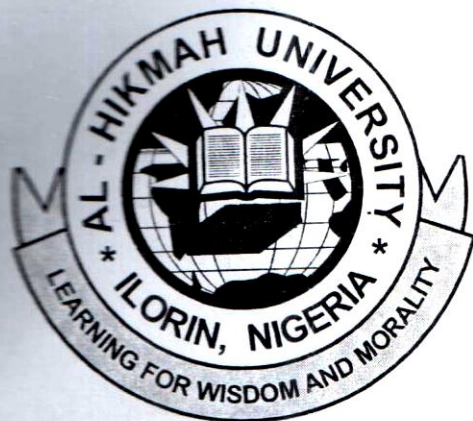




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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

- Abdul, A. Ph.D.** Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Abdulkafiz, A. I.** is a Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, College of Education, Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Abdulkadir, O. R. Ph.D.** is a Lecturer, Educational Foundations Department, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsin-MA, Katsina, Nigeria
- Abdullahi, M. A. Ph.D.** is a Chief Lecturer, Department of Education, College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies Ilorin, Nigeria
- Abdulraheem, I. O.** Ilorin, Kwara
- Abdulraheem, M.** is a Lecturer, Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin
- Abdulraheem, Y. O.** is a Lecturer, Department of Human Kinetics Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin
- Abdussalam, O. I.** is a Lecturer, Kwara State College of Education, (COED) Ilorin,
- Abimbola, I. O. Ph.D.** is a Lecturer, Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Abubakar, M. S.** is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education
- Adegunna, A. D.** is a Research Student (Mathematics Education) Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria
- Adeyemi, W. A.** is a Lecturer, Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara
- Agbonlahor A. A.** is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations & Management, School of Education, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State
- Ahmed, M. A. Ph.D.** is a Lecturer, Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
- Ajagbe, F. N. Ph.D.** c/o. Mr. Ibrahim Oyedele Ajagbe, Michael Imohoudu National Institute for Labour Studies, P.M.B. 1524, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
- Ajayi, I. G.** is a Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin, Kwara State
- Ajeigbe, Y. I.** is a Lecturer, Department of Human Kinetics, Health Education and Sports Administration, Kwara State University Malete
- Akanmu, M. A. Ph.D.** is a Lecturer, Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Akanni, L. F. is a Lecturer, Business Education Department, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Akinnubi, O. P. Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Counselling, College of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State

Alabi, D. O. is a Lecturer, Religious Department, Faculty of Arts, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

Ambali, R. is a Lecturer, Political Science Department, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Ayinla, S. O. is a Lecturer, Department of Science and Technical Education, College of Education, Igbaja Campus,

Bello, A. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Science Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Bello, A. Y. Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Science Education, College of Education, Al-Hikmah University Igbaja Campus.

Braimah, O. J. is a Lecturer, *Department of Statistics, University of Ilorin, PMB 1515, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.*

Braimah, O. J. is a Lecturer, *Department of Statistics, University of Ilorin, PMB 1515, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria*

Busari, K. K. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Osun State College of Education, Ilesa, Nigeria

Chukwujekwu, O. N. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Policy, School of Education, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State

Cobbinah, A. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast-Ghana

Daramola, D. S. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Dimowo, R. A. is a Doctoral Student, Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin, Kwara State

Enijuni, A. T. is a Lecturer, Business Education Department, College of Education, Ikere Ekiti, Ekiti State

Etejere, P. A. O. Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Falode, O. C. is a Lecturer II (Educational Technology) Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria

Fawale, A. A. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Counselling, College of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Gambari, A. Ph.D. is an Associate Professor (Educational Technology) Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria

Idris, S. M. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Federal College of Education, Zaria

Iliyas, R. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, *Department of Educational Foundation, Federal University Dutsinma, Katsina State, Nigeria.*

Isiaka, G. is a Doctoral Student Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, JA'AFAR, A. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, FCT College of Education, Zuba-Abuja

Joan, A. P. is a Lecturer, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Faculty of Education, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma

Kolawole, L. A. is a Lecturer, *Chemistry Laboratory Unit, AbdulRaheem College of Advanced Studies, Igbaja (An Affiliate of Al-Hikmah University, PMB 1601, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria)*

Kurfi, R. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Educational Foundations Department, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsin-MA, Kastina, Nigeria

Lasisi, A. K. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin

Lawal, S. is a Lecturer, Languages Department, Kaduna Polytechnic, Kaduna

Muhammad-Jamiu I. Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Muraina, M. B. is a Lecturer and Sub-Dean, College of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State.

