



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE

By

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ABSTRACT

Formative assessment is an essential component of teaching and learning because it provides information on students' learning progress and guides instructional decisions. Despite its recognised importance, evidence suggests that many secondary school teachers do not adequately implement formative assessment practices in classroom instruction. This study examined the formative assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the planning practices adopted by teachers in formative assessment administration, factors affecting the validity of formative assessment test items, and factors affecting the reliability of teacher-made assessments. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population consisted of 657 English Literature teachers in 257 public secondary schools in Anambra State, from which a sample of 367 teachers was selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Test Items Validation Questionnaire (TIVQ). Face and content validity of the instrument were established by experts in Arts Education and Measurement and Evaluation, while reliability was determined through pilot testing. Data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and t-test statistics at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicated that teachers recognised the importance of planning, validity, and reliability considerations in the administration of formative assessment. The study recommends regular professional development programmes to enhance teachers' competencies in classroom assessment and the institutionalisation of quality assurance mechanisms for teacher-made assessments.

Keywords: *formative assessment, classroom assessment, validity, reliability, secondary education, Anambra State.*



INTRODUCTION

Assessment is an indispensable component of the educational process because it provides evidence of the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved and enables teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional methods. In educational systems worldwide, teachers are expected to design assessment methods, administer assessment tasks, provide feedback, determine grades, and report learners' progress to relevant stakeholders. Broadfoot and Black (2004) observed that classroom assessment provides valuable information on students' learning, curriculum implementation, and school effectiveness.

Assessment encompasses a wide range of procedures and practices used to determine students' learning outcomes. Popham (2011) described assessment as a formal process for collecting information regarding students' learning status and making valid inferences about what learners know and can do. Effective assessment therefore extends beyond the administration of tests and includes the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence to improve teaching and learning.

Formative assessment has increasingly gained attention because of its capacity to improve instructional practices and student achievement. Black and Wiliam (1998) argued that assessment becomes formative when evidence of students' learning is used to modify teaching and learning activities to meet learners' needs. Similarly, Black (2003) defined formative assessment as activities designed to improve students' learning by providing information that helps learners understand their strengths and weaknesses and make appropriate adjustments.

The importance of formative assessment lies in its ability to provide timely and constructive feedback to both teachers and students. Feedback enables learners to identify gaps between current and desired performance and guides them toward strategies for improvement (Onuoha, 2002). According to Dasuki (2014), feedback constitutes an integral part of the learning process because it promotes continuous improvement and enhances students' academic development.

Despite its significance, evidence indicates that the implementation of formative assessment practices in secondary schools remains inadequate. Loughran (1999) observed that although formative assessment is recognised in educational policy documents, little classroom-based evidence exists regarding how teachers implement it. In many secondary schools, assessment practices are often characterised by inadequate planning, inappropriate item construction, insufficient feedback, and limited use of assessment information to improve instruction.

Effective formative assessment requires teachers to possess adequate knowledge and skills in assessment planning, test construction, validity considerations, reliability procedures, and feedback mechanisms. However, observations suggest that many teachers have limited understanding of these essential components and therefore do not adequately implement formative



assessment practices in classroom instruction (Black & Wiliam, 1998). This deficiency may negatively affect instructional quality and students' learning outcomes.

Given the central role of assessment in improving teaching and learning, there is a need to examine the formative assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Specifically, it is necessary to determine the extent to which teachers engage in assessment planning and consider issues relating to validity and reliability when developing and administering classroom assessments.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Formative assessment is widely recognised as an important instructional practice that promotes effective teaching and learning by providing timely feedback and facilitating informed educational decisions. Effective implementation of formative assessment enables teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and adjust instruction accordingly. It also encourages students to become active participants in their learning process.

However, many secondary school teachers appear to possess inadequate knowledge and skills regarding formative assessment practices. Evidence suggests that teachers often experience challenges in assessment planning, test construction, feedback provision, and the application of validity and reliability principles in classroom assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Consequently, formative assessment may not be effectively implemented in secondary schools, thereby limiting its potential contribution to improved instructional outcomes.

The problem of this study, therefore, is to determine the extent to which secondary school teachers in Anambra State implement formative assessment practices, particularly with respect to assessment planning and the validity and reliability of teacher-made assessment instruments.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to examine the formative assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Examine the planning practices adopted by teachers in formative assessment administration.
2. Determine the factors affecting the validity of formative assessment test items developed by teachers.
3. Determine the factors affecting the reliability of formative assessment test items developed by teachers.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What planning practices are adopted by teachers in the administration of formative assessment in secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What factors affect the validity of formative assessment test items developed by teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State?
3. What factors affect the reliability of formative assessment test items developed by teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H01: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the planning practices adopted in formative assessment administration.

