ROYAL THRIVE
(A Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal)
Volume – 1 Issue – 1 January – 2024 ISSN : 3048-524X

EXPLORING TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON OPEN BOOK ASSESSMENTS (OBA): INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Over the past century, examination reforms have improved flexibility, analytical focus, comprehensive questioning, alternative assessments, and the grading system, emphasizing holistic development and continuous evaluation. Despite resistance from educational authorities, teachers, and students and issues like increased workload and subjectivity in exams, reforms like open-book exams and rubrics for consistent scoring have been introduced. Challenges include inadequate teaching focused on exams over knowledge, vague questions, and implementation issues. The Indian education system emphasizes rote learning over understanding, hindering students' real-life application of knowledge despite high exam scores. Continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) aims to improve analytical skills but faces implementation issues. Historical examination reforms have struggled, with few recommendations fully adopted. Recent efforts, such as open-book assessments (OBA), seek to shift focus from memorization to cognitive skills, yet sustained commitment from all educational stakeholders is crucial for meaningful change. These reforms aim to enhance learning outcomes and reduce competition and anxiety, but effective implementation and overcoming resistance are crucial for success. Formative assessments focus on feedback and motivation (Harris & Bell, 1986), contrasting with summative assessments that quantify learning (Black & William, 1998). Emerging in the 1990s, alternative assessments offer qualitative evaluations through authentic, performance-based tasks, addressing standardized tests' limitations (Garcia & Pearson, 1994). An open book exam allows students to consult textbooks and notes to analyse and evaluate information during their responses. The aim of the investigation was to examine how open-book assessments improved the academic performance of 343 high school instructors. The open book assessment scale (OBAS) was used in the study, which demonstrated that regardless of the gender of the teachers or the type of school, open book assessment had no appreciable impact on improving their academic performance. Significant variations were also seen in the degree to which open book assessment affected higher

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secondary school teachers across different age groups and type of school. The aforementioned findings challenge previous views about the relationship between open-book assessments and academic achievement.

Keywords: Alternative assessment, Open-Book Assessments, Formative assessments, summative assessments, and academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

According to Carroll (1968), a test is a procedure to elicit behaviours for inferring characteristics of the test taker, often used pedagogically to motivate or review material (Bachman, 1990). Tests, typically conducted at session ends, measure learnability with question papers and are authoritarian and product-focused (Troman, 1989; Geetha, 2015). Assessment, broader than testing, is a continuous, democratic process evaluating various construct aspects (Brown, 2004; Troman, 1989). Green (2014) emphasizes its informal, less restrictive nature, encompassing activities like informal questioning, quizzes, self and peer assessments, and portfolio reviews. Testing, formal with time constraints, judges' specific subjects, while assessment includes all evaluative activities, influencing learning and highlighting the necessity for diagnostic and formative assessments. Formative assessments, focusing on learning processes, offer feedback and motivation (Green, 2014; Harris & Bell, 1986), while summative assessments quantify learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Alternative assessments, emerging in the 1990s, counter standardized tests' limitations by promoting qualitative evaluations through portfolios, peer assessments, and real-life tasks (Garcia & Pearson, 1994). These alternatives reduce anxiety and emphasize strengths and individual growth, incorporating authentic, performance-based tasks into teaching to enhance learning and assessment simultaneously.

Introducing alternative assessments in education, particularly in environments traditionally dominated by teacher-centred methods, presents initial challenges but offers significant educational benefits. These assessments, including portfolios, presentations, and open-book exams, are designed to evaluate students' analytical and conceptual abilities beyond mere memory recall. The Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system in India exemplifies these principles, focusing on continuous feedback in a non-threatening setting. Open-book exams, for instance, are tailored to test higher-order thinking skills and reduce rote learning.

Despite their advantages, the implementation of alternative assessments requires careful planning and guidance to ensure effectiveness. It involves a gradual introduction alongside traditional assessments to allow students to adapt. Teachers should employ rubrics and checklists initially, moving to self-assessment and peer-

assessment as students become more proficient. These assessments aim to create a more comprehensive evaluation of students' abilities, encouraging creativity and critical thinking. However, challenges remain in recording and certifying results, necessitating clear criteria for their effective use in higher education.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of educational assessment changes is examined in this research, with a focus on the shift from traditional rote learning to assessments that better foster analytical abilities. It focuses on using open-book exams and other non-traditional forms of assessment to improve students' comprehension and application of their learning. The study emphasizes the value of India's Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation System, which promotes ongoing feedback in an effort to reduce test-taking anxiety. Sophisticated assessment systems need careful planning and clear instructions for teachers to implement them effectively. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how well open-book exams contribute to better learning outcomes and instructional effectiveness while also supplying data to assist in continuing educational improvements.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the level of understanding in Open Book Assessment among higher secondary school teachers and examine the influence of various factors such as gender, school types. age groups, nature of the school.

To determine if there are significant differences in Open Book Assessment outcomes among higher secondary school teachers based on these variables.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. The level of Open Book Assessment of higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram District with respect to their background variables is average.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

3. There is no significant difference among age group of higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

4. There is no significant difference among Boys, Girls and Co-Education higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.
5. There is no significant difference among nature of school among higher secondary school teachers in

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Open Book Assessment.

METHOD OF STUDY

The normative survey method has been adopted in the present study.

SAMPLE

Population of the study consists of 343 school teachers working in Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu, India.

TOOLS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Open Book Assessment Scale (OBAS).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

To find the meaningful interpretation of the raw scores, the investigator used mean, S.D, 't' test and 'f' test to analyse the data.