Nuhu, M. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Odetokun, A. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State

Ogundele, M. O. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria.

Oguntunde, A. D. Ph.D. is a Deputy Director, Department of Continuing Education, Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Okafor, I. P. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Okeshola, T. A. is a Doctoral Student, Department of History and International Studies, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Olutola, A. T. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State.

Omosidi, A. S. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Management University of Ilorin, Nigeria,

Owolabi, H. O. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Adult and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

Oyelakin, A.M. is a Lecturer, Department of Science Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Nigeria

Ozurumba. N. is a Lecturer, Bell University of Technology, Otta

Rabi, A. D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University, Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Raji, K. M. is a Lecturer, Kwara State College of Education (Technical) Lafiagi

Salami, S. S. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Management and Counselling, College of Education, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin

Salau, K. K. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundation, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Salau-Ibrahim T.T. *Department of Physical Sciences, Al-Hikmah University, PMB 1601, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria*

Salihu, T. A. ARMTI SSQ Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute, Ilorin, Kwara State.

Saliu, K .A. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations & Management, School of Education, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State

Shittu, A. T. is a Lecturer I (Educational Technology) Department of Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria

Sule, A. O. Ph.D. is a Reader, *Department of Statistics, University of Ilorin, PMB 1515, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.*

Toki, O. T. is a Lecturer, School of Basic and Remedial Studies, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin

Torpev, T. F. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, Federal University, Dutsin-Ma, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Udechukwu, J. A. Ph.D. is a Lecturer, Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, Department of Educational Psychology, School of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Uyanne. E. O. is a Lecturer, Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

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BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT SKILLS IN KWARA CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

D. S. DARAMOLA, A. T. OLUTOLA & H. O. OWOLABI

Abstract

The study investigated the profile, competence, and level of strengths and weaknesses of School-Based Assessment (SBA) skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State. Also, relationship between variables such as gender, age, teaching qualifications, teaching experienced and SBA skills of basic school teachers were found out on. Survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of all the basic school teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District while the target population comprised all the Upper basic school teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District. Three hundred and sixty-four teachers were randomly drawn from the total of 3,410 upper basic teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District. The teachers were drawn from 30 schools out of a total of 84 Upper Basic Schools in the district. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.65 was obtained. Analysis of data was carried out using mean, t-test and ANOVA statistics at 0.05 alpha level. The result revealed that the respondents have strengths in the areas of test administration and feedback while they showed weaknesses in the areas of test interpretation, test construction, test scoring and remediation. In addition, significant difference exists in the SBA skills of basic school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of gender, age, teaching qualifications and teaching experience. Based on these findings, it was recommended that basic school teachers should pay particular attention to principles of test construction skills so as to broaden their assessment knowledge as this could give rise to quality and effective teaching.

Keywords: *Assessment, Skills, Assessment Skills, Basic School Teachers*

Introduction

Assessment plays a critical role in teaching and learning process. Assessment and students' promotion or advancement cannot be separated. It is a tool use to measure students' performance in the school. Ojerinde (2009) purported that assessment is at the heart of education as test scores of assessment are used to gauge students' academic strengths and weaknesses. Assessment is a means whereby the teacher obtains information about knowledge gains, behavioural changes and other aspects of the development of learners (Ogunseye, 2002).

Quality and effective teaching cannot exist without good students' assessment. Assessment could also be defined as the process of obtaining information that is used to make educational decisions about students, to give feedback to the students about his or her progress, strengths and weaknesses, to judge instructional

effectiveness, and to inform policy (American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education and National Education Association, 1990). Assessment of students' achievement emphasizes the principles and practices of assessment that contribute to more effective classroom instruction and improved learning (Gronlund, 2006).