H02: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the factors affecting the validity of formative assessment test items.

H03: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers regarding the factors affecting the reliability of formative assessment test items.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to formative assessment practices under the following subheadings: concept of assessment and formative assessment, forms of formative assessment, formative assessment and students' academic achievement, validity and reliability in classroom assessment, theoretical framework, and review of empirical studies.

Concept of Assessment and Formative Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information about students' learning for educational decision-making. It provides evidence on the extent to which instructional objectives have been achieved and assists teachers in evaluating and improving instructional practices. According to Broadfoot and Black (2004), classroom assessment generates valuable information regarding students' learning, curriculum implementation, and school effectiveness. Similarly, Popham (2011) described assessment as the formal process of gathering information about students' learning status in order to make valid educational decisions.



Assessment is generally categorised into diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment. Diagnostic assessment is administered before instruction to determine learners' entry behaviour and prior knowledge, while summative assessment is conducted at the end of instruction to evaluate learning outcomes and facilitate grading and certification. Formative assessment, however, occurs during instruction and is intended primarily to improve teaching and learning processes (Black & Wiliam, 1998).

Formative assessment involves the continuous gathering and use of information about students' learning progress to guide instructional decisions and provide feedback to learners. Black and Wiliam (1998) argued that assessment becomes formative when evidence about students' achievement is used to adapt teaching and learning activities to meet learners' needs. Similarly, Black (2003) defined formative assessment as classroom activities that provide information for improving students' learning by helping teachers and learners identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas requiring improvement.

The significance of formative assessment lies in its capacity to provide timely feedback and facilitate instructional adjustments. Through continuous assessment and feedback, teachers identify learning difficulties and design appropriate interventions, while students become actively involved in monitoring and improving their learning. Consequently, formative assessment promotes reflective learning, learner participation, and improved academic achievement.

Forms of Formative Assessment

Formative assessment can be implemented through various classroom activities and strategies. One common form is questioning, which encourages learners to think critically and enables teachers to obtain immediate information about students' understanding. Black et al. (2003) maintained that effective questioning should extend beyond closed-ended questions and encourage students to analyse and explain their responses.

Performance-based assessment constitutes another important form of formative assessment. It requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through authentic tasks and practical activities that involve higher-order thinking and application of learning experiences. Performance-based assessment enables teachers to evaluate students' competencies beyond memorisation and promotes meaningful learning.

Interview-based assessment provides opportunities for teachers to gather information regarding students' experiences, beliefs, interests, and understanding. Herrera et al. (2007) observed that teacher-student interviews facilitate communication and provide valuable information that assists teachers in adapting instruction to learners' needs.



Similarly, play-based assessment allows students to demonstrate learning through role play, simulations, and dramatization of concepts and experiences. According to Herrera et al. (2007), observations made during play activities provide useful information regarding learners' cognitive and social development. Collaborative activities and group assessments also provide opportunities for students to demonstrate learning through projects and experiments. Slavin (2006) argued that effective group assessment requires consideration of both collective efforts and individual accountability.

Another form of formative assessment is the use of dialogue journals and scaffolded assignments. Dialogue journals encourage learners to express their ideas and reflections in writing, while scaffolded assignments simplify complex tasks into manageable activities that facilitate learning and reduce anxiety (Berkowitz et al., 2000). These forms of assessment generate useful information concerning students' progress and instructional needs.

Formative Assessment and Students' Academic Achievement

The ultimate objective of educational activities is improved students' achievement. Consequently, considerable attention has been directed toward the role of formative assessment in enhancing learning outcomes. Dum and Mulvenon (2009) observed that formative assessment improves students' performance by supporting instructional decision-making and facilitating appropriate interventions for learners experiencing difficulties.

Filsecker and Kerres (2012) further reported that learning improves significantly when students actively participate in assessment activities through self-assessment and reflective practices. Students who understand assessment criteria and evaluate their own learning become more responsible for their educational progress and demonstrate improved academic performance.

Fuchs and Fuchs (2006), in a meta-analysis of twenty-one studies, reported that students who received individualised instruction based on frequent formative assessment performed significantly better than those whose learning progress was not continuously monitored. Likewise, Crooks (2008) concluded that formative assessment has a greater impact on student learning than summative assessment because it provides opportunities for immediate instructional improvement and continuous feedback.

