



**COMPETENCY IN ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AMONG
LECTURERS OF THE FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
OBUDU, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Achieving quality in education is one of the factors facilitating the implementation of education for all initiatives. Success in education depends on the quality of teachers and their competency in assessment practices. This important role is often abused by both teachers and lecturers in higher institutions of learning who, for various reasons, do not abide by the rules governing test item construction. This paper therefore examines the quality of assessment as practised by lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu, Cross River State. This was done by randomly sampling examination question papers and their corresponding course outlines in five courses each in six NCE programmes of the college. Each of the question papers was reviewed for appropriateness in terms of being in line with the course objectives, and for reflecting the three domains of educational objectives and content coverage. The study then highlighted areas of abuse and recommended that the college management should, in conjunction with measurement and evaluation experts, organize refresher courses for lecturers of the college on the techniques involved in test item development.

Key words: Competency in assessment practices, Quality in Education, Test items.

Introduction

Teachers at all levels of education are major stake holders in the assessment of students, and it is important to examine their competency and ability in test item development. Setlthomo and Sammy-King (2017) suggested that to attain the required twenty-first century standards of learning, teachers must be effectively trained and supervised in classroom assessment practices. They emphasized the important role teachers play in enhancing the quality of student learning process and therefore should be skilful enough to construct and administer quality tests that enhance teaching and learning. The

teaching and learning process cannot successfully take place without assessment. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to harmonize the two to ensure efficiency. McMillan (2001), emphasized that when teachers engage in assessment practices, it helps them to evaluate students' learning needs and improves the education system. He further explained that checking teachers' assessment practices is a way of finding out if they adopt or use quality assessment methods that can address the learning needs of students. Raty, Kasanen, and Honkalampi (2006) opined that test administration by teachers gives them the privilege of identifying the specific goals and objectives of each subject or lesson, and systematically gauges the extent to which the anticipated outcomes have been achieved.

The Nigerian educational system makes continuous assessment essential. This increases the need for teachers to be competent in test item development since they are the implementers of the programme. However, most of the achievement tests developed by teachers have been criticized for not meeting the standard of a good test. Alele-Williaams (2002) is of the opinion that most of the tests constructed by teachers in Nigeria lack quality since most of the teachers who construct such tests do not have the skills needed to construct standard tests. Sparks (2005) explains that students are assessed to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. In the assessment process, there is a clear link between stated learning outcomes and the learning experiences to which the students are exposed. He explained that through assessment, the teacher is able to diagnose students' learning difficulties and plan further instructions for them.

Teacher's incompetence in test item development sometimes makes students fail to secure a pass mark in examinations, not because they are dull or they did not work hard enough to deserve a pass mark. Baker (2003) argued that teachers ought to have mastered the different types of test construction skills. Asim, Ekuri and Eni (2013) contend that it should not be taken for granted that the ability of a teacher to construct one variety of test items also translates to ability in the construction of other types of test items. Therefore, higher education teachers should train pre-service teachers on the construction of all varieties of test items. Hamafyelto, Hamman-Tukur and Hamafyelto (2015) conducted a study to assess the ability of teachers in the construction of tests and the content validity of examination questions constructed by them in Bornu State, Nigeria. Their findings showed that most of the teachers were only able to construct items in the lower levels of the cognitive domain. They recommended workshops and seminars for teachers as a way of improving on their ability to construct quality tests. Nenty, Adedoyin, Odili and Major (2007) observed that there was a difference between how teachers perceived each level of Bloom's cognitive behaviour, how they enhance quality education and the level to which their ability to construct classroom tests could provide the skills needed for the development of cognitive behaviour among learners. Most of the teachers used for the

study lacked the knowledge and ability to use the recommended assessment techniques, especially in content coverage.

It is against this background that this study was conducted to ascertain the competency of teachers in carrying out the task of test item development as part of their roles in school-based assessment. If the teacher fails in this important task, the aim of assessment will be defeated. This study was therefore conducted to examine the competency in assessment practices among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu. It is focused on their competency in test item development with particular interest in course objectives, content coverage and the three domains of educational objectives.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- i. What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting course objectives?
- ii. What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting the three domains of educational objectives?
- iii. What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting content coverage?

