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AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS VIEW TOWARDS OPEN TEXT BASED ASSESSMENT (OTBA) IN CENTRAL INDIA



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Abstract: The Study investigated the perception of secondary students towards Open Text based Assessment . Descriptive research design of the survey type was used. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. A total of 200 secondary school students were selected from four schools through stratified random sampling technique. A validated questionnaire vetted by experts in measurement and research was used as an instrument for data collection. Independent t-test statistic was used for data analysis. The study revealed that students' towards Open Text based Assessment were significantly positive; that gender and school location significantly influenced students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. The results further revealed that there are significant differences between attitude of male and female students in rural and urban schools towards Open Text based Assessment

Keywords: Secondary School, Open Text based Assessment.

INTRODUCTION:

Ushering in what could be the biggest change in the country's school examination system, the Central Board of Secondary Education will introduce an 'open book' section in the final exams for classes 9, 10 and 11 from the current academic year and for class 12 boards from next year (2014-15). For the 'open book' section " which doesn't mean books can be taken inside the exam hall " students will be given case studies in each subject four months in advance. All questions will be from the given material. This section will carry 20% weightage.

"This section will have questions based only on the case study given to students. The idea is to do away with rote learning and improve students' ability to understand and apply concepts. The open book section will begin for all subjects in classes IX and X but at the plus two level, CBSE has identified four subjects to start with - Biology, Economics, Geography and a language..

The open book exam will be part of the Summative Assessment II for class IX and also for those students who opt for school-based class X exams under the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) scheme instead of the board exams.

The open book examination would be exclusively case study-based. Board would bring out guidance material for students and parents to help them prepare for the test.

Students will not be allowed to take books inside the examination hall. Modifying the open book system, School will provide case studies related to the subjects four months prior to the examination. This concept will be called pre-announced test (PAT).

The open book exam is now a reality for CBSE with the path-breaking initiative set to debut in March next year for Std IX and XI. Open Text Based Assessment (OTBA), its questions will be out of text/pictorial material which shall be given to students three months advance. In addition OTBA will allow students to take that text/pictorial material inside examination hall and refer to it while answering questions. CBSE circular justified this in a letter to school saying that "multiple modes of assessment need to be provided to cater to the varied abilities of individual strengths of learner. These are meant to incorporate analytical and theoretical skills, thus moving away from memorization". All subjects of Std IX and three of Std XI will be part of OTBA. The board had earlier planned to start this concept for Std X and XII but it seems the change has been made with a view to test the waters.

OTBA will comprise 15%-20% of the total marks and may also include value-based questions, which is already part of the current set up. Since Std IX comes under the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation Scheme, the March OTBA will be part of Summative Assessment-II (SA-II).

Schools will be provided with that they will be supplied with "textual material in a few months before the commencement of SA-II. A textual material may be in the form of an article, a case study, a diagram, a concept/mind map, a picture or a cartoon, problem/situation based on the concepts taught to be students during second term". Textual material will be related to chosen concepts taken from the syllabi. Joshi's letter added that "OTBA will have questions of higher order thinking skills some of which may be

subjective, creative and open ended". Confirming that students will be able to refer to that material during exam, further wrote that "textual material supplied earlier will be printed again as part of the question paper and thus will be available while answering the questions".

For Std XI, the OTBA will be applicable only to economics, biology and geography. This will be part of the final exam in March. Schools are advised to mark the answer sheets based on four criterion. First is the student's understanding and application of the concepts to the situational problems, second being ability to suggest and bring out the appropriate solutions to the problem, third is the ability to come up with innovative opinions and fourth the ability to deeply analyze, based on a wide range of perspectives. More details are expected to be given to schools by December.

What is the Open Text Based Assessment (OTBA) and how will it work?

OTBA works on the "open book exam" system prevalent in many western countries. It permits students to carry material into the exam hall from which questions have been set. OTBA does not dilute the exam as questions are not direct, but require understanding of topic's concept. OTBA will be applicable to Std IX and Std XI students from March 2014. It will account for maximum 20% of the total marks.

ROLE OF TEACHERS :

Teachers are expected to provide a bridge between the theory and practice. The Text/Case studies should be designed to promote active participation of the students in active learning process through discussion, analysis, self reflection and critical thinking. The teachers are expected to assign the text material received from Board to the students in groups so that they may read, and understand it through discussion view it from different perspective, brainstorm main ideas in class or even do further research outside the class. The main objectives of the introducing this element is to provide opportunities to students to apply the theoretical concepts to a real life scenario by encouraging active and group learning in the class. The teachers should guide students and provide feedback at regular intervals about their performance during the completion of assigned activities. Since real-life cases or situations are complex and open to different opinions, teachers must be prepared for innovative and open answer from students.

