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POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS' SELF-ASSESSMENT IN EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS IN NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY, AWKA

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ABSTRACT

Self-assessment can be defined as students judging their own work, based on evidence and explicit criteria, for the purpose of improving future performance. Many researchers agree that implementation of student self-assessment in the classroom is an important tool for improving academic performance and self-efficacy. The study determined the student self-assessment of postgraduate students in Educational Statistics. The study was carried out in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Design for the study was survey with a sample size of 187 which include 132 females and 55 males drawn from 2021/2022 academic sessions of postgraduate students offering Educational Statistics course in the Faculty of Education. Questionnaire was used in data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and the reliability index of the instrument was 0.84 using Crombach Alpha. Research questions were answered using arithmetic mean and standard deviation while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The findings showed that the respondents assess themselves high in Educational Statistics and self-assessment of male students does not differ from that of female students in Educational Statistics course. It was recommended among others the need for departments, faculties and universities to adopt this innovative assessment technique for human, national as well as global change in teaching and learning and create more awareness on the use of self-assessment in all courses.

Introduction

Assessment is not a new word in the world of education. Assessment is carried out to see what students know, understand and are able to do. Assessment is very important for tracking progress, planning next steps, reporting and involving students in learning (Ugwaka, and Igbokwe, 2020; Okaforcha and Okeke, 2025). According to, Okaforcha and Iloka, (2025), Nwankwo and Okoye (2022) and Osegbue, (2022) assessment portrays the ways teachers support and assess students' learning and monitor progress and identify next steps in learning. It is described as a

process by which feedback gotten is used by teachers to adjust their teaching strategies, and by students to adjust their learning strategies (Abonyi, 2022; Onyekwelu, 2024; Obumse and Chinwe, 2021). In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2015). Sequel to this, assessment techniques are the criteria for assessing the success of a programme or project which are intended to help students achieve stated lesson objectives or learning outcomes (Kpangban and Onwuegbu, in Esomonu and Ikeanumba, 2021). The authors further stressed that assessment technique explains the criteria to be used for assessment success (tests, survey, etc), methods that will be used to collect assessment information and methods that will be used to analyze the assessment information (Nwabachili, Iloka and Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2022; Abonyi, 2020). It is imperative that teachers have the most effective assessment strategies available to them. In education, there are two types of assessment: formative assessment, also called assessment-for-learning and summative assessment, also known as assessment-of-learning (Esomonu & Ikeanumba, 2021).

Assessment for learning (formative) is any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting students' learning (Osegbue, 2019). This is in line with the definition of Esomonu and Ikeanumba (2021) that formative assessment is commonly referred to as assessment for learning, in which the focus is on monitoring student response to, and progress in instruction, summative Assessment is at the end of the programme for grading and certification. The authors continued that formative assessment provides immediate feedback to both the teacher and the student regarding the learning process. It thus differs from assessment designed primarily to serve the purposes of accountability, or of ranking, or of certifying competence (summative). Nwankwo, (2022), Obumse, (2022) and Nonyem and Chimaa, (2020) noted that an assessment activity can help learning if it provides information that teachers and their students can use as feedback in assessing themselves and one another and in modifying the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged. Such assessment becomes formative assessment when the evidence is actually used to adapt the teaching work to meet learning needs. The present study is concerned with assessment for learning (Ethelmary, Nwankwo & Aroh, 2019; Iloka, 2025; Romy, 2016).