Methods

First semester 2016/2017 examination questions in five courses each, from six programmes representing the six schools in the college were analysed. Each of the question papers was reviewed for appropriateness in terms of being in line with the course objectives and reflecting the three domains of educational objectives and content coverage. The research design adopted for this study was the document analysis method. The population of the study comprised of all the courses offered by students in the six programmes of the college. Two sampling techniques were used. First, stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure that every school was represented in the research. Random sampling technique was then adopted in the sampling of question papers from five courses, one from first year, two each from second and third year, in each of the six programmes giving a total of thirty (30) question papers used for the study.

For the purpose of data analysis, each of the question papers was reviewed for appropriateness in terms of being in line with the course objectives, reflecting the three

domains of educational objectives and content coverage. Test items that were found to have been constructed in line with the course objectives of the course, had adequate content coverage and reflected the three domains of educational objectives were considered as adequate, while those that did not were regarded as inadequate. These three parameters were used to determine the competency of the test developer. This statistical analysis technique is in agreement with the one adopted by Asim and Eni (2015) in a research they conducted on evaluation of the use and misuse of statistical techniques in educational research in university of Calabar, Here, research proposals of graduate students of the faculty of Education were sampled from where the hypotheses of each proposal, the identified variables and the suggested statistical techniques were then reviewed for appropriateness, using known underlying assumptions for the use of such techniques as a criteria for judgment.

Results

The results of analysis are presented in the following tables:

Research Question 1:

What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting course objectives?

This research question is answered using the data as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Appropriateness of Test Items in terms of Reflecting the Course Objectives

S/N	Course Code	Course Title	Appropriateness in terms of Reflecting Course Objectives
1.	ECO 111	Principles of Economics 1	Adequate
2.	ECO. 123	Introduction to statistics	Adequate
3.	ECO.223	Economics of production	Adequate
4.	ECO 321	Applied Economics	Adequate
5.	ECO 323	History of Economic Thought.	Adequate
6	MAT 122	Coordinate Geometry	Adequate
7	MAT 114	Complex Numbers	Adequate
8.	MAT 211	Integral Calculus	Adequate
9.	MAT 225	Research Methods	Adequate
10.	MAT 322	Linear Algebra	Adequate
11.	ECE 112	Child Development (Introduction)	Adequate
12.	ECE 114	Child Growth and Survival	Adequate
13.	ECE 213	The Child and his Learning Environment	Inadequate
14.	ECE 322	Visual Art and Creative Development.	Inadequate
15.	ECE 324	Entrepreneurship in ECCDE.	Inadequate
16.	EDU 121	Sociology of Education	Adequate
17.	EDU 111	History of Education	Adequate
18.	EDU 224	Introduction to Educational Administration, Planning and Supervision.	Adequate
19.	EDU 123	Philosophy of Education.	Adequate
20.	EDU 124.	Theory and Practice of Child Friendly Schools	Adequate
21	ENG 112	Introduction to phonetics and phonology	Adequate
22	ENG 121	Basic reading skills and reading comprehension	Adequate

19.	EDU 123	Philosophy of Education.	Adequate
20.	EDU 124.	Theory and Practice of Child Friendly Schools	Adequate
21	ENG 112	Introduction to phonetics and phonology	Adequate
22	ENG 121	Basic reading skills and reading comprehension	Adequate
23	ENG 212	Applied English Linguistics	Inadequate
24	ENG 213	Selected European Authors	Adequate
25	ENG 312	Female Writers in Africa	Adequate
26	FAA 122	Art Education	Adequate
27	FAA 216	Sculpture	Adequate
28	FAA 211	Art History111	Inadequate
29	FAA 320	Display and Exhibition Techniques	Adequate
30	FAA 325	Painting.	Adequate

Table 1 shows that out of the thirty (30) question papers sampled for the study, twenty five (25), representing 83.3%, reflected the course objectives while five (5), representing 16.7%, did not. This implies that twenty five of the lecturers whose question papers were sampled were conscious of course objectives while constructing their test items. The remaining 5 (16.7%) may not have even been conscious of this important consideration during test item construction. The result of data analysis on the appropriateness of test items in terms of reflecting the course objectives showed that most of the lecturers sampled across the programmes operated in the college were conscious of course objectives while constructing their test items.

