

Evaluation of Christian Students' Perception of Unannounced Tests and its Effects on their Academic Performance

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Abstract

Students often complain each time an unannounced test is administered hence calling for this study. The purpose of this study is to: evaluate the perception of Christian Students on the Unannounced Test as part of Students' continuous assessment (CA) and as their only CA, as well as assess its effects on their academic performance as part of their CA and as their only CA. There is much literature on the unannounced test, but there is none on the perception of Christian students. The study is significant in the following ways: It will help change the perception of Christian students; there will be a lasting solution to the effects of unannounced Tests; it will enrich the present knowledge; and lecturers will have an idea of what students perceived of them. A survey research design was used, and 155 students were randomly sampled from six (6) departments in the Faculty of Education using a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that: Students perceived that, the lecturers meant good to them by giving the unannounced test, it is geared toward making the students to be consistent in their studies, it doesn't allow students to express their knowledge, and it helps Students to maintain their grade in the cause of their studies. Recommendation: Students should attend classes regularly; they should read consistently, students should get themselves acquainted with Unannounced Tests, and students should be serious with their studies.

Keywords: Perception, Continues Assessment, Unannounced Test and Academic Performance

Introduction

The assessment movement began with external influence on education and internal force, it became clear that the best way for institutions to be accountable to any audience is to incorporate the evaluation of students learning into the way they operate regularly. When faculty collectively

take charge of their educational programmes, making visible their purpose and intent, and putting in place a data-based system of education that focuses on improving students learning; the institution itself is the primary beneficiary, and then the external audience.

The system of testing and evaluation has a long history, where students' ability is examined to ascertain if the objective is achieved or not. Continuous assessment is imperative in the life of every student, and since it has taken the central stage diversifying the method of assessing the students becomes important and takes different forms such as formative and summative assessment, the former on the other hand can be taken at any given time either announced or unannounced. Though, students often complain when the assessment is unannounced.

Based on existing studies, past research focused on the relationship between class attendance; class participation and students' performance (for instance, Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Gatherer & Manning, 1998; Rodgers, 2002; Van Walbeek, 2004; Massingham & Herrington, 2006; Nyamapfene, 2010), and also teaching and learning initiative that enhances academic performance and lectures attendance (Evelyn & Micheline 2014). It was clear that these studies show a positive relationship between class attendance; class participation and students' performance (for instance Rodgers, 2002; Nyamapfene, 2010). However, previous research concentrated on modules offered in various disciplines and business management. These disciplines include macroeconomics (Stanca, 2006); biology (Gatherer & Manning, 1998); introduction to statistics (Rodgers, 2002); Mathematics (Jungic, Kent & Menz, 2006) and Business management (Evelyn & Micheline 2014), concerning the use of unannounced quizzes as an initiative to encourage class attendance and enhance academic performance. The literature is almost silent on the details of the perception of Christian Students on the unannounced test as the only continuous assessment (CA) and as part of their continuous assessment (CA).

Against this background, this study explores the perception of Christian Students on unannounced tests and how it affects their academic performance when the test is given as the only continuous assessment (C.A) and as part of their continuous assessment (CA).

Review of Conceptual Framework

Continues Assessment (CA)

Continuous assessment (CA) has been a form of educational examination which evaluates the students' progress or performance throughout a course. Shehu, (2000) posited that:

Continuous assessment is an assessment approach which involves the use of a variety of assessment instruments, assessing various components of Learning, not only the thinking process but including behavioural, personality traits and dexterity, continuous assessment will also take place over a long period (14).

Chukwuka (2013), Luky (n d) and Alausa (2009) have this same view on CA which they said is a mechanism whereby the final grading of students in the cognitive, effective and psycho-motor domain of behaviour takes account, in a systematic performance during a given period of schooling; such assessment involves the use of a variety of mode of evaluation to guide and improve learning and performances of the students (9).

Looking at the definition, CA serves as a means of getting a comprehensive and valuable judgement on a student's performance based on the fact that it is a progressive check on the overall performance of the learner at the end of studies. Esere and Idowu (2009) opine that CA should be "systematic, comprehensive, cumulative, and guidance oriented".

Ismael (2009), noted that "the main objective of CA is to obtain a reliable picture of the progress of the learners in terms of achieving the basic competencies as set out in the objectives of the syllabus as earlier as possible and to embark upon corrective measures if needed". He went further to say that "CA could become a valuable tool to produce the failure rate among learners. Teachers would have a better follow-up if their learners work throughout the year. Teachers would also have time to undertake any revision of basic notions with learners."

