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TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE PERCEPTION OF HISTORY STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN ON THE USE OF CBT FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF HISTORY COURSES

Saidu, Abubakar (Ph.D), Department of Arts Education,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin. 1

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

Aibangbe, Mary O. (Mrs.), General Studies Education Department, Federal College
of Education, Kano. 11

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: CHALLENGES OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AS PERCEIVED BY NIGERIAN UNDERGRADUATES

Ajufo, Beatrice Ifeoma (Ph.D), Faculty of Education, National Open University of
Nigeria, Lagos. 23

THE PERCEPTION OF RETIREES ON OPEN DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A PANACEA FOR POVERTY AND LONELINESS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

Apena, Temilola, T. (Ph.D), Centre for Lifelong Learning, National Open
University of Nigeria, Victoria Island, Lagos. 34

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ITS EFFECTS ON PRODUCTIVITY AS PERCEIVED BY WOMEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS IN ACCRA, GHANA

Effirim, Paul Kobina and Antwi-Danso, Stephen (Ph.D), University of Education,
Winneba, Ghana. 41

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE MUSCULAR STRENGTH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

Attahiru, Zubairu & Suleiman Jummai S., Department of Physical and Health
Education, School of Sciences, Shehu Shagari College of Education,
Sokoto. 56

**CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
ADMINISTRATION IN NIGERIA: THE ROLE OF THE POLICE FORCE,
LAW COURTS & PRISON SERVICE**

Tambiyi, Francis Joseph, Department of Social Studies, School of Arts & Social
Sciences, Federal College of Education, Zaria. 67

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN THE
IMPROVEMENT OF GIRL-CHILD PARTICIPATION IN BASIC
EDUCATION IN THE NORTH-WEST ZONE, NIGERIA**

Oduwaiye, R.O. (Ph.D), Department of Educational Management, University of
Ilorin & Bakwai, B., Department of Educational Foundations, Usmanu Dan Fodiyo
University, Sokoto. 80

**ASSESSMENT OF THE 9-YEAR BASIC ENGLISH STUDIES
CURRICULUM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL
FOUNDATIONS OF NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL IDEAS**

Enyengho, Toju; Akinmusire, Patrick; & Adediran Joseph, Department of Special
Education & Curriculum Studies, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. 96

**THE CASE FOR COMPREHENSIVE AESTHETIC EDUCATION
CURRICULA FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA**

Aghaosa, Ike P. (Ph.D), Department of Educational Foundations, University of
Benin & Ukwaku, Samson O. (Ph.D), Department of Fine and Applied Arts,
University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria. 108

**INFLUENCE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS OF PRIMARY
SCHOOLS ON PUPILS' PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Attahiru, Zubairu & Suleiman Jummai S., Department of Physical & Health
Education, Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto. 124

**TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES THROUGH
COORDINATED SPORTS AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES IN
NIGERIAN SCHOOLS**

Eyengho, Toju; Ajibade, Yetunde; Akinmusire, Patrick & Adediran Joseph,
Department of Special Education and Curriculum Studies, Adeyemi College of
Education, Ondo, Nigeria. 133

INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL VALUES AND PRACTICES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT IN YENAGOA METROPOLIS OF BAYELSA STATE

Offor, Ihebietei, T. (Ph.D), & Paulley, Fabainmine G. (Ph.D), Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Yenagoa. 146

PARENTAL OPINIONS ON THE EFFECTS OF STREET HAWKING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTHS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

Okafor, Ifeoma P. (Ph.D); Balogun, A.O. (Ph.D); Abdulazizi, Isiaka (Ph.D); Iyekolo, A.O. & Oniye, R.K.; Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. 172

TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN GOMBE STATE: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

Sagir, Jummai I. & Luka, Er Peter, Department of Education, Gombe State University, Gombe. 161

THE AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF RESOURCES FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Udom, Idongesit David (Ph.D) & Oyedokun, Moshood O., Department of Vocational & Technical Education, University of Benin, Benin-City, Nigeria. 184