Research Question 2:

What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting the three domains of educational objectives?

This research question is answered using data as presented in table 2.

Table 2: Appropriateness of Test Items in terms of Reflecting the Three Domains of Educational Objectives

S/N	Question	Domain of Educational Objectives Covered
1a	i) Define educational administration ii) Using three points, differentiate between administration and management iii) List and explain six functions of a school manager/administrator	All the items are in the cognitive domain
b.	i)What is an organization? ii) Justify the assertion that the school is a formal organization	
2a.	Define leadership in Education	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	List four types of leadership styles and explain any two of them.	
c.	Which leadership style would you adopt as a school administrator in managing your school?. Give three reasons.	
3a.	Define the concept of educational law.	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	Itemize four (4) reasons for studying educational law.	
c.	Mention 7 ways of generating funds in the school system.	
4a.	Define the concept of instructional supervision	All items are in the cognitive domain
b	Mention and explain four types of supervision in Nigeria.	
c.	List four problems militating against school supervision in Nigeria.	
5a	Define educational planning	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	List and discuss the three approaches to the study of educational planning.	
c.	List five problems confronting educational planning in Nigeria.	
6a.	Define the term Sociology of Education	All items are in the cognitive domain.
b.	Outline and discuss any five factors that are responsible	
7a.	What do you understand by social stratification in sociology of Education?	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	How does social class affect school achievement?	
8a.	Outline five(5) importance of sociology of Education in the educational system	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	What is secondary socialization?	
9a	What do you understand by the term History of Education? Briefly explain any five relevance of History of Education to a teacher in training.	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.		
10a	Give any three names of some Greek educators.	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	Mention and explain any five legacies of Greek education to modern Education.	
11a	Identify any five problems of the early Christian mission schools in Nigeria	All items are in the cognitive domain
b.	State any five contributions of the early mission schools in Nigeria.	

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| 12a | List and discuss five qualities of a good supervisor that you have studied. | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | Enumerate five principles that guide school supervision. | |
| 13a | Define inspection according to Nwaogu (1980) | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | Educational supervisors often adopt certain strategies in school supervision. List four of such strategies. | |
| 14 | Write short note on any four of the following concepts
1) Special visits
2) Sampling and Survey visits
3) Pastoral supervision
4) Accreditation Supervision
5) Full inspection. | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| 15a | In five points give a brief distinction between inspection and modern supervision | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | What is educational planning?
List three types of educational planning | |
| 16a | What is the relevance of educational planning in our nation's educational curriculum? | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | What five (5) major problems that are confronting the educational planning process in Nigeria? Explain them. | |
| 17a | Define facilities as it relates to child friendly schools | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | The concept of child friendly school facilities can be summarized in eleven points. Mention ten(10) of the points. | |
| 18. | Discuss briefly but accurately, five (5) main thrust or objectives of child friendly school. | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| 19a | What is constructivism? | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | Explain briefly five (5) principles of constructivism in child friendly school. | |
| 20a | Briefly define the term philosophy of Education | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | Explain the relationship between philosophy and Education (In three points). | |
| c. | Explain the relevance of epistemology to Education. | |
| 21a | Briefly define the concept of Education | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| b. | Write short notes on the following
(i) Formal Education (ii) Informal Education (iii) Non formal Education | |
| 22 | Write short notes on the following (i) Teaching (ii) Instruction (iii) Training (iv) Indoctrination | All items are in the cognitive domain |
| 23. | Using any two tertiary colours of your choice, do a painting depicting an academician. You may tint or shade with colour, white or black. | Psycho-motor domain |
| 24. | Detailed a marquee of your burst-not less than half foot tall using a mirror and well prepared clay. | Psycho-motor domain |
| 25. | What are the basic differences between traditional and contemporary or modern African art? | Cognitive domain |

