UNDERGRADUATES' SELF-ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, ILORIN, NIGERIA

[1]**OLOKOOBA, I. N.**
[1]*Social Sciences Education Department,*
University of Ilorin, Ilorin
olokooba.in@unilorin.edu.ng/olokoobain@gmail.com

Abstract
Tertiary institution students are trained to acquire knowledge rather than participation in learning. The students need to be aware of how and actively participate in learning. Therefore, this study examined undergraduates' self-assessment and learning of Social Studies in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The objectives of this study was to examine the prevalence, influence, challenges and ways of improving undergraduates' self-assessment on learning of Social Studies in University of Ilorin. The population for the study comprised Social Studies undergraduates in the university. The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving 220 Social Studies undergraduates sampled through purposive sampling technique. A researcher-designed questionnaire titled Undergraduates' Self-assessment and Learning of Social Studies Questionnaire was used as an instrument to elicit data from the respondents. Construct validity was used to determine the validity of the instrument with reliability coefficient of 0.83 using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings of the study revealed that all self-assessment techniques identified in this study were prevailing among University of Ilorin undergraduates and that self-assessment had influence on undergraduates' learning of Social Studies. It was therefore recommended among others that undergraduates should be more enlightened on the essence of engaging in self-assessment practices to enable them determine their capabilities and potentiality.

Key words: Undergraduates, Self-assessment, Learning of Social Studies, Challenges

Introduction

Self-assessment is the involvement of learners in making judgments about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning. It is a valuable approach to supporting student learning, particularly when used formatively. Self-assessment is one of the most important skills that students require for future professional development and life-long learning, as it develops their capacity to be assessors of learning. It provides a theory into practice approach, outlines techniques and integration of techniques more directly in the design of curricula. It argues for making its use in the classroom more explicit in order to help students learn more effectively (Wride, 2017).

Assessment has a number of different purposes, that is, to measure achievement, to engender learning and to enable learners to become aware of how they learn. However, tertiary education has generally focused on acquisition of, rather than participation in learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Falchikov (2005) stated that the dynamic definitions of assessment as procedure, enquiry, measurement, accountability and quality control. Recent developments in the education have led to a renewed interest in self-assessment as it is meant for learning and measuring achievement of learning. When learners are assessed in academic activities that seem naturally relevant or functional, students are more likely to involve and pay rapt attention in deep learning (Sambell, McDowell & Montgomery, 2013). However, traditional assessment techniques which focus on results and individual certification can weaken students' capability to make value judgment of their own work (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). Involvement of learners in assessment help them to be active and determine their learning styles for effective internalization of experiences gained in the classes.

Eshun, Bordoh, Bassaw, and Mensah (2014) described self-assessment as a valuable tool for formative purpose and could be boosted by peer assessment as it enables learners to assess one another for formative purpose. In self-assessment process, feedback should operate both from teacher to students, from students to teachers\ and from students to students. These processes would ensure adequate guidance and judgement about the performance of students and better attainment of pre-determined objectives.

Many different types of assessments are utilized in classrooms. Some assessors may elect to use alternative assessments and use pre-established criteria for evaluating the students' work prior to giving the evaluative task (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). Alternative ways of assessment have been sought to ameliorate student assessment as there are many who doubt about traditional ways of assessment (Papageorgiou, 2017), such as written tests. Alternative or authentic assessment methods are based on student's involvement in the assessment process (Chang, Tseng & Lou, 2012). One of these methods is student self-assessment, some other categories of assessment place the students in a passive role. The students simply receive feedback from their assessors. Self-assessment, by contrast, makes students to become autonomous learners, to think about how they should be learning. Having learned self-assessment techniques, students can continue to apply the techniques in their career and in other contexts throughout life.

McDonald and Boud (2003) defined self-assessment as the process of involving learners in finding out standards and criteria to apply to their work and making value judgments about the extent to which they met these criteria and standards. Self-assessment is the way in which students are able to assess their performance by making decisions about themselves and their competencies (Chalkia, 2012). Self-assessment is a type of assessment that serves prognostic, diagnostic, formative and summative purposes and acts as process that improves learning (Yan, 2018). During self-assessment process students express their

judgment about the effort they make, which may be either autogenous and comes from their personal interest, or heterogeneous and comes from someone else (Bellou, 2017). Self-assessment is a very crucial and important process of the assessment because gives students the necessary feedback and make them take the appropriate actions to become better (Zapitis, 2011). The concept of self-assessment is a practice that every discipline in respective of students' level of education and areas of study engage in to develop rational judgement on own their study and determine their suitable learning styles. Social Studies students are not exception especially at higher level of education.