Black and Wiliam (1998) synthesised findings from numerous studies and established that classroom formative assessment practices significantly improve students' learning outcomes across different educational contexts. These findings underscore the importance of integrating formative assessment into everyday classroom practices.



Validity and Reliability in Classroom Assessment

Validity and reliability are essential qualities of effective classroom assessment. Validity refers to the extent to which an assessment instrument measures what it is intended to measure and whether interpretations and decisions based on assessment results are meaningful and appropriate. Orluwene (2012) regarded validity as one of the most important characteristics of a measuring instrument because invalid assessments provide little basis for making credible educational decisions. Similarly, Middleton (2022) described validity as the degree of accuracy with which a measuring instrument assesses the intended construct.

Four forms of validity are particularly relevant to classroom assessment. Face validity concerns the apparent suitability and acceptability of assessment items to teachers and learners (Middleton, 2022). Content validity refers to the extent to which assessment items adequately represent instructional objectives and curriculum content (Zach, 2021). Construct validity concerns the extent to which an instrument measures abstract concepts such as intelligence, anxiety, and motivation (Bhandari, 2022). Criterion-related validity examines the relationship between assessment scores and external measures of performance and includes predictive and concurrent validity (Orluwene, 2012).

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability, and dependability of assessment results. A reliable assessment instrument yields similar outcomes when administered under comparable conditions to the same group of individuals. Middleton (2022) defined reliability as the consistency with which a measuring instrument produces stable and dependable results.

Reliability can be determined through several procedures, including test-retest, inter-rater, alternate forms, and internal consistency methods (Crossman, 2019; Middleton, 2022). Factors such as the quality and length of assessment items, classroom conditions, scoring procedures, and students' physical and psychological states may affect reliability. Therefore, effective classroom assessment requires careful planning and administration to ensure valid and reliable measurement outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Vygotsky's Social Development Theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory.

Vygotsky's Social Development Theory (1978) posits that cognitive development occurs primarily through social interaction and collaborative learning experiences. The theory emphasises that learning initially takes place at the social level before becoming internalised by the learner. Central to the theory is the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the difference between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with



guidance from more knowledgeable individuals. The theory is relevant to this study because formative assessment emphasises interaction, feedback, and instructional support that enable teachers to identify students' learning needs and facilitate improved achievement.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) emphasises that learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modelling of behaviours demonstrated by others. According to the theory, learning results from reciprocal interactions among cognitive, behavioural, and environmental factors. Through observation and feedback, learners acquire new behaviours and develop competencies. The theory is relevant to this study because formative assessment relies heavily on observation, demonstration, questioning, and feedback processes that provide evidence of learning and facilitate instructional improvement.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate the positive influence of formative assessment on students' learning outcomes. Olagunju (2015) investigated the effect of formative assessment on secondary school students' achievement in Mathematics and found significant improvement in the achievement scores of students exposed to formative assessment practices. The study recommended regular professional development programmes to improve teachers' assessment competencies.

Similarly, Amakiri and Ukwuije (2016) investigated the effect of Assessment for Learning strategies on the Biology achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Their findings revealed that strategies such as questioning, comment-only marking, and self- and peer-assessment significantly enhanced students' academic achievement. The researchers therefore advocated greater emphasis on classroom assessment practices that promote continuous feedback and learner participation.

The reviewed studies indicate that formative assessment contributes significantly to improved teaching effectiveness and students' academic achievement. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding formative assessment practices among secondary school teachers in Anambra State, particularly with respect to assessment planning and issues of validity and reliability. The present study therefore seeks to address this gap in knowledge.

RESEARCH METHOD

This section presents the methods employed in carrying out this study. The methodology is discussed using the following subheadings, design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, administration of the instrument, and method of data analysis.



Design of the Study

This study is a descriptive survey. Abdullahi (1995) sees survey research as a systematic collection of data or information from a population (sometimes referred to as universe) or sample of a population (considered to be representative of the entire group of interest), through the use of personal interview and/or questionnaire. This design is considered appropriate as the study will collect data from the sample with the aid of a researcher developed questionnaire, to describe an entire population under study.

Area of the Study

The area of the study is made up of all the government-owned secondary schools in the six education zones of Anambra State. The six education zones are Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha. There are 257 public secondary schools in the six education zones. The government-owned secondary schools are centrally controlled by the Post Primary Schools Service Commission, Awka.