Gronlund and Lin in Ajogbeje (2013) stated that formative assessment serves three specific uses namely: (i) to plan corrective actions to overcome learning deficiencies;

(ii) to aid in motivating learners and (iii) to increase retention and transfer of learning. According to the author, the sequence for formative assessment is that students are taught with well-defined objectives, assessed during the course of the programme with quiz, tests, and assignment after the lesson, given corrective instruction to those who require additional clarification. These provide feedback to both the students and the teacher about what material was learned well and what was not. Stiggins, et al. in Agu and Okwuduba (2016) stated that there are three questions students must answer when dealing with assessment for learning: (1) where am I going? (2) Where am I now? and (3) How can I close the gap? Teachers can help students answer the first question by revealing learning expectations to students in easy-to-understand language and by providing a range of poor- to good-quality work to students. To answer the second question, Okaforcha and Okeke, (2020) and Nwankwo, and Ezeibe, (2021) noted that teachers should provide practice relying on descriptive feedback students can use to improve their work as well as encouraging students to monitor their progress day-to-day. To assist students with closing the gap between where they are now and where they are going, teachers should show students how to improve one attribute at a time and how to reflect on changes in their work and their academic capabilities (Enwezor, 2021; Okeke, 2022; Okeke & Okaforcha, 2025).

Assessment practices have a variety of important features that can be effective to teaching and learning (Anthony, 2019; Anushiem and Anushiem, 2023). In a study done by Hodgson, Pyle, and Shamsan (2009), researchers found that the key features to a thriving assessment-based classroom were classroom climate, talk, feedback, questioning, and self-assessment. Classroom climate is very important so that students feel comfortable expressing their ideas. The classroom should be a non-threatening place, where teachers can establish student ideas and misconceptions, while pushing students to develop their understandings (Nwakoby, 2025; Nwakoby & Iloka, 2025; Enwezor & Obi, 2022). Assessment through talk in the classroom is another key component that aids understanding in teaching and learning. Through talk, Ucheagwu-Okoye (2025) and Obumse and Egenti (2021) reiterated that ideas are shared and group members are able to assess each other, give feedback, and create new understanding. Feedback can be done in a variety of ways, including oral, written, and through peer- or self-assessed work. Feedback provides learners a time to celebrate learning, to highlight their next learning goals, and to continue to develop themselves into independent learners. Self-assessment was a key strategy for further growth in learning as well (Ekwesianya, Okaforcha & Okeke, 2020; Enwezor, 2021; Ojimba, 2024). Harrison and Harlen in Oates (2019) stated that it is important for learners to become more autonomous and identify

their own learning needs. Although all features of assessment contribute in every teaching and learning, self-assessment, plays a vital role in the development of students as learners (Tanis, 2014). Tanis was of the view that vital understanding and realization can come to students who understand and are open to using self-assessment strategies. Self-assessment as viewed by Agu, (2017), Izuchukwu, Ugwaka, Arazu and Ezechi, (2023) and Abonyi, (2021) is the process of looking at oneself in order to assess aspects that are important to one's identity. Sequel to the above, self-assessment is one of the motives that drive self-evaluation, along with self-verification and self-enhancement. Self-assessment exercise is seen as means by which students monitor and evaluate the quality of their thinking and behaviour when learning and identify strategies that improve their understanding and skills (Rolheiser & Ross, 2011). The implication is that self-assessment occurs when students judge their own work to improve performance as they identify discrepancies between current and desired performance (Onyekwelu, and Adinna, 2022). There are many benefits that come from using self-assessment in the classroom.

Many self-assessments have the potential to positively impact student self-efficacy (Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2025; Onyekwelu, 2024). Osegbue, and Nnubia, (2020) noted that Children become more responsible and gain the skills to be self-monitors by checking their own progress and recognizing where they have learning needs. Students eventually are able to judge their own work to improve performance as they identify places that need it (McMillan & Hearn, 2018). This process encourages students to set higher goals and to be willing to commit more of their own resources like time. McMillan and Hearn discussed three important aspects of student thinking that were impacted by the self-assessment process: self-monitoring, self-judgment, and identifying and internalizing what they needed to do for success. Self-monitoring, according to Okechukwu, (2025), Enwezor, and Obi, (2022), and Ezeaku, (2025) allows students to pay attention to what they are doing by being more aware of their thinking and progress. In self-judgment, students learn to better identify the process they need to move towards a targeted performance (Azubuike, 2025; Onyekwelu, 2021). This leads students to identify and internalize the criteria they need for success.

