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**COMPARABILITY OF LITERACY SKILL SCORES IN SCHOOL BASED
ASSESSMENT OF MALE AND FEMALE MIDDLE BASIC PUPILS IN MORO
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The underlying principle in School-Based Assessment (SBA) is the transformation from Continuous Assessment (CA) in accordance with the National Policy on Education (2013). The study therefore compared literacy skill scores generated from SBA of male and female middle basic pupils in Moro Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria. This study adopted ex-post facto design. The population for the study covered all the basic 1 to 9 pupils in public schools in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. The target population comprised 148 schools and 12,493 middle basic (Basic 4 to 6 pupils) in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 59 (39.87%) schools and 1180 pupils' results in English Language. A profoma was used as instrument to collect 2015/2016 academic session pupils' scores in English Language. One research question was raised and answered using curvilinear transformation on percentile scale. One research hypothesis was raised and tested using independent sampled t-test. It was found that the scores obtained by male pupils were higher than female pupils in 2015 English Language SBA in Moro LGA, Kwara State. It was also found that a significant difference was found in the scores obtained by male and female pupils in English Language SBA. One of the recommendations revealed that school-based assessment should be conducted to provide feedback to stakeholders in education industry. Teachers should endeavour to follow the recommended assessment procedures as specified by the National Policy on Education.

Keywords: Comparability, Literacy skill scores, School-Based Assessment, Middle Basic Schools.

Comparability of Literacy Skill Scores in School Based Assessment

Introduction

The system of education in many nations, Nigeria inclusive is undergoing significant transformation. One of the underlying principles in the transformation is moving away from Continuous Assessment (CA) to the School-Based Assessment (SBA) in accordance with the National Policy on Education (2013). Generally, the term assessment, in its widest sense, could be regarded as a process of collecting and interpreting information about learning and achievement of students that are normally used to provide information to students and their parents about the progress of the learners (pupils) in acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. Assessment provides support to teachers to modify their instruction and the learning activities; it also provides information to other stakeholders that make decisions about educational policy.

In the context of this study, SBA refers to assessments administered in schools and marked by the teachers. Students' assessment is seen as any method used to understand the current knowledge they possessed. The assessment of students varies from teacher to teacher and from school to school. In a school it is a known fact that a teacher may set difficult test items or be more lenient. This could also happen in his/her award of marks than another teacher.

At present, there seems to be no uniformity in the conduct of assessment across the schools in terms of test administration and marking of assessment instruments which might make SBA scores vary among schools. To address these disparities, there is need to search for ways of moderating assessments submitted by different teacher and schools, with the aim to ensuring the comparability scores of SBA. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) stated that any existing contradictions, ambiguities, lack of uniformity in educational practice in different parts of the Nigeria should be removed. According to Ojerinde & Falayajo (1984); Ayodele (2010) the differences in the quality of tests and other assessment instruments used in different schools as well as differences in the procedures of scoring and grading the various assessments in the various schools could pose problem of comparability of standard. Ayodele (2010) observed that the problem of non-uniformity in the quality of assessment instruments, consistency in assessment administrative procedures and procedures for scoring and grading varies from teacher to teacher. Some schools seem to use this advantage to unduly inflate SBA scores especially when is to be submitted to examination that is external to the school.

Comparability of assessment judgments means that there is agreement that the assessed performances are appropriately classified in terms of the standard they demonstrate. This involves both similar interpretation of the standards and similar recognition of performances that demonstrate those standards. It therefore involves moderation processes of assessor judgments (Graham, 2006). Comparability of SBA scores refers to scores generated by teachers that could be used to judge or compare students' performance based on certain criteria or standard. Comparability of school assessments depends to a considerable extent on the degree to which schools teach the same content and assess the same things in the same manner. It is required when scores need to have common meaning with respect to one another, to some reference group, or

to a content standard (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2014). Comparability can be carried out in two levels. The first is within schools known as intra-school moderation which is a process that enables a shared understanding between teachers in the same school about what is being assessed, why, and level of achievement. The second type could be carried out between two or more schools known as inter-school moderation. This also involves key teachers' assessment decisions.

