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EFFECTS OF GENDER ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT AUTHENTICITY OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF SIRAIKI AREA

Abstract

This study started with the review of the literature; many studies were found which have analyzed different aspects of assessment. A need was felt to see the authenticity of marking paper Authenticity of Educational Assessment in Higher Education Institutions of Siraiki Area. The population of this study consisted of students of Baghdad campus of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. A sample of 200 students was selected. In this study questionnaire was used to collect data. The major objectives of the study were to study the authenticity of marking paper and to analyze the marking system of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur. The results of the study show that concepts provided material and good handwriting are given credit in assessment. It is recommended that workload of teachers should be reduced so that they may be able to mark tests properly to ensure the authenticity.

Key Words

Authentic Assessment, Siraiki Area, Academic Achievement

Introduction

Examination is a way to know what has been accomplished during the period of study, to weigh each candidate's sum of knowledge. This knowledge is created through students and teachers interaction in the classroom (Inamullah, 2005).

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Examination is an instrument of evaluation and measurement to which; educational methods, teaching procedures and techniques of preparation are subjected. This study deals with the perception of students about authenticity of marking of tests and assessment in Siraiki speaking area's higher education institutions. There are two general universities in this area. The top most ranked by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB). So this study was specially designed to investigate the perception of students of IUB.

Authentic Assessment is not simple recall of information, it is complex displays of student ability to go through the process, apply, and construct knowledge. For example authentic assessment includes performance which requires students' ability to take on analogies, explain, exemplify, and generalize information. Authentic assessment should include student self-evaluation, using scoring rubrics, or some other assessment tools. Assessment should tell the students about their learning and the areas that need improvement.

Most of the educators agree that authentic assessment includes more than a "one-shot" evaluation. A teacher and administrator of the school have to make some very important decisions about students' future. They must be based upon more than one sample of a student's abilities. Similarly, complex learning outcomes often require several tests so that students may be able to demonstrate their understandings in a variety of contexts (Ackers & Hardman 2001).

The Real Picture

Till the recent time in Pakistan in general and in the Islamia University in particular assessment tested lower-level skills and concepts that are very easy to test, rather than more complex, and often more significant, aspects of the curriculum. The information from these traditional assessments is most often reported as a number, which is not useful for determining what students knew or what teachers needed to do to help them to learn. Classroom-based assessment is very important it acquires a central position in all assessment discussions (McCartney, 2007).

Actually classroom-based assessment is the closest one to the actual learning of the students. It also influences instructional decisions. It is generally criterion-referenced instead of norm-referenced testing. When assessment and instruction are melded, both teachers and students become learners. Teachers focus on what and how to teach, and students become more self-motivated, self-directed, and focused on learning (Graue, 1993; Wolf, 1989).

According to Watt (2002) it is our responsibility to understand the elements of good practices in assessment and how to use them in our own context. A good assessment system gives response the audiences. It fulfills its very purpose and it establishes a value system even in classroom-based assessment. It includes a balance of formal normative tests that help teachers and administrators know how students are performing compared to other students across the nation or the province.

Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment refers to assessment tasks that resemble reading and writing in the real world and in school (Danial & Shephardson, 2006).

Authentic assessment, assess many different kinds of abilities in different contexts that are closely matched to the actual situations in which these abilities are required. For instance, we may ask students to read real texts, to write on a new topic, and to participate in a public awareness talk show, discuss some books, keeping journals, writing letters, and revising a piece of creative writing . Assessment should value the thinking behind the work, the process, and the product. Assessment is mostly done through tests and in academic settings they are academic achievement tests (Pearson & Valencia, 1987).

Achievement Test

An achievement test is a performance appraisal test which assesses that a trainee has acquired certain information or has mastered the required skills or not.

There are three types of achievement tests, informal classroom tests, customized tests, and standardized achievement tests (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2010).

Informal Classroom Test

Informal classroom are designed to meet the local needs of the classroom and the assessment objectives. These tests are based on the curriculum adopted by the institution. Generally they are teacher made tests having more flexibility and freedom of choice. These tests are designed according to content area covered, class size, depth of learning out comes, and school's mission. But certainly they are teacher made tests, and all the teachers are not of the same quality; so these tests also have their inbuilt deficiencies (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2010). Often they neglect the complex learning out comes. As these tests are not pretested so the quality of these tests is unknown. Although the content is covered accurately but the issue of reliability remains unresolved. These tests are administered and marked by the local teachers, so the scores of the students cannot be interpreted in terms of national norm referenced. Even having all deficiencies, informal tests are very useful for formative and diagnostic assessment.