Population of the Study

The study focused on formative assessment practices of senior secondary school teachers in Anambra state. The English literature teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State were used in the study, so, the population of the study comprises all teachers of English Literature in the 257 government-owned (public) secondary schools in the six (6) education zones of Anambra State. The choice of the population is based on the fact that these institutions all offer English literature as a core subject at all levels while other languages such as Igbo and French are compulsory only in junior classes but taken as optional subjects in the senior classes. Data obtained from the Post Primary Schools Service Commission, Awka revealed that there are six hundred and fifty-seven (657) English literature teachers in the government-owned secondary schools. Thus, the population of the study is 657 secondary school English literature teachers.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used to select one hundred and eleven (111) schools which represented 50% of the public secondary schools in Anambra State. All the English literature teachers from the 111 schools will be used since the number is not very large. The total number of the sample is three hundred and sixty-seven (367) English literature teachers. The purposive sampling technique is deemed appropriate because the population is not very large as there are often few English literature teachers in schools. Moreover, matters of quality should not be trifled with and the more responses sought, the better the result obtained.



Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection is a researcher developed teachers' questionnaire entitled Test Items Validation Questionnaire (TIVQ). The questionnaire items were generated from data gathered in the review of related literature. There are two parts in the questionnaire – Part A (which solicits information on respondents' personal data) and Part B (which contains items on knowledge and practice of validation processes). Further, Part B is in three sections and the clustered items relate to and attempt to answer the three research questions.

Validation of the Instrument

Face and content validity of the instrument will be determined by four (4) experts – two (2) from the department of Arts Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam; and two (2) from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation of the same university. Copies of the questionnaire will be sent to these experts and their suggestions and comments will be incorporated. This will be done to ensure high validity of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument will be determined by pre-testing it on one hundred and ten (110) teachers of English literature in public secondary schools in Enugu State. This number represents thirty percent (30%) of the sample size. More so, the researcher will hire the services of two (2) assistants to trial test the instrument. The use of the two assistants will enable the researchers to cover enough ground in the three days stipulated for the exercise. Also, these assistants will ensure that no document is lost as well as be handy to make explanations if need be. These will enable the researchers to collect adequate and accurate data to ensure reliable results. The scores obtained from the respondents will be collated and analyzed to determine the co-efficient of the set of scores for the items in each of the sections.

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher employed the services of six (6) research assistants to help in the administration and collection of questionnaires on the spot to avoid loss. The rationale behind the number of the research assistants is that one research assistant would cover the schools in each of the six education zones in the state. The expectation was that all the questionnaires administered would be returned and used in the study. The exercise of actual administration lasted for eight (8) days given the number of public schools to be covered in the six education zones in the state.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using simple percentage, frequency count and mean was used to answer the research questions. For percentage scores, the bench mark is 50% which signifies

agreed while below 50% indicates disagreed. Four-point scale was used as Strongly Agreed (SA), Agree(A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) which is rated as 4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5. The criterion mean is therefore 2.5. Any mean score which is 2.5 and above is accepted as agreed while mean score that is less than 2.5 is acknowledged as disagreed. The t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05level of significance.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter deals with the data presentation and analysis of dat. The responses from the questionnaire items were used to answer the research questions. Frequency counts and simple percentage were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Presentation was done sequentially in tables.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration in secondary schools in Anambra?

Table 1: Frequency counts and simple percentage scores of the respondents on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration.

		Male Response	Female Response		
S/N	Item	SA A D SD	SAA D SD	cluster X	Rm k
		f% f% f% f%	f% f% f% f%		
1.	The students are aware of the purpose of the test.	36 31 26 35 28% 24% 20% 27%	135 66 15 23 56% 28% 6% 10%	2.9	A
2.	The test items are associated with specific objectives of the topics.	40 36 29 23 31% 28% 23% 18%	59 72 48 60 25% 30% 20% 25%	2.6	A



3.	The teacher makes use of relevant format	38 27 33 30 30% 21% 26% 23%	129 92 6 12 54% 38% 3% 5%	3.0	A
4.	The teacher earmarks the duration of the test	52 42 26 9 41% 32% 20% 7%	98 75 29 37 41% 31% 12% 15%	3.0	A
5.	The teacher ensures that every test item is given the same level of difficulty.	56 43 19 10 44% 43% 15% 8%	105 69 34 31 44% 29% 14% 13%	3.1	A
6.	The method of test administration is decided before the d day.	61 29 25 13 48% 23% 20% 10%	122 67 14 36 51% 28% 6% 15%	3.2	A
7.	Teat items are prepared and arranged before the test day.	66 45 5 12 52% 35% 4% 9%	89 56 48 46 37% 23% 20% 19%	3.1	A
8.	The test materials are ready on time	59 32 29 8 46% 25% 23% 6%	95 59 32 53 40% 25% 13% 22%	3.0	A
9.	The marking scheme is prepared along with the test items	23 34 36 35 18% 27% 28% 27%	88 68 60 23	2.7	A