ACADEMIC STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES AMONG STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

Enuku, Christie A., Department of Nursing Science, School of Basic Medical Sciences, University of Benin & Nwike, Peace Chinozor, University of Benin, Benin-City. 201

PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ON THE LEARNING OF FRENCH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OYO METROPOLIS

Abudu, Zainab Assake, Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. 212

PERCEPTION OF HISTORY STUDENTS OF UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN ON THE USE OF CBT TO ASSESS HISTORY COURSES

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Abstract

Information and Communication Technology is gaining vast popularity globally in recent years. Its use which extended to information processing capabilities is influencing organizations of all types and sizes bringing about changes in institutional goals. A large percentage of the activities in many educational institutions is now done with the use of computers including assessment. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. The research design used for this study is descriptive survey research design. The population consists of all students of History of the University of Ilorin while a sample of 200 History students was selected across all levels of study in the Department of Arts Education (History Unit), and Department of History and International Studies, University of Ilorin using Stratified random sampling techniques. A researcher designed questionnaire tagged: Questionnaire on the perception of History student of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses (QPHCBTHC) was used. The demographic characteristics of the participants were described using the percentage while summated mean rating was used to answer research question one. Hypothesis one was tested using the t-test statistics. Furthermore, hypotheses two and three were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

It was found that virtually all the items present in the questionnaire are the respondents' perception of history students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender. It was however recommended that more awareness campaign should be done in promoting the use of computer for assessment. Government should provide funds to schools to be used in buying more computers for use during assessment. The school authorities should engage in training of more personnel to handle the centres of assessment.

Background to the Study

Assessment plays a major role in the teaching and learning process. It is a very important aspect in the teaching and learning process as it helps the students, parents, teachers and school management to determine students' performance and take various decisions on the students' learning (Kirk, 2013). With the introduction of the first computers in the 1970s in Europe, the potential of this new technology to generate not only new types of learning environments but also new settings for the design and administration of tests was quickly recognized.

During the past few years, technology has significantly reshaped the method of assessment. In many academic domains, educational measurement has been moved towards the use of Computer Based Test (CBT). Computer Based Test (CBT) also known as computer based assessment or E-examination, is a method of administering examination in which the responses are electronically recorded, assessed or both. It is commonly available for several admission tests throughout the developed and developing countries. There are two main types of Computer Based Test. The most familiar type is where candidates fill in their responses on a paper from which is fed into a computer optical mark reader. This reads the form, scores the papers and may even report the reliability. The second type of CBT is where a computer provides an assessment interface for students: they input their answers and receive feedback via a computer (Peter, Bill, & David, 2004).

An effective method of student assessment is necessary in History as well as all other subjects at various levels of education. Due to increase in number of students, ever increasing work commitment for academic staff and the advancement of internet technology, the use of computer assisted assessment has been an attractive proposition for many higher education institutions (Darrell, 2003). Currently at the University of Ilorin, the conventional method of CBT is commonly used to assess students' knowledge. In the past few years, the number of students has increased and the traditional examination method (paper and Pencil examination) was then considered not suitable to assess large classes as it is time consuming. Hence, the introduction of CBT by the management of University of Ilorin in 2008.

Generally, the advantages of CBT system over traditional Paper and Pencil Testing (PPT) have been demonstrated in various comparative studies and as mentioned by Peter, Bill, and David (2004), CBT is not just an alternative method for delivering examination, rather it represents an important qualitative shift away from the traditional paper and pencil based test method. Despite these advantages available in computer based test system, it was shown that it does not mean that CBT is better than PPT. Previous studies by Ryfe, Meyer, Ryfe, Liman, Sanders, and Hill, J. (n.d.) have even found that testing format does not affect test scores and as such CBT can be considered a valid and acceptable testing mode.