Standardized Achievement Tests

The first standardized test came into existence around 1900. These tests were tests of a single achievement area, such as spelling. Single subject achievement tests are still used today although they are largely confined to the secondary grades. Achievement testing plays an important role in the school program and published achievement tests are widely used at both the elementary and secondary school levels. Most published achievement tests are called standardized achievement tests. These typically are norm referenced tests that measure the student's level of achievement tests in various content and skill areas by comparing their test performance with the performance of other students in some general reference group (e.g. a nationwide sample of students at the same grade level) quite a few criterion referenced achievement tests also have been published.

The purpose of the standardized achievement tests have changed markedly, originally they were intended to be used for the assessment of the students' achievement but now they are mostly used for the assessment of the teachers' performance (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2010). Stronge (2006) suggested students learning data should be included in teaching evaluation? According to him, there is a huge amount of research available which tells us that students' academic achievement is directly related to the quality of the teachers. Teachers can be made accountable for the performance of their students. And lastly thinking is developing that we should shift our focus from standardized tests to instructionally beneficial tests.

Customized Achievement Tests

To more adequately meet the needs of classroom teachers for individualized instruction and mastery learning test publishers are now making available customized achievement tests. Some publishers also provide items banks and software programs that enable schools to produce their own customized tests with microcomputers.

These customized achievement test measure student mastery of locally selected instructional objectives and thus describe what learning tasks a student can and cannot perform in the local instructional program. The interpretations must be made with great caution however because there are frequently a small number of objective or skill (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2010). In recent years a number of testing systems have been introduced. In Pakistan, National Testing Service (NTS) is a known organization which develops tests for its clients according to their given specifications.

Assessment in Siraiki Areas

The highest ranked by HEC Pakistan in Siraiki Area the Islamia University of Bahawalpur follows semester system for the assessment of the students. What is the perception of students about marking of papers and authenticity of assessment in this university and what is the difference of opinion among students? This study analyzes students' responses gender wise and takes into account relative difference, mean scores, and standard deviation.

Objectives of Study

Following were the objectives of the study:
1. To study the authenticity of marking paper.
2. To study the teachers favoritism in marking paper.
3. To analyze the marking system of The Islamia University of Bahawalpur
4. To give recommendation for the improvement of the marking system.

Methodology

It was a descriptive research and survey method was used for data collection. Among 3000 students studying in Baghdad campus in different departments the sample of this study was selected through convenient sampling method. Two hundred students from The Islamia University of Bahawalpur were selected as sample of the study. The data was collected from 22 departments. In this study questionnaire was used for data collection. This questionnaire contained 27 statements and there had been one open ended question. It took three weeks to develop this questionnaire. The validity of questionnaire was checked by experts, after validation of questionnaire it was administered to the sample. The last one statement of the questionnaire was open ended so that respondent could write response in his or her own words. Two hundred copies of the questionnaire were distributed personally to the students of IUB. Total 200 questionnaires were received from the respondents. The return rate was 100%.The data was analyzed by using SPSS 17.0; finding, conclusion and recommendations were drawn on the basis of the analysis of data.

Table Showing Difference in Perception about Paper Marking in the University

Statement	Mean scores		SD
	Male	Female	
Concepts of students given credit in paper.	3.77	3.97	1.27
Students are given credit for good handwriting.	3.78	3.81	1.08
Papers are examined thoroughly.	3.61	3.60	1.09
More marks are given more material.	3.51	3.44	1.24
If teacher are too busy they give paper to students for checking.	2.58	2.94	1.35
Students are satisfied with marking of teachers.	3.22	2.92	1.19
Teachers show favoritism in marking paper.	3.53	3.54	1.37
Teachers check the quality of answer.	3.64	3.57	1.17
Teachers check the quantity of answer.	3.42	3.42	1.15
Teachers check the paper honestly.	3.50	3.41	1.20
Teachers mark paper by themselves.	3.74	3.33	1.15
Teachers complete the syllabus in time.	3.22	2.93	1.28
Teachers give better marks to those students who participate actively in class.	3.86	3.67	1.16
Teachers penalize the students for grammar mistakes.	3.16	3.20	1.11
Teachers mark paper without gender discrimination.	3.49	3.77	1.33
Teachers give marks according to the ability of students.	3.66	3.53	1.13
Teachers come under political pressure in examine the paper.	2.91	3.12	1.22
Teachers accept bribe in marking paper.	2.81	3.14	1.23
Table marking is good for authenticity of marking.	3.85	3.40	1.01
Teachers mark paper in a hurry.	3.36	3.52	1.14
Checkers are punished for their wrong marking.	2.91	3.14	1.21
Students' politics is involved in marking.	3.05	3.20	1.32
Sessional marks are given with full honesty.	3.08	2.82	1.48

N=126 (Male) and N=74 (Female)

Findings

1. Mean score for the statement about concepts of students given credit showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.77 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.97.