	The students are duly informed about the date and time allotted for the test.	45 33 37 13 35%26%29%10%	37% 28% 25% 10% 109 66 51 13 46%28%21%5%		
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Table 1 shows the frequency counts and the percentage scores of the male English teachers from items with serial numbers 1-6 & 8-10 have the frequency count ranging between 8-61 as against 128 males with the percentage scores below 50%. This indicates that male English literature teachers disagreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration. The male English teachers agreed with item with serial number 7 with the frequency count of 66 and percentage score of 52% which is above the bench mark of 50%. The female English literature teachers on the other hand agreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration based on items with serial numbers 1, 3 and 6 with frequency count of 135, 129 and 122 as against total frequency of 239. Their respective percentage scores yielded 56%, 54% and 51% which is above the bench mark of 50%. However, female English literature teachers disagreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration considering items with serial numbers 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 have their frequency count fluctuating from 6-10.9 as against total frequency of 239. The percentage scores range between 3%-46% which is below the bench mark of 50%. On the general note, all the items agreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration with all the items from 1-10 having the grand mean above 2.5 which is the criterion mean.

Research questions 2: What are the factors that affect English literature teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Responses of the participants on the factors that affect English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

		Male Response	Female Response		
S/ N	Item	SA A D SD	SA A D SD	X	Rmk
		f% f% f% f%	f% f% f% f%		
1.	The test items are derived from the subject content	87 41 - - 68% 32% - -	121 59 36 23 51%25% 15% 10%	3.4	A
2.	The direction of the expected answer to the test clarified	59 39 18 12 46% 30% 14% 9%	99 56 61 23 41%23% 26% 10%	3.0	A
3.	The use of ambiguous words is avoided	90 35 2 - 70% 27% 2% -	123 73 40 3 51% 31% 17% 1%	3.4	A
4.	Adequate time is given for the test	56 39 28 5 44% 30% 22% 5%	92 89 13 41 38% 37% 5% 17%	3.0	A
5.	Over padded sentences are avoided	105 19 3 1 82% 15% 2% 0.7%	87 96 29 27 36% 40% 12% 11%	3.4	A
6.	Items of the test are well organized	68 56 31 27 53% 44% 24% 21%	90 98 25 26 38% 41% 10% 11%	3.2	A
7.	All the test items are already treated in class	30 23 49 26 23% 18% 38% 20%	41 29 105 64 17% 12% 38% 27%	2.2	D
8.	The test items have too many sub-questions	29 8 35 56 23% 6% 27% 44%	38 45 92 64 16% 19% 38% 27%	2.1	D
9.	Part of the test are written in clear terms	69 28 11 20 53% 22% 9% 16%	99 97 14 29 41% 41% 6% 12%	3.1	A

10	Part of the test items are taught in class.	128 - - -	102 89 33 15		
		100% - - -	43% 37% 14% 6%	3.5	A

Table 2 above shows that male teachers agreed on the factors that affect English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra based on the items with serial numbers 1, 3, 5, 9 and 10 as seen in their frequency count of 87, 90, 105, 69 and 128 as against 128 overall frequency counts. Their respective percentage scores are 68%, 70%, 82%, 53% and 100% which is above the bench mark 50%. However, some male English teachers disagreed on the ways English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra with their frequency scores and percentages ranging between 1-59 & 0.1%-46% respectively as seen in items with serial numbers 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 which have all their percentage scores below 50% benchmark. Inversely, the female English teachers agreed on the ways English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra with items with serial numbers 1 and 3 with their respective frequency counts and percentage scores of 121 (51%) and 123 (51%) which is above the bench mark of 50%. Many female teachers disagreed on the ways English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra based on items with serial numbers 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. These items have their frequency counts and percentage scores as 99 (41%), 92 (38%), 82 (34%), 78 (33%), 95 (40%), 80 (33%), 86 (40%) and 68 (28%) all of which lie below the 50% bench mark. The grand mean scores from both male and female English literature teachers indicate that English literature teachers agreed on the ways English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra with items with serial numbers 1-6 and 9 & 10 having their mean scores above 2.5 which is the criterion mean. Items 8 and 9 had their mean scores as 2.2 and 2.1 which is below the criterion mean of 2.5 and therefore disagreed on the ways English literatures teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra.