Hernande (2012), cited by Joy (2019), stated that: "continuous assessment is a systematic, comprehensive and cumulative record of a student's cognitive, affective and psychomotor attainment within the period of schooling" (9). Joy, further assert that: the CA test deals with keeping records of students' academic performance ranging from assignment, projects and seminars. She maintains that "in continuous assessment, emphasis is on the award of marks on any academic activities performed by the student. This implies that scoring must be continuous and regular.

The national policy on education as cited by Joy (2019) maintains that: "continuous assessment is a tool or means, which the final grading of the students' domains of education are taken into account accurately, within their study period". It, therefore, implies that this type of assessment takes into consideration various methods or modes of evaluation used, the sole aim is to guide and improve the learning capacities of the students, as well as their different performances (11-12).

Obioma (2010) cited in Awofala and Babajide (2013), has investigated that many teachers misapplied the CA instruments leading to more continuous testing instead of continuous assessment. From the above finding, it is not clear what the author means by "continuous testing" and "continuous assessment" because there is no amount of CA specified to be administered by a teacher to imply "continuous assessment". Also to "test" a student implies assessing the student which translates as "assessment". Aytaged (2013) as cited by Sintayehu (2016), opines that the "judgmental role (summative) of continuous assessment is practised more than the development role (formative) of the assessment". This submission cannot be fully verified based on the fact that the practice of single exams (summative) is no longer applicable in a school setting.

Unannounced Test (Pop Quiz)

Evelyn & Micheline (2014), are of the view that: unannounced quizzes are used as a teaching and learning mechanism to aid students to give priority to their academic work. The best practice for unannounced quizzes is to administer tests during lecture periods without prior notice on the exact date and time of when the quizzes are to be taken (1196). And Felix (2007), said that "unannounced quiz impact student's performance and different subjects are better learned by the use of unannounced "pop quiz". Graham (1999) in Felix's work stated that "average Test score for students who were exposed to an unannounced "pop quiz" were higher than those who were not exposed to unannounced quiz". Still in the same work, Bell (1997), used anonymous "pop quiz"

to measure students understanding; not simple memorization but to grade effectiveness, of course, instructions. The study showed that the segment with anonymous “pop quiz” achieved more gains. Graham (1999) was of the view that “despite the positive effect of unannounced “pop quiz”, there is a negative effect” which he noted that; “it tends to increase examination tension and stress, and did not offer a fair examination”. From his view, it will be possible when the test is given as the only CA, and the performance of such student(s) is very low, but when the Test is not the only CA, it means the student(s) must have to sit up and prepare well for the next unannounced test, by so doing there will be no examination tension. Turner, Scheffer, Custer and Cate (2011), in their study, found that “unannounced spaced testing seems to have a positive effect on retention of factual knowledge after life-support courses”. Abbas (2008), found out that “unannounced quiz supply the motivation for students to attend classes”. Still in the same study, Clump (2003), found a relationship between class attendance and grade point average. According to him “the fewer absences a student has during the semester, the higher his/her grade point average”. Williams (2011), in his research work titled “the impact of various quizzing Patterns on the Test Performance of high school economics Students” different quizzes used but unannounced Tests, came out to be the best in terms of improving student performance, the rate at which they read and the rate of class attendance all where on the increase.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow’s Theory of Human Motivation and its Deep Roots in Individualism (1943)

Maslow’s theory of human motivation is cited as a general description of the priorities of what humans need and want. There is no doubt that Maslow’s reasoning, particularly his theory of hierarchies of needs and motivation has proven helpful within the contexts of perspectives on growth and even equality, as Maslow emphasised the potential of every human being (Munyarauzi, M. Tapuwa, R. M. Murjam, V. R. & Gertjan V. S. 2016).

In Maslow’s thinking, the ‘individual’ is seen as the most important actor, and his/her agency supersedes other motivations of action. As a humanistic psychologist, Maslow believed that every person has a strong desire to realise his or her full potential, to reach a level of ‘self-actualisation’. He was the founder of the new movement of humanistic psychology that reached its peak in the 1960s, and whose main point was to emphasise the positive potential of human beings (Schacter et al. 2012 as cited by Munyarauzi, M. Tapuwa, R. M. Murjam, V. R. & Gertjan V. S. (2016 p 4)). His thinking has deeply influenced the paradigm of the development agenda, both in theory and in practice, and set the foundation for moral thinking on individual entitlements. As a humanist psychologist, Maslow believed that people have an innate desire to be self-actualised: that is, the desire to be all they can fully be. Yet for Maslow, in order to achieve these ultimate goals of what people want to be, several more basic needs must be met, such as the need for food, safety, love, and self-esteem, among others (ibid 5).