In Nigeria, School Based Assessment (SBA) is synonymous with Continuous Assessment (CA). CA is within the content of a larger SBA, a reform that is taking a central burner in schools. The interest in SBA is a shift in teaching for examinations to teaching for acquisition of knowledge and understanding (Afemikhe & Omo-Egbekuse, 2012). School Based Assessment is expected to expand the form, mode, means and scope of assessment in schools to facilitate and enhance learning (Osunde, 2008). For effective assessment in the school setting, teachers must understand the types of assessment such as, standardized tests, achievement tests, aptitude tests, anecdotal records, and structured observations, assessment of prior knowledge, student response during a lesson, portfolios, and essays written to prompts, journals, self-evaluations and performance assessment. The teacher must also have knowledge on the uses of assessments such as formative evaluation, summative evaluation and diagnostic evaluation (Okeke-Oti & Adaka, 2012). There are criteria teachers must follow during the construction of school based assessment.

According to Stanley and Hopkins (1972), criteria for judging classroom assessment practices should include selection of assessment techniques (test construction), administration and scoring, interpretation of assessment and communication of assessment. Selection of assessment techniques must be done based on standard principles depending on the objectives of the assessment. Administration and scoring must also be done based on standards to avoid assessment fraud and ensure validity. The interpretation of the results of the assessment as well as communication is also expected to be done in a fair manner to provide objectivity and reliable feedback to education stakeholders.

Research evidence tends to point to teacher inadequacy and failure in the subject matter of assessment, pervasive poor assessment practices among teachers (Erhinyodavwe, 2007), wide application of shoddy assessment practices of teachers due to unqualified and non-professional teachers in the field (Odili & Ajuar, 1995), teacher pre-occupied with numerous activities outside teaching for self sustenance, and irrationality in grading practices in terms of score interpretation (Karim, 1993; Cox, 1993) as factors affecting teachers competency in assessment skills in Nigeria schools.

In addition, some teachers construct poor test items because they did not understand the test construction skills. Test construction has been found to be a major source of anxiety among many teachers in Nigerian schools, especially, less experienced ones (Ebinye, 2001). This anxiety stems majorly from lack of test construction skill by these teachers. Lack of test construction skills by teachers might result to poor

assessment of students' achievements which may lead to students' failure both in internal and external examinations. Some researchers (Esomonu, 2002 & Paulson, 2003) saw this incompetency in test construction by teachers as a major cause of malpractice in school examinations by both teachers and students in Nigerian secondary schools.

However, test construction skills include the competencies needed for developing quality tests based on stipulated principles of test construction (Ali, 1999). These competencies are outlined by Ujah (2001) as: objectivity, communicative, item validation skills and skills for applying appropriate strategies for ascertaining the reliability of test instruments. To Silker (2003), skill in test construction enables a teacher to construct tests with precision, appropriateness of language-use, objectivity and good grading scales.

Studies have suggested that faulty test items affect students' comprehension and ability to provide accurate answers to the items, the inference drawn about what a student knows and understands may be compromised (Koksal, 2004; Leighton and Gokiert, 2005). Jatto (1996) observed that classroom teachers generally write poor items and that a typical classroom teacher in a secondary school cannot construct good multiple choice test items.

Research work confirmed that, some teachers failed to acquire assessment skills needed for quality test items development, scoring, interpretation, feedback and remediation skills while in training. This shows the need to investigate the assessment skills of basic school teachers in Nigeria. In view of this, the study investigated assessment skills of basic school teachers in Kwara central senatorial district. Specifically, the study aimed at assessing the teacher assessment skills on test construction, test administration, test scoring, test interpretation, feedback and remediation skills.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of SBA skills exhibit by Basic School teachers in Kwara State?
2. How competent are the Basic School teachers in Kwara State in their use of SBA skills?
3. In what SBA skills do Basic School teachers in Kwara State show strengths and weaknesses?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the SBA skills of male and female Basic School teachers in Kwara State.
2. There is no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching qualification.
3. There is no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching experience.
4. There is no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of age.

Methodology

The Survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of all the basic school teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District, while the target population comprised of all the Upper basic school teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District. Three hundred and sixty-four teachers were randomly drawn from the total of 3,410 upper basic teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District. The teachers were drawn from 30 schools out of a total of 84 Upper Basic Schools in the district. A rating scale titled "Teachers Assessment Skills Questionnaire" (TASQ) was used to collect data. It was divided into two sections A and B. Section A contained teachers' biographic information. Section B contained 32 items on teacher assessment skills on test construction, test administration, test scoring, test interpretation, feedback and remediation skills. The 4 point-likert scale of Always (3-points), Often (2-points), Seldom (1-point) and Never (0-point) was used. Expert judgment was used in validating the instrument. A Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.65 was obtained. The researchers personally administered the instrument to the respondents. Analysis of data collected was carried out using mean, t-test and ANOVA statistics at 0.05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question One: *What is the profile of SBA skills showed by Basic School teachers in*

Kwara State?

