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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS OF TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION
IN HIGH SCHOOLS FOUND IN ADIGRAT TOWN**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analysis of the challenges and problems of teachers' assessment and evaluation. The main focus of this study was to investigate the extent of utilizing the assessment and evaluation and its implementation. Four high schools in Adigrat town were selected. Of the respective total population size of the study group, 4 principals, 60 teachers and 200 students as sample size were taken. The data for analysis were collected from students, teachers and school principals in each high school using structured interview and instrument. Prior to the data collection, a pilot study was made to see the reliability and face validity of the instrument for students and teachers, found to be 0.77 and 0.89 in Cronbach alpha respectively. After having the intended data, one sample *t-test* statistics was employed on the data. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis has accomplished in identifying major and distinct challenges and problems including large class size, shortage of resources, inadequate knowledge of teachers, students' poor educational background, inadequate supervision of school principals and other concerned bodies. The study came up with the conclusion of the applications of various assessment and evaluation methods in high schools were inadequate.

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INTRODUCTION

In educational contexts: The term testing, measurement, assessment and evaluation are likely to be used interchangeably without taking into consideration their difference (Ethiopian Ministry of Education, 1999). However, Experts define testing "as a systematic procedure for observing behaviour and describing it with the aid of numerical scales of fixed categories" (Cronbach, 1990, cited in Cole and Chan, 1994: p.443). On the other hand, measurement refers to a procedure for assigning numbers to a specified characteristic of a person in such a way that the numbers describe the degree to which the person possesses the attribute (Cole and Chan, 1994; Nitko, 2004). Scholars (Beriroglu, 2008; Airasian, 1996; Oosterhof, 1994; Marsh, 2004) have defined assessment as a process of observing learning: describing, collecting, recording, scoring, synthesizing and interpreting information about student's own learning to make it ready for decision. In line with the above, (Nitko, 2004; Kizilik, 2009; Cole and Chan, 1994) have also defined assessment as a process of obtaining information for the purpose of making decision about students, curricula, and programs, and educational policy

against the achieved objectives by the learner so as to measurein all aspects of instruction. Likewise, evaluation is the process of making value judgment about the worth of a student's performance or instructional objective achievement (Zenebe, 2002; Nitko, 2004). Evaluation can be also defined as "a systematic process of determining the extent to which educational objectives are achieved by pupils" (Gronlund, 1971: p.8).

Classification of assessment

The purpose of classroom assessment is used to manage the classroom instruction, placing students in educational programme, guidance and counselling, certifying their competence, selecting students, assigning grade to student, feedback and report to student and parents (Horton, 1990; Airasian, 1996; Marsh, 2004; Nitko, 2004; USAID – AED/EQUIP II, 2008). Nitko (2004) added further about the purpose of assessment in relation to diagnosis students' learning difficulties; evaluate teacher's teaching methods, and controlling students' behaviour. Besides, it helps a teacher to clarify what students are expected to perform when their learning is complete. Thus, there are different approaches in conducting assessment in the classroom. Here are the five pairs of assessment typologies: namely,

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- Formal vs. Informal,
- Criterion referenced vs. Norm referenced,
- Formative vs. Summative assessments,
- Divergent vs. Convergent,
- Process vs. Product assessment.

Despite the importance of classroom assessment to improve student learning, it also help the teachers' skill to develop assessment instrument, administer the test, and interpret the result affect assessment outcome (Phye, 1997). Regardless of how a teacher feels and uses about assessment, it is a classroom teacher who administer, organize, and interpret assessment data (Kubiszyn and Borich, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, the implementation of continuous assessment in secondary school was often inadequate and nearly 88% of respondent reported that continuous is not sufficiently practiced by teachers in the school (MoE, 2008). Besides, nearly 77% of Ethiopian high school teachers don't always use the result of continuous assessment to provide feedback student learning. Interview with regional experts have shown that there are multiple problems in relation to student certification and promotion from one grade to the next. The problem includes lack of capacity of teachers to set appropriate assessment instrument, inflation of grades, lack of confidence among student (cheating and guessing), lack of comprehensive exam, absence of continuous follow up and recording systems, unreliability of teacher made tests, etc (MoE, 2008).

