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# Templates of Measuring Academic Performance of Mass Communication Students: Issues of Social Constructivism and Goal Theories in Nigerian Universities

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess the academic performance evaluation of Mass Communication students in Nigerian Universities. The objectives were to find out the most common evaluation methods, the evaluation frequency, and the outstanding barriers. The goal and the social constructivism theories were applied. The scope of this research was limited to two universities with Mass Communication /Communication Arts as a course of study. The two universities are the University of Uyo, and the WellSpring University, Benin in Southern Nigeria. The method was a survey on a population of 16 lecturers purposively taken and administered with a closed-ended questionnaire. Findings indicated that most lecturers, 8 persons or 50 percent, apply termly examinations to evaluate students' performance at the expense of class assignments, continuous assessments, class participation, and practical sessions. The implication is that the academic performance of Mass Communication course students is poor and not evenly evaluated. The implication also shows that there has been a turning out of half-baked graduates due to poor standards of academic evaluation over a period. This research has also established that result-oriented academic evaluation methods have a link with students' performance no matter the course of study in the Universities. It is recommended that authorities of Universities should set goals and endeavor to restrain the lecturers from using corruption, bias, and social constructivism sentiments in evaluating students. Regulatory agencies of Nigerian universities have to put effective practical structures of students' evaluation and regularly conduct transparent monitoring of teaching and assessment models. This work has validated propositions of the goal and social constructivism theories and attendant effects on templates of students' evaluation by educational institutions. It seeks further research to establish purposeful and practical evaluation methods to meet the goals of universities in Nigerian society.

## 1. Introduction

Education is the process of learning and acquiring new ideas, knowledge, and skills. The end product of education is the growth and development of the individual and the society. Commonly, education can be undertaken formally or informally. The formal segment of education lies mostly in the face-to-face classroom situation which has recently been expanded to the virtual aspects. Face-to-face education is an instructional technique where course contents and learning items are taught directly to a collection of students. This allows for a straight interaction between a learner and an instructor. It is the most traditional type of learning. Learners benefit from interaction with their fellow students. In face-to-face learning, students are responsible for their progress through specific class meeting days and times. Face-to-face learning ensures understanding and recollection of lesson contents and gives class members the chance to bond with one another. Face-to-face learning refers to the traditional, classroom-based method of learning. This style of learning involves in-person sessions that are instructor-led. The pace of learning is set by the instructor and students in this setting are passive learners. Face-to-face learning is considered effective due to the benefits of live interaction between the instructors and the learners or students. Learners are responsible for their own progress by attending classes or training meetings, interacting with fellow students, and interacting in real-time with instructors. Face-to-face learning provides in-person benefits that online learning lacks.

Learning with your peers, in the same room, fosters a sense of learning that is physical, unlike online learning. The entire group is learning together, at the same time and in the same place. In-person or face-to-face learning allows instructors to develop learning plans and relationships with learners that cannot be obtained online. Being a part of an in-person group provides nuances that online forums cannot offer. On the opposite, any type of learning that occurs on the internet could be considered online learning, also known as e-learning. Today, online learning is most often used to refer to asynchronous learning, which allows learners to engage with instructional material at their own pace, from anywhere, at any time. Face-to-face learning is essentially a teacher-centered method of education and is widely accepted among cultures. Many modern education systems have largely shifted to online away from traditional face-to-face forms of educational instruction, due to the contemporary needs of learners.

Hence, an online learning program encourages self-study in many forms ranging from a remote seminar such as a LinkedIn Learning course to a full-fledged virtual college degree program.

Such classroom and corporate learning settings, require teaching management systems meant to connect learners with learning materials and in monitoring the progress. Online or e-learning presents clear advantages for the development of professional end-user learners and organizations. It is cost-effective. Online learning does not require in-person training as it reduces the costs of travel and related expenses. In e-learning experiences, students need not purchase physical learning materials like books, tests, videos, and so forth. It is easier to access anywhere through an internet connection at any time. It is more consistent. Online learning relies less on physical individual instructors. This allows the learning experience to be less biased. With online learning, instructors can take a multimodal learning approach with hyper-transfer-text protocols (https) links, videos, text, assessments, or more (Olmstead, 2023).