Self-assessment is an essential component of cognitive and constructivist theories of learning and motivation (Ucheagwu-Okoye, 2021). Shepard in Agu and Okwuduba (2016) points out that student self-monitoring of learning and thinking is important in the knowledge construction that lies at the heart of such theory. That is, students construct

meaning, in part, by self-assessing prior to and during learning. Students organize, evaluate, and internalize when learning, and self-assessment is part of that process. They must connect new knowledge, understandings, and skills with what they have already stored and used (Okoye, 2025). Self-assessment fosters students' ability to make these connections themselves; provides a mechanism to enhance learning in a meaningful, rather than rote, manner; and results in greater student motivation and confidence (Ezeamama & Ofozoba, 2023; Ibe, 2022; Okoye, & Ezeaku, 2025). The goal-theory perspective on motivation represents a cognitive theory about how students internalize different types of ability goals and the effects of those goals on self-assessment, persistence, and achievement. This research has focused on one type of goal: mastery goals. A mastery goal, according to Osegbue, (2021) and Ekwesianya, (2025), is one in which the student focuses on the task at hand and what needs to be done to improve knowledge, understanding, and skill. With this orientation, students reach mastery through such cognitive processes as thinking, self-monitoring, and generating solutions (Ezeaku & Okoye, (2025); Okechukwu, (2025)). Additionally, students will tend to immerse themselves in the task and continually check their progress which is the key of self-assessment.

Within the content area of Educational Statistics, self-assessment holds a crucial role as well. Educational Statistics involves the study of collecting, analyzing numerical data, interpreting, drawing conclusions and presenting the information in an educationally related manner (Adinna & Onyekwelu, 2021; Okaforcha, 2021). Educators usually conduct statistics to find a solution to some problem or to gain insight into an issue they don't understand (Esomonu & Ikeanumba, 2021). According to Ary, Jacob, and Razavieh in Esomonu and Ikeanumba (2021), scientific approach involves five steps which include identification of the problem, statement of the problem, formulation of hypothesis, prediction of consequences and testing of hypothesis. Through this scientific approach, students are asked to reflect on their role as a researcher. They must consider evaluative questions such as, "how confident am I in my results"? or "Where were my places of error in this investigation"?

Several researchers (Anushiem, 2017; Ekwesianya, 2022; Ibe, 2019; Ofozoba, 2020) offer advice on how teachers can involve students in the assessment process. This can be done qualitatively or quantitatively. This means that students can actually grade their works by using explicit criteria or rate their contribution or otherwise to the course using a requisite scale. For quantitatively grading their work, Stiggins (2018) offers an array of ways students can be involved in this. According to Stiggins,

students can: take the test and receive the grade, be invited to offer the teacher comments on how to improve the test, suggest possible assessment exercises, actually develop assessment exercises, assist the teacher in devising scoring criteria, create the scoring criteria on their own, apply scoring criteria to the evaluation of their own performance, come to understand how assessment and evaluation affect their own academic success, come to see how their own self-assessment relates to the teacher's assessment and to their own academic success. Agu and Okwuduba (2016), Onyekwelu, (2024), Ofozoba and Ofozoba, (2023) and Abonyi, (2023) claim that self-evaluation must be taught to students in four stages. First, students should be involved in defining the criteria by which their performance will be judged. Second, students should be taught how to apply those criteria to their own work. Third, students should be provided with feedback on their own self-evaluations. Finally, teachers should work with students to develop goals and action plans. Although by its very definition self-assessment places a great deal of the assessment work load on the students' shoulders, experts agree that there are responsibilities of the teacher in this process. McMillan and Hearn (2018) claim that in order to use self-assessment effectively, teachers must pass the evaluative responsibilities to their students by scaffolding and modelling goal setting, evaluation, strategy adjustment, and reflection. Rolheiser and Rossagree, stating that students harbour misconceptions about the self-evaluation process (e.g., the role that evidence plays). Because of this, Rolheiser & Ross in Agu and Okwuduba (2016) argued that students should be taught how to accurately evaluate their own work. Simply requiring self-evaluation is unlikely to have an effect on achievement.