Scores of Basic school teachers in Kwara State SBA skills was subjected to mean analysis.

Table 1: Details of the Mean Analysis on SBA Skills of the Respondents

Assessment Skills	Over All Marks	Minimum Scores	Maximum Scores	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Construction	30	0	14	14	9.7885	2.5296
Administration	21	14	21	7	18.2418	1.6504
Scoring	9	7	9	2	8.7775	0.5529
Interpretation	12	6	12	6	9.9670	1.0597
Feedback	15	10	15	5	12.5027	1.0769
Remediation	9	5	9	4	6.7170	1.0039

From Table 1. Basic School teachers in Kwara State had high skills in test administration with mean of (18.24), followed by feedback with mean of (12.50), followed by Interpretation, Construction and Scoring skills with the means of (9.96), (9.78) and (8.77) respectively, while a least skill with a mean of (6.71) was demonstrated in remediation.

Research Question Two: *How competent are the Basic School teachers in Kwara State in their use of SBA skills?*

The means of the identified assessment skills revealed on Table 1 above indicated that the respondents were poor in their use of SBA skills. The means are below average.

Research Question Three: *In what SBA skills do Basic School teachers in Kwara State show*

strengths and weaknesses?

Table 1 revealed that the respondents showed strengths in the areas of test administration (18.24) and feedback (12.50), while they showed weaknesses in the areas of test interpretation (9.96), test construction (9.78), test scoring (8.77) and remediation (6.71).

Hypotheses Testing

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal t	P	Decision
Male	223	65.2691	4.3288	362	4.071	0.000	Rejected
Female	141	67.1418	4.1894				

As shown in Table 2, the t-test calculated value is 4.071, while its p-value is 0.000. At alpha level of 0.05. The null hypothesis one is rejected since the P-value .000 is less than 0.05 alpha level ($.000 < 0.05$). Thus, there is significant difference in the SBA skills of male and female Basic School teachers in Kwara State. Female teachers are significantly different in the SBA skills with higher mean of 67.1418.

Table 3: Details of the ANOVA Statistics on Respondents' SBA Skills on the Basis of Teaching Qualification.

Sources	SS	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P	Decision
Between Group	2187.944	3	729.315	55.484	0.000	Rejected
Within Group	4732.045	360	13.145			
Total	6919.989	363				

Table 3 shows an F-value 55.484 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching qualification is rejected. It therefore, means that there was a significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching qualification. Scheffe's Post Hoc was carried out to find the sources of the differences.

Table 4: Scheffe's Post - hoc Table on Respondents' SBA Skills on the Basis of Teaching Qualification.

Qualifications	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
B.Sc	54	63.7963	
B.A	182	64.3297	
NCE	46		68.6087
B.Sc.Ed/B.Ed	82		69.6707

Table 4 shows the Scheffe's post - hoc SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching qualification and a significant difference was revealed that Basic School teachers in Kwara State with B.Sc.Ed/B.Ed and NCE certificates have the highest mean score of 69.6707, and 68.6087 respectively. The means in the same subset implies that the respondents significantly possessed the same assessment skills. The respondents with B.A and B.Sc certificates have the least mean scores of 64.3297 and 63.7963 respectively and are significantly different in their SBA skills.

Table 5: Details of the ANOVA Statistics on Respondents' SBA skills on the Basis of Teaching Experienced

Sources	SS	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P	Decision
Between Group	1264.071	3	421.357			
Within Group	5655.918	360	15.711	26.819	0.000	Rejected
Total	6919.989	363				

Table 5 reveals an F-value 26.819 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching experience is rejected. It therefore, means that there is a significance difference in the SBA of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching experience. Scheffe's post - hoc was carried out to find the sources of the differences.

Table 6: Scheffe's Post- hoc Table on Respondents' SBA Skills on the Basis of Teaching Experienced.

