
**INVESTIGATION INTO THE OPINION OF NIGERIAN
SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS ABOUT THE USE OF
ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES
IN SCHOOLS IN KATSINA METROPOLIS, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study was conducted to reveal the opinions of Social Studies teachers about the use of alternative assessment techniques in junior secondary schools in Katsina metropolis, Nigeria. The research was carried out on 50 Social Studies teachers working in both private and public junior secondary schools in Katsina metropolis in 2020/2021 academic session. This study which adopted a case study research design and was guided by four research questions. Findings showed that Social Studies teachers mostly prefer the traditional assessment techniques because they do not have sufficient knowledge about alternative assessment techniques. It was also discovered that class size, physical conditions of classes, finance and time allotted to the subject in school are the mostly likely problems if they are to make use of alternative assessment techniques. The respondents generally see the most important benefit of alternative assessment techniques as the ability to evaluate students in every aspect of learning. Based on the findings the study recommends among others, the need to address the reasons

why the alternative assessment techniques are not used by teachers and the need for increase of budgetary allocation to the educational sectors.

Keywords: *Social Studies Teachers, Assessment, Alternative Assessment Techniques.*

Introduction

Since the inception of western education in Nigeria, learners have been ranked using various forms of objective and essay tests. These limited assessment techniques has not broadened over the years despite the expansion in the goals of education in general, and that of Social Studies in particular(Snyder, 2014).To address this change, the educational programmes that are prepared by policy makers need to be prepared in parallel with the requirements of the era. Especially ensuring that teaching-learning process is performed with modern methods to include, how the outputs at the end of the process will be assessed and in accordance to what criteria they are assessed (Wiliam, 2013).In other words, for functional education, teaching-learning process should be considered as a whole, therefore a systematic assessment is required in order to reveal the extent to which learning has occurred in full..

Assessment that is an indispensable and integral part of education is based on the assessments performed at the beginning of a training process or lesson, during the process and at the end of the process depending on its purpose(Olukayode, 2012). According to Olukayode, the assessment technique that can serve these purposes is the alternative types of assessment technique. With these assessment techniques, it is aimed that the skills acquired at the end of learning are revealed not only with a single aspect but also in a concrete way with different aspects. When the alternative assessment techniques are used, the teachers can see the learning process and the learning products that emerge at the end of learning in their students, students see these factors in themselves and the parents see these in their children and they all

can observe whether the learning has occurred or not (Okafor & Arinze, 2011).

These aforementioned features is different from the assessment techniques that is used in Nigeria (traditional assessment technique) such as multiple choice, short answer, true-false, matching, gap-filling among others. However in order to assess student behavior; and the high-level mental processes such as problem solving, reading comprehension, critical thinking, analytical thinking, empathy, making research, decision making, understanding the importance of social history and creativity, the alternative assessment techniques has to be given importance at all levels of education in Nigeria (Rupani & Bhutto,2011).

In the traditional methods, the evaluation of student achievement is generally dealt separately from the teaching process and in a way that give weight to product more; for this purpose, multiple choice and short answered tests, written and oral examinations are attached importance. According to Eshun and Mensah (2013)these traditional methods generally occur at the end of the teaching process and within a certain time period. However, the assessments made with such assessment instruments are sometimes not effective in determining the desired behavior change.

However, alternative assessment techniques are evaluation techniques that focus on the evaluation of the process rather than the product. This differs from the traditional assessment techniques which focus on the evaluation of product rather than process (Calskun & Yigittir 2015). Some modern assessment techniques that emerged as an alternative to the traditional assessment techniques according to Aydogmus and Coskun-Keskin (2012) include; authentic assessment and performance assessment approaches. Aydogmus and Coskun-Keskin further added that although each of the two approaches differ from each other in terms of their contents, in the authentic assessment, the students have education as if they are in their own living environment, and they try to perform all given authentic tasks within this environment. All the tasks given to the students are just like their real-life challenges. This is because, authentic

assessment includes important questions or valuable and attractive problems which the students will use the available information in a creative and effective way for their performances. The benefit of authentic assessment has to do with establishing a relationship between the knowledge learned in school and the real world events and to describe the studies aimed at performing implementations associated with this (Kaya, Balay & veGocen, 2012)

