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Blessing Aladi Okpe

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CHAPTER 4

Perception of Heads of Department on Faculty Members' Online Assessment

Competence and Use for Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Clara Dumebi Moemeke Ph.D and Felicia O. Mormah Ph.D

Abstract

The study investigated the perception of Heads of Departments of a tertiary institution in southern Nigeria on their lecturers' competence and use of online assessment in evaluating students' learning outcomes' by male and female. It also sought to find out if the gender of the Head of Department influenced perception. The aim was to find out if the HODs believe in the capability of their lecturers to utilize the innovation. A sample of Fourteen Heads of Departments was selected by stratified random sampling technique. This is to afford inclusion of all clusters. A 15-item 4-point likert scale questionnaire tagged "Perception of Heads of Departments on lecturers online assessment competence and use for evaluating learning outcomes (PHDQ)" was administered. Data collected was analyzed using the independent t-test to enable the comparing of means since the data was normally distributed and Levene test ensured equality of variance. Result showed that the gender of the Head of Department did not influence perception nor did it influence their views about lecturers' competence and use of online innovation in assessment. The need for training was recommended as well as system policy change to enhance the use of online assessment innovation by College lecturers.

Introduction

The online technology is an ideal innovative technological breakthrough that has come to stay, especially in evaluating students learning outcomes. Generally, observation is common that lecturers and students own and use Smartphone, laptop, iPods, tablets and Computers. These devices are mostly used over the internet.

These mobile technologies have overtime changed our way, methods and patterned interactive relationship with one another. Online assessment refers to the appraisals, evaluations, tests and examinations that are given over the internet to assess the learning outcomes of learners after a course of instruction. The online assessment method has changed the pattern of communication and interaction between the lecturers and their students.

From an administrative point of view, research has been conducted, examining why online course evaluation should be used. Evidence shows that online course evaluation lowers cost of assessment, allows more time for teaching and lessen administrative burden (Ballantyne, 2013). Even though correlation have been found to exist between teaching quality and online student feedback (Kember,Leung &Kwan,2002) opined that other factors could also interact and affect the quality of teaching over time. Mormah (2017) concord that Information and Communications Technology (ICT), in terms of online assessment is required for effective instructional management and delivering and it needs to be integrated into lecture delivery, students'

assignment, and course examination, student presentation of seminars, micro teaching and evaluation.

In the college of Education system, Heads of Departments (HOD) are saddled with the duty of monitoring faculty members' assessment activities in the department. The study thus investigates the perception of the HODs about the competence and use of online assessment in their various departments

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The Technology Acceptance Model was propounded by Davis in 1989. It is an information system theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology. The model suggests that when users such as College Lecturers are presented ICT technology like online assessment for evaluating students learning outcomes, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when to use it. These factors include:

- Perceived usefulness (PU): This was defined by Davis as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance” which in this case, is evaluating students learning outcomes.
- Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU): The degree to which the lecturers believe that using online assessment for evaluating students learning outcomes will be free from effort.
- External variables: This refers to the actual system's features and capabilities.

When Heads of Departments and Lecturers perceive the usefulness of practicing online assessment for evaluating student learning outcomes the easier the compliance and utilization will be.

Statement of the Problem

Critical to effective teaching and learning, is the assessment of the products of learning based on stated objectives. Assessment, not only gives information on the extent of learning by learners, but also informs the learners on the next course of action as well as gives Lecturers opportunities to interface with learners through knowledge interactive communication principles. The diversity of learning styles and principles in the 21st Century classrooms and learning systems have called variations and innovations in the modes and methods of assessment of students' learning outcomes. Also prevalent is the separation of lecturers and their students both by time and space. It thus becomes necessary to apply innovative assessment strategies that will continually connect lecturers and their students and avoid any gaps in the monitor of learning outcomes. Connected to the above is the continuous increase in the number of students and the challenges posed by traditional methods of assessment in covering all aspects of learning as well as the diversity of next generation learning tools, clouds, digital and mobile technologies available to both lecturers and their students. Literature, (Kybartaitė, 2010; Moemeke, 2014) has shown that use of online assessment of students learning outcomes enable quick and effective generation of assessment reports and feedback with a single click, easy and fast publication and sharing of results with

parents, guardian, peers as well as fast submission of test, assignment, projects etc by students. Its effectiveness in tracking timely completion of work is also instructive.

However, the ability of Lecturers to key into and utilize these digital technologies to the fullest has remained questionable. Coutinho and Junior (2009) have attributed inability to differentials that exist between the technological worlds of teachers and their 21st Century learners of the digital age. Efforts to bridge this gap between teachers and their students in technology use has resulted in improved training and retraining of lecturers in digital and technology use in the classroom through programmed such as the Advanced Digital appreciation for Tertiary institutions organized by Digital Bridge Institute (ADAPTI) under the funding of the Nigerian Communications Commission and may others. The aim is to improve competence and utilization of digital tools and strategies in all aspects of teaching and learning. Since the Heads of Departments are saddled with the duty of monitoring the job performance of the faculty members in their various departments, it becomes necessary to find out from them about lecturers' competence and use of online technologies in students' assessment. This study therefore asks: What is the perception of Heads of Departments on the competence and use of online assessment of students' learning outcomes by lecturers in their department?

Research Questions

The study intends to answer the following questions;

1. Is there difference in the views of male and female HODs on the use of online assessment of students learning outcomes by Lecturers?
2. Is there difference in the views of male and female HODs on online assessment use by male and female lecturers?
3. Is there difference in the views of HODs about competence and use of online assessment by lecturers?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the views of male and female HODs about lecturers' use of online assessment for evaluating students' learning outcome
2. There is no significant difference in the views of male and female HODs about the use of online assessment by male and female lecturers
3. There is no significant difference in the views of HODs about the lecturers' competence in online assessment

Purpose of the study

This study seeks the views of Heads of Departments on their Faculty members' online assessment competence and their use of online assessment in evaluating learning outcome as avenues for understanding lecturers' assessment practices.