The provision of online learning against face-to-face is expanding worldwide. Those who are responsible for creating online material for blended learning consider the nature and type of activities available to learners. It seems that students appreciate the flexibility of online learning by different choices of time and place to learn rather than discussions that take place face-to-face. Being seen simply as an alternative process of delivering academic content, the benefits of online technology can be very useful and adapted not only due to the offering of greater flexibility but also to inspire students' engagements and successes at universities and beyond.

Across advanced and developing countries including Nigeria, the formal segment of education at the tertiary level has been prevalent. Consequently, universities are built and owned either by the government or private citizens as well as non - governmental organizations. Aside from the admission of students from academic year to academic year, the universities take to the employment of lecturers specialized in several fields and disciplines. The academic year of the student's learning is sometimes broken into semesters or terms. The computation of competence of the students takes place at the final graduation of either two years, three, or four years of learning depending on the university. The yardsticks of determining competence are varied. It ranges from practical exposure to written assignments and class participation.

This process cannot be said to be without fault. The assumption is from the perspective that some of the graduates of universities appear not competent in handling situations and challenges for themselves or society. However, no graduate is expected to come out of university without passing through processes of assessments on academic performance. Hence, the academic performance of students is a key feature in education. It is considered to be the center of formal education systems. The academic performance of students determines the success or failure of

any academic institution. The academic performance of students has a direct impact on the socio-economic development of a country. In essence, academic performance assessment or evaluation is the test of the knowledge imparted by the lecturer in the awarding of marks over a specific period of time. The tactics can even be by using continuous assessments or final examinations results.

Certainly, due to many social and economic sentiments and challenges facing lecturers in universities, the evaluation of students appears not to be the true test of knowledge. The evaluation by any standard adopted by the lecturers is largely affected by elements of corruption. There are accusations of sex for marks against lecturers, the collection of gift items, and even the application of ethnic or religious interests to evaluate students. The marks are allocated to grade the students in groups of First class, Second class, Third class, or the Ordinary pass levels. In the performance of students after universities, it is uncommonly noticed that the most acclaimed as qualified through the marks awarding procedures of evaluation tend to be in the failing groups while the ones without high scores are the drivers of economy and politics. The mirage of this research is to uncover the most adopted methods of academic evaluation by lecturers in universities of Nigeria and the effects of the process to the society.

## 1.1.  Statement of the Problem

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek lifelong learning opportunities for all. Considering this, many countries including Nigeria make access to quality education a task. For the achievement of quality education, Nigeria, apart from having more than 200 universities, also raises educational regulatory agencies. In the 2018 – 2019 academic year, over two million candidates applied for space in universities and almost the same number graduated though about half a million failed to gain admissions yearly.

This means that the percentage of admission seems to be close to the percentage of graduates per year at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The steps in turning out the products for the labour market have connectivity with the styles of evaluation. Assuming that the pattern of evaluation equates to the rate of performance, it means that the process of evaluation is without fault and vice versa. The statement of the problem therefore is whether Nigerian Universities apply a standardized pattern of evaluating students' performance for the overall benefit of the graduates and society and what has been the major barrier to the proper evaluation of students, particularly the students of Mass Communication course in Nigerian Universities.

## 1.2. Research Questions

a) What has been the most common method of academic performance evaluation of Mass Communication course students in Nigerian Universities?
b) What has been the frequency of adoption of methods of academic performance evaluation of Mass Communication course students in Nigerian Universities?
c) What has been the outstanding barrier to the evaluation of academic performance of Mass Communication course students in Nigerian Universities?

## 1.3. Scope/Limitations

The research was limited to only the evaluation of students in Mass Communication departments. Hence, only lecturers in the Mass Communication/Communication Arts Departments were given the opportunity to partake but for generalization of results.

## 2. Literature Reviews

### 2.1. Evaluation: General Overview

Evaluation is an inseparable part of any education process. It plays a crucial role in any student's learning. Academic evaluation is considered one of the valuable tools of teaching and learning because it can provide useful feedback for teachers and universities about the quality of education. Moreover, it can reveal the university's impact on students' learning and practices.