Peter, Tim & Kenneth (1994) observed that various steps can be used in maximizing the comparability of the assessments scores provided by schools. Generally, these may be classified under three steps:

1. assessment of the content using the same criteria within a school where two or more teachers teach a given subject;
2. establishment of common mechanism which will involve expert(s) or peer review of school assessments. This involves consensus moderation that is, subject teachers meeting in groups to compare sets of school assessments and to either confirm or adjust schools' initial assessments.; and
3. statistical moderation which involves adjustment or confirmation of scores in a given subject relative to the expected achievement standard. This may be carried out in two ways. The first is the linear transformation of school assessment scores in which the marks are adjusted to be equal to the mean and standard deviation of the marks obtained by the students in that subject in the reference test. The second method is the use of curvilinear transformation of scores on percentile scaling using marks obtained by the students within a given subject on the reference test to re-scale their school scores (Peter, et al, 1994).

The main reason for moderating SBA scores is to ensure test scores fairness and to standardized students' performance across all schools in a geographical zone. However, the teacher concerns must be monitored throughout the process. Comparability of scores also ensures qualities of students' achievement which must be made with reference to predefined standards that describe how well students have achieved the earlier stated educational (behavioural) objectives. It also ensures the quality of assessment decisions across learners' variables such as gender, school location, school types, classes or levels. In this study therefore, gender is the most factor that is paramount. There are numerous different understandings of literacy, some of which are even contradictory (UNESCO, 2006). One of the major conceptual problems of this literacy is that they mean different things to different researchers which gave rise to a variety of schools of thought. In this study because of educational of target population, "literacy" meant having the skill to interpret different letters which, when put together, formed words that conveyed meaning. Hence, is the ability of middle basic (primary 4-6) pupils to be able to read, write and understand simple messages in English Language.

The society has different expectations about what the male and female should be able to do in term of academic behaviour (performance). In this study, performance of

Comparability of Literacy Skill Scores in School Based Assessment

pupils based on gender could be explained in terms of the scores obtained by male and female pupils literacy test administered to primary six pupils. Scholars argued that performance is a measure of academic output expressed in terms changes in knowledge and skills as a result of their exposure to learning experiences within the school's system (Simkins, 1981).

There have been series of study on this especially on literacy (English Language). Federal Ministry of Education, (1999) reported that performance of students on the literacy test based on gender and revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean percentage scores of boys 24.8 percent and girls 25.8 percent. The National Population Commission and Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), (2011) observed that between 1990 and 2008, literacy rate had steadily increased among younger women. In 2003, 56 percent of girls while 44 percent of boys could read. In 2008, 61 percent of female while 39 percent of male ages could read. The National Population Commission and Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), (2016) also revealed in the 2015 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) report that literacy rate of male and female children ages 5 and 16 years was put 48.2% and 48.7% respectively.

Statement of the Problem

Assessment in education is inherently inexact and fraught with inaccuracies in the measurement of students' learning outcomes given several procedures whether statistical or non-statistical to adjust, moderate and transform the raw scores submitted by various schools. Thus, one of the problem concerning the implementation of SBA is whether the SBA scores submitted by schools, which are estimated as part of students' public examination results, are fair and comparable across all schools.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to compare literacy skill scores generated from the SBA among middle-basic students in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria on the basis of pupils' gender and school types.

Research Questions

In this study one research question was raised as stated below and answered.

RQ: What are the scores obtained by male and female pupils in 2015 English Language SBA in Moro LGA, Kwara State?

Research Hypothesis

In this study one research hypothesis was raised as stated below and tested.

Ho: There is no significant difference in the scores obtained by male and female pupils in 2015 English Language school-Based Assessment in Moro LGA, Kwara State.

Methodology

The study adopted ex-post facto research design by which existing SBA scores were collected. The population for this study covered of all the basic pupils in public schools in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. There are 148 public basic schools with the total number of 12,493 pupils as at 2015/2016 academic session (Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, 2016) in Moro LGA, Kwara State. The target population comprised of middle basic (Primary 4 to 6 pupils) in Moro LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. The schools in the Local Government Area were seeing as one block; hence, Fifty-nine (59) public schools represented 39.87 percent were sampled using simple random sampling technique. In any of school visited scores in English Language examination administered in 2015/2016 academic session to primary six pupils by Moro Local Government Education Authority were used. In each of the school sampled, 20 pupils' scores in English Language were sampled using simple random sampling technique, thus, making a total of 1180 English Language scores sampled. A researcher's designed profoma was used to collect the scores from Moro Local Government Education Authority Office Bode-Saadu, Kwara State.