The performance assessment is the assessment techniques in which the students show their knowledge and experiences together. The performance assessment is determining the effectiveness of students using some assessments instruments whose validity and reliability were achieved after giving them a task in order to measure the knowledge, skill and attitudes of students in a desired area of learning (Calskun&Yigittir2015). The students, in performance assessment, implement and perform instead of answering a simple choice. The students create something in more than enough time for the process or the product or both of them. The students even evaluate how they actively construct their answers for complex and significant problems or tasks. Instruments used in alternative assessment include: concept map, self evaluation, interview, attitude scale, performance task, self assessment, group and peer evaluation, structured grid, observation form, product file among others(Dilaver, veAkyurek & Tay,2015).

The assessment techniques used in Social Studies as a school subject should be that that can measure the three domains of learning (Kaya, Balay, veGocen,,2012;Dilaver, veAkyurek& Tay 2015).However, it has been revealed that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge on the use of alternative assessment techniques (Dilaver, veAkyurek & Tay 2015).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to reveal the opinions of Social Studies teachers about the use of alternative assessment techniques in junior secondary school in Katsina Metropolis, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study include to;

- I. determine the knowledge level of Social Studies teachers in Katsina metropolis on the use alternative assessment technique,
- ii. determine the general usage of alternative assessment techniques by Social Studies teacher in Katsina metropolis?
- iii. examine problems that could be encountered in the use of alternative assessment technique; and
- iv. determine the benefits of alternative assessment technique

Research Questions

The research questions that guided the study include;

- i. To what extent do Social Studies teachers in Katsina metropolis have sufficient knowledge on the use of alternative assessment technique?
- ii. To what extent is the general usage of alternative assessment technique by social studies teacher in Katsina metropolis?
- iii. What problems could be encounter in the use of alternative assessment technique?
- iv. To what extent is the benefits of alternative assessment technique?

Methods

This study is a qualitative research that adopted a case study research design. Case study research design was used because it will help in revealing the perceptions of teachers and other features in a realistic and holistic way through data collection tools such as observation, interview and document analysis in their natural environment (Awotunde, &Ugodulunwa, 2004). The population of the study consists of 50 Social Studies teachers working in public and private junior secondary schools within Katsina metropolis in 2020/2021 academic session. The tool for data collection included five open-ended questions. To ensure the questions asked were clear and understandable, the tool was validated. For validation, the tool was applied to 20 teachers from both public and private schools in Batagarawa Local Government area of Katsina state. These teachers were not part of the

population of this study. The data obtained was analyzed using content analysis.

Results

Research Question 1: to what extent do Social Studies teachers in Katsina metropolis have sufficient knowledge on the use of alternative assessment technique

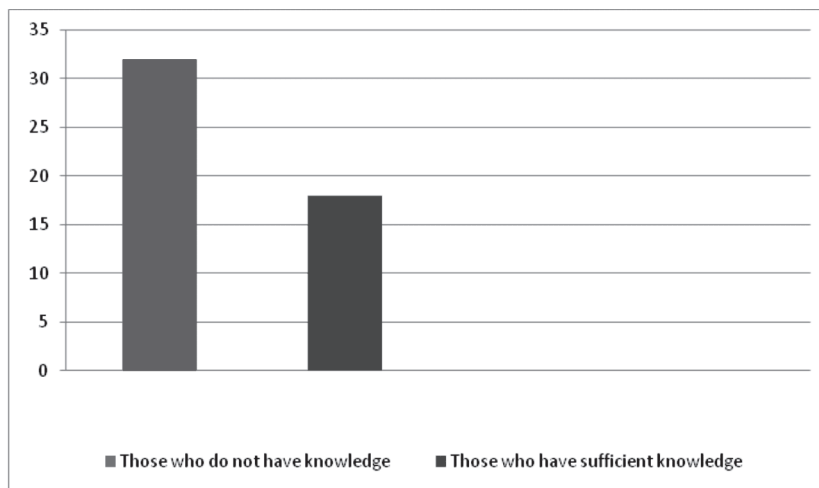


Table 1. Extent to which Social Studies teachers in Katsina metropolis have sufficient knowledge of alternative assessment technique?