Evaluation arises when a score is allocated after the completion of a test, quiz, lesson, or assignment. A mark on a spelling test can be applied to determine whether a student can write or spell some given words or sentences in the course of academic tutelage. But sometimes evaluation is wrongly understood as an assessment. Johnson, Spanella & Pisano (2023) say that assessment in education is the collation of various data from different resources to check the student's learning and understanding. When reviewed and placed in context, this data helps gauge student progress, roadblocks, and obstacles. It can further give an insight into the reasons why students face the problems they face and can help bridge the gap between content retention and better student performance.

However, assessment requires the gathering of evidence to measure the learning and understanding of a course. Assessments are used to identify individual students' flaws and strengths to enable educators to offer dedicated learning activities. In addition, assessments are created by groups and individuals, especially lecturers in universities, or any departments of an educational institution. In classroom assessments, lecturers develop, direct, and ask questions to know the outcome of teaching. Consequently, it affords response on students' extent of progress. Shabbir, Zafar, Rafiq, and Bhuttah (2021) say that assessment plays a vital role,

through classroom evaluation, a teacher measures the student's performance and ability to find how much a student is getting the idea. Through classroom evaluation, a teacher can improve student learning and classroom instructions. As a result, teachers can achieve educational goals for better performance of students. It is beneficial for both teachers and students. It may be through providing multiple test formats, self-assessment, or maybe through a formal observation or normal class routine.

Academic performance has been sharpened and clarified by numerous writers. Academic performance is the hierarchy of placing students in grades by lecturers for the arrival of an educational goal over a definite time. Matalka & Dwakat (2022) affirmed that academic performance is a student's ability to complete academic assignments, and it is assessed using objective criteria such as final course grades and grading point average. The grades are obtained by using continuous assessment or examination results. Academic performance measures education results.

## 2.2. Models and Levels of Evaluation

### STRUCTURAL APPROACH

The first is the widely recognized and developed model by Donald L. Kirkpatrick, known as the four levels of evaluation, to assess the effectiveness and impacts of training. This is a structured approach to evaluating training initiatives and measuring outcomes at different levels. The first level of evaluation is the Reaction Level Evaluation, which focuses on participants' immediate reactions to training programmes. The second level is the Learning Level Evaluation, which measures how participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills. Next, the Behavior Level Evaluation, which works to the transfer of learning into workplace behaviour. The final level, the Results Level Evaluation, measures the impact of the training programme (Escuadro, 2023).

### RETURN ON INVESTMENT MODEL

Return on Investment methodology, developed by Jack Philips, evaluates not only how effective a training programme is but also its financial impact on an organization. It does this by linking training outcomes to measurable results. This allows more data-driven decisions, justifies training investments, and continuously improves training initiatives. It comprises five levels of evaluation, with each level building upon the previous one. The first level focusses on participants' reactions and satisfaction with the training programme. The methodology emphasizes the importance of participants' opinions and feedback as a starting point for the

evaluation process. At the second level, the Learning Level Evaluation assesses participants' knowledge and skills acquisition through assessments and tests. The Application-Level Evaluation examines how much participants have implemented what they learned during the training programme, contributing to improved performance and efficiency. The fourth level is the Impact Level Evaluation, which focuses on measuring the broader impact of the training programme on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Finally, the fifth level, Return on Investment (ROI) Evaluation, quantifies the value of the training programme by comparing the benefits achieved as a result of the training with the associated costs.

## CIPP EVALUATION MODEL

The CIPP (Context, Input, Process, and Product) evaluation model is a comprehensive framework to evaluate training programs and interventions. The CIPP evaluation model gives organizations a systematic and comprehensive approach to evaluating training programmes. The first component of the CIPP model is Context Evaluation, which focuses on understanding the organizational contexts and needs that led to the approval of the training. Context evaluation guarantees that the training is designed to address specific needs and challenges within the organization. Input evaluation examines the quality of training materials, expertise of trainers, and overall structure for effective delivery of learning outcomes. Process evaluation looks at how the training is being delivered, the level of participants' engagement, and the effectiveness of the training methods. The final component is Product evaluation which identifies achieved objectives and goals, how knowledge is applied in practice, and the overall impacts on individuals and organizational performance.