ROLE OF SCHOOL

The text/case –studies/supplied to schools should be thoroughly read, discussed and analyzed by the teachers. If possible, the teachers may get together for brainstorming session working on the following

Objectives of the text materials/Case-study

Concept involved

Application of concepts to situation

Description and further explanation of the case /problem

Higher Order thinking skills involved

Analysis with different perspectives

Assessment techniques

The case studies with leading questions should be assigned to

students in groups who would discuss at their level. The teachers should guide them with further leading questions.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

Open Text Book Assessment: OTBA works on the "open book exam" system prevalent in many western countries. It permits students to carry material into the exam hall from which questions have been set.

Teacher: Teacher is a person who imparts the knowledge and provides learning experiences to the pupils.

Attitude: A predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation.

OBJECTIVES:

The purpose of the study was to determine the nature of the attitude of secondary school students towards Open Text Book Assessment in Central India. The study also sought to investigate how these students' attitudes were influenced by certain variables such as sex (gender) and geographical location of the school.

Hypotheses

Three null hypotheses based on the purpose of the study were postulated and tested during the investigation.

Ho1: The attitude of secondary school students towards Open Text based Assessment is not significantly positive.

Ho2: Students attitude toward Open Text based Assessment is not significantly influenced by sex (gender).

Ho3: Attitude of secondary school students toward Open Text based Assessment is not significantly influenced by the geographical location of the schools.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study: The research study was essentially descriptive/survey in nature. Since students in secondary schools irrespective of sex and geographical location are involved in Open Text based Assessment, the target or accessible population for the study therefore consisted of the secondary school students in Central India.

Population of the study: The Secondary school students studying in IX and X standard of schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education of Madhya Pradesh during the session 2013-2014.

Sample: Incidental sampling technique was used to draw the sample of the study. Total Sample size was 200. There were 100 boys and 100 girls students from both Urban and Rural Schools. The breakup of sample is depicted in the table below.

Table-1 Break of sample

S No	School	Sample size	Standard IX		Standard X	
			Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1	School 1	50	-	25	-	25
2	School 2	50	25	-	25	-
3	School 3	50	12	13	13	12
4	School 4	50	13	12	13	12

Instrument: Secondary school students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment questionnaire (SSATOBTA) designed by the researchers was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument had two sections. Section A had four (4) items which elicited bio-data information while section B had sixteen items on student's attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. To ensure the face and content validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was vetted by three experts in measurement and evaluation and psychology unit of the university. The researchers equally established the reliability of the instrument through test-retest method. A reliability co-efficient of 0.93 was obtained and this was considered high enough therefore the instrument was judged reliable for data collection.

The instrument was administered by the researcher to 200 students and also retrieved from them on the spot; a 100% return was achieved. The coding system was four point Likert type scale that had 4 to 1 in order of strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, Agree (A) 3 points, Disagree (D) 2 points and strongly disagree (SD) 1 point in the positively worded items and the reverse in the negatively worded items. The highest score any respondent could get on attitude towards Open Text based Assessment was 64 while the average score was 32. Any respondent who scored above 32 was considered as having high/positive attitude towards Open Text based Assessment, and any respondent who scored below 33 was considered as having low or negative attitude Open Text based Assessment.

RESULTS

The data collected were collated and analyzed by using independent t-test statistic. This was done hypothesis by hypothesis. The result of the analysis provide answers to the three null hypotheses posed as presented in tables 1, 2 and 3.

Hypothesis 1. The attitude of secondary school students toward Open Text based Assessment is not significantly positive.

Table 2 Independent t-test analysis of students' positive and negative attitude towards Open Text based Assessment

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-Critical
Positive attitude	100	23.00	7.24	198	8.333	1.960
Negative attitude	100	16.6	5.58			

* Significant

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of 8.333 is greater than the table value of 1.960 i.e. $8.333 > 1.960$. Hence the result is significant and the null hypotheses rejected. This implies that students have positive attitude towards Open Text based Assessment in secondary schools.

Hypothesis 2: Students' attitude toward Open Text based Assessment is not significantly influenced by their sex (gender).

