



Perspectives of Teachers Towards Blended Assessment (OBE and CBE) in Higher Education

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Abstract:

The evolving needs of the learners to face the challenges of the 21st century has been prompting educationalists to design a robust, flexible assessment system for higher education. The latest National Education Policy 2020 recommended learning outcome-based and competency-based evaluation as also open-book / closed-book examinations. The aim was to cater to holistic skills development in higher education learners. In consonance with NEP-2020 and researches world over promoting innovative assessment approaches, the researcher aimed to study the viability of administration of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on higher education learners. In the present study, the researcher gathered perspectives of Arts (40), Science (65) and Commerce (44) college teachers of Surat city, Gujarat, India, on different aspects of blended assessment in higher education. The sample of 149 college teachers was selected by cluster sampling from Arts, Science and Commerce colleges of Surat city. These colleges were chosen by random sampling technique. Self-constructed opinionnaire was used to gather opinions of college teachers. Data of sample scores was analysed using t-test and mean. Results indicated no significant difference in male and female college teachers (Arts, Science and Commerce) opinions, while Arts and Commerce college teachers' opinions were higher than science college teachers towards blended assessment.

Keywords: Assessment, Open-Book Examination, Closed-Book Examination, Test Anxiety, Examination Stress, Academic Achievement, Higher Order Thinking Skills

Introduction

Assessments play a pivotal role in the education system. They form a measure of the students' learning outcomes and the extent of teachers' accomplishment of learning objectives framed. The education sector is witnessing continued efforts of educationalists towards innovative teaching-learning practices. Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) was a guide to educators in framing learning objectives for learners to include the skills required to be learnt.

The traditional mode of examination has been the closed-book examination (CBE) and recall skills of the learners' content is assessed. CBE is tagged with demerits of test anxiety, stress, copying etc. Educationalists have been looking out for an alternative mode of evaluation to alleviate the stress factor of CBE. Open-book examination seems to be a good option in higher education. In open-book examination (OBE) learners have the freedom to refer educational resources during examination. However, OBE too suffers from drawbacks of difficulty in finding solutions from books, over confidence in learners and encountering higher difficulty level questions.

Recently, the National Education Policy – 2020 (NEP-2020) has focused on assessment reforms so as to groom learners with 21st century skills. The policy recommended outcome-based and competency-based assessment and assessment methods of OBE/CBE etc. In the present research study, the researcher attempted to investigate the feasibility of administration of both OBE and CBE (Blended Assessment)

on higher education learners. Hence, the researcher conducted a study to collect perspectives of teachers (Arts, Science and Commerce colleges of Surat city, Gujarat, India) towards blended assessment (OBE and CBE) in higher education.

Statement of the problem

The present study statement of the problem was as follows-

Perspectives of Teachers towards Blended Assessment (OBE and CBE) in Higher Education.

Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the present research study were as follows-

- 1.To assess the college teachers' opinions on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as an alternate mode of evaluation in higher education with respect to gender (male and female) and stream (Arts, Science and Commerce)
- 2.To study the opinions of college teachers towards the impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement with respect to gender (male and female) and stream (Arts, Science and Commerce)

Hypothesis of the Research

In the present study, Null hypothesis was framed.

- H₀₁:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of male and female college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education.
- H₀₂:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Science college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education.
- H₀₃:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education.
- H₀₄:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Science and Commerce college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education.
- H₀₅:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of male and female college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement.
- H₀₆:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Science college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement.
- H₀₇:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement.
- H₀₈:** There will be no significant difference in mean scores of opinions of Science and Commerce college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement.

Delimitations of the study

The present research study had some delimitations which were as follows-

- The research study was delimited to Surat city of Gujarat, India.
- Educational streams of only Arts, Science and Commerce colleges of Surat city were selected for the study.
- Only self-constructed opinionnaire was used as the tool.
- The research study was limited to only English medium colleges (Arts, Science and Commerce) of Surat city.

Population and sample of the Research

The population for the present research study comprised of teachers of English medium Arts, Science and Commerce colleges of Surat city, Gujarat, India.

For an unbiased selection of the sample from the population, random sampling technique by lottery method was used to select English medium colleges of Arts (5), Commerce (5), Science (5) and class divisions. All teachers (149) present were chosen by cluster sampling as the sample of the study (Arts – 40, Science – 65 and Commerce - 44).