Research question 3: What are the factors that affect English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 3: Responses of the participants on the factors that affect English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State?

		Male Response	Female Response		
S/N	Item	SA A D SD	SA A D SD	X	Rmk
		f% f% f% f%	f% f% f% f%		
1.	The English literature test is lengthy	34 29 45 20 27% 23% 35% 16%	68 96 35 40 29%40%15% 1%	2.7	A
2.	The test is conducted close to dismissal	24 31 32 41 18% 24% 25% 32%	49 50 65 75 21%21%27% 3%	2.3	D
3.	The test contains many test items	23 32 48 25 18% 25% 38% 20%	54 23 85 77 23%10%36% 3%	2.3	D
4.	The students have their respective writing materials	66 32 11 19 52% 25% 9% 15%	68 71 57 43 28%30%24% 1%	2.9	A
5.	There is good seating arrangement.	56 32 22 18 44% 25% 17% 14%	82 76 56 25 34%32% 23% 10%	2.9	A
6.	There is good lighting in the class	35 25 33 35	46 56 78 58	2.4	D

		27% 20% 26% 27%	19%23%33% 24%		
7.	The classroom is well ventilated	45 28 29 26 35% 22% 23% 20%	46 35 95 63 19%15%40% 26%	2.2	D
8.	There is adequate provision of teaching aids	27 33 30 38 21% 26% 23% 30%	56 33 70 80 23%14%29% 33%	2.1	D
9.	The class is close to market or noisy area	40 23 40 22 31% 18% 31% 17%	86 56 68 29 40%24%28% 12%	3.1	A
10	The test is always given unannounced	44 29 25 30 34% 23% 20% 23%	68 59 60 52 28%25%25% 22%	3.5	A

Table 3 above indicates that male English language teachers agreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State with just item with the serial number 4 which has frequency count and percentage score of 66 (52%) which above the bench mark of 50%. On the reverse side, items 1-3 & 5-10 from the male side, disagreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State with the frequency counts and percentage scores of 34(27%), 41 (32%), 48 (38%), 22 (17%), 33 (26%), 29 (33%), 30 (23%), 40 (31% and 25 (20%) which is below the benchmark of 50% 29 (23%), 30 (23%), 40 (31%) and 25 (20%) which is below the benchmark of 50%. On the female part, they total disagreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State in all the items with the frequency counts and percentage scores of ranging between 23(10%) -86 (40%) which fell below the bench mark of 50%. On the mean scores, items with serial numbers 1, 4, 5, 9 and 10 for both male and female English literature teachers agreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State had their mean scores above 2.5 which is above the criterion mean while

items 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8 disagreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State since their mean scores fell below the criterion mean of 2.5.

HO1 There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female English literature teachers on the planning practices adopted in the test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: T-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of male and female English literature teachers on the planning practices adopted in the test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value	2-tailed	Sig. Level	Dec.
Male	128	3.2	0.96	1.73	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Female	239	2.8	0.98				

On the above table, the hypothesis testing indicates that there is no significant difference between the male and female English language teachers on the planning practices adopted in the test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State. This is shown with the mean scores of 3.2 and 2.8 with their corresponding SD of 0.96 and 0.98, with 2-tailed value of 1.96 which is greater than t.-value of 1.73 at 0.05 level of significant upon which the hypothesis was tested.

HO₂ There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female English literature teachers on the factors that affect English literature teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 5: T-test analysis of difference between the mean scores of the respondents on the factors that affect English literature teachers ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value	2-tailed	Sig. Level	Dec.
Male	128	3.2	0.96	0.63	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Female	239	2.8	0.98				

Table 5 above shows the mean scores for both male and female English literature teachers to be 3.2 & 2.8 with SD of 0.96 & 0.98 accordingly. The t-value is 0.63 as against 2-tailed of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significant. Since the t-value is less than the 2-tailed value of 1.96, it is therefore upheld that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female English literature teachers on the ways they ensure validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

HO₃ There is no significant difference in the mean rating of male and female English literature teachers on the factors that affect English literature test while ensuring reliability of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 6: T-test of difference between the mean scores of male and female English literature teachers on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-value	2-tailed	Sig. Level	Dec.
Male	128	3.2	0.96	0.98	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Female	239	2.8	0.98				

On the above table, the hypothesis testing indicates that there is no significant difference between the rating scores of the male and female English literature teachers on the way they ensure reliability of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State. With 2-tailed value of 1.96 which is greater than t-value of 0.98 at 0.05 level of significant, the hypothesis testing is thus accepted.