Assessment of learning in schools is usually carried out by teachers on the basis of impressions gained as they observe their students or by various kinds of tests given periodically (Ministry of Education, 1999). However, it contradicts with what is stated by Blandford (2000) that assessment and evaluation is an ongoing process to check whether objectives are achieved with the planned timetable or not. According to Blandford, effective evaluation facilitates the process of recording and reporting to the school learning on the attainment of targets. Research findings indicated that new approach to assessment emerge arguing that traditional assessment has failed to encourage students, assess learning, and promote competence based on individuals cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development (Nettlesand Nettles, 1995). These conditions motivates this study to analysis the challenges and problems of assessment and evaluation used by high school teachers in Adigrat Town. Thus, the following leading questions were formulated

- To what extent is assessment and evaluation implemented in the school?
- What problems and challenges do teachers encounter during the practice or implementations of assessment and evaluation process in high schools?

Objective of the study

General objective

The major aim of the study was to analysis the challenges and problems of teachers assessment and evaluation in high schools.

Specific objectives of the study

Specifically, the study has the following purposes

- To describe the extent to which assessment and evaluation implemented in high schools.
- To investigate the challenges and problems that hinder the successful applications of assessment and evaluation in high schools by teachers.

Significance of the study

The outcome of this study includes:-

- It points out challenges and problems that obstruct the successful implementation of assessment and evaluation so that teachers can understand and plan for further improvement. The skill of teacher in the area of assessment and evaluation can be improved through training, regular supervision and discussion among themselves to restrain problems that could be solved at school level.
- It enhances the quality of education service provided to the students since it searches out the challenges and problems exist in the school along with suggested options for improvement.

Operational Definition

Assessment- teachers' way of gathering information about students' achievements of learning objectives, readiness to learn, and problems in learning in Adigrat town's high schools. Evaluation-is the process of decision making about students' academic achievement, pass or fail, understanding of lesson by Adigrat town's high school teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants of the study

The target populations of the study were teachers and students as well as school principals of each high school found in Adigrat Town. Of the total population 60 teachers and 200 students from both grades nine and ten were selected from the four high schools using simple random sampling in proportion of the schools. Four principals of each high school were included in the study purposefully.

Sampling procedure

The study selected all the four high schools in the town. From the total numbers of teachers, 60 numbers of teachers (44 males and 16 females) of those schools who were teaching grades nine and ten students were selected through simple random sampling (lottery methods) after getting list of teachers from director office. Students were also included to triangulate the data gathered from teachers and school principals. For the selection of students as participants of study, systematic random sampling was used after the total data collected from grades nine and ten. The names were arranged alphabetically from each school and considered proportionality to select students from those schools.

Thus, 50 students were selected from each school, 200 numbers of students (120 males and 80 females) of those schools who were in grade nine and ten were selected using systematic random sampling.

Instruments of data collections

Questionnaires and interviews were used as instruments of data collection. Close-ended questionnaire was used to gather data from the students consisted of 20 items scored on a five point scale ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). On the other hand, both open ended and close ended questionnaire items were used for teachers to triangulate the responses of the teachers using various data sources. Some of the questionnaire items were adapted from observation check list developed by Cole and Chan (1994). The questionnaire had 20 items with a five points scale ranging from 1(never) to 5 (always). The other instrument used to collect the data was interview. It was used to get information from the school principals. The interview items based on the literature review and research questions. It was designed to ensure the reliability and validity of data collected from the teachers and students using questionnaire.

Procedures of data collections

In order to minimize the problems of understanding of the items due to language difficulty while responding, the questionnaire for students was developed in Tigrigna. A pilot test was conducted for the purpose of testing reliability of the questionnaires. Accordingly, they were administered for 8 teachers and 20 students selected randomly in two of the high school found in the town. The questionnaire for students and teachers as well as interview items was also evaluated for their validity by twolanguage teachers in the high school. As a result, the items that seem vague and lack clarity were discarded and modified based on pilot test results and comments from the evaluator. Then, the reliability coefficients of the questionnaire were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. The questionnaire had a reliability of 0.77 and 0.89 for students and for teachers respectively base on the pilot study.