Result in figure 1 shows that while 36% of Social Studies teacher have sufficient knowledge of alternative assessment technique, 64 % of them are not sufficiently aware of the alternative assessment techniques.

Research Question 2: what is the general usage of alternative assessment technique by Social Studies teacher in Katsina metropolis?

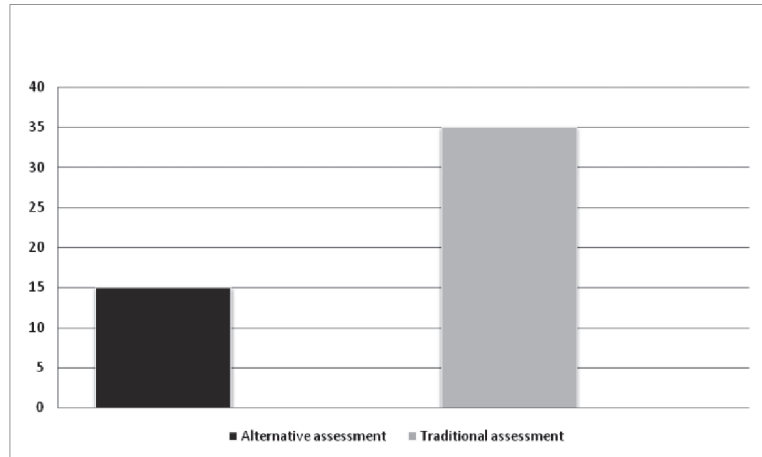


Table 2: Opinion on the General usage of Alternative Assessment Techniques by Social Studies Teachers in Katsina Metropolis

Result in figure 2 shows the extent to which social studies teacher make use of alternative assessment technique. From the table, while 30% represent Social Studies teacher that make use of Alternative assessment technique, 70% of them make use of traditional assessment techniques.

Research Question 3: what problems could be encounter in the use of alternative assessment technique?

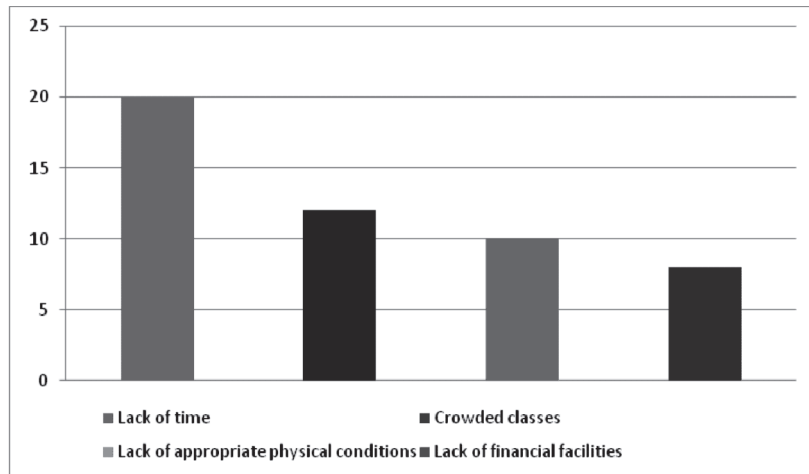


Table 3: The problems that could be encounter in the use of Alternative Assessment Techniques.

Result in Figure 3 showed that while 40% of the Social Studies teacher expressed “Lack of time”, 24% of them expressed “Crowded classes”, 20% of them expressed “Lack of appropriate physical conditions”, and 8% of them expressed “Lack of financial facilities” as the problems that could be faced in the use of alternative assessment technique.

Research question 4: To what extent is the benefit of alternative assessment technique?