2. Mean score for the statement about marks for good handwriting showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.78 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.81.

3. Mean score for the statement of papers examined thoroughly showed that respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.61 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.60.

4. Mean score for the statement about more marks give more material showed that respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.51 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.44.

5. Mean score for the statement about teacher busy and give paper to students for checking showed that most respondents disagreed to the statement.. Mean score of the male respondents is 2.58 and mean score of the female respondents is 2.94.

6. Mean score for the statement about students satisfaction with marking of teacher showed that male respondents are agree and female disagree to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.22 and mean score of the female respondents is 2.92.

7. Mean score for the statement about teachers favoritism showed that most of the respondents of agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.53 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.54.

8. Mean score for the statement about the quality of answer showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.64 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.57.

9. Mean score for the statement about the quantity of answer showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.42 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.42.

10. Mean score for the statement about the honesty showed that most of the respondent agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.50 and mean score of the female respondents 3.41.

11. Mean score for the statement teachers mark paper by their selves showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.74 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.33.

12. Mean score for the statement about completion of syllabus in time showed that male respondent agreed and female respondent disagreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.22 and mean score of the female respondents is 2.93.

13. Mean score for the statement about give better marks to those who participate actively in class showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.86 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.67.

14. Mean score for the statement about grammar mistakes showed that most of the respondent agreed to the stamen. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.16 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.20.

15. Mean score for the statement about gender discrimination showed that most of the students agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.49 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.77.

16. Mean score for the statement about ability of students showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.66 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.53.

17. Mean score for the statement about political pressure showed that male respondents disagreed and female agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 2.91 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.12.

18. Mean score for the statement about bribe showed that male respondent disagreed and female respondent agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 2.81 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.14.

19. Mean score for the statement about table marking showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is and mean score of the female respondents is 3.85 and 3.40 respectively.

20. Mean score for the statement about mark paper in hurry showed that most of the respondents agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.36 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.52.

21. Mean score for the statement about punished for wrong marking showed that male respondent disagreed and female agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 2.91 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.14.

22. Mean score for the statement about students politics showed that most of the respondent agreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.05 and mean score of the female respondents is 3.20.

23. Mean score for the statement about sessional marks showed that male respondent agreed and female disagreed to the statement. Mean score of the male respondents is 3.08 and mean score of the female respondents is 2.82.

Conclusions

It is evident from this study that teachers of the Islamia University are hardworking, honest, dedicated, committed, and having professional attitude. No statistically significant difference on gender basis had been found in perception of students about the marking of paper in IUB. Self-concept of students had been evident. Gender wise evaluation revealed that female students were expecting more but they could not get as high marks as they had been expecting. This result verifies the findings of Beyer (1998). Students say that quantity of written material and good handwriting are given credit in paper. They also think that teachers of IUB check their paper thoroughly.

Although students perceive positively about marking of their papers by the teachers yet they think some papers are marked by some other person rather than teachers their selves. This result is in lined to Lundeberg, Fox, & Puncochar (1994). Here the problem arises and students complain that why teachers do not check paper by themselves? Teachers' credibility is also affected by this attitude.

When we analyze the perception of respondents, it quite clear that female students perceive the things differently and male students think differently. Students of both genders have different perception about teachers' behavior. In this study it is found that female students are not satisfied to their achieved scores, sessional marks, and coverage of syllabi. As Mura (1987) also found that female students expect more and male students are satisfied with even lesser scores. This study came up with the similar results. Male students are of the view that teachers of IUB do not accept any type of bribe, do not discriminate among gender, neither take gifts nor fear the consequences.

But female students perceive quite oppositely as explained by Bridges (1988) Female students think teachers come under political pressure and they are punished for their wrong behavior so they have to work honestly but if they are allowed to work unchecked they will not behave properly. The results of current study are quite similar to Bridges explanation.

Male students perceive that teachers mark paper on merit and female students perceive that paper marking in The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is not merit based.

It is another interesting finding. When scores of student are compared, it is found that female students get more average scores than male students. This reflects the enthusiasm and overconfidence of female students about their scores in academics.

Recommendations

Keeping in view the responses of the sample students following recommendations are given:

- The teachers as evaluator should not only be honest but take care of their repute also.

- Marking should be fair and unbiased. It also be seen by the students that what are the mistakes due to whom they had been awarded lesser scores. Justice not only be done but also be seen being done.

- Tests should be mark very keenly on the basis of quality not on quantity.

- Workload of teachers should be reduced so that they may be able to mark all tests by themselves.

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