Significance of the study

The study will help to examine how the Heads of Departments perceive lecturers competence and use of online assessment for evaluating learning outcomes. It will also help to examine if lecturers practice online assessment of students learning outcome and provide insight into technological acceptance. In addition, the study examines if college Lecturers possess the necessary digital competence for online assessment of learning outcome thereby providing insight and information on training needs of faculty members in the College.

Method

The study is a case study of the College of Education, Agbor, located in South/ south zone geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The variables of interest are the perception of Heads of Departments on competence and use of online assessment while gender is the independent variable. The population of the study consisted of the twenty- six academic Heads of Departments (HODs) in the College. A sample of fourteen HODs was drawn by stratified random sampling technique so as to include males and females. A 15-item likert scale questionnaire tagged 'Perception of Heads of Departments on lecturers online assessment competence and use for evaluating learning outcomes' (PHDQ) consisting of two sections was used for data collection. Section A collected information on the personal data of the respondents while section B sought information on the perception of the HODs about their Lecturers competence and use of online assessment and was scored on a 4- point scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly disagree (SD). The internal consistency reliability of PHDQ was determined by Kuder Richardson 21 to be 66.5. data collected was analyzed using the t- statistics.

Results

The result of the study is presented below.

HO1: There is no significant difference in the views of male and female HODs about lecturers' use of online assessment for evaluating students' learning outcome.

Table one below revealed a no significant difference in the views of male ($M = 38.75$, $SD = 6.67$) and female $M = 37.16$, $SD = 7.41$), $t(12) = 0.419$, $p = 0.68$ HODs about their faculty members' use of online assessment. This is not significant at the alpha level of 0.05 set for the study. The levene test also showed homogeneity of variance of the samples tested. The null hypothesis was therefore retained or not rejected.

Table1: t-test of significance of means of views of Male and female HODs on use of online assessment

Independent Samples Test

F

Lower

Cummulated perception

of the HODs

Equal variances not assumed

Levene's t-te
Test for for
Equality Eq
of y o
Variances Me

Sig. t

Upper

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variances .75
assumed

In respect to null hypothesis 2, table 2 below showed that there is no significant difference in the views of male (M = 4.50, SD = 1.19) and female (M = 3.66, SD = 1.36 $t(12) = 1.216$, $P = 0.247$) HODs about use of online assessment by male and female lecturers. This is thus not significant at the 0.05 alpha level set for this study. This means that there is no significant difference in the views of HODs about male and female lecturers' use of online assessments. Hypothesis 2 is therefore not rejected since there is not enough statistical evidence to do so. HO2 : There is no significant difference in the views of male and female HODs about the use of online assessment by male and female lecturers

Table 2: independent t-test of significance of the difference in mean responses of male and female HODs about the use of online assessment by male and female lecturers.

Independent t Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval of the Diff			
Lower	Upper									
male and female lecturers use	Equal variances assumed	.129	.725	1.216	12	.247	.83333	.68550	-.66024	2.32691
Equal variances not assumed			1.191	10.027	.261	.83333	.69977	-.72528		2.39195

Null Hypothesis 3 which stated a no significant difference in the mean views of Male and female HODs about their lecturers' competence for use of online assessment was also not rejected. Table 3 revealed that gender was not a factor in the competence of

Male (M = 22.50, SD = 4.30) and female (M = 22.00, SD = 5.29), $t(12) = 0.195$, $P = 0.849$ lecturers in the use of online assessment of learning outcome. The null hypothesis 3 was therefore not rejected due to lack of enough statistical evidence for acceptance.

female 6 1.6667 .81650 .33333

HO 3 : There is no significant difference in the views of HODs about the lecturers' competence in online assessment

Table 3: Independent t-test of the significance of difference in the mean of HODs perceived competence of Lecturers in the use online assessment.

Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means							
F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			
Lower level of competence variances not assumed	Upper Equal variances assumed									
		.329	.577	.195	12	.849	.50000	2.56174	-5.08155	6.08155
			.189	9.528	.854	.50000	2.64350	-5.42990	6.42990	

Discussion of findings

The study revealed that the perception of heads of departments about the competence and use of online assessment of learning outcomes is not gender dependent. It is possible to state here that the perceived inability to utilize online assessment may be as a result of poor technology acceptance as espoused by Davis (1989). Lecturers are not yet convinced of the usefulness (Perceived usefulness), adequacy and ease of use of online assessment strategy as noted by Davis. It is also possible that lack of enforcement of innovation (System variable) is responsible for drawback in implementation. This may explain the poor enforcement by relevant authorities.

Conclusion

The study investigated Heads of Departments perception about their lecturers competence and use of online assessment in evaluating students' learning outcomes. The views of the HODs did not vary along gender line regarding the lecturers' competence and use of online assessment. The gender of the lecturer did not also determine competence and use of online assessment. The HODs generally are of the view that their lecturers do not and cannot utilize online assessment effectively.

Recommendations

This study recommends that there is need for change in perception of the HODs and other educational administrators and implementer about online assessment since literature has shown its adequacy in evaluating learning outcomes. It is only when this is done that enforcement and acceptance can be enhanced.

There is need for retraining of lecturers on current assessment practices and their benefits in assessing all domains of learning outcomes especially in the 21st Century classrooms. There should be a gradual shift from traditional assessment practices to more robust and flexible online strategies by the College through policy alterations to accommodate innovations that are globally accepted since products of the College will operate within the same global setting as their counterparts from other institutions worldwide.

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