The data were collected from March 11-14, 2015. In the first day, orientation about the objectives of questionnaire was given for the selected samples in coordination with Agazi, Yalembrhan, Funetebrhan, and Tsinselalemariam high school directors and the data were administered and collected. And so does to the teachers. Besides, interview with school principals were also conducted.

Methods of data analysis

Even though 60 questionnaires were distributed for high school teachers, only 46 of them were analyzed. The remaining 14 questionnaires were excluded from analysis since 6 teachers were unable to return back and 8 of them filled the questionnaires carelessly. In addition, 200 questionnaires of students were included in analysis part. The data obtained from teachers, students, and school principals were organized carefully and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. The study used one sample t - test to

analyze the quantitative data both for students and teachers. The qualitative data and interview items were analyzed in narrative descriptions. And interview data with principals were analyzed along with both data gathered from teachers and students that had similar nature.

RESULTS

Implementation of Assessment and Evaluation

School teachers use various assessment techniques to gather information about students, teaching learning process, and the curricular objective achievement. This study was interested to recognize the extent of assessment and evaluation that teachers used in schools. As can be seen from Table 1, all the obtained means for all items found to be greater than the expected mean value of each item (3). In addition, the value of t -obtained for each item was greater than the table value. Thus, the results indicated that teachers used assessment information to manage and plan instructional progress, provide feedback and motivate, and diagnose the learners' problems. As can be seen from the Table 2, the mean score of students to item 5 (2.13) was less than the expected mean value. On the other hand, t obtained is less than table value. This indicated that the use of assessment to resolve students' learning difficulty is low. In other words, teachers do not significantly use the result to diagnose learners' problem.

Problems of test construction

The preparation of assessment instrument (tests or exams) requires knowledge of measurement and evaluation. This helps to develop tests and exams carefully to get valid and reliable data about students' learning and achievement of learning outcomes. As indicated in table 3, teachers' response in relation to test item 6 (3.89) was greater than the expected mean and obtained t -value showed a significant divergent from the mean which implies that teachers followed test development procedures both to construct and administer the test. However, the teachers believed that they do not use table of specification during the construction of test items mostly. Furthermore, interview results also confirmed that teachers usually use objective test item and they rarely use individual and group activities, essay test, reflection, term paper, etc...

Table 4 on item 4 showed that teachers align the assessment process with instructional activities. Moreover, they reported that they use books and other reference books to construct the test item (item 5). Therefore, the item constructed in a test might not be representative to the content stated in the curriculum. The mean response of teachers to item 16 is greater than the expected mean, which indicates that teachers consider the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of student learning. Students were asked to rate those items in the Table 5 to understand some problems related to assessment. The first question was asked to recognize whether teachers show test results to the students after they score the test papers (item 8). The result indicated that teachers show test results for students after they score it. Moreover, the students were asked if teachers make subjectivity (bias) in favor of some students against the others in the assessment processes.

Students believed that their teachers do not commit bias in assessment and evaluation process in favor of some students against the others (item 10) as the mean value was below the expected mean.

Practices of assessment and evaluation

The data obtained from teachers and the principals indicated that there are problems and challenges in implementing assessment and evaluation in the schools. A teacher (T25) described that the implementation of assessment and evaluation in the schools is not effective. Because managing and administering tests and exams is often difficult due to large class size and the arrangements of tables and chairs in the classroom. Another teacher (T41) also explained that the issue of continuous assessment and evaluation rose but its implementation in the classroom encountered variety of problems. I used assessment and evaluation as midterm and final exam due to various problems. The problems includes like large class size, lack of resources (Computer, stationery, and duplicating machine), and lack of conducive physical classrooms.

Interview results also supported the idea that the implementation of assessment and evaluation in the schools is inadequate. Three of the interviewees agreed on teachers attempt to practice continuous assessment in the school but only inadequately. Thus, the extent assessment and evaluation's practices and implementation in the schools is often difficult and inefficient, and teachers mainly focused on the summative roles of assessments and evaluation (marking, promoting, and reporting students' results).The successful implementation of assessment and evaluation in the school is challenging and it has encountered multiple problems.