- 26** Mention and write about any two sources that inspired traditional African artists to create forms and figures. Cognitive domain
- 27.** Write short notes on any two of the following (i) Dogon Art (ii) Bambaras Art (iii) Ashanti Art (iv) Senufo Art Cognitive domain
- 28a** What is a mask Cognitive domain
- b.** Mention any two traditional African mask and discuss their relevance to their host communities.
- 29** Mention any five general characteristic features of traditional African art. Cognitive domain
- 30** List out five basic factors you may consider before organizing an exhibition. Cognitive domain
- 31** What is the difference between a gallery and a museum? Cognitive domain
- 32.** Write short notes on the following Cognitive domain
i) Pedestal (ii) Casting (iii) Brochure (iv) Labelling (v) Reclaiming
- 33a** What is entrepreneurship? Cognitive domain
- b.** Explain the following functions of entrepreneurship
i) Planning (ii) Organization (iii) Controlling
- 34.** Explain in detail the following qualities of entrepreneurship Cognitive domain
i) Vision (ii) Creative (iii) Honesty (iv) Discipline
- 35** List and explain the three types of business enterprise Cognitive domain
- 36** Explain any five entrepreneurship and risk bearing. Cognitive domain
- 37a** What is child development? Cognitive domain
- b.** Clearly explain three reasons why we study the child
- 38a** What is pre-natal stage? Cognitive domain
- b.** Mention and explain three stages of human development.
- 39** Discuss any four principles of child development. Cognitive domain
- 40** Write short notes on any five of the following Cognitive domain
i) Neo-natal stage (ii) Nature (iii) Nurture (iv) Environment (v) Gait (vi) Maturation.
- 41a** What is a theory? Cognitive domain
- B** Explain two theoretical world views out of the three propounded by different psychologists to explain the basic nature of human beings.
- 42a** What is the term error? Cognitive domain
- b.** Give three reasons for the usefulness of errors in the classroom
- 43a** Explain the term motivation as it concerns teaching and learning Cognitive domain
- b.** Discuss two types of motivation to language learning.
- 44** Applied linguistics puts theory into practice. Explain what this means in the context of the languages classroom. Cognitive domain
- 45** Identify and explain any levels of linguistic descriptions that can show the differences and similarities between languages. Cognitive domain
- 46a** What is linguistics? Cognitive domain
- b.** Why linguistics is considered a science?
- 47.** Examine any five lessons you have deduced from Ifeoma Okoye's *Behind the clouds*. Cognitive domain

48.	Use any one pair in Zaynab Alkali's <i>The stillborn</i> to depict how their dreams were stillborn.	Cognitive domain
49	Examine the theme of childlessness in any of the female writers' works you have treated in this course.	Cognitive domain
50	To what extent can Anowa and Kofi Ako be described as non-conformists, and how this affects their lives?	Cognitive domain
51a	What is money?	Cognitive domain
b.	State four institutions that made up of the money market.	
52	Identify and explain five sources of finance to business enterprise	Cognitive domain
53	Explain the following basic concepts (i) Bonds (ii) Shares (iii) Debentures (iv) Overdraft	Cognitive domain
54	Differentiate between bank loan and overdraft	Cognitive domain
55	Write short notes on the following (i) Bill of exchange (ii) Treasury Bills (iii) Promissory notes (iv) Cheque.	Cognitive domain

On the assessment of appropriateness of test items in terms of reflecting the three domains of educational objectives, fifty five examination questions were sampled. Out of this number, only two were in the psychomotor domain, the rest were in the cognitive domain. None reflected the affective domain.

Research Question 3:

What is the level of competency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu with reference to appropriateness of items in terms of reflecting content coverage?

This research question is answered using data as presented in table3.