Research methodology

For the present research study, the researcher had selected the descriptive survey design. Face-to-face survey was adopted to collect opinions of Arts, Science and Commerce college teachers of Surat city through a self-constructed opinionnaire.

The opinionnaire with positive and negative items was framed aiming to receive responses from English medium Arts, Science and Commerce college teachers of Surat city, in context of the objectives of the study. The self-constructed opinionnaire was validated by experts' suggestions which were implemented. Also, a pilot study conducted on a small sample of teachers showed consistency in the responses of teachers for both positively and negatively worded items, with no suggestions. The opinionnaire was thus finalized and administered on the selected sample of college teachers. Arts, Science and Commerce colleges of Surat city were selected by random sampling, lottery method and college teachers by cluster sampling method. The data of opinions from opinionnaire forms was then subjected to data analysis.

Research Tool

In the present research study, the researcher had to gather opinions of Arts, Science and Commerce college teachers of Surat city by survey method. For this purpose, the researcher designed a self-constructed opinionnaire with items related to effect of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as an alternate mode of evaluation in higher education; impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement.

Opinionnaire consisted of positive and negative items and responses of college teachers were against a 5-point likert type of scale. Opinionnaire was validated by experts and pilot study responses. After modification of some items, the self-constructed opinionnaire was ready for administration on the sample of teachers.

Method of Data Collection

Opinions of Arts, Science and Commerce college teachers were collected using self-constructed opinionnaire by the researcher adopting survey method. After seeking prior permission of the principals of the selected colleges, the researcher visited the colleges with the opinionnaire forms, introduced the topic of study before distributing the forms to the college teachers. Queries of teachers were attended to and the completed opinionnaires were collected by the researcher.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

In the present research study, opinions of Arts, Science and Commerce college teachers of Surat city collected through opinionnaire were scored on a 5-point Likert type of scale. Both positive and negative items were scored and the sample scores related to the objectives of the study were analysed. Mean and t-test were used as the statistical techniques to verify the null hypothesis framed in the study.

Findings of the Research

1. There was no significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of male and female college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of

evaluation in higher education. Thus, the opinions of male and female college teachers were almost the same.

2. There was a significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Science college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education. Opinions of Arts college teachers were higher than Science college teachers.
3. There was no significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education. Thus, the opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers were almost the same.
4. There was a significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Science and Commerce college teachers on impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effectiveness as alternate mode of evaluation in higher education. Opinions of Commerce college teachers were higher than Science college teachers.
5. There was no significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of male and female college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement. Thus, the opinions of male and female college teachers were almost the same.
6. There was a significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Science college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement. Opinions of Arts college teachers were higher than Science college teachers.
7. There was no significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement. Thus, the opinions of Arts and Commerce college teachers were almost the same.
8. There was a significant difference found in mean scores of opinions of Science and Commerce college teachers towards impact of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on test anxiety, examination stress and academic achievement. Opinions of Commerce college teachers were higher than Science college teachers.

Educational Implications

- Science college teachers would be required to attend motivational workshops, seminars etc. to gain awareness on blended assessment (OBE and CBE) and its effects on alleviating test anxiety, stress etc. in learners.
- The new norm of assessment is outcome-based assessment as is evident in NEP-2020 assessment reforms in higher education. It included OBE/CBE modes to develop higher order thinking skills. Blended assessment (OBE and CBE) of the present study is in line with the NEP – 2020 and aims to develop lower order and higher order thinking skills in learners of higher education.
- Blended assessment could shift focus towards innovative pedagogical practices to cater to OBE and CBE. This would benefit teachers to widen their vision towards problem-solving activities, group discussions, inquiry-based teaching etc. to groom learners.
- Learner's behavioural problems arising out of test anxiety and stress could be minimized with blended assessment (OBE and CBE) which would help ease teachers' stress in encountering such cases.

Conclusion

NEP-2020 aims at implementation of innovative pedagogical practices and learning methods in higher education to develop 21st century skills in learners. Recommendations of this policy included open-book/closed-book examinations in higher education to do away with rote-memorization and inculcate higher-order thinking skills in learners. The idea was to minimize test anxiety and examination stress in students. In the present study, an attempt was made by the researcher to study perspectives of college

teachers (Arts, Science and Commerce) towards various aspects and effects of blended assessment (OBE and CBE) on higher education learners.

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