## PRE- AND POST-TRAINING ASSESSMENTS MODEL

Pre- and post-training assessments examine the improvement in participants' knowledge and skills before and after training. Assessments are conducted before the training begins (pre-training) and after completion (post-training), allowing the comparing of results and gauging the impacts of the training. This can take the form of quizzes, tests, or surveys that cover the key topics and learning objectives. Pre-training assessment identifies any knowledge gap, areas of weaknesses, or existing proficiency among participants. On the other hand, post-training assessment evaluate participants' understanding of the training contents, ability to apply the newly acquired knowledge, and overall skill development. Pre- and post-training assessments also give feedback on progress, growth, and development, which can motivate learning. Additionally, this assessment helps organizations identify areas where further support or

reinforcement may be required and guide future training initiatives to address specific needs and gaps.

## SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES MODEL

Surveys and questionnaires allow participants to express their opinions, rate various aspects of the training program, and offer suggestions for improvement. Also known as Kaufman's Model of Learning evaluation is divided into two parts of "Input", and "Process." The Input indicates if the training resources and materials were suitable and appropriate. The Process indicates if the training was well delivered. It is simpler to assess whether the training materials or the delivery were the causes of the success or failure of a training course (Deller, 2020).

### 2.3. Forms and Methods of Academic Evaluation

Evaluation can have different forms. There are two foremost methods for lecture evaluations: informal/individual and formal/group. The lecturers' evaluation of students provides information about student results and their performance as far as academic writing. In other cases, usually, a final evaluation of assignments for students can be done during a course. Kunnath (2020) states that traditionally, the final exam has a significant impact on semester grades—often comprising 20% or more of report card grades. However, when one considers that many of these assessments lack purpose and validity, the accuracy of the final exam grade (the extent to which it represents student learning of priority standards from the semester) may be highly questionable. Yet, from the evaluation, the lecturer can know whether students are making progress or not, reflect on the teaching methods, and make necessary changes in teaching strategies. This can be done using analytical scoring.

In addition, self-reflective methods encourage self-motivation or self-directed learning and make students more responsible for learning. In a self-reflective system, the teacher's approach may not have to reveal all the weaknesses and strengths or the reluctance to do reflections. It must be stated that students' self-reflective methods are not expected to include the final mark. This is because students are just asked about experiences in a course to improve the course teaching methods and students' performance. The format of the self-reflective essay is the same as formal methods with some guidance. Jones (2022) mentions that self-reflection evaluation serves as a catalyst for heightened self-awareness among evaluators by acknowledging and confronting biases, values, and assumptions in conducting fair and unbiased evaluations.

## 2.4. Purpose and Implications of Academic Evaluation

Kapur (2020) says that assessment and appraisal are to expand student scholarship. Information obtained from assessments and evaluations assists lecturers in identifying students' problems as well as knowing weaknesses in the delivery of the lectures. Assessments and evaluations are major instruments for adjusting curriculum and instructional approaches to students. It is a clear way of determining the general success of programmes and classroom practices. Assessment is the manner of collecting information from a diversity of sources that precisely replicate how well students are accomplishing the curriculum missions and philosophies. The evaluation methods ascertain the right path in the achievement of academic goals. Furthermore, the instructors also effectually implement teaching-learning methods. Therefore, the learning capabilities can be known from the application of evaluation procedures. The instructors are to put into repetition the evaluation methods and generally have to inform the students ahead of the assessment. In this way, the students are equally expected to prepare adequately. Therefore, lecturers have to put up evaluation processes often and often at all levels of learning. The students at all stages of education need to be poised and should not feel weak and anxious, particularly when several evaluation procedures are put into practice.

## 2.5. Factors to Improve Academic Performance

Islam and Tasnim (2021) found that improvement of students' learning requires regular daily study hours as a factor that can affect academic performance. Similarly, the economic status of parents, academic background, and encouragement are factors that influence academic performance. Proper guidance from parents and teachers, communication skills, and learning facilities are also significant determinants of academic performance.

