward their learning goals, encouraging self-evaluation, and monitoring and grading students' participation in class activities as part of their school-based assessment practices. This implies that teachers have effectively implemented school-based assessments; however, not all the teachers successfully leveraged the data gleaned from student responses to boost overall achievement

3.2. Gender-based Differences and the Practice of School-Based Assessment.

Table 2: T-test comparing male and female teacher’s methods of SBA

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	p-value
Male Teachers	200	46.90	7.15	685	1.23	0.262
Female Teachers	30	52.27	8.62			

*Significant $P < 0.05$

Table 2 shows a t-test value of 1.23 and a p-value of 0.262, both of which are statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that male and female primary school teachers or instructors do not significantly differ in their methods of conducting SBA.

3.3. Teachers Teaching Qualifications and the Practice of School-Based Assessment

A t-test value of 21.02 was obtained at the 0.05 significance level. The upshot of this is that the alternative hypothesis cannot be rejected. This implies that primary school teachers with and without teaching qualifications have quite different approaches to assessing students in the classroom.

Table 3: T-test of the difference between teachers with and without teaching qualifications in their use of SBA tools

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-cal	p-value
Teachers with Teaching Qualifications	602	37.72	4.39	685	21.02	.000
Teachers without Teaching Qualifications	85	25.18	3.78			

*Significant $P < 0.05$

4. Discussion

According to the research findings, teachers in elementary schools do not use the feedback that students provide during classroom assessments. Findings from the study also reveal that providing students with feedback is not a top priority for elementary school teachers. This indicates that teachers in primary schools do not give letter grades for every form of assessment they give their students while in school. The study further revealed that teachers do not evaluate students' work or provide feedback to help them develop. Consistent with the claims of Ugodunwa and Mustapha (2005), and Akinsola (2007), this study found that many teachers in practice lack the skills necessary to conduct accurate and timely evaluations of their students' progress.

The large class sizes makes it challenging for classroom teachers to implement SBA as a novel educational policy. SBA-related professional development opportunities were especially scarce for elementary school teachers, according to the survey. This finding is also in line with research carried out by Norani and Saifulazri (2010), which found that teachers' or educators' lack of school-based assessment training subconsciously lowers their confidence in administering such assessments. There were no significant disparities between the ways in which male and female students were evaluated at school. The findings of this study contradict that of Fagbayi (2016), who claimed that male and female teachers administered school-based assessments differently. The study also found that there was a significant difference between teachers with and without teaching qualifications in their use of school-based assessment procedures. In this scenario, it is clear that certified teachers or educators are better equipped to use SBA than their uncertified counterparts. Since SBA necessitates the use of evaluation abilities that can only be achieved through educational training or background, and since untrained teachers lack such background, this conclusion may be warranted.

5. Conclusion

The study has shown that primary school teachers have a good understanding of SBA implementation principles and methods, and they have indeed tried to carry out the practice of SBA well. The SBA aims to obtain information on student performance to fully develop their potential to become harmonious and balanced human capital in line with the aspirations and objectives of the National Policy on Education. Hopefully, this study is capable of helping and guiding primary schools to improve their practices of SBA in their respective schools. The study recommends that opportunities should be provided for teachers to attend workshops and seminars on creating and validating test instruments. All levels of government must support teachers and educators in carrying out rigorous SBA and see SBA as an "assessment of learning" and not an "assessment for learning."

Acknowledgement

The researchers would like to extend their gratitude to the head teachers for allowing us to use their schools and teachers, research assistants, and the teachers who participated in the research work for their willingness and readiness to share their time and insights with us.

Without their cooperation and assistance, this research work would not have been possible. We would also like to thank everyone who helped conduct this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethical Statement

This study does not require ethical approval since it focuses majorly on the practices of school-based assessment by primary school teachers and does not involve any direct intervention, manipulation, or collection of personal data from human subjects. However, the research instrument was reviewed and approved by the Centre for Research and Development (CERAD) Ethics Assessment Committee of Bamidele Olumilua University of Education, Science, and Technology.

Author Contribution

The authors conceived the idea, developed the materials, carried out the data collection, and wrote the manuscript. The authors also read and approved the final manuscript.