Results

This section describes personal characteristics of the respondents using percentage. The scores in English Language collected were used to answer the only research raised using curvilinear transformation on percentile scale while the only hypothesis postulated tested using independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Res

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	615	52.12
Female	565	47.22
Total	1180	100.0

Table 1 reveals that out of 1180 pupils' results sampled, 615 (52.12%) were for males while the rest results were for females

Comparability of Literacy Skill Scores in School Based Assessment

Answering of Research Question

Table 2: Percentile Rank of Male and Female Pupils' Scores in 2015 English Language SBA in Moro LGA, Kwara State.

Score	Mf	Ff	Mf/2	Ff\2	MCf	FCf	Mf/2 + MCf	Ff\2 + FCf	(M) %	(F) %
40	262	153	116.0	76.5	353	432	469.0	508.5	80	87
30	239	203	119.5	111.5	114	209	233.5	320.5	40	55
20	82	106	41.0	53.0	32	103	138.0	156.0	24	27
10	32	103	16.0	51.5	0	0	16.0	51.5	3	9
N=	615	565								

Key

Mf = Male Frequency

Ff = Female Frequency

MCf = Male Cumulative Frequency

FCf = Female Cumulative Frequency

Table 2 shows that 80 percent of male pupils scored below a score of 40 while 87 percent of the female pupils scored below this same score. This indicates that more female pupils scored below 40 marks than male pupils. Also, 40 percent of male pupils scored below a score of 30 while 55 percent of female pupils scored below it. This data was analysed up to the very last score where 3 percent of male scored below 10 marks while 9 percent of female pupils scored below it.

It can therefore be inferred from the analysis that the percentage of male pupils scoring below each of a given score is less than that of the female counterpart and hence, the performance obtained by male pupils in English Language SBA is higher than that of female pupils in middle basic schools in Moro LGA, Kwara State.

Hypotheses Testing

One hypothesis was raised in the course of this study. It was tested using independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 3: T-test Statistics of Male and Female Pupils' Scores in 2015 English Language SBA in Moro LGA, Kwara State

Gender	N	Mean	Std.	df	Cal. t-Value	Sig.	Remarks
Male Pupils	615	5.5621	0.63	1178	5.31	0.000	S
Female Pupils	565	3.1940	1.48				

P < 0.05

Table 3 shows the t-value of 5.31 with a calculated p-value of 0.000 computed at the alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.000 is lesser than the 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null-hypothesis is rejected. This implies that a significant difference exists in the scores obtained by male and female pupils in English Language SBA in Moro LGA, Kwara State. This is in favour of male pupils with the mean score of 5.5621 greater than the mean score (3.1940) of the female counterpart.

Discussion of Findings

The two findings (are similar. The second finding confirmed the first finding; therefore, they would be discussed together. They all revealed that male pupils performed well in literacy SBA examinations conducted in 2015 by Moro LGA Bode-Saadu, Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings of National Population Commission and Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), 2011) supports the present findings when they observed that in 2003, there was disparity in the literacy level of male and female. They observed that 56 percent of girls and 44 percent of boys could read in English Language. In 2008, 61 percent of female and 39 percent of male could read in the same prescribed language.

The present findings are in contrary to the Federal Ministry of Education, (1999) who reported that performance of students on the literacy test based on gender and was statistically significant no difference in the mean percentage scores of boys 24.8 percent and girls 25.8 percent. It is also in disagreement with the 2016 Nigeria Education Data Survey (NEDS) which revealed that literacy rate of male and female children ages 5 and 16 years was put 48.2% and 48.7% respectively (National Population Commission and Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), 2016).

Conclusions

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that male pupils performed well in SBA than that of female pupils.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings from this study, it is therefore recommended that SBA should be continually exploited by schools to provide information to stakeholders in education industry. Teachers should endeavour to follow the assessment procedures as specified by the National Policy on Education. In the construction of SBA which could be transformed for making decisions about educational policy in the Local Government Area, state and Nigeria at large especially at this level of education.

Comparability of Literacy Skill Scores in School Based Assessment

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