In addition, self-assessment is a procedure where students judge or otherwise assess their work and, especially the essence of their learning, in the light of various factors related to their psychology, such as motivation, self-esteem, self-regulation, among others. (Yan & Brown, 2017). There are different techniques that self-assessment can be implemented such as rubrics, learning logs, portfolio, self-assessment tests, which may be also electronic, and forms in which students can write their judgment about the effort they make, the obstacles they encounter, how they overcome these obstacles, and so on. (Petropoulou, Kasimati, & Retalis, 2015). In order to apply student self-assessment there are specific stages, which are described in figure 1
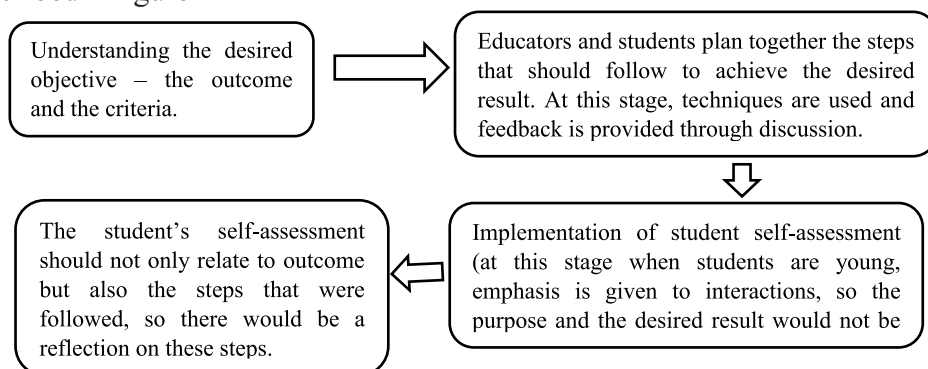
Figure 1. Stages of students' self-assessment

Self-assessment involves a wide variety of mechanisms and techniques through which students assess themselves and possibly assign merit or worth to the qualities of their own learning processes and products (Panadero, Brown & Strijbos, 2016). Hwei-Ming (2016) asserted that self-assessment is a process where students reflect on their performances, thinking and learning. Its activities help students to be a realistic judge of their own performance and to improve their work. Although some assessors may not take student self-assessment seriously because they feel that students meant know what they are doing. However, students are actually a source of information about their own learning. It is a common misconception that students are not teachers, and hence they are not able to assess themselves. Hwei-Ming (2016) believes however that students can be empowered to take ownership of their own learning, provided they are given the appropriate structure and guidance from their

191

teachers.

The most important component of self-assessment is that the individual student is able to gain understanding of their own needs, which can then be communicated to fellow students (leading into peer learning and assessment). It is a valuable approach to supporting student learning, particularly when used formatively (Taras, 2010). It is also useful in preparing students for life-long learning, through discussions about their skills and competencies (Wride, 2017). Self-assessment has many advantages for student learning. These include induces students to think about their own learning, encourages metacognitive practices that deepen learning. helps them to gain perspective, by thinking about how assignments fit into the context of their education (Gehringer, 2017). As important as the concept of self-assessment is, it would be exceedingly interesting to investigate the prevalent techniques, influence, challenges and ways of improving the practice of self-assessment especially at higher education where the level of maturity of learners has advanced and also on learning of a discipline such Social Studies that cultivates values, right attitudes and societal norms that enable them to contribute positively to the development of the society. Therefore, this study examined undergraduates' self-assessment and learning of Social Studies in University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised to guide the study.

a. What are the prevalent self-assessment techniques used by undergraduates for learning Social Studies?

b. What are the influence of self-assessment techniques on learning of Social Studies among undergraduates?

c. What are the challenges associated with self-assessment practices among Social Studies undergraduates?

d. What are the ways of improving self-assessment practices among Social Studies undergraduates?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study was all Social Studies undergraduates in Social Sciences Education Department, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin. The total number of Social Studies students in the department were 440. The target population of the study was all 300 and 400 levels Social Studies undergraduates in the university in 2019/2020 academic session. The two levels were selected because the students in the levels have experienced many ideas, principles and theories in Social Students. 300 level Social Studies students were 109 while 400 level students were 111. The two levels were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Sample of 220 students was drawn as respondents in this study.