Hypothesis - 1

The level of Open Book Assessment of higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram District with respect to their background variables is average.

Table - 1

The level of Open Book Assessment of higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram District with respect to their background variables

VARIABLES	CATEGORIES	LOW		AVERAGE		HIGH	
		COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%
GENDER	Male	19	11.8	123	76.3	19	11.8
	Female	36	19.7	13	7.14	133	73.0
AGE	Below 25	0	0	4	66.6	2	1.24
	26-35	10	19.2	21	40.3	21	40.3
	36-45	33	20.4	60	37.2	5	3.1
	46-55	11	6.8	79	49	19	11.8
	Above 55	1	0.62	57	35.4	20	12.4
TYPE OF SCHOOL	Government	25	16.7	99	66.4	25	16.7
	Govt-Aided	1	4.7	7	33.3	13	61.9
	Private	29	16.7	116	67.0	28	16.1
NATURE OF SCHOOL	Boys	7	15.5	29	64.4	9	20
	Girls	19	19.1	62	62.6	18	18.1
	Co-Education	29	14.5	131	65.8	39	19.5

From Table 1 it is evident that the level of Open Book Assessment of higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram District with respect to their background variables is average

ROYAL THRIVE
(A Peer Reviewed & Refereed Journal)
Volume – 1 Issue – 1 January – 2024 ISSN : 3048-524X

Hypothesis – 2 There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

Table - 2

'T' - test values for the open book assessment scores of genders

CATEGORY	N	MEAN	S. D	Calculated 't' Value	Table Value 5% Level	Remark
MALE	161	88.130	6.54	0.5	0.51561	Not Significant
FEMALE	182	89.126	7.86			

From the above the table 2, it is evident that the calculated 't' value 0.5 is smaller than the table 't' value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. It is Not Significant. It is clear that there is no significant difference in the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts on both type of Gender. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference in the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on type of gender" is accepted.

Hence, it is evident that the level of impact of open book assessment higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts has no significant difference based on type of Gender.

Hypothesis - 3

There is no significant difference among age groups of Below 25years, 25-35years, 36-45years, 46-55 years, and Above 55 years of higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

Table - 3

'F '- Ratio for The Open Book Assessment Scores Between Different Age Group of Teachers

Category	Source of variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-Value		Remark
					Calculated Value	Table Value 5% level	
AGE	Between Samples	2651.829	4	662.957	14.476	3.00	Significant

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	Within Samples	15479.261	338	45.797			

From the above the table, it is evident that the calculated 'f ' value 14.476 is greater than the table 'f ' value 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance. It is Significant. It is clear that there is significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on type of Age. Hence the null hypothesis "There is significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on type of Age" is rejected.

Hence, it is evident that the among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts has significant difference based on type of Age.

Hypothesis - 4

There is no significant difference among Boys, Girls and Co-Education higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

Table - 4

'F '- Ratio for The Open Book Assessment Scores Between Different Nature Of School

Category	Source of variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-Value		Remark
					Calculated Value	Table Value 5% level	
NATURE OF SCHOOL	Between Samples	42.644	2	21.322	0.401	3.00	Not Significant
	Within Samples	18088.447	340	53.201			

`From the above the table 4, it is evident that the calculated 'f ' value 0.401 is lesser than the table 'f ' value 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance. It is Not Significant. It is clear that there is no significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on Nature of School. Hence the null hypothesis "There is no significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on Nature of School" is accepted.

Hence, it is evident that the among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts has no significant difference based on Nature of School.

Hypothesis - 5

ROYAL THRIVE
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There is no significant difference among Government, Government- Aided and Private higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

Table - 5

'F '- Ratio for The Open Book Assessment Scores Between Different Type of School

Category	Source of variation	Sum of Square	DF	Mean Square	F-Value		Remark
					Calculated Value	Table Value 5% level	
NATURE OF SCHOOL	Between Samples	42.644	2	21.322	0.401	3.00	Not Significant
	Within Samples	18088.447	340	53.201			

From the above the table 5, it is evident that the calculated 'f ' value 9.891 is greater than the table 'f ' value 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance. It is Significant. It is clear that there is significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on type of School. Hence the null hypothesis "There is significant difference among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts based on type of School" is rejected. Hence, it is evident that the among the level of impact of open book assessment on the higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram districts has significant difference based on type of School.

FINDINGS

1. The level of Open Book Assessment of higher secondary school teachers in Villupuram District with respect to their background variables is average.

2. There is no significant difference between male and female higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

3. There is significant difference among age group of higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

4. There is no significant difference among Boys, Girls and Co-Education higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

5. There is no significant difference among nature of school among higher secondary school teachers in Open Book Assessment.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated a number of background variables and looked at the instructors of upper secondary schools in the Villupuram District's comprehension of Open Book Assessment (OBA) and its effects. The results show that these instructors' overall OBA levels are ordinary. OBA does not significantly differ between teachers who are male or female, or between teachers who work in government, government-aided, or private schools, or between teachers who work in various school districts. Significant variations were discovered across instructors in various age groups, indicating that a teacher's age may have an impact on how they see and perform in OBAs. Furthermore, there was no discernible variation in the OBA efficacy of instructors from Co-Education, Boys, and Girls schools. These results highlight the need for tailored professional development programs that address the specific needs of different age groups to enhance the effectiveness of OBAs. While OBAs aim to promote higher-order thinking and reduce rote learning, successful implementation requires addressing age-related differences and ensuring consistent support across various types of schools.

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