The Researchers of this paper find this theory applicable to this work on the premise that: “As a humanist psychologist, Maslow believed that people have an innate desire to be self-actualised: that is, the desire to be all they can fully be”. The only thing that gives students joy and makes them feel fulfilled is their “grade and performance”. Achieving such height required the student to be up and doing in his/her academic work, through motivation from within and without. Lecturers’ sole responsibility in students’ life is to motivate them to learn in any possible way; so, administering the unannounced test is one way to keep the students in check, in terms of constant

studying for fear of unannounced test and its possible outcome of failure. So, motivation is very important in humans generally and of students in particular, hence “unannounced tests’ serve as a motivation for student academic performance.

Statement of Problem

CA is an assessment approach which involves the use of different assessment tools, assessing various components of learning, not only the thinking process but including behaviour, personality, traits and dexterity (Shehu, 2000). This clearly shows that unannounced test form part of the student’s continuous assessment. In respect to the above-stated, unannounced Test is part and parcel of CA tools which can be administered at any given time, and as part of their CA not as the only CA. The researchers also observed that most students read only when they are told or informed about a Test, in which it is expected that students read every time whether at school or at home.

It is against this background that researchers want to evaluate the perception of Christian Students on the administration of unannounced tests as part of their continuous assessment, and when it is their only continuous assessment, and also examine its impact on their academic performance when it is part of their continuous assessment, and when it is their only continuous assessment.

The Objective of the Study

The present study is to:

- i. Find out the perception of Christian students on unannounced Tests as the only CA and as part of the CA
- ii. Examine the effects of unannounced Tests on the students’ academic performance as the only CA and as part of their CA

Research Question

This paper answers the following questions:

- i. What is the perception of Christian students on unannounced Tests as the only CA and as part of CA?
- ii. What are the effects of unannounced Tests on the students’ academic performance as the only CA, and as part of CA?

Methodology

To evaluate the perception of Christian Students on the Unannounced test, “survey research design” was used for easy accessibility of information. Through this, the Christian students’ opinion was assessed to find out their perception of the administration of the Unannounced Test and its effects on their performance. The population of this study comprised all Christian students in the Faculty of Education at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, which has seven departments they are Arts & Social Science Education, Educational psychology and counselling, Library and information science, Science Education, Physical and Health Education, Vocational and Technical Education and Educational Foundation Curriculum and Planning. The researcher worked with only a portion of the entire population of Christian students in the faculty of which population is at about Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty (1,550) Christian students in six departments in the faculty, as collected from various course representatives (2014). The researcher sampled six undergraduate departments in the faculty out of seven existing departments, because one out of the

seven departments offers only Postgraduate courses, that is, Educational Foundation and Curriculum, and 10% of the entire population of the research work was used giving the total number of (155) questionnaire. A “stratified random sampling” method was employed by the researcher to distribute the questionnaire. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Content validity was used to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments. The researcher randomly picked students from each of these departments and administer the questionnaire for their responses, and also went to the Christian faculty fellowships and did the same.

Interpretation of Data and Result

From the responses received, agreement to each item is by adding the column S.A and A, while that of disagreement is putting together the column of S.D and D

Table 1: Unannounced Test as the only CA

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	To discourage students from procrastination in terms of reading	54	36.5	48	32.4	17	11.5	29	19.6
ii	It serves as punishment measures	20	13.5	41	27.7	39	26.4	48	32.4
iii	To motivate students to attend classes	80	54.1	60	40.5	5	3.4	3	2
iv	To change the study pattern of the students	51	34.5	69	46.6	9	6.1	19	12.8
v	It is to antagonize the students	22	14.9	37	25	40	27	49	33.1

Table 1 is the opinion of Christian Students on the Unannounced Test as the only CA. Item I shows that 102 respondents representing 68.9% Agreed that the unannounced Test which serves as the only student's CA discourages them from procrastination in terms of reading, while 46 respondents representing 31.1% disagreed. Going by the highest percentage, it, therefore, means that: students' perception of the unannounced test as the only CA is to discourage them from procrastination in terms of reading. Item II indicates that 61 respondents representing 41.2% agreed that, it serves as a punishment measure to the students, while 87 respondents representing 58.8% disagreed with that. It then means that, for students, unannounced tests as the only CA did not serve as punishment measures to them.