## 2.6. Challenges of Academic Evaluation

Perhaps the biggest challenge and also the most difficult seems to be the final assignments where students are required to exhibit the skill of academic writing in a very good command of English before graduation from the course. Moreover, the magnitude of a class-to-teacher fraction has also been established as a reason that affects academic results. There is a substantial connection concerning teacher to the student ratio and a student's output. Thus, school factors such as class size add to effective teaching with positive results and vice versa.

## 2.7. Review of Related Literature

Dhokare, Teje, Jambukar & Wangikar (2021) carried out research on the "Evaluation of the academic performance of students using fuzzy logic". This work was based on the premise that

the entire education system has undergone numerous changes to stand unhindered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, all over the world, the educational system has changed its teaching and learning methods while evaluating the students' overall performance becoming a complex task with the changing patterns. The traditional approach of evaluation may not be the best fit anymore since multiple factors are required to make an all-inclusive, multifaceted decision to keep up with the upgrades in evaluation schemes and patterns. Also, universities and educational institutes are making emphasis on the importance of skill-based learning and major changes are being made in the curriculum for cognitive approach to evaluate the students' performance. Hence, the authors designed and implemented a solution of a fuzzy logic-based model. This model, while showing the difference between the traditional approach and the inference system, proposes that educational institutes not only evaluate students' performance but also understand the students comprehensively.

Dauda (2024) carried out a study on the impact of continuous assessment on the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in the Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The study was set to elicit the respondents' opinion on the effect of continuous assessment (CA) on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in the Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State. The main objective of the study was to find out the effects of continuous assessment on the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in the Ilorin-west local government area, Kwara state. Two research questions were answered. The study used a descriptive survey research design. A multistage sampling procedure was used to choose 87 students to be study respondents. The respondents were eighty-seven (87) students. Eighty-seven (87) questionnaires were distributed, but only eighty (80) were successfully retrieved. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Students from public mixed senior secondary schools in the Ilorin-west local government region were included in the study. The findings of the study revealed that continuous assessment has a positive effect on the academic performance of students since it affects the future careers of students both academically and socially. However, in light of these findings, it was recommended that stakeholders in the education sector should organize orientation programmes periodically for all students in the region on the causes, consequences, and solutions to the effects of continuous assessment.

Tibebu, Kassahun, Sime, and Shibeshi (2023) conducted a study about "The effect of assessing students based on class work and homework performance on the overall academic achievement

of students". The research noted that continuous assessment, mainly tests, and assignments, helps students to actively engage in the learning process. However, these assessments have been the only type of assessment in most Ethiopian universities, and they affect the student's academic performance from time to time. Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effect of assessing students based on their class work and homework performance on the overall academic achievement of students. This study is conducted on 4th-year Environmental Engineering undergraduate students. The class contains 25 students of which 6 of them were female. In this study, both primary and secondary data were used. The primary data includes test results, observation, and interviews, and the secondary data was collected from reviewing different published articles. The overall achievement of the students was measured in terms of test results. The collected data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2016. It was noted that there is no significant difference ($P>0.05$) between the two test results. Among the various factors, six major factors that significantly affect the student's academic performance were identified through observations. Previous schooling, family income, student's self-motivation, teacher's delivery style, and assessment are the identified significant factors. The interview result was obtained before the application of the intervention. The result indicates that only 20% of the students are happy with the intervention and think that it will affect the improvement of their grades. The majority of the students (72%) are unhappy and think the opposite of the idea and the remaining 8% choose to be abstentious. After the implementation of the intervention, the student's grade improved for both test 1 ($7.60\pm1.04$) and test 2 ($7.00\pm1.15$). There is also a significant difference ($P<0.05$) between the student's test results before and after the intervention. It can be concluded that the intervention significantly improves the student's test scores, which in turn improves their overall performance. However, it recommended further research to be conducted for enhancing the student's academic performance.