Summary of the findings

The response to the questionnaire items which were based on the research questions shows the following:

1. Male and female English teachers agreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State. The matching hypothesis accepted the null hypothesis tested and states that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female teachers on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in the test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State.



2. Male and female English teachers agreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure validity of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State. The corresponding hypothesis upheld that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female English literature teachers on the ways they ensure validity of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State.
3. Male and female English teachers agreed on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State. The corresponding hypotheses declared that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female teachers on the ways English literature teachers ensure reliability of their test in secondary schools in Anambra State.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. This is done under the following sub-headings: Discussion of findings, Implication of the study, conclusion, recommendations, limitation of the study and suggestions for further study.

Discussion of the Findings

The first finding of this study which is derived from research question one on table 3 revealed that English literature teachers agreed on the planning practices adopted by English literature teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State with the grand mean scores of 2.57 and 2.99 for both male and female English literature teachers respectively. Since the two grand mean scores are above the criterion mean score of 2.5. With reference to the frequency counts and percentage scores the male English literature teachers had 5 had above 50% bench mark only on the item with serial number 7 while other items had below 50% benchmark. This is an indication that most English literature disagreed on the planning practices adopted by the English literature teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State looking at items 1-6 and 8-10 which disagreed on the following: that the purpose of the test are explained to the students, all the test items relates to specific objectives, using suitable formats for testing, deciding the time frame for the test, ensuring that every item hade equal difficult level, determining the method and type of testing, ensuring the test materials are ready before time and many others. The corresponding hypothesis on table 6 which is the second finding of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between the man scores of male and female English literature teachers on the planning practices adopted in test administration in secondary schools in Anambra State with T-calculated value of 1.73 which is less than the 2-tailed value of 1.96.



Planning is futuristic and facilitates avoidance of impending threats and errors that might thwart the genuine efforts of the teachers and students thus render an instrument of measurement such as test invalid and unreliable. This is because it is during planning that, necessary modifications are such as ascertaining the uniformity of the difficult level of the test items among others is rectified to ensure valid and reliable test that could be used for evaluation and as such fit for official use. This revelation had been made in the past by Fadipo (2000) & Badele (2011) in Oloyede & Oloyede (2020) along with Kpolovie (2014) who vehemently asserted that for quality to be achieved in education industry, there must be standard set aside to be met and it is through planning that the guidelines to achieving quality is streamlined which involves ensuring that factors of validity and reliability are maintained in test administration. The scholars further stressed that when tests are planned, there is avoidance of ambiguous questions, excessive wordings, choice of appropriate items emphasis and use of item appropriate formats. The reverse is the case when test administration is unplanned leading to subjectivity and unreliable test administration.

The third finding of the study emanated from the research question two with the data analysis displayed on table 4 revealed that the English literature teachers agreed on the application of the factors of that affect validity in the English literature test in secondary schools in Anambra State with the grand mean of 3.24 for males and 2.87 for females. This is because the two scores are above the criterion mean of 2.5. However, frequency counts and percentage scores indicate that the male English literature teachers agreed on the application of factors that affect validity in English literature test with item with serial numbers 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, and 10 all of which had their percentage scores above 50% bench mark. Nevertheless, items 2, 4, 7 and 8 disagreed on the application of the factors of validity in their test items. This is shown on the frequency counts and percentage scores of 59(45%), 56(44%), 30(23%) and 29(23%). Conversely, the female English literature teachers agreed on the application of the factors that affect validity of English literature test on items with serial numbers 1 and 3 which had their frequency counts and percentage scores of 121(51%) and 123(51%) the scores which is above 50% bench mark. On the reverse side, most female English literature teachers disagreed on the application of the factors that affect validity of test instrument on the items with the serial numbers; 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 which had all the matching percentage scores below the 50% bench mark. This is an indication that most female English teachers do not validate their test items before administration. The corresponding hypothesis which is the fourth finding of this study on table 7 shows that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of male and female English literature teachers on the application of factors of validity of their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State with the t-calculated value of which is less than 2-tailed value of 1.96 thus the hypothesis testing was not rejected.

Validity of test instrument certifies it accurate for the use of the results for evaluation and subsequent placement, selection, promotion, certification and other official uses. It ensures the test



measures the extent to which students comprehend learned materials, teachers' level of competent in terms of knowledge and methods and the level of adequacy of instructional facilities. This instigates improvement on the educational processes for quality educational objectives accomplishment. This revelation is not different from what earlier researchers like Oloro & Opa (2014), Linder, Williams & Levitas (2021), Bhandari (2022) & Elttguide (2022) postulated that validity as an integral part of quality assurance is the systematic construction, administration and scoring of teacher-made test thus stressed that validity explores educational objectives which quality education connotes.