Item III which talks about motivating the students to attend classes has 140 respondents representing 94.6% agreed, while 8 respondents representing 5.4% disagreed. Going by the highest percentage indicates that, students are of the view that it motivates them to attend classes. Item IV had 120 respondents representing 81.1% agreed that it changes the study pattern of the students. While 28 respondents representing 18.9% disagreed. From this result, it interprets that, the students accept that unannounced test changes their study pattern. In Item V the frequency distribution shows that 59 respondents representing 39.9% agreed that unannounced tests 'it is to antagonise

the students. While 89 respondents representing 60.1% disagreed with that. It, therefore, means that the unannounced test is the only CA that is not meant to antagonize the students.

Table 2: Unannounced Test as Part of CA

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	This is to encourage students to keep on reading	96	64.9	45	30.4	4	2.7	3	2
ii	To reduce the probability of meaningless cramming on the eve of the final exams	45	30.4	55	37.2	17	11.5	31	20.9
iii	To encourage students to read the material before the lectures	63	42.6	74	50	8	5.4	3	2
iv	It serves as an attendance	34	22.9	88	59.5	6	4.1	20	13.5
v	To help students to keep up with their course reading between exams	40	27	83	56.1	7	4.7	18	12.2

Table 2 is the Perception of Christian Students on Unannounced Tests as Part of CA 141 respondents in Item I representing 95.3% agreed that, unannounced Tests as part of students' CA to encourage students to keep on reading. While 7 respondents representing 4.7% disagreed with that statement. Looking at the result it means that, students both agreed with the stated statement. Item II says that it is to reduce the probability of meaningless cramming on the eve of the final exams; 100 respondents representing 67.6% agreed to that. While 48 respondents representing 32.4% disagree with the above claim. Going by the highest percentage it means then, that unannounced test is to reduce the probability of meaningless cramming on the eve of exams. In Item III 137 respondents representing 92.6% agreed that; it is to encourage students to read the material before the lectures. While 12 respondents representing 7.4% disagreed. This result shows that; students accept the fact that an 'unannounced Test is to encourage them to read their material before the lectures'. Item IV which says that it serves as attendance, the frequency distribution of 122 respondents with 82.4% agreed to that. While 26 respondents representing 17.6% disagreed. The result clearly shows that; students' view is that it serves as attendance. Item V which had 123 respondents representing 83.1% strongly agreed that it is to help students to keep up with their course reading between exams. While 25 respondents represented 16.9%. This result, therefore, means that students agreed that it is to help them keep up with their course reading between exams.

Table 3: Effects of Unannounced Test as the only CA

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	It improves their performance at the end of the course	29	19.6	46	31.1	35	23.6	38	25.7

ii	It affects the achievement measurement of the students	37	25	69	46.6	23	15.5	19	12.8
iii	It encourages lower-level students to study at a more consistent rate	50	33.8	70	47.3	16	10.8	12	8.1
iv	It increases examination tension and stress	27	18.2	38	25.7	32	21.6	51	34.5
v	It did not offer a fair examination	30	20.3	52	35.1	28	18.8	38	25.7

Table 3 shows the Effects of the Unannounced Test on the Performance of Students as the Only CA. 75 respondents representing 50.7% in Item I agreed that, the effects of the unannounced test on the performance of students as the only CA it improves their performance at the end of the course. While 73 respondents representing 49.3% disagreed. This result shows that the respondents agreed with that. In Item II Where it says that it affects the achievement measurement of the students, 106 respondents representing 71.6% agreed. While 42 respondents represented 28.3%. Looking at the result, it, therefore, means that unannounced test affects the performance measure of the students.

In Item III 120 respondents representing 81.1% agreed that it encourages lower-level students to study at a more consistent rate. While 28 respondents representing 18.9% disagreed. Going by the highest percentage, it clearly shows that, it helps lower-level students to study at a more consistent rate. Item IV says that it increases the examination tension and stress, 65 respondents representing 43.9% agreed to that. While 83 respondents representing 56.1% disagreed. It, therefore, means that the effects of the unannounced test as the only C.A., it doesn't increase examination tension and stress. Item V says that unannounced test doesn't offer fair examination, 82 respondents with 55.4% agreed. While 66 respondents representing 44.5% disagreed. With this, the highest percentage is that of agreed. It, therefore, means that the effects of unannounced tests, it doesn't offer a fair examination.