Sánchez, Gilar-Corbi, Castejón, Vidal, & León (2020) researched Students' evaluation of teaching and their academic achievement in a higher education institution in Ecuador. The paper addressed the relationship between student evaluation of teaching (SET) and academic achievement in higher education. Meta-analytic studies on teaching effectiveness showed a wide range of results, ranging from small to medium correlations between SET and student achievement, based on diverse methodological approaches, sample size studies, and contexts. This work was aimed at relating SET, prior academic achievement, and academic achievement in a large sample of higher education students and teachers, using different methodological procedures. It considered distinct units of analysis, the group class and the individuals, the

variability between students within classes, and the variability between group-class means simultaneously. The data analysis included the calculation of group-class means and its relationship with the group-class mean academic achievement, through correlation and hierarchical regression techniques. A multilevel path analysis was applied to the relationship between prior academic achievement, SET, and academic achievement and the variability among group classes. A multi-section analysis was also carried out in courses in which there was more than one class group (section). The results of individual and group-class analysis revealed that SET was moderately low related to academic achievement once the effect of previous academic achievement was controlled. Multilevel path analysis revealed the effect of SET on achievement, both within and between group-class levels. The results of the analysis yielded similar results to the individual and aggregated data analyses.

## 2.8. Theoretical framework

Two theories are applied in this study. The first is the social constructivism theory. Akpan, Igwe, Mpamah, and Okoro (2020) say that the social constructivism theory anchors people's learning and thinking as influenced and shaped within a social and cultural context. Proponents of this theory Lev Vygotsky in 1978 argued that individuals' ability to learn and think begins from their social interaction as a result social interaction is good for cognitive development. These social constructs can emerge from age, religion, occupation, tribe, education, peer friends, and parental influence.

The second is the Goal theory. In 1984, Locke and Latham provided a well-developed goal-setting theory of motivation. The theory emphasizes the relationship between goals and performance (Debara, 2022). The goals of any organization may not be far from profit-making. In the milieu of corruption, universities have tended to deviate from social service to commercial and profit-making ventures, especially in Nigeria. The theory explains the meaning the universities or the students attach to academic achievements and the action for a purpose either for the positive or the negative certainly affects the final grading systems. These two theories are significant to this work to help in finding the foundations that influence academic evaluation and performance of students in comparing with the goals of universities by the application of certain evaluation methods in the assessment of students.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

The research design for the study was the use of a survey. It is a scientific approach to the measuring of opinions and perceptions on a given issue affecting persons at a particular place. It is the process of conducting research that dwells on opinions and attitudes by asking a sample of individuals to make reactions about something. The survey is a research method that allows the use of a questionnaire to collect information from respondents (Akpan & Udo, 2024).

### 3.2. Participants

The participants in the study were purposively selected lecturers on full-time appointments in the two chosen affected universities in Nigeria. Taking a purposive position, the researcher administered the questionnaire to only 16 lecturers by levelness formula of 8 questionnaires to each department of mass Communication in the two universities. This method is close to the census method which Akpan (2023) attests that there is a higher degree of accuracy, and less bias, in a universe that is small, intensive examination of specific variables required, exhaustive and meaningful information regarding the number of people, status and education.

### 3.3. Instruments

The instrument of the study was a questionnaire with 8 closed-ended questions raised by taking the basic variables of the research questions of the study. The questionnaire had 4 options in each of the questions for the respondents to tick the most appealing choice.

### 3.4. Data Collection/Analysis

The collection of the questionnaire was done in a period of two weeks having given one week to the distribution and retrieval per university. The analysis of data was done by the adoption of arithmetical frequency computation of figures to represent the highest, average, and lowest of the variables sorted out from the research questions.

## 4. Results

The discussion of results comes from the quantitative analysis of data from the respondents. It was purely drawn as answers in separate frequency tables in consideration of the research questions as explained below.

Table 1 shows that out of 16 lecturers 8 representing 50 percent picked examinations as the most common method of evaluating the academic performance of Mass Communication students in Nigerian universities. The least 1 or 6 percent picked practical evaluation.

Table 2 displays that out of 16 lecturers 12 or 75 percent agreed that the frequency of evaluation was on a termly basis against 4 or 25 percent that picked quarterly evaluation.

Table 3 shows that out of 16 lecturers, 10 or 63 percent agreed that industrial actions constitute barriers to a proper evaluation of Mass Communication course students.