Table 3: Appropriateness of test items in terms of Content Coverage

S/N	Course Code	Course Title	Appropriateness in terms of Content Coverage
1.	ECO 111	Principles of Economics	Adequate
2.	ECO. 123	Introduction to statistics	Adequate
3.	ECO.223	Economics of production	Adequate
4.	ECO 321	Applied Economics	Adequate
5.	ECO 124	Introduction to Business Finance	Adequate
6	MAT 122	Coordinate Geometry	Adequate
7	MAT 114	Complex Numbers	Adequate
8.	MAT 211	Integral Calculus	Adequate
9.	MAT 225	Research Methods	Adequate

10.	MAT 322	Linear Algebra	Adequate
11.	ECE 112	Child Development (Introduction)	Adequate
12.	ECE 114	Child Growth and Survival	Inadequate
13.	ECE 213	The Child and his Learning Environment	Inadequate
14.	ECE 322	Visual Art and Creative Development.	Inadequate
15.	ECE 324	Entrepreneurship in ECCDE.	Inadequate
16.	EDU 121	Sociology of Education	Adequate
17.	EDU 111	History of Education	Adequate
18.	EDU 224	Introduction to Educational Administration, Planning and Supervision.	Inadequate
19.	EDU 324.	History of Education in Nigeria	Adequate
20.	EDU 124.	Theory and Practice of Child Friendly Schools	Adequate
21	ENG 112	Introduction to phonetics and phonology	Adequate
22	ENG 121	Basic reading skills and reading comprehension	Adequate
22	ENG 121	Basic reading skills and reading comprehension	Adequate
23	ENG 212	Applied English Linguistics	Inadequate
24	ENG 213	Selected European Authors	Adequate
25	ENG 312	Female Writers in Africa	Adequate
26	FAA 122	Art Education	Adequate
27	FAA 216	Sculpture	Adequate
28	FAA 211	Art History111	Adequate
29	FAA 320	Display and Exhibition Techniques	Adequate
30	FAA 325	Painting.	Adequate

Data analysis on the assessment of appropriateness of test items in content coverage indicates that past examination question papers in thirty courses across the different departments of the college were sampled and examined against their corresponding course outlines. The result showed that twenty four of the question papers were adequate in content coverage while six were inadequate.

Discussion

The results reveal that many of the question papers sampled, twenty five (25) representing 83.3%, reflected the course objectives. This finding corroborates the views of Raty, Kasanen, and Honkalampi (2006) that test administration by teachers gives them the privilege to identify specific goals and objectives for each subject or lesson, and systematically gauges the extent to which the anticipated outcomes actually occur. It also enables them to how much of the objectives have been achieved. The finding that many of the questions assessed cognitive domain was an abuse on the part of the test developers because a good test ought to establish a balance between the three domains of educational objectives the test items were one sided. This is a case of incompetency in test item development and calls for proper training of lecturers in the college on the basic techniques in test item development. This will help to improve on the quality of graduates produced by the college. This result is in line with Hamafyelto, Hamman-Tukur and Hamafyelto (2015) who found that most of the teachers were only able to construct items in the lower levels of the cognitive domain. The result of this study showed that twenty four of the question papers were adequate in content coverage while six were not adequate. This, of course, is an indication that compliance in terms of content coverage was good. However, the six that did not comply have abused the system in terms of total compliance and should make necessary adjustment. This result is further in line with Nenty, Adedoyin, Odili and Major (2007) whose findings showed that there was a difference between how teachers perceived each level of Blooms cognitive behaviour and how they enhance quality education and the level to which their ability to construct classroom test was able to provide the skills needed for the development of cognitive behaviour among learners.

Conclusion

There is an abuse or incompetency in test item development among lecturers of the Federal College of Education, Obudu. Most of the lecturers were conscious of constructing test items in line with the course objectives and content coverage, but none of them constructed test items across the three domains of educational objectives. Leaving out such an important aspect of test item development calls for action towards correcting the abuse if the quality of teaching and learning in the college must be enhanced.

Recommendations

From the findings of this research, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The college management should, in conjunction with measurement and evaluation experts in the college, organize refresher courses for lecturers of the college on the techniques involved in test item development.
2. Only experienced chief lecturers who have cognate knowledge in test item development should be appointed external moderators for the college.

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