Teaching Experienced	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
11-15YRS	172	64.3314	
1-5YRS	43	65.0233	
18 & ABOVE	79		67.7975
6-10YRS	70		68.6429

Table 6 above shows the Scheffe's post- hoc SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching experience and a significant difference was revealed. Basic School teachers in Kwara State with 6-10years and above 18years teaching experience have the highest mean scores of 68.6429, and 67.7975 respectively. The means in the same subset implies that the respondents significantly possessed the same assessment skills. The respondents with 1-5years and 11-15years have the least mean scores of 65.0233 and 64.3314 respectively and are significantly different in their SBA skills.

Table 7: Details of the ANOVA Statistics on Respondents' SBA skills on the Basis of Age

Sources	SS	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P	Decision
Between Group	1005.018	3	335.006			
Within Group	5914.971	360	16.430	20.389	0.000	Rejected
Total	6919.989	363				

Table 7 reveals an F-value 20.389 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of age is rejected. It therefore, means that there was a significant difference in the SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of age. Scheffe's Post Hoc was carried out to find the sources of the differences.

Table 8: Scheffe's Post - hoc Table on Respondents' SBA Skills on the Basis of Age

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
26-31years	56	64.4821	
Above 38years	251	65.4821	
32-37years	50		69.5600
20-25years	7		71.0000

Table 8 shows the Scheffe's post hoc on SBA skills of Basic School teachers in Kwara State on the basis of age and a significant difference was revealed. Basic School teachers in Kwara State between 20-25years old and 32-37years old have the highest mean scores of 71.000 and 69.5600, respectively. The means in the same subset implies that the respondents significantly possessed the same assessment

skills. The respondents that are above 38 years of age and those with age range of 26-31 years have the least mean scores of 65.4821 and 64.4821 respectively and are significantly different in their SBA skills.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the data collected and work done on the analysis of result, the findings of the study in Table 1 revealed that majority of the teachers exhibited high skills in administration, construction and scoring skills but had least skill in remediation. It was revealed that the basic teachers in Kwara State are poor in their use of SBA skills. The respondents had strengths in the areas of test administration and feedback, while they had weaknesses in the areas of test interpretation, test construction, test scoring and remediation as shown in Table 1. Bassey, Akpama, Ayang & Iferi-Obeten (2013) revealed in their study that the observed level of best assessment practices exhibited by the basic education teachers was not significantly higher than expected, except in assessment administration and scoring but assessment practices were significantly poor in construction, interpretation, communication, analysis and trial implications. Poor usages of SBA skills in Kwara State teachers were discovered.

From the study, female teachers are significantly different in the SBA skills than the male teachers as showed in Table 2. Sliker (2003) observed that all teachers irrespective of gender should develop some valid and reliable tests. Agu, Onyebuka and Anyichie (2013) found that there was no significant difference in the means ratings of male and female teachers. This confirms that the Test Construction Skill Inventory is stable across gender and could be appropriately used to assess the test construction skills of both male and female teachers.

The study revealed the significant differences in the SBA skills of basic school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching qualifications. Teachers with B.Sc. Ed./B.Ed. and NCE certificates have the highest means score as showed in Table 4.

Significant difference exists in the SBA skills of basic school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of teaching experience. This study supports the findings of Dosumu (2002) which observed that the more experienced a teacher is, the more he begins to understand and appreciate some important test construction skills. In addition, Silker (2003) made a similar observation and concluded that years of experience was a significant factor that affects the validity of teacher-made test. Moreover, significant difference exists in the SBA skills of basic school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of age.

Recommendations

This study investigated the profile, competence, and level of strengths and weaknesses of School-Based Assessment (SBA) skills showed by Basic School teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. Also, relationship between variables such as gender, age, teaching qualifications, teaching experience and SBA skills exhibited by basic school teachers were analyzed.

School- Based Assessments (SBA) are expected to be used as a formative tool to monitor students' performance and progression rate during a particular course or topic. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Teachers should pay particular attention to principles of test construction skills to reduce the problems of poor basic school assessment test items;
2. Teachers should be vast in assessment skills in order to set the test items that will include three domains of learning and to facilitate effective assessment practice in the classroom; and
3. Teachers should improve in remediation skills as this will assist students to understand what their teachers taught them, increase mastery and improve their academic performance.

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Asekun'Owo

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