



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jhlste

Academic Papers

Assessment preferences of sport science students

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Assessment
Assessment preferences
Education
Sport education
Sport science students

ABSTRACT

This study examined sport science students' assessment preferences in different undergraduate courses. Turkish university students ($n = 304$) completed an adapted version of the Assessment Preferences Inventory (API). Results indicated that self-assessment, observation and peer assessment were the most preferred assessment tools. Multiple choice and performance-based tasks were the most preferred item format and task types, respectively. Physical Education and Sport course students reported a greater preference for Alternative Assessment and Simple/Multiple Choice; Recreation Education course students preferred Classical Assessment and Complex/Constructivist. Consequently, students wanted prior knowledge of assessment format indicating the need to inform them prior to beginning instruction.

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1. Introduction

Assessment is an indispensable and integral element of education, and students' individual differences are the most fundamental emphasis of today's assessment processes. Hence, it is important to consider students' assessment preferences in educational settings.

Assessment preference was described as “imagined choice between alternatives in assessment types (p. 647)” by Van de Watering, Gijbels, Dochy, and Van Der Rijt (2008). Garcia-Ros and Perez-Gonzalez (2011) highlighted that there are basically three complementary reasons for analysing university students' assessment preferences: (1) to demonstrate the relationship between these preferences and the way students' approach learning and studying the materials; (2) to consider new assessment methods in university academic contexts; and (3) to emphasize a perspective of improving the quality of university teaching. As stated in the third reason, the present study examined university students' assessment preferences to determine some clues about how to improve teaching and learning process at the universities. There is an extensive and growing literature that examines students' assessment preferences in different higher education settings (Amin, Kaliyadan, & Al-Muhaidip, 2011; Baeten, Dochy, & Struyven, 2008; Bartram & Bailey, 2010; Birenbaum, 1997; Birenbaum & Feldman, 1998; Birenbaum, 2007; Dogan & Kutlu, 2011; Furnham, Batey, & Martin, 2011; Garcia-Ros & Perez-Gonzalez, 2011; Gijbels & Dochy, 2006; Struyven, Dochy, & Janssens, 2005; Struyven, Dochy & Janssens, 2008; Van de Watering et al., 2008; Zoller & Ben-Chaim, 1997).

To author's knowledge, there is no study specifically related to assessment preferences of sport science students (SSSs). SSSs take theoretical and practical modules in the different courses at their schools, and classroom studies are also supplemented by practical studies. In these modules, they learn how to teach their students the importance of lifelong fitness via physical education in elementary, secondary and high schools (The Physical Education and Sport Course), coach their athletes to nurture their athletic and personal growth (The Trainer Education Course), and administer sport programs in community recreation facilities (The Recreation

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Education Course), and sport associations (The Sport Management Course). Whilst it is commonly understood that assessment is important in both theoretical and practical modules, and SSSs are being assessed frequently through conventional and non-conventional assessment procedures to determine whether concepts and modules taught have been learned and mastered well by them.

There is a need to conduct studies that examine assessment preferences of SSSs who learn about multi-disciplinary aspects of sport in society. Therefore, the main purpose of the present study was to examine SSSs' assessment preferences. In the current study, to examine assessment preferences of SSSs, the researcher sought to investigate the following research questions: (a) what is the general overview of SSS profile in terms of the assessment-form related dimension? and (b) are there any significant differences among courses in terms of the assessment-form related dimension?

2. Method

In this study, a quantitative, non-experimental and cross-sectional research design was used. The data was collected by means of self-report Likert-type scales.

2.1. Participants

Participants in the study were 304 undergraduate SSSs ($M_{age}=21.42$, $SD_{age}=3.04$) enrolled in a School of Sport Sciences and Technology (90 freshmen, 74 sophomores, 74 juniors and 66 seniors) from a Turkish university. 89 participants (42 females and 47 males) were studying in the Physical Education and Sport Course (PES), 72 (25 females and 47 males) in the Trainer Education Course (TED), 82 (42 females and 40 males) in the Recreation Education Course (REC) and 61 (39 females and 22 males) in the Sport Management Course (SM). Women were 48.7% of the participants ($N_{women}=148$), and 51.3% was men ($N_{men}=156$).

2.2. Instrument

"The Assessment Preferences Inventory (API)", originally developed by Birenbaum (1994) and adapted to Turkish by Gülbahar and Büyükoztürk (2008), was used to measure SSSs' assessment preferences in this study. The original API was a 5-point Likert-type questionnaire containing 67 items referring to three independent content dimensions: *assessment-form related dimension*, *examinee related dimension*, and *grading and recording*. Each item was rated on a 5-point scale indicating the extent to which the student would like to be assessed in that manner, where 1=*to a very small extent* and 5=*to a very large extent*. In this study, 32-item assessment-form related dimensions of the API inventory were used. The scales are described in detail below (Büyükoztürk & Gülbahar, 2010; Gülbahar & Büyükoztürk, 2008).

2.2.1. Assessment-form related dimensions (32 items)

1. Assessment Types Scales (ATS-16 items)

Alternative Assessment Types (AAT – projects, portfolios, discussion etc., $\alpha=.79$)

Classical Assessment Types (CAT – written and oral exams etc., $\alpha=.81$)

2. Item Format/Task Type Scales (IFTTS-12 items)

Simple/Multiple Choice (S/MC – multiple choice, true-false etc., $\alpha=.71$)

Complex/Constructivist (C/C – concept maps, performance based skills etc., $\alpha=.76$)

3. Pre-assessment Preparation Scale (PAPS-4 items): Guidelines for preparation, examples etc. ($\alpha=.79$)

Before the main study, the inventory was pilot-tested with 245 SSSs in an intact group to determine its validity and reliability. In confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), the indexes used to determine the goodness-of-fit were: (a) root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), for which values below .08 shows a good fit (Browne & Gudeck, 1993; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996); (b) standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR), for which values less than .08 suggest a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999); and all those indexes for which values greater than .90 indicate a good fit according to Byrne (1994) and .95 indicate a good fit according to Hu and Bentler (1999), namely (c) comparative fit index (CFI); (d) goodness-of-fit index (GFI); (e) adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI); and (f) normed-fit index (NFI). In the pilot study, CFA results determined that 32-item assessment-form related dimensions of the API displayed ($RMSEA=.07$, $SRMR=.04$, $CFI=.92$, $GFI=.93$, $AGFI=.91$, $NFI=.90$) acceptable values. The computed internal consistency values for each of the dimensions used in the main study were stated as follows: ATS – AAT ($\alpha=.79$), CAT ($\alpha=.81$), IFTTS – S/MC ($\alpha=.71$), C/C ($\alpha=.76$) and PAPS ($\alpha=.79$).

2.3. Procedure

Permission was sought from the Directorship of School of Sport Sciences and Technology to conduct this study. The study was conducted in a manner consistent with the institutional ethical requirements for human experimentation in accordance with the

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