A structured questionnaire was employed by the researcher to collect data. The questionnaire was titled "Undergraduates' Self-assessment techniques and Learning of Social Studies Questionnaire (USTLEQ)". The questionnaires had five

parts; Section A, B, C, D and E. Section A requested for the demographic information of the respondents. While section B contained items structured to elicit information on "Prevalent and extent of usage of self-assessment techniques adopted by undergraduates". The questionnaire had a two and three-point rating scale of Used (U) and Not Used (NU); and Often (O), Sometimes (S) and Rarely (R).

Section C contained items structured to elicit information on "Influence of self-assessment techniques on learning of Social Studies" with a Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Section D contained items structured to elicit information on "Challenges associated with self-assessment practices by undergraduates for learning Social Studies" with a Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Section E contained items structured to elicit information on "Ways of improving self-assessment practices among undergraduates for learning Social Studies" with a Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The items of the questionnaire were structured and developed from the literature reviewed.

Construct validity of the instrument was determined by giving the questionnaire to three experts in the field of test, evaluation and measurement and test-re-test method of reliability was adopted and 0.83 coefficient was obtained. Data collected for this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Research Question One: What are the prevalent self-assessment techniques used by undergraduates for learning Social Studies?

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of the prevalent self-assessment techniques adopted by social studies undergraduates

S/N	Self-assessment Techniques	Used (%)	Not Used (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)
1.	Self-reflection of lesson taught	202 (91.8)	18 (8.2)	101 (45.9)	102 (46.4)	17 (7.7)
2.	Setting target objectives for the concept	198 (90.0)	22 (10.0)	108 (49.1)	88 (40.0)	24 (10.9)
3.	Becoming more curious about what I am learning	180 (81.8)	40 (18.2)	78 (35.5)	114 (51.8)	28 (12.7)
4.	Investigating more points and explanation on the concept taught	176 (80.0)	44 (20.0)	90 (40.9)	95 (43.2)	35 (15.9)
5.	Formulating questions on the lesson taught while studying	177 (80.5)	43 (19.5)	78 (35.5)	111 (50.5)	31 (14.1)
6.	Asking questions while I am learning in lecture room	166 (75.5)	54 (24.5)	79 (35.9)	102 (46.4)	39 (17.7)
7.	Using rating scales to improve my performance	161 (73.2)	59 (26.8)	75 (34.1)	103 (46.8)	42 (19.1)
8.	Using training modules to assess my level of understanding of lesson	173 (78.6)	47 (21.4)	87 (39.5)	102 (46.4)	31 (14.1)
9.	Solving exercises on the lesson taught on my own to retain the knowledge gained	181 (82.3)	39 (17.7)	100 (45.5)	94 (42.7)	26 (11.8)
10.	Developing a personal grading system	177 (80.5)	43 (19.5)	83 (37.7)	112 (50.9)	25 (11.4)

Results in table 1 showed that all the 10 self-assessment techniques identified in this study, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are prevalent techniques of self-assessment used by Social Studies undergraduates as their percentages are above 50%. It also indicated that out of 10 items that showed the extent to which Social Studies undergraduates use self-assessment techniques, items 3, 5 and 10 are sometimes use by the undergraduates as their percentages are above fifty percent. Other self-assessment techniques have different percent which are lower than average percent (50%). This indicates that becoming more curious about what is learning, formulating questions on the lesson taught while studying and developing a personal grading system were the self-assessment techniques sometimes used for learning of Social Studies.

Research Question Two: What are the influence of self-assessment techniques on learning of Social Studies among Social Studies undergraduates?

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank order of influence of self-assessment techniques among social studies undergraduates

S/N	Self-assessment Techniques make me:	Mean	S D	Rank
1.	be proud of my results	1.40	0.65	9th
2.	feel a sense of ownership of my efforts	1.57	0.63	7th
3.	Increase my higher-order thinking capacity	1.61	0.71	6th
4.	Develop in me problem -solving processes through valuable assessment	1.66	0.79	3rd
5.	Encourage me to reflect on how my study meets the objectives of the lesson	1.63	0.76	5th
6.	Enhance effective practices of my knowledge	1.36	0.63	10th
7.	Provide insight into my true comprehension of concept taught	1.71	0.73	2nd
8.	Identify gaps or areas that require improvement	1.57	0.71	7th
9.	Develop self-regulation and improves my learning processes	1.72	0.79	1st
10.	Appraise my study for possible improvement	1.66	0.88	3rd

Table 2 indicated that out of 10 items that address influence of self-assessment techniques on learning of Social Studies, items 9, 7, 4, 10, 5, 3, 2, 8, which were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th and 7th respectively are the prevalent influence of self-assessment techniques on learning of Social Studies as their means are above 1.5 benchmark. However, the least of the items were items 1 and 6 in which their means were below the benchmark of 1.5. This implies that the prevalent self-assessment techniques (becoming more curious about what is learning, formulating questions on the lesson taught while studying and developing a personal grading system) used by Social Studies undergraduates have influence on learning of the subject.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with self-assessment practices among Social Studies undergraduates?