The fifth finding of this study is gotten from the research question three on table 5 indicates that the English literature teachers agreed on the application of the factors that affect reliability of test instrument in secondary schools in Anambra State with the grand mean scores of 2.5 and 2.53 for both male and female English literature teachers which had their scores above the 50% cut off mark. A close observation on the frequency counts and percentage scores shows that the male English literature teachers agreed on the application of the factors that affect reliability in their test items based only on item with serial number 4 which has the frequency count of 66 and percentage score of 52% which is above the benchmark. They disagreed on the application of the factors of reliability on their test items following items with serial numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 all of which had their percentage scores below the 50% bench mark. On the opposite side, all the female English literature teachers disagreed on the application of the factors that affect reliability on their test items with all the percentage scores appearing below the 50% bench mark. They disagreed that all the test items should be lengthy, have many test items, are conducted in a serene environment, there is good seats and desks for the students, good lighting, cross ventilation in the classroom, test time and date being announced to student and above all instructional aids availability. The equivalent hypothesis which is the sixth finding of the study as shown in 8 revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the male and female English literature teachers on the application of the factors of reliability on their test items in secondary schools in Anambra State with the t-calculated value of which is less than 2-tailed value of 1.96 thus the hypothesis testing was retained.

It is truism that reliability determines the consistency and dependency of the test items which is achieved through ensuring suitable time and date scheduled and made known to the students for the test administration, given students matching time that suits the length of the test, creating enabling environment to prevent distractive tendencies. This revelation is similar to what previous researchers in the likes of Ebong (2006), Orluwene (2012) & Middleton (2022) had discovered that components of quality education which reliability emphasizes should incorporate resource input like teacher, learner, facilities and test books. The scholars' stand was that when the test is adjudged reliable, it is dependable and trust worthy capable to be used objectively for inferences



and this can only be achieved in the midst of adequate quality and quantity educational resource inputs.

Implication of the Findings

The findings of this study have exposed the absence of planning of the English literature test by most teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State which has adversely influenced the reliability and validity of the test items. The implication is that the scores derived from the test are not the exact of what it should have been all things being equal. The test outcome is deceptive and subjective thus not credible for inferences. When used to test the proficiency of the students' knowledge and teachers' competency in knowledge and methods yield blurred result.

Another implication is that when the teacher-made test does not reflect the validity factors in the test items, the test becomes inconsistency and result to poor assessment and evaluation. The implication remains that the students are tested on the peripheral knowledge while the substance remained untested. This gives a wrong impression of the test and can even affect the students negatively in external examination which is constructed by the test experts or psychometricians. This is because they not used to writing or answering valid questions where the content of the subject matter are tested. It also leads to continuous failure in external examinations. The scores gotten from this type of test cannot be used for referral purposes where it is used, it gives falsehood and their holders of certificate cannot defend it. Failures could also result to examination irregularities which students see as way of getting unmerited mark.

The last implication of the study is that the unreliable test lacks consistency and dependability of the test score because of a lot anomalies such as distraction from the environment, lack of adequate furniture, dilapidated classroom condition, lack of study material, wrong time of test administration, teachers' incompetency and ill-method of teaching-learning. This could lead to frustration and confusion on the part of the students which is mirrored in the epileptic achievement of educational objectives. It also leads to poor quality and functional education which negates economic growth and development.

Apparently, the positive implication of this study is that teachers now see their lapses and the need to improve their testing skills so as to ensure that test items are valid and reliable. This is achieved by following the planning guide lines to construct teacher-made test in line with educational objectives. Through the certification of valid and reliable test items, the students are better positioned for excellent result thus quality of education at the long run.



Conclusion

Based on the outcome of the findings, it is concluded that English literature teachers in secondary schools in Anambra State agreed to adopting planning practices in their testing and administration of test. It is also agreed that they ensure both reliability and validity

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should be enlightened on the need for test planning and the benefits of planning the test so as to ensure that the test measures what it is meant to measure.
2. The school supervisory body should deem it fit to include teacher-made test as one of the documents that should be vetted before administration to ensure that the components of validity are duly incorporated during the planning state to ensure objectivity of the test items for students' better performance.
3. Another recommendation is that the elements of reliability should be declared to the appropriate authorities in education responsible for provision of school facilities to provide adequately supply the needed resources in functional state so as to create enabling class/school environment which inspires teaching-learning effectiveness for a quality education.

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