Table 3 Independent t-test analysis of the difference between student's gender toward Open Text based Assessment

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-Critical
Boys attitude towards OTBA	100	17.00	3.48	198	-6.317	1.960
Girls attitude towards OTBA	100	20.00	2.70			

* Significant

The result in table 3 shows that the calculated t-value is greater than the table value i.e. $-6.317 > 1.960$ hence the null hypothesis tested is rejected. This implies that there is a significant gender difference in students attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. The tables further indicate mean difference in boys and girls student's attitudes toward Open Text based Assessment, girls having higher mean score of 20.00 than male students with 19.00 mean score.

Hypothesis 3. The attitude of secondary school students towards Open Text based Assessment is not significantly influenced by the geographical location of the schools.

Table 4 Independent t-test analysis of the difference between student's attitude in urban and rural schools locations towards Open Text based Assessment.

Variables	N	X	SD	DF	T-Calculated	T-Critical
Urban students attitude towards OTBA	100	17.00	4.17	198	5.638	1.960
Rural students attitude towards OTBA	100	14.00	3.16			

* Significant

The result presented in Table 4 shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. This is because the calculated t-value of 5.638 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.960 i.e. $5.638 > 1.960$. This implies that Geographical location of the schools (school location) exert greater influence on the student's attitudes toward Open Text based Assessment. The table further shows significant difference in the mean scores of urban students 17.00 and that of rural students 14.00. This implies that students in urban schools have high positive attitude toward Open Text based Assessment than students in rural schools.

The result of the study revealed a significant positive attitude of students towards Open Text based Assessment in the schools, since the calculated t-value of 9.333 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.960. The result further showed a marked difference between the mean scores of the respondent on the positive attitude 24.00 and mean of the negative attitude 17.6, which indicate that in some

schools students have negative attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. The possible reasons for the difference in the positive attitude could be that students in the schools are already aware of the Open Text based Assessment and are also motivated by the teachers on the need to utilize the services. The next finding of this study is that sex (gender) has significant influence on the attitude of the students towards Open Text based Assessment. It further revealed gender difference in the students attitude with the mean score of 22.00 for girls and the lower mean score of 19.00 for boys. This implies that female students are favourably disposed to school Open Text based Assessment, than their boy's counterparts. This is an interesting finding which reflects femininity

The analysis on table 4 showed that geographical location of the school exerts significant influence on students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. The result further revealed a significant difference between urban and rural students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. Looking at their mean scores, the urban students had mean of 18.00 while the rural students had a mean of 15.00, indicating or meaning that students in urban school showed higher positive attitude to Open Text based Assessment than students in rural secondary schools.

SUMMARY

Summary of the results of the findings show that:

1. Secondary school students' attitudes toward Open Text based Assessment is positive.
2. Sex (gender) has a significant influence on students attitude towards Open Text based Assessment
3. School geographical location influence students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment
4. Reasons for positive attitude of secondary school students towards Open Text based Assessment are (i)Overall development (ii) Continuous study (iii)Gate way to new knowledge (iv)Organized examination .

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings summarized above the following conclusions are drawn from the study.

1. The secondary school students in Madhya Pradesh State have positive attitude towards Open Text based Assessment
2. Boys and girls students differ in their attitude towards Open Text based Assessment. Female students show high positive attitude towards Open Text based Assessment than their male counterparts.
3. Geographical location is a strong determinant of students' attitude towards Open Text based Assessment in schools. Students in urban schools are predisposed to Open Text based Assessment than student in rural schools.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

After retrospective view of the whole study, the investigators find that there were a few limitations that constricted the area of generalization of this study. The limitations were as given below:

1. Due to paucity of time and resources a sample of only 200 secondary school students was taken which restricted the scope of generalization.
2. There are many variables which may affect the perception of teachers towards OTBA like some socioeconomic variables, intellectual level, and maturity level and so on. Though these variables were included in the study, they were not used in analysis in any way.
3. Since the perception was measured on the basis of fixed responses, the students might have given socially accepted responses instead of giving correct responses.
4. Only a very few schools affiliated to CBSE were selected in this study.
5. Some respondents put tick mark against more than one alternative and sometimes they left some of the items unanswered which presented difficulty in accurate analysis of data.
6. Only students who scored 60% to 95% marks were taken in the sample.
7. The biggest limitation was that some students consulted with each other while making their choice. So the result might have got affected due to this.
8. Present study was conducted only in one state therefore more empirical evidences will be required from more states before ample generalization may be made .In light of this , it is suggested that a similar but more elaborate study may be conducted using a larger sample and covering more states in India

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