Challenges and Problems of Assessment and Evaluation

The results revealed that the practice of assessment and evaluation in the school is not adequate enough. Such practice of assessment and evaluation is resulted from different problems and other challenging factors. The commonly identified problems and challenging factors based on the qualitative data gathered through interviews and open ended questionnaire items include large class size, shortage of resources, teacher and student related problems, and lack of intensive supervision. Generally, the factors discussed above are problems and make assessments and evaluation challenging. Thus, the roles of assessment and evaluation to check students' progress, detecting their difficulty in learning, evaluating teaching methods, determining the achievements of learning outcome, and evaluating the effectiveness of curricular objectives is limited.

DISCUSSION

This part of the study discusses the implication and the results presented in the previous chapter. It discusses the results in line with the findings of different scholars used in literature review and focused on the basic leading questions and the research stated objectives.

Purpose of Assessment and Evaluation

Teachers use assessment results for the purpose of evaluating appropriateness and effectiveness of the instruction (Airasian, 1997). Teachers and students were asked to describe about the purpose of assessment teachers use in the schools. The results represented that teachers use assessment results for managing and planning instruction, providing feedback for students, motivate students, and diagnose students' learning problem. The results obtained from the students pointed out that teachers used assessment result to providing feedback for students, motivate students, improve the instructional process, and understanding learners' variety of problems. However, students argued that teachers' usage of assessment results to diagnose students' learning problem is not adequate.

Although teachers claimed that they use assessment results to improve the teaching-learning process and their use of it is inadequate. This was found contradiction with what measurement experts suggested. For instance, Horton (1990) and Airasian (1996) described that classroom assessment is used to manage classroom instruction, providing feedback and guidance and counseling purpose. Cole and Chan (1994) also stated the purpose of assessment result is to plan instruction, providing feedback, and motivate student for improvement. Teachers claimed that they consider affective, cognitive, and psychomotor domains of student learning during assessment. However, the result obtained through interview and open-ended questionnaire items indicated that tests and exams prepared by teachers mainly focus on the cognitive domains of learning. This result contradicted with what has been suggested by (Nettles and Nettles, 1995) that described the inclusion of affective, cognitive and psychomotor domain during selection of test items is crucial. But teachers' failure to consider the other aspects of learning objectives would affect the quality of evidence they get about the students. But to make assessment more dependable, teachers made tests should measure clearly stated learning goals in the instructional process (Gronlund, 1982). This indicated that there is a gap in the findings of this study and what other scholars suggested.

Implementation of Assessment and Evaluation

As describe in the result of this study, there are problems and challenges in the implementation of assessment and evaluation in every school. This result coincide with what has been suggested by other scholars Majesty, (as cited in Goldstein and Lewis, 1996), described that the traditional assessment of student in school is inadequate, inconsistent, and inefficient. Interview result obtained from principals also supported the idea of inadequate implementation of assessment and evaluation in the school which occurred due to inadequate knowledge of teachers about assessment and evaluation, large class size, and absence of resources, etc. Thus, assessment and evaluation practice in the schools are inadequate. Under this condition, assessment and evaluation process might not be able to improve students' learning, teaching-learning process, and the achievement of instructional objectives; Because teachers mainly focused on the summative roles of assessment and evaluation.

Table 1. Teachers' response to the purpose of assessment

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	t obtained
8	I used assessment information to diagnose student learning problems.	3.52	0.96	3.673
20	I use test as means to motivate my students.	3.94	1.08	5.910

*p<0.05

Table 2. Students' response about purposes of assessment used by their teachers

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	t obtained
5	Teachers diagnose student learning problem using students' test result.	2.13	1.09	-4.895

*p<0.05

Table 3. Teachers' response to item construction principles and applications, and Administration

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	t obtained
6	I follow test development procedure to construct and administer tests.	3.89	1.089	5.528
7	I used table of specification during test item construction.	2.85	1.17	-0.869