Table 4: Effects of unannounced Test as part of CA

S/N	Items	SA		A		SD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
i	It helps students learn and remember information better	52	35.1	62	41.9	17	11.5	17	11.5
ii	It increases long-term memory in students	37	25	68	45.9	17	11.5	26	17.6
iii	It aids student's retention of factual knowledge after life-support courses	21	14.2	80	54.1	16	10.8	31	20.9
iv	It keeps students on alert	70	47.3	71	47.9	5	3.4	2	1.4
v	Students' final grade is always high	19	12.8	28	18.9	46	31.1	55	37.2

Table 4 the Effects of Unannounced Tests on the performance of students as part of their CA. In Item, I 114 respondents with 77% agreed that the effects of the unannounced test as part of students' CA, help the students learn and remember information better. While 34 respondents representing 23% disagreed. Going by the highest percentage, it clearly shows that the students agreed with the above statement. Item II says that it increases long-term memory in students, 105 respondents representing 70.9% agreed. While 43 respondents represented 29.1%. The result clearly shows that, agreed had the highest percentage, which means the students accept the above statement.

In Item III 101 respondents representing 68.3% agreed that it aids students' retention of factual knowledge after life-support courses. While 47 respondents representing 31.7% disagreed. From the result above the highest percentage is 68.3% which is agreed; it, therefore, means that students accept the above statement to be part of the effects of the unannounced Test. Item IV with a frequency distribution of 141 representing 95.2% agreed that it keeps students on alert. While 7 respondents with 4.8% disagreed, the result clearly shows that the students agreed that unannounced tests keep them on alert. Item V which says that the student's final grade is always high, 47 respondents representing 31.7% agreed. While 101 respondents representing 68.3% disagreed. It, therefore, means that students' final grade is not always high due to unannounced test as part of their CA.

Research Findings

From the data presented and interpreted, the following are the new findings of the research work:

1. Students' perception was that the lecturers meant good to them by giving unannounced Tests to help them not to be lazy with their academic work.
2. It shows that the Unannounced Tests are geared towards making the students consistent in their studies.
3. It doesn't allow students to express their knowledge; by implication affects their performance.
4. It helps students to maintain their grades in the cause of their studies. This implies that unannounced Tests should be part of their CA, not the only CA.

Discussion of findings

From the data interpreted on the perception of Christian Students on unannounced Tests as the only CA and as part of CA, the students were of the view that they don't longer procrastinate in terms of reading, and it makes them read at all times and students who read only when they are being told of a test makes them change the pattern of their study, as well it reduces the rate at which students cram. This view was supported by Abbas (2008). Clump, (2003), and Jones (1931) talk about motivating students to attend classes, and according to these findings, the students strongly agreed with that. And still, on that, the student's perception of unannounced Test is that they used it as attendance, for them when a lecturer comes to the class and find only a few students in the class, instead of taking attendance which the lecturer believes that some students may write for their friends he/she gives a pop quiz. Maryellen (2010) supported the above findings in her research work. According to Maryellen "she took attendance on about (10) unannounced days during the course, and students present on those days get two bonus points".

More to that, the students disagreed with the perception of the unannounced test as a punishment, or to antagonise the students, for them, that is not the reason or the motive for administering an

unannounced Test. Maryellen (2010) in her work said that some lecturers administered pop quizzes as punitive. This is a clear indication that the students have contrasting opinions towards that, by interpretation it, therefore, means that the view held by the above author to some extent has an element of truth. At the same time what the students perceived could still be true; at this point the Researcher is of the view that it all depends on the individual in tension when giving the Unannounced Test.

Furthermore, students agreed that unannounced Test doesn't offer a fair examination, Graham (1999) observed that unannounced test has negative effects on students when it fails to offer a fair examination, as a result of the examination tension that unannounced Test create. For the effects of unannounced Tests on the performance of students as the only CA and part of the CA, the students held that it improves their performance at the end of the course. This is possible because the rate at which they study because of fear of pop quizzes will aid their performance in the end. William (2011) supported the above view, for him, unannounced tests came out to be effective in terms of improving students' performance, the rate at which they read and the rate of class attendance all at an increased level.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the researchers draw the following conclusions: Unannounced Test as the only CA, is not meant to punish or to antagonize Students; Unannounced Test as part of students' CA is geared toward making the Students consistent in their studies; The impact of unannounced Test as the only CA, it doesn't allow students to express their knowledge; And when it is part of their CA, it helps Students to maintain their grade in the cause of their studies; Finally, it can be concluded that unannounced Test is a vital tool to be used in continuous assessment of the students during their studies due to its outstanding benefits in helping the students generally.

Recommendations

Concerning the above findings, the researchers outline the following recommendations:

- a. Students should attain classes regularly and give priority to their academics.
- b. Students should read consistently without giving room for laziness.
- c. Students should get themselves acquainted with Unannounced Tests so that it won't be a surprise when the unannounced test is administered, and
- d. Students should be cautious with their studies and avoid a lackadaisical attitude toward learning.

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