As regards the issue of using CBT to assess undergraduate courses in Nigeria, many scholars have carried out researches to examine students' perception on the use of CBT to assess some courses. (Jimoh, Abduljaleel&Kawu, 2012) conducted a research on students' perception of CBT for examining undergraduate Chemistry courses. Alabi, Issa&Oyekunle (2012) also conducted a research on the use of Computer Based Test method for the conduct of examinations at the University of Ilorin and Aliyu& Francis, (2014) also conducted a research on using Computer Based Test method for the conduct of examination in Nigeria. None of these studies has been done to investigate the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. The thrust of this paper, therefore, is to carefully investigate the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History Courses.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. Specifically, this study is to investigate:

- a. The difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender.
- b. The difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study.
- c. The difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer Proficiency.

Research Questions

The following questions were posed to guide the study:

- a. What is the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses?
- b. Is there any difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender?
- c. Is there any difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on the level of study?
- d. Is there any difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses deduced from the research questions would be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H01:** There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender
- H02:** There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study.
- H03:** There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency.

Methods

The research type adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. The descriptive research is a systematic attempt to describe and explain the characteristics of a given population or areas of interest gradually (Daramola, 2006). It is also described as a research method which enables researchers to obtain opinions or views of a representative sample of a target population so as to infer that of the entire population. The descriptive survey method was adopted for this study so as to be able to obtain factual information on the perception of History students on the use of CBT to assess History courses. The population consists of all History education and History and International Studies students in the Faculties of Education and Arts, respectively, of the University of Ilorin. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 50 students from each level cutting across the two departments. In the long run, 200 respondents were later sampled and involved in the study.

A researcher-designed a questionnaire tagged, "Questionnaire on the Perception of History Students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to Assess History Courses" (QPHSUICAH) was used. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, namely sections A and B. Section A elicits background information on the respondents such as gender, computer proficiency, level of study, while section B contained items to elicit information on the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. The respondents were requested to respond to these items on a modified four-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), while the scoring of these responses involved a minimum of 1 for Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 for Disagree (D) 3 for agree (A) 4 for Strongly Agree (SA) for positive statement. The scores were reversed for negative statements on QPHSUICAH. The reliability of the Instruments was established through the test re-test method. The instrument was administered on 20 undergraduates of other departments. The administration was done two times at an interval of three weeks; the two administrations were subjected to the Pearson Product Moment(s) Correlation (PPMC) statistics.

The demographic characteristics of the participants were described using the percentage while summated mean rating was used to answer research question one. Hypothesis one was tested using the t-test statistical tool. Hypotheses two and three were tested using one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The data collected were analyzed to answer the research question and to test the research hypotheses formulated. The two hundred (200) copies of questionnaire that were administered were all retrieved. This gave a response return rate of 100%. Four research questions were raised in this study. Research question one was answered using mean while research questions two, three and four which had corresponding hypotheses were tested with the use of t-test and ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question One: *What is the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses?*

Table 1: Mean rating of the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses

S/N	ITEMS	Mean
1.	The use of CBT is efficient for wide coverage of content matter	2.84
2.	CBT is undertaken in a conducive environment	2.89
3.	CBT is better than the paper based test	2.71
4.	I prefer CBT to paper based testing	2.56
5.	Students' fairness and equity is ensured with CBT	2.73
6.	The use of CBT has positively affected my test performance	2.62
7.	The time allocated for CBT is not always enough	2.67
8.	The use of CBT reduces the time dedicated to marking	2.82
9.	The need for double marking is totally eliminated by CBT	2.51
10.	The use of CBT ensures prompt release of result	2.80
11.	The use of CBT creates propensity for original thinking during examination	2.83
12.	The use of CBT enables more detailed knowledge of students' progress	2.50
13.	The use of CBT allows course evaluation by lecturers to be undertaken more easily	2.88
14.	CBT helps to ensure objectivity in test scores	2.87
15.	CBT helps to ensure quick thinking and reasoning	2.71
16.	The use of CBT is confusing	2.47
17.	I feel threatened by the use of CBT compared to the paper based test	2.44

18.	The CBT is tedious	2.51
19	I think the training of students on the use of computer is necessary before the administration of test.	2.68

Table 1 shows the response of the perception of History students of the University of the Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. With a benchmark mean of 2.5, any item that is less than the benchmark mean is considered not to be one of the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses and any variable that is greater than the benchmark mean is considered to be one of the perceptions. However, from the table, it can be seen that all the items except for items 16 and 17 are noted by the respondents as not the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses.

