

SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT AS A DETERMINANT OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN WAEC AND NECO EXAMINATIONS: GEOGRAPHY IN FOCUS

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Abstract

This study investigated school-based assessment as a determinant of students' achievement in WAEC and NECO SSCE in geography. The ex-post facto research design was employed for this study. The population of this study consisted of all the Senior secondary school certificate geography candidates in the public schools in the Ilorin metropolis while the target population comprised all candidates who sat for both the WAEC and NECO geography SSCE in 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 academic sessions. Ten public Senior Secondary Schools were randomly sampled. A total of five thousand eight hundred and eighty-four (5, 884) candidates results that sat for the WAEC and NECO Geography SSCE for the academic session 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 in Ilorin metropolis were considered. Proforma and a questionnaire were used to collect data. Analysis of data was carried out using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic to test the two hypotheses postulated for this study at an alpha level of 0.05. The findings revealed that there was a low positive and moderate relationship in both hypotheses tested between School-Based Assessment and the students' performance in WAEC and NECO Geography SSCE respectively. Based on these findings, it was recommended that, teachers and officers in the examination bodies indicted in manipulating school-based assessment scores should be regarded as saboteur and be made to face the charges like those that engaged in examination malpractice.

Key Words: School-Based Assessment, Determinant, Students Achievement WAEC and NECO

Introduction

The education systems of most nations in the world including Nigeria are currently undergoing a significant transformation. The development of any nation depends largely on the quality of its citizens, which in turn depends to a large extent on the percentage of the population with a level of education adequate for any meaningful development and human capital resources. Therefore, Nigeria like other countries of the world, acknowledges that education is a vital tool for achieving national development (National Policy on Education, 2004). To ascertain that education responds adequately to our national needs and aspirations, individual learners need to be assessed periodically and at the end of any educational programme. As a result of these education reforms, a series of effective and practical ways of measuring, evaluating and reporting students' progress towards the various targets and learning goals are being introduced periodically (NPE, 2004). The computation of the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) has two components-micro (school-based assessment) and macro assessments (SSCE assessment). The first component is the school-Based Assessment which is a form of formative evaluation conducted by individual schools for evaluating the progress of their students and also used for certification of the SSCE programme. A school-based assessment is an innovative but objective way of assessing the course of instruction as well the total learning outcomes in the learners (National Teachers' Institute. 2007).

One such form of school-based assessment is Continuous Assessment (CA) in which students are expected to be assessed in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. School-based-assessment is in three forms (pre-instruction, during and end of instruction) (National Teachers Institute 2007). The results of these assessments are summed up starting from Senior School One (SS1) to Senior School Three (SS3). The cumulative scores obtained are usually computed and converted to 30% of the total obtainable scores for certification. The first reason for introducing school-based assessment is to improve the validity of students' assessment and therefore, facilitate effective learning outcomes. The second reason is to improve the reliability of assessments since they must be based on multiple observations. Hence, the ultimate purpose of School-based assessment is to facilitate or promote learning which is also referred to as "assessment for learning (National Teachers' Institute 2007).

The ways school-based assessment is being conducted in Nigerian schools have often been criticized. Most schools still operate the traditional assessment practice such as one-shot examination. There are a lot of disagreeable outcomes following the mismanagement of test instruments and scores. Emphasis is still placed on obtaining high marks without regard for understanding or the ability to apply the concepts learnt in solving real-life problems. Afemikhe (2005) observed that it is doubtful whether the school-based assessment is not helping to inflate the grades obtained in JSCE and SSCE. Adejumo and Afolabi (1990) also observed that school-based assessment scores sent to the State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, WAEC, NECO and National Business Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) are often arbitrary and usually inflated by teachers in school. Frary, Cross and Weber (1993) also stated that

there is irrationality in the grading of School-Based Assessment by teachers in various subjects.

The second component is the SSCE assessment conducted by the West African Examinations Council and the National Examinations Council which are external examinations to the school system (Federal Ministry of Education, 1985). This is so because the examination bodies are not responsible for the teaching and learning of these students and it is a form of summative evaluation. However, the National Policy on Education (2004) recognizes three examination bodies (i.e. WAEC, NECO and NABTEB) in Nigeria that conduct parallel or equivalent SSCE and each of these bodies is responsible for test development, administration, marking, award of grades and certification of all candidates. However, in this study, two examination bodies (i.e. WAEC and NECO) are being considered. They conduct parallel or equivalent SSCE based on the national curriculum and each of them is responsible for test construction, administration, marking of scripts, award of grades and certification of candidates. The scores obtained from the examinations they conduct are converted to 70% of the total obtainable marks for certification as directed by the National Policy on Education and the SSCE national curriculum.