*p<0.05

Table 4. Teachers' response on the practice of enhancing validity of test item

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	t obtained
4	I integrate assessment with instructional activities.	4.020	0.86	8.044
5	I use books and reference to construct test other than the test book.	3.720	1.17	4.172
16	I consider cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domain of learning during assessment.	4.000	0.73	9.294

*p<0.05

Table 5. Students' response with regard to assessment problems

No	Items	Mean	Standard deviation	t obtained
8	Teachers don't show test results for students after they mark the test papers.	1.99	1.05	-7.005
10	Our teachers commit bias in favors of some students against the others.	2.06	1.059	-5.995

*p<0.05

Challenges and Problems of Assessment and Evaluation

As already described, the existing assessment and evaluation process in the school was not adequate enough. Such inadequate practices could result from different factors that make assessment and evaluation implementation challenging. The results obtained from students indicated that teachers do not encourage students to assess and evaluate themselves. This result contradicted with what Clarke (2005) has been described that some teachers are satisfied with students' grade and want no more from the learners as those teachers worried that they will lose control if the students are given roles in the assessment process. The commonly identified problem of assessments and evaluation includes: large class size, shortage of resource, inadequate knowledge of teachers, students' poor educational background, and inadequate supervision. In line with this, Muluken (2006) found that large class size, lack of sufficient materials, teachers' lack of knowledge and commitment, and time constraints are the major problems that challenge the implementation of continuous assessments. In line with the above, Bekalu (2007) also explained that those factors which include tight schedule, broad course content, and teaching load hampered the implementation of continuous assessment. The Ministry of Education (2008) also identified: lack of teachers' skill to select appropriate assessment methods, students' lack of self-confidence, and absence of continuous follow up as factors that affect assessment

implementation. All in all, those factors discussed above contributed to inadequate implementation of assessment and evaluation in the selected schools. So the decision made based on assessment results about students' learning, effectiveness of teaching methods, and achievements of curricular objectives may not successfully be achieved.

Summary

The main aim of this research was to analysis the challenges and problems of teachers' assessment and evaluation whom found in high school. The data were gathered from all four high schools in Adigrat Town. To investigate the following leading questions:

1. To what extent is assessment and evaluation successfully implemented in the schools?
2. What are the challenges and problems in the implementation of assessment and evaluation in high schools?

The applications of various assessment and evaluation methods in high schools were inadequate. The common test item types used were multiple choice, true or false, matching, and short answer. Teachers also focus on the cognitive domain of students learning.

The practice of assessment and evaluation in the secondary schools was not adequate enough to ensure students' competency, growth in learning, and the curricular objectives' achievements. It may affect the quality of education in the schools at large. Large class size, shortage of resources, inadequate knowledge of teachers about types and roles of assessment and evaluation, students' poor educational background, inadequate supervision, and other factors were investigated to be the major problems that challenge the implementation of assessment and evaluation in the school.

Conclusion

Teachers recognized that proper implementation of assessment and evaluation helps to improve students' learning, instructional processes, and achievements of learning outcome. However, the practice of assessment and evaluation was inadequate. However, the implementation of assessment and evaluation was challenged by many problems and challenges. This includes large class size, shortage of resources, inadequate knowledge of teachers, students' poor educational background, inadequate supervision of school principals and other concerned bodies, and others factors. Unless these problems and challenges of teachers' assessments and evaluations are minimized or alleviated, inadequate implementation of assessment and evaluation will continue. It also retards the effectiveness of the schools in particular and the quality of education to the nation at large and also the deteriorating quality of education will be intensified.

Recommendations

Based on summaries and conclusion, this study suggested the following recommendation:-

The Ministry of Education should refresh teachers on the existing assessment and evaluation system in the schools through in-service training for principals and teachers. Besides, The Woreda Educational Office should provide opportunities for teachers to share experiences across schools by arranging workshop and seminars on assessment and evaluation procedures to enhance their knowledge about assessment and evaluation. Teachers have to use various assessment and evaluation methods and consider students' knowledge, experience, skill, and feeling to get detailed overview of learners to make sound decision about the learners, learning, and achievement of curricular objectives.

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