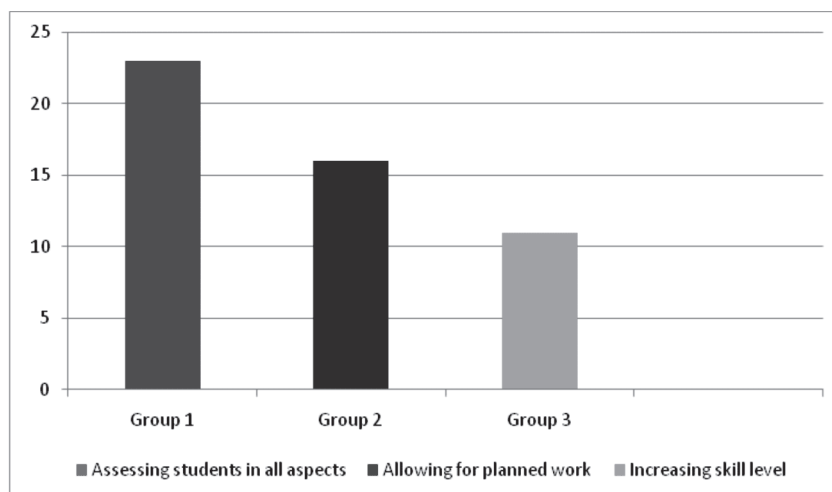


Table 4: Benefits which alternative assessment techniques could provide

Results in figure 4 showed that while 48% of the Social Studies teachers are of the opinion that alternative assessment could lead to the assessment of students in all aspects or domain of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain), 30% believed that it could lead to proper planning of teaching and learning process and 22% of them states that alternative assessment technique could lead to increase in skill level of both the teacher and the learners.

Discussions

This study was hinged on the importance of Social Studies curriculum as a subject whose objectives include the inculcation of adequate knowledge, required skills and desired values that is needed for the total development of the recipient. However decades after the introduction of the subject into Nigeria school curriculum, the subjects objectives is far from been achieved. This is evidenced in the decay that is witnessed in the generality of Nigerian society(Okafor & Arinze, 2011). Scholars have argued that the use of traditional assessment technique could be one of

the reasons for the challenge facing Social Studies as a subject (Eshun& Mensah 2013).

The findings of this study attests to Eshun and Mensah conclusion as mostof the respondents do not have sufficient knowledge needed for the use of the alternative assessment technique neither do they make use of the technique in their classroom. The lack of teachers' knowledge on how to effectively use the alternative assessment technique is due to the absence of course content on alternative assessment techniques in the universities and teachers training institutions in Nigeria(Olukayode, 2012). This will naturally translate into teachers' lack of knowledge on the use of alternative assessment technique. This findings is also in line with Rupani, and Bhutto (2011),Aydogmu^o, ve Coskun-Keskin, (2012)findings.

The findings of this study also showed that class size, time, physical condition of the classes and financial burdens are the problems associated with the use of alternative assessment technique thus they prefer the use of traditional assessment techniques. This findings is supported by the study carried out by Kabapinar and Ataman (2010), Rupani and Bhutto (2011),Aydogmu, ve Coskun-Keskin (2012),Calskun and Yigittir (2015).

The forth question considered was the benefit of alternative assessment technique. The finding indicated that although Social Studies teachers do not make use of the alternative assessment technique because they do not have sufficient knowledge about the content of alternative assessment techniques, they are of the opinion that the advantages of alternative assessment technique outweigh that of traditional assessment technique. This is in line with the finding of Coskun-Keskin, (2012) and Calskun and Yigittir (2015).

Conclusion

Alternative assessment techniques are designed to foster higher order critical thinking skills in students through the design of more authentic tasks. In Nigeria, despite the benefits of alternative

assessment technique, its use is not given any preference because of some challenges which ranges from issue of overcrowded class, insufficient knowledge on the utilization of alternative assessment technique inadequate finance allocated to educational sector among others. There is urgent need to address these challenges so as to benefit from the advantages of alternative assessment technique.

Recommendations

As a way forward, there is the need to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude on how to use alternative assessment techniques. To do this, there is the need for curriculum review of teacher education programmes to include course content on alternative assessment techniques. Also, there is the need to prioritize sponsoring of teachers for in-service training courses to enable them understand the philosophical background of alternative assessment techniques. Furthermore, there is the need to increase the budgetary allocation to the educational sector.

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