References

1. Adediwura, A. A. (2012). *Teacher's Perception of School Based Assessment in Nigerian Secondary Schools. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. 3(1), 99-109*
2. Aduloju, M. O., Adikwu O, Agi, C. I. (2016). *School Based Assessment: Implication for National Development. Open Access Library Journal. 2016; 3:e2392. (<https://dx.doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1102392>).*
3. Afemikhe, O. A. (2015). *Assessment in schools: A look at the big picture. Inaugural Lecture Series 151 University of Benin, February 5, 2015.*
4. Afemikhe, O. A. (2018). *Effecting Evidence-Based Teaching and Learning. Keynote Address presented at the EARNIA 4th International Conference Ghana 2-7 September, 2018*
5. Ajogbeje, O. J. (2012). *Effect of formative testing on student's achievement in secondary school mathematics. European Scientific Journal. 8, (8), 117-153.*
6. Ajogbeje, O. J. (2023). *Enhancing classroom learning outcomes: The power of immediate feedback strategy. International Journal of Disabilities Sports and Health Sciences 6(3). 453-465.*

7. Akinsola, O.S. (2007), *Teacher perception of School-Based Assessment problems: Implications for universal Basic Education*. *Nigerian journal of Educational Researcher and Evaluation*. 7(1),43-49.
8. Amedahe, F. K., &Asamoah-Gyimah, K. (2016). *Introduction to measurement and evaluation (7th ed.)*. Cape Coast: Hampton Press
9. Anikweze, C.M. (2011) *Assessment of Teachers' Professional Skills in Nigeria: Needed Reforms*. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 10, 57-68.
10. Anyiamuka CK. *Teachers' characteristics as determinants of their attitude towards assessment for learning in secondary schools in Rivers State*. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Port Harcourt, 2018.
11. Fagbayi, T. F. (2016). *An Assessment of Secondary School Teachers' Perception and Competency towards the Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State*. M.Ed Project, University of Benin
12. Imasuen K., Iyamu I.F. (2022), *Public Junior Secondary School Teachers' Perception and Application of School-Based Assessment in Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area, Edo State*. *British Journal of Contemporary Education* 2(1), 42-53.
13. Kolawole, E. B. (2010). *Principles of Test Construction and Administration (Revised Edition)*. Lagos, Nigeria: Bolabay Publications.
14. Mahmud, M. S., &Yunus, A. S. M. (2018). *The Practice of Giving Feedback of Primary School Mathematics Teachers in Oral Questioning Activities*. *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems*, 10(12), 1336–1343.
15. Mahmud, M. S. (2019). *The Role of Wait Time in the Process of Oral Questioning in the Teaching and Learning Process of Mathematics*. *International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology*, 28(16), 691–697.
16. Mahmud, M. S., Yunus, A. S. M., Ayub, A. F. M., &Sulaiman, T. (2020a). *Enhancing Mathematical Language through Oral Questioning in Primary School*. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*.
17. Mahmud, M. S., Yunus, A. S. M., Ayub, A. F. M., &Sulaiman, T. (2020b). *The use of oral questioning in inculcating values in mathematics for primary school students*. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(3), 1–8.
18. Mkphee S. G, Obowu-Adutchay V. (2017). *School-based assessment: Benefit and teachers' perception in Nigerian secondary schools*. *International Journal of Education and Evaluation*. 3(2):19-27.
19. Mohid, A. &Rohaya, T (2013). *Perception towards School Based Assessment Implementation among Teachers in Malaysian Schools*.

20. Moss, C. M., & Brookhart, S. M. (2019). *Advancing formative assessment in every classroom: A guide for instructional leaders*. ASCD.
21. Norani, M. N. & Saifulazri, S. (2010). *The Implementation of School Based Assessment Coursework of life Skill Subject in National Secondary Schools*. Baharu. *I Journal of Education*, 24 (3), 102-110.
22. Pongi, V. (2004). *Making the Switch from “assessment for ranking” towards “assessment for learning”: Challenges facing the small Island states of the Pacific*. Paper presented at the Third Conference of the Association of Commonwealth Examinations and Accreditation Bodies (ACEAB), Nadi, Fiji.
23. Rashid, R. A & Jaidin, J. H (2014). *Exploring primary school teachers’ conception of assessment for learning*, *International Education Studies*, 7(9), 69-83.
24. Tan, A. M. (2010). *School-Based Assessment in Malaysia: Availability of Teachers, Issues and Guidelines for Implementation*. Kuala Lumpur: Greek Budaya Enterprise
25. Ugodunwa C.A & Mustapha A.Y (2005), *Strategies for quality assurance in educational assessment at the university level*. *Nigerian Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 12(3), 10-17
26. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2018). School-based assessment*.