Field observations by the researchers showed that more than 75% of the students who enrolled and sat for SSCE sat for Geography as one of the elective subjects. The researchers observed that more students pass Geography in NECO than WAEC. Afemikhe (2005) also observed that the performance of students varied between WAEC and NECO because of the time available for the student's preparation for the examination. Ejinkeonye (2004) and Ojerinde and Faleye (2005) stated that the WAEC uses a small proportion while NECO uses a large proportion of school-based assessment scores in the computation of the final results of school SSCE. It is for this reason that the researchers decided to investigate if the school-based assessment can be used as a determinant of students' achievement in WAEC and NECO SSCE Geography.

Purpose of the Study

Specifically, this study attempted to examine

1. Relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the WAEC SSCE Geography.
2. Relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the NECO SSCE Geography.

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were postulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the WAEC SSCE Geography.
2. There is no significant relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the NECO SSCE Geography.

Research Methodology

This study adopted an expo-facto research design. This is because the school-based assessment, WAEC and NECO Geography results that were in existence in the schools were used. The population for this study consisted of all Senior School Certificate Geography candidates in the Public Secondary Schools in the Ilorin metropolis. The target population is made up of candidates who sat for both the WAEC and NECO Geography SSCE in the academic sessions 2011/2012 to 2012/2013. Four schools out of 54 schools in the Ilorin metropolis were randomly selected because of the volume of data. All the candidates' results in the four randomly selected schools were purposively sampled because they both sat for WAEC and NECO Geography SSCE for the academic sessions 2011/2012 to 2012/2013. Therefore, a total of 5,884 results were used for computation in this study.

The researchers developed a proforma for the collection of School-Based Assessment scores, the WAEC and NECO Geography SSCE results for the academic sessions 2011/2012 to 2012/2013. In addition, a questionnaire "Magnitude of School-Based Assessment in the Computation of WAEC/NECO Examination" was also designed to confirm the percentage of School-Based Assessment scores being used in the computations of the final SSCE results by the WAEC and NECO. The questionnaire consisted of only four items. The questionnaire was validated by experts in the Department of Social Sciences Education, the University of Ilorin to have content validity. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic was used to test the hypotheses formulated at an alpha level of 0.05.

Results

The data collected were collated and analyzed. The results were presented in the tables below for easy interpretation.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the WAEC Geography SSCE*

To test this hypothesis one, Geography School-Based Assessment scores sent to WAEC for the academic sessions 2011/2012 to 2012/2013 needed for SSCE final computation were obtained from sampled schools. The WAEC Geography results for the same academic sessions were also collected. The set of data collected was transformed to the same unit (continuous data) and subjected to PPMC statistical analysis using SPSS 21.0.

Assessment Scores with WAEC Geography SSCE Results								
Variables		N	Mean	Std.	df	Cal. r-value	Crit. t-value	Sig.
School-Based Assessment		5,844	64.98	7.68				
WAEC Geography Results		5,844	61.61	10.68	5,842	0.315	0.87	0.000
P < 0.05								

This low relationship could be attributed to the field observation made by the researchers, that scores in school-based assessment in all school subjects WAEC Geography are usually adjusted upwards before they are sent to the and the NECO offices. It is for this reason that the researchers believed that reduces the percentage of school-based assessment scores being used in the computation of SSCE results.

To test this hypothesis two, Geography school-based assessment scores sent to NECO for the academic sessions 2011/2012 to 2012/2013 needed for SSCE final computation were obtained from sampled schools. The NECO Geography results for the same academic sessions were also collected. The set of data collected was transformed to the same unit (continuous data) and subjected to PPMC statistical analysis using SPSS 21.0. ent The NECO.

Assessment Scores with NECO Geography SSCE Results								
Variables		N	Mean	Std.	df	Cal. r-value	Crit. t-value	Sig.
School-Based Assessment		5,844	64.98	7.68	5,842	0.577	0.087	0.000
NECO	Geography Results	5,844	37.97	12.43				

Table two shows that the calculated r-value is 0.577 and with the calculated significant .000 computed at a critical level of significance.05. Since the calculated significance (000) is less than the critical significance (05), hypothesis two is therefore rejected. This implies that there is a positive but moderate relationship between students' performance in School-Based Assessment and their performance in NECO Geography SSCE.