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank order of the challenges associated with self-assessment practices among social studies undergraduates

S/N	Challenges associated with Self-assessment Practices	Mean	S D	Rank
1.	Unwilling attitude of teacher to give control of lesson to the students	1.70	0.90	9th
2.	Feeling of incapable of assessment of learners	1.86	0.83	4th
3.	Fear of taking over of teaching-learning processes by learners	1.87	1.03	2nd
4.	Students may not be sincere and even over -evaluate their own performance	1.85	0.78	5th
5.	Time consuming may serve as constraint	1.85	0.92	5th
6.	Students may not be familiar with the assessment criteria	1.87	0.82	2nd
7.	Students may be subjective in the assessment processes	1.73	0.86	8th
8.	It increase lecturer's workload by needing to brief students on the process as well as on -going guidance on performing self -assessment	1.92	0.87	1st
9.	Self-deception may interfere in one's assessment of the morally relevant facts	1.67	0.90	10th
10.	It may be difficult to accurately reflect on both students' strengths and weaknesses	1.77	0.85	7th

Table 3 shows the challenges associated with self-assessment practices adopted by Social Studies undergraduates. Items 1st to 10th are the prevalent challenges as their means are 1.50 and above. Therefore, the prevalent challenges are the main challenges associated with self-assessment practices by undergraduates for learning Social Studies.

Research Question 4: What are the ways of improving self-assessment practices Social Studies Undergraduates?

Table 4: Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank order of the ways of improving self-assessment practices social studies undergraduates

S/N	Ways of improving Self-assessment Practices	Mean	S D	Rank
1.	Reasons for self-assessment techniques should always be emphasized by teachers	1.42	0.66	8th
2.	Students should be always involved in the development, application and reporting assessment	1.62	0.66	6th
3.	Self-assessment should be clear and fair	1.71	0.79	2nd
4.	Students should be well prepared for the assessment in advance so that they will have plenty time	1.75	0.84	1st
5.	Giving an honest and objective assessment of myself should be a priority	1.68	0.78	4th
6.	Developing a personal grading system should be encouraged among students	1.62	0.71	6th
7.	Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for self-assessment processes	1.69	0.77	3rd
8.	Guidelines should be produced for each stage of te process of self-assessment	1.66	0.79	5th

Table 4 indicated that out of 8 items that address ways of improving self-assessment practices for learning of Social Studies, items 4, 3, 7, 5, 8, 2, 6, which were ranked 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th respectively are the ways of improving self-assessment practices for learning of Social Studiesas their means are above 1.5 benchmark. However, the least of the item was item 1 in which its mean was below the benchmark of 1.5. This implies that all items identified on ways of improving self-assessment practices except item 1 (Reasons for self-assessment of learners should be emphasized) are prevalent ways of improving self-assessment practices for learning Social Studies.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the numerous self-assessment techniques identified in this study were prevalently used by Social Studies undergraduates. This finding is in line with the findings of Petropoulou, Kasimati and Retalis (2015) who found that there are different techniques of which self-assessment can be implemented. These could be electronic, and forms in which students can write their judgment about the effort they make, the obstacles they encounter, how they overcome these obstacles, among others. The fixation observed in the finding of this study and that of Petropoulou, et al (2015) might be due to similarities in the population.

In the finding of the study, it was revealed that self-assessment techniques influenced Social Studies undergraduates. The areas of influence were: making me proud of my result, ownership of my efforts, higher-order thinking capacity, problem-solving processes through valuable assessment, enhancing practices of my

knowledge, helping identify areas for improvement, helping appraise my study. The finding is consistent with finding of Gehringer (2017) who found that self-assessment requires attention as it always has an influence and effect on students and also helps students achieve their goals. The stabilization observed in the result of this study and that of Gehringer (2017) might be due to tremendous advantages of self-assessment on effective teaching in schools.