Hypotheses Testing

Three hypotheses are postulated in this study. Hypothesis one was tested with the use of t-test and hypotheses two and three were tested with the use of ANOVA at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho1: *There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender*

Table 2: A table of t-test analysis on the difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig (2tailed)	Decision
Male	80	21.1	5.36	1.124	198	.262	Do not Reject
Female	120	22.0	5.92				

P>0.05

Result from table 2 shows the t-test value yielded 1.124 which is not significant with P value .262 > 0.05. This shows a non-significant result. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender.

Ho2: *There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study*

Table 3: A table of ANOVA analysis on the difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	3.844	2	1.922			
Within Groups	6470.776	197	32.847	.059	.943	Do not Reject
Total	6474.620	199				

P>0.05

From table 3, result shows the df (2,199) and F value yielded .059 which is not significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis is retained since the P-value .943 is greater than 0.05 (.943 > 0.05). This means that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study.

H₀₃: *There is no significant difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency*

Table 4: A table of ANOVA analysis on the difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	140.334	2	70.167			
Within Groups	6334.286	197	32.154	2.182	.016	Reject
Total	6474.620	199				

P>0.05

From table 4, result shows the df (2, 199) and F value yielded 2.182 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected since the P-value .016 is less than 0.05 (.016 < 0.05). This means that there is a significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency.

Table 5: Scheffe's post hoc Analysis on the difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency

Experience	N	Mean	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
			SD	S.Error
Fair	70	21.0214	6.00041	.71719
Very Fair	70	21.4286	5.13293	.61350

Good	60	22.7600	5.86862	.75764
Total	200	21.6300	5.70401	.40333

Table 9 shows the Scheffe's post hoc Analysis of the difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency. It was revealed that the three groups were significantly different as those that are good have the highest mean of 22.76, followed by the very fair with a mean of 21.43 and fair with a mean of 21.02.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study revealed that all the items except for items 16 and 17 are noted by the respondents as the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses. A majority of the respondents noted that CBT helps to ensure objectivity in test scores, the use of CBT is efficient for wide coverage of content matter and that student' fairness and equity is ensured with CBT. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Adegbija, George, Abayomi and Bola, (2012) who noted that the use of CBT in testing has so many advantages such as ensuring wide coverage of syllabus, objectivity in scoring, it also helps to boost the reasoning level of students. The researcher further noted that as a result of its advantages over the Manual method of assessment, many higher institutions and other examination bodies have adopted it.

The second finding of this study reveals that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender. This finding is in line with the findings of Alabi, Isaa,&Oyekunle, (2012) who also found that there was no significant difference between male and female students' perception concerning the use of CBT in testing, especially in objective tests.

From the findings, it was discovered that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on the level of study. This finding is in consonance with the assertions of Kclevin (2002) that students' level of study is not a determinant of their use of computer. He further explained that being able to operate and use a computer for diverse functions depends on the user's computer literacy irrespective of level of study.

Another finding of this study shows that there is a significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency. This agrees with that of Peter, Bill and David (2004) who submitted that the level of a students' computer proficiency will determine how well he/she will be able to work on it. He explained further that some students find it difficult to use the computer because they have little knowledge on the use of computer.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on gender. It can be said that there is no significant difference in the perception of History students of University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on level of study. It can also be concluded that there is a significant difference in the perception of History students of the University of Ilorin on the use of CBT to assess History courses based on computer proficiency.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the result of this study:

1. Though most student are familiar with the use of computer but more awareness campaign can be done in promoting the use of computer for assessment.
2. The government should provide funds to schools for buying more computers for use during assessment.
3. The school authorities should engage in training of more personnel to handle the centres of assessment.

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