**Table 1.** *The most common method of academic performance evaluation of Mass Communication students in Nigerian Universities*

| Methods | Response | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Continuous Assessment | 3 | 19 |
| Assignments | 4 | 25 |
| Class participation | - | - |
| Examinations | 8 | 50 |
| Practical | 1 | 6 |
| **Total** | **16** | **100.00%** |

Source: Field Survey 2024

**Table 2.** *Frequency of Evaluation*

| Evaluation Frequency | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Weekly | - | - |
| Monthly | - | - |
| Quarterly | 4 | 25 |
| Termly | 12 | 75 |
| **Total** | **16** | **100.00%** |

Source: Field Survey 2024

**Table 3.** *Barriers against Evaluations*

| Barriers | Responses | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| No Time | 2 | 12 |
| Poor Facilities | 3 | 19 |
| Corruption | 1 | 6 |
| Industrial Actions | 10 | 63 |
| **Total** | **16** | **100.00%** |

Source: Field Survey 2024

## 5. Discussions

On methods of evaluation, it shows that lecturers apply examinations on a semester basis to evaluate the academic performance of Mass Communication course students. The result is that the practical aspect of training is ignored. This makes the students to be only conversant about theories. Examinations can hardly be the true test of knowledge in universities. Thus, the use of theories only in the absence of practicality to meet the goals of academics is contrary to standards of training. The position of Collins (2022) is that examinations cannot define the standard of understanding a certain concept. Examinations emphasize memorization instead of resourceful breaking down of ideas. Hence, evaluation of students by examination standards only processes results negatively and eliminates the progress of seasoned, serious intellectual learning that is indispensable for the 21$^{st}$ century era.

On the frequency of evaluation of students, this work agrees that it may seem logical to survey course evaluation after students have had the opportunity to experience the complete course or as soon as it is possible for the feedback. This could be addressed by mid-semester, focusing on course delivery methods to establish a link and integrating monitoring methods into periodic classroom reviews on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. The once-per-semester examination evaluation cannot be adjudged enough to assess the competence of students in universities. It agrees with the position of Aracena (2024) that assessing students' work daily may not be the most practical or reliable; though may be the most accessible, but this may not best represent the population.

In addition, the analysis showed that the most outstanding barrier to regular evaluation comes from industrial actions by lecturers which are too many in Nigerian Universities. The position of this study agrees with Mohammed and Hammangabdo (2022) that strikes over the last decade have been the bane of educational planning and development in Nigeria's public university systems affecting teaching, learning, and research. This suggests that non-self-motivation, non-availability of teaching and learning materials, poor competency of teachers, unconducive school environment, personal goals, and personality traits of constructivism theories affect standards of teaching, evaluation, and learning of Mass Communication.

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This work started on the foundations of assessing the methods of evaluating the performance of students in universities. Objective questions were raised and backed up with theories to make

generalizations from data collected from lecturers on what they do to assess the performance of students. The research has been able to establish that there are academic evaluation standardized methods. These methods are not rightly followed by the lecturers. These methods or models are sometimes overlooked or set aside to the advantage of bias and sentiments in evaluating the performance standard of students no matter the course of study in Universities. It has also been established that academic evaluation has to be regulated rather than the application of self-methods in an irregular format. This means that it can be done regularly. The implications are that the mentioned standards and formats of evaluation have eluded the Nigerian universities especially those undertaking Mass Communication courses. The expected directions for the turning out of students with practical knowledge and adequate intellectual inputs for the development of society have not been adopted. So, the implication has been the turning out of half-baked graduates due to poor standards of academic evaluation over a period. This has been partly attributed to a prevailing shortage of lecturers, poor facilities, corrupt practices in universities, and protracted industrial actions. It is recommended that authorities of Universities should endeavor to institute mechanisms for student evaluations, monitor the lecturers, shun inducements from students for undeserved assessments that constitute corruption, and discourage evaluating students out of social constructivism sentiments. The aforementioned recommendations are visible directions for changes in the standard of education in Nigeria. It is expected that if appropriately adopted, it can help in reshaping policies affecting education in Nigeria. The relevant government agencies in the control of educational institutions have the responsibility of ensuring that these recommendations are deliberated and seen to be implemented to transform the educational systems and standards.

## Declaration

It is hereby declared that the authors have no conflict of interest in the conduct of this research work. This is so since this work received no funding from any individual or institution. In addition, the scope of this research was limited to two universities in Nigeria. These are the University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, and the WellSpring University, Benin City, Nigeria.

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