The finding revealed that there were challenges associated with self-assessment practices. These were: unfamiliarity with self-assessment criteria, subjectivity in the assessment processes, incapability of self-assessment, time constraint, self-deception, insincerity, excessive workload and difficulty in reflecting on strengths and weaknesses of Social Studies undergraduates in University of Ilorin. This finding is similar to finding of Boud and Falchikov, (2006) who reported that a lot of learners are overconfident about their competence to execute certain tasks. Overconfidence is seen in relation to lower performance levels. Self-deception is a challenge because the students' own view of how they learned is critical in self-assessing. Those students who overestimate their ability are not likely to use the actual efforts and information to fulfil a task. They failed to involve in efficacious comprehension, monitoring or develop appropriate strategies. Moreover, they may not like to revamp their efforts or study methods. This means that the sampled students had numerous challenges associated with self-assessment practices.

The findings of the study also discovered that reasons for self-assessment, involvement in development, application and reporting assessment, clear and fair, well prepared to the assessment, honesty, personal grading system and guidelines processes of self-assessment are ways of improving self-assessment practices among undergraduates. The finding is also in line with Taras (2010) who reported that with self-assessment, students can be deeply self-motivated and independently learned. Students can be honest with themselves when setting goals. Self-assessment practices provide students with a greater sense of ownership of their work, a more enthusiastic approach to learning, and the increased use of higher-order thinking. This means that numerous ways to improving self-assessment practices are identified in the study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that all self-assessment techniques identified in this study were prevailing among undergraduates. Hence, this study found out that the self-assessment techniques highlighted for this study were sometimes used by the undergraduates. This study also discovered that self-assessment techniques adopted by students influenced undergraduates' learning of Social Studies in schools. This study further revealed that there are challenges of self-assessment practices facing by undergraduates. This study further identified the ways of improving self-assessment practices among undergraduates in schools.

Recommendations

The following were recommended based on the findings of the study.
1. Undergraduates should be oriented on the need to frequently indulge in self-assessment practices to enable them ascertain their capabilities and potentiality.
2. Lecturers should enlighten undergraduates more on the techniques of self-assessment practices as some undergraduates tend to self-assess themselves to improve their ability and level of understanding.
3. Self-assessment practices should be emphasized and included in school curriculum to manifest learners' strengths and weaknesses.

References

Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2006). Aligning assessment with long-term learning. Assessment & evaluation in *higher education,* 31(4), 399-413.

Chalkia, E. (2012). Self-assessment as an alternative method of assessing speaking skills in the sixth grade of a Greek state primary school classroom. *Research papers in language teaching and learning, 3*(1). Available online at
http://rpltl.eap.gr/previousissues/volume-3_issue-1-february-2012/table-of-contents/37-ekaterini-chalkia

Chang, C., Tseng, K., & Lou, S. (2012). A comparative analysis of the consistency and difference among teacher-assessment, student self-assessment and peer-assessment in a Web-based portfolio assessment environment for high school students. *Computers & Education, 58*(1), 303-320.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.08.005

Eshun, I., Bordoh, A., Bassaw, T. K. Mensah, M. F. (2014). Evaluation of Social Studies students learning using formative assessment in selected colleges of education in Ghana. *British Journal of Education*, 2, (1), 39-48.

Falchikov, N. (2005). Improving assessment through student involvement-*practical solutions for aiding learning in higher and further education.* RoutledgeFalmer, Oxon, U.K.

Flint, N.R.A., Johnson, B. (2011). Towards fairer university assessment-*recognizing the concerns of students*. Routledge, Oxon, U.K.

Gehringer, E. (2017). Self-assessment to improve learning and evaluation. *American Society for Engineering Education*. 2(1), 24-36.

Hwei-Ming W. (2016). *Student Self-assessment*. 3rd Annual Assessment Colloquium.

MacDonald, B., & Boud, D. (2003). The impact of self-assessment on achievement:*The effects of self-assessment training on performance in external examinations.* Assessment in Education.

McMillan, J. H., & Hearn, J. (2008). Student self-assessment: The key to stronger student motivation and higher achievement. *Educational Horizons, 87*(1), 40-49. Available online at
http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ815370&login.as&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Ozdemir, N. (2014). The Self-assessments of Social Studies candidates about own mental maps regarding Turkey's geomorphic features. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 6, (2), 220-225.

Panadero, E., Brown, G. T., & Strijbos, J. W. (2016). The future of student self-assessment: a review of known, unknowns and potential directions. *Educational Psychology Review.*

Papageorgiou, K. A. (2017). Alternative assessment proposals for primary education. p*roceedings of the 9th International Conference on Open & Distance Learning, 9,* 150-159. http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/icodl.1120

Petropoulou, O, Kasimati, A., & Retalis, S. (2015). *Contemporary educational assessment with the use of educational technologies*. Retrieved from
http://hdl.handle.net/11419/233