This moderate correlation could be a result of a series of remedial lessons that were given to students before the commencement of the NECO Examinations. During this period, several past questions were treated with the students. This acted as a revisional preparatory activity to NECO Examinations. This made Geography students adjust and strengthen their possible areas of weakness in geographical concepts that have been spotted as difficult in the previous examinations

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data collected, the findings of the study in table 1 showed that there is a significant relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the WAEC Geography SSCE. Support for this finding could be derived from a series of research activities that have been carried out by scholars. For instance, Adejumo and Afolabi (1990) believed that Continuous Assessment (Schools-Based Assessment) scores are often arbitrary and usually inflated by Nigerian Schools. Fray Cross and Webber (1995) used Adejumo and Alolabi (1990) by stressing that there is irrationality in the grading of Continuous Assessment (schools-based assessment) in schools. Anikweze (2005) also confirmed this claim by stressing that it is doubtful whether the inclusion of Continuous Assessment (schools-based assessment) in Nigeria's final system has not helped to inflate the grades obtained in SSCE. Support is finding is also obtained from Anikwez (2005) who stated that how Continuous Assessments (schools-based assessments) are conducted in librarian schools has often been criticized due to certain unsavoury outcomes following the mismanagement of test aims and objectives, testing situation, and even the interpretation of results.

In the same vein, Ojerinde and F'aleye (2005) also stated that in recent times. the WAC has been using a small proportion of Continuous Assessment (schools-based assessment) scores in the computation of the final results of the students at the SSCE level. 1Ejinkconyc (2004) went further to state that less than 30% of the teachers' assessment scores are being used in the computation of the WARC/SsCE results.

In addition, the findings of the study in table 2 revealed that there is a significant relationship between students' performance in school-based assessment and their performance in the NIECO Geography SSCE. The moderate relationship that was found could be seen from the emphasis placed on the school-based assessment by the NECO as stipulated and directed in the national curriculum and the national policy on education. This made the students' performance in the NECO Geography SSCE to be a little better than WAEC Geography SSCT. Support for this view comes from Fjinkcove (2004) who stated that sometimes more than 30% of school-based assessment scores are being used in the computation of NIECO Senior School Certificate Examinations. Ojerinde and

F'aleyc (2005) also pointed out that a high premium is placed on school-based assessment, which therefore increased the number of credits and passes obtained by the students at the NECO Senior School Certificate Examination. Similarly, the finding supports the view of Owolabi (2000) and Olasupo (2003) that remedial Cussons are forms of assessment, which help students to identify their areas of strength and weakness and provides on-going feedback to the students for Cdemie improvement. Okpala and Omacha (1990) and Afemikhe (2005) also affirmed that remedial classes help students to receive improved instructions and therefore increased their academic performance.

Conclusions

Arising from the discussion of the findings, it appears that school-based assessment conducted by teachers in Nigerian schools has been abused and misused. It appcared that school-based assessment in our schools could not solely rely upon to determine or predict students' future academic performance in SSCE. However, no matter the magnitude of the problems being performance ed in the operation and implementation of school-based assessment, it is clear that we cannot back out of the national educational policy.

It was also discovered that the WAEC and NECO do not have ents SSCE results. The study also found that remedial lessons before internal external examinations are necessary ingredients in teaching and learning processes weighting scores for School-Based Assessment in the computation of student and since they help to discover areas of strengths and weakness and enhances student performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the results of this study:

1. It is clear that much work has to be carried out to ensure that school-based assessment scores add value to the overall assessment at the SSCE level
2. School administrators and teachers must incorporate a high degree of fairness and objectivity in their evaluation activities to make School-Based Assessment reliable in the 9-3-4 Nigeria educational system.
3. Teachers and officers indicted in manipulating school-based assessment scores should be regarded as saboteurs and made to face the same sanctions/penalties as those engaged in examination malpractice. This will act as a deterrent to others who may want to do similar barbaric and unprogressive activities,
4. There is a need to have a uniform weighting score for the School-Based Assessment being used in the computation of the final results by the two examination bodies (WAEC and NECO).
5. The proportion of weighting scores used by NECO and WAEC for the school-based assessment should be the same and followed strictly.
6. Government should stop employing people without teaching qualifications to teach and assess students in our schools because they lack assessment skills,
7. Proper monitoring and supervision of teachers during school-based assessment may eradicate or reduce the manipulation of school-based assessment scores

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