For all of the cited benefits to student learning afforded by self-assessment, there are new difficulties introduced into the classroom with it. Many teachers first attempting self-assessment may be tempted to believe the greatest hardship will be one of student academic dishonesty. However, this is often not the case. Rolheiser and Ross in Esomonu and Ikeanumba (2021) argue that many teachers, parents, and students believe that if students have a chance to mark their own work they will take advantage, giving themselves higher scores regardless of the quality of their performance. Rolheiser & Ross in Agu and Okwuduba (2016) have found that students, especially older ones, may do this if left to their own devices. But, when students are taught systematic self-evaluation procedures, the accuracy of their judgment improves. But when teaching students to effectively self-assess, the first and most difficult task is to get students to think of their work in terms of a set of goals. Once students convert to this way of thinking, they begin to develop an overview of that work that allows them to manage and control it for themselves. However, this study

is on the first aspect of self-assessment which is quantitatively rating their self-assessment contribution or otherwise in Educational Statistics.

In Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, students are required to complete successfully an educational statistics course to enable them learn how to use statistics as a tool, to improve their educational research, interpret research results or statistical data in their field of study as well as to obtain a certificate. An additional goal of teaching educational statistics is to prepare students to deal effectively with statistical aspects of the world outside the classroom (Esomonu and Ikeanumba, 2021). According to Nworgu (2012), statistics serves a useful purpose in modern life. It helps us to make tentative statements (hypotheses), analyze the problem relating to the stated hypotheses and make conclusions/interpretations of the analyzed problem. It charges its recipients to make wise decisions that will satisfy their quest for answers. Educational Statistics is also very useful in analysis and interpretation of result in project, thesis and dissertation of students' work. Educational Statistics is a general course taught at both the postgraduate and postgraduate levels of education at the faculties of education in many Nigerian universities. It is one of the compulsory courses all master's degree students in the faculty of education must pass upon graduation. However, it is the culture of some faculties of education like Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka that students pursuing their doctorate degree with a masters' degree from another institution must enroll for the course and have a minimum grade of C.

It is evident that the population of students in the educational statistics course is large and these student populations range from students who require support services to students who qualify for the gifted and talented programs. Since all these students are enrolled in the educational statistics course, effective assessment is important to meet the diverse needs of all students. Students' use of self-assessment tools and strategies may be helpful in meeting these learning needs. This study examined the use of self-assessment strategies in postgraduate educational statistics course. Specifically, the study aimed at determining how postgraduate students of different gender assess themselves.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do postgraduate students assess themselves in educational statistics course?
2. How do male postgraduate students assess themselves in educational statistics course?
3. How do female postgraduate students evaluate themselves in educational statistics course?

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Hypothesis

This hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the self-assessment of male and female postgraduate students in educational statistics course.

Method

The study adopted survey design. The population consists of 2021/2022 postgraduate students of Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The sample size was 187 which consist of both 55 male students and 132 female students. The data for this study were collected using structured questionnaire designed and validated by the researchers for the purpose of this study. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.84 using Crombach Alpha The questionnaire consisted of fourteen items representing the student self-assessment in educational statistics course. The scale has options of four response; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The responses were assigned weights of 4, 3, 2 and1 for positive items and 1, 2, 3, and 4 for negative items. The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation. Data were analysed using mean to answer the research and t-test to test the null hypothesis. Thus, questionnaire item with mean score of 2.50 or above was considered as agree while an item that scored less than 2.50 was taken as disagree.

Results

Question 1

How do postgraduate students assess themselves in educational statistics course?

Table 1: ***Mean Scores of Students' Self-Assessment in Educational Statistics Course***

S/N	*Items*	*Mean*	*Decision*
1	*I have been present in all lectures*	*3.38*	*Agree*
2	*I have contributed little during the lectures*	*2.28*	*Disagree*
3	*I have handed in all assignments*	*3.60*	*Agree*
4	*I have handed in my assignment in time*	*3.49*	*Agree*
5	*I have not read any statistics book throughout the lecture period*	*3.18*	*Agree*
6	*I have been of great help to peers concerning the learning tasks in this course*	*3.24*	*Agree*
7	*I paid attention during the lectures*	*2.94*	*Agree*
8	*I have been of good behaviour throughout the duration of the course*	*3.66*	*Agree*
9	*I paid attention during the lectures*	*3.69*	*Agree*
10	*I do not consistently take notes during the lectures*	*3.35*	*Agree*
11	*I take joy in studying this statistics course on my own private study time*	*3.12*	*Agree*
12	*I fail to revise the lesson taught before the next lecture*	*2.62*	*Agree*
13	*I expect to make above 'C' grade in this course*	*3.70*	*Agree*
14	*On average, I spend 2 hrs a week personally studying this course*	*2.88*	*Agree*

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Out of the items presented in Table 1 above, the students disagreed on only item 2 with a mean of 2.28 while they agreed on the other thirteen items. Three out of thirteen items were negative item while the remaining ten were positive items. This indicates that postgraduate students assessed themselves high in educational statistics course, more so as the item they disagreed on states thus: "I have contributed little during the lectures.

Question 2

How do male postgraduate students evaluate themselves in educational statistics course?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Male Postgraduate Students' Self-Assessment in Educational Statistics Course

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	I have been present in all lectures	3.09	Agreed
2	I have contributed little during the lectures	2.25	Disagreed
3	I have handed in all assignments	3.46	Agreed
4	I have handed in my assignment in time	3.42	Agreed
5	I have not read any statistics book throughout the lecture period	3.32	Agreed
6	I have been of great help to peers concerning the learning tasks in this course	2.94	Agreed
7	I paid attention during the lectures	2.96	Agreed
8	I have been of good behaviour throughout the duration of the course	3.56	Agreed
9	I paid attention during the lectures	3.61	Agreed
10	I do not consistently take notes during the lectures	2.94	Agreed
11	I take joy in studying this statistics course on my own private study time	3.09	Agreed
12	I fail to revise the lesson taught before the next lecture	2.58	Agreed
13	I expect to make above 'C' grade in this course	3.73	Agreed
14	On average, I spend 2 hrs a week personally studying this course	2.74	Agreed

Table 2 above reveals that male postgraduate students agreed on the thirteen items in the questionnaire and disagreed on item 2. This indicates that male students assess themselves high in educational statistics course.

Question 3

How do female postgraduate students evaluate themselves in educational statistics course?

Table 3: Mean Score of Female Postgraduate Students' Self-Assessment in Statistics Course

S/N	Items	Mean	Decision
1	I have been present in all lectures	3.47	Agreed
2	I have contributed little during the lectures	2.29	Disagreed
3	I have handed in all assignments	3.66	Agreed
4	I have handed in my assignment in time	3.53	Agreed
5	I have not read any statistics book throughout the lecture period	3.14	Agreed
6	I have been of great help to peers concerning the learning tasks in this course	3.20	Agreed
7	I paid attention during the lectures	2.93	Agreed

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8	I have been of good behaviour throughout the duration of the course	3.69	Agreed
9	I paid attention during the lectures	3.73	Agreed
10	I do not consistently take notes during the lectures	3.51	Agreed
11	I take joy in studying this statistics course on my own private study time	3.13	Agreed
12	I fail to revise the lesson taught before the next lecture	2.64	Agreed
13	I expect to make above 'C' grade in this course	3.70	Agreed
14	On average, I spend 2 hrs a week personally studying this course	2.94	Agreed

Table 3 above reveals that female postgraduate students agree with thirteen items and disagreed with one item. This indicates that female students evaluate themselves high in educational statistics course.

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the self-assessment of male and female postgraduate students in educational statistics course.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Students Self- Assessment Scores in Educational Statistics Course

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	α	Df	t-cal	Sig.
Female	132	45.36	4.57	0.05	185	0.340	0.561
Male	55	43.27	5.04				

The independent t-test analysis in table 4 shows that the probability of obtaining the t-value of 0.340 is 0.561 which is greater than significant level (0.05) set by the statisticians. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted, which means there is no significant difference in the self-assessment scores of male and female students in educational statistics course (t-cal = 0.340 P= 0.561, P>0.05).

Discussion and Conclusion

There were several types of assessment that are key to successful classrooms. Assessment strategies such as questioning and discussions are essential strategies. Self-assessment is also important assessment strategy. This allows students to assess their current understandings and grow in variety of ways before, during and after learning situation. The study has shown that postgraduate students assess themselves high in educational statistics course and gender does not significantly affect the students' self-assessment in statistics course. The implication is that students have high self-monitoring, self- judgement and they were able to identify and internalized what they needed do for success. This in turn may impact on their achievement in educational statistics course. Based on the findings of Tanis (2014) Anushiem, (2023), Azubuike, (2024), Okeke, Okaforcha and Ekwesianya, (2019), the growth in achievement of

students that used self-assessment strategies in science was minimal. They recommended that over time the continual implementation and practices of self-assessment could show growth in students.

The findings of this study also showed that male and female postgraduate students evaluate themselves high and the self-assessment of male postgraduate students do not differ significantly to the assessment of female postgraduate students. These findings were contrary to the findings of study conducted by Andrade, et al (2009), Enwezor, and Chukwunonye, (2021), Ugwaka and Igbokwe (2023) on the relation between long- and short-term rubric use (including self-assessment) and self-efficacy for writing by 268 elementary and middle school students. Although average self-efficacy ratings of all condition groups increased over time, Andrade, et al. reported a greater increase in self-efficacy of girls in the treatment group (using rubrics to check their work) than in the control group. The effect of the rubrics on self-efficacy of boys appeared to be statistically insignificant. To explain these results, the authors relied on statistics on attribution theory stating: Girls tend to be more concerned with mastering a writing task than do boys, who, on average, tend to be more concerned with showing someone else that they are capable. Our findings regarding the differences in increases in self-efficacy after self-assessment may reflect these different achievement goals: Girls may derive more satisfaction and confidence from self-generated evidence of progress on a writing assignment than do boys, who seek confirmation of progress from others, including perhaps their teachers and peers. Thus, the statisticians concluded, self-assessment shielded female students from potentially debilitating effects of negative adult feedback. This may have led girls to attribute shortcomings to effort, not inherent ability, which allowed them to see how they could improve. This, in turn, led to increased self-efficacy ratings. The boys in the study, however, might have been less influenced by the presence of the rubric because they placed less value on their own feedback.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in view of the efficacy of the formative assessment approach.

1. Teachers and students as agents of educational reforms at national and global levels should be encouraged to make use of self-assessment more often in order to enable them properly evaluate themselves, know their present stand in the subject content and discover the area to improve upon to achieve an improved academic performance in Educational Statistics course content.
2.Self-assessment technique should be suggested to the Ministry of Education and School of Postgraduate studies of high institutions, so that longitudinal researches be organized and commissioned by the

government and their agencies informing all categories of Educational Statistics lecturers and tutors to further confirm the efficacy of this approach in all areas of Educational Statistics, this could be done through seminars, conferences and workshops organized by government and professional bodies like the Association of Educational Researchers and Evaluators of Nigeria (ASSEREN) Science Teachers of Association of Nigeria (STAN) and even Curriculum Organization of Nigeria (CON).

3. Educational Statistics lecturers should be encouraged to include formative assessment process in their instructional approach to check, motivate, stimulate and sustain critical thinking and proper evaluation of self-knowledge level in the students which would help to enhance achievement in Educational Statistics concepts.

4. Departments, faculties and universities should be encouraged to adopt this innovative assessment technique for human, national as well as global change in teaching and learning and create more awareness on the use of self-assessment in all courses.

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