



ASSESSMENT LITERACY, FEEDBACK PRACTICES, AND QUALITY OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

Ojong Blessing Mpantor

Email: ojongblessing503@gmail.com

University of Cross River State

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Foundation.

Abstract

This study examined the relationships among teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria. Four objectives, four research hypotheses, and a correlational framework guided the study. A cross-sectional correlational survey design was adopted. The population comprised 4,003 teachers in 290 public secondary schools across the three education zones of Cross River State. Using Taro Yamane's formula and a 20% attrition adjustment, a sample size of 437 teachers was obtained. A multistage sampling procedure involving stratified, proportionate, and simple random sampling was used to select participants. Data were collected using the *Teacher Assessment Literacy, Feedback Practices, and School-Based Assessment Questionnaire* (TALFPSBAQ). The instrument underwent face and content validation by experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Psychology. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.87, 0.84, and 0.89 were obtained for the respective scales. Data were collected through direct questionnaire administration and analysed using mean and standard deviation, simple linear regression, and multiple regression at the 0.05 significance level. The results showed that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted teachers' feedback practices and the quality of school-based assessment, as feedback practices also significantly predicted school-based assessment quality. The study concluded that effective school-based assessment depends substantially on teachers' assessment competence and formative feedback practices. The study recommended sustained professional development in assessment literacy and formative feedback practices for secondary school teachers.

Keywords: Formative evaluation; classroom feedback; instructional decision-making; continuous evaluation; educational measurement.

Introduction

Across education systems, assessment is gradually shifting from a predominantly summative, examination-oriented process toward classroom-based formative practices that support learning while





maintaining accountability. This transition is strongly influenced by the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL), which positions assessment as an integral component of teaching and learning rather than merely a terminal evaluation activity. Within this perspective, learning improvement depends on the continuous generation, interpretation, and instructional use of evidence obtained through instructional interactions (Halim et al., 2024; Pastore, 2023). Although many educational systems now formally support formative assessment approaches, evidence indicates that teachers regularly struggle to implement them consistently in classroom practice due to limited pedagogical preparedness and the persistent influence of examination-driven systems (Figa et al., 2020; Mrema et al., 2024; Seng et al., 2025). Consequently, the effectiveness of formative assessment depends largely on teachers' professional competence and instructional practices rather than policy intentions alone (Karaman, 2021; Yusoff et al., 2025).

Within this assessment reform movement, school-based assessment (SBA) has gained increasing attention as a strategy for integrating continuous assessment into everyday classroom instruction across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. SBA is intended to strengthen alignment among curriculum objectives, teaching activities, and assessment outcomes by generating authentic and ongoing evidence of student learning (Babatimehin et al., 2025; Bwembya & Daka, 2024). Ideally, SBA reduces excessive dependence on high-stakes examinations by supporting diagnostic, formative, and instructional decision-making inside classrooms. However, evidence from several African learning settings suggests that SBA is frequently implemented in a procedural or compliance-oriented manner, thereby limiting its instructional usefulness (Figa et al., 2020; Mrema et al., 2024). This suggests that the quality and effectiveness of SBA depend less on policy design and more on how teachers grasp and apply assessment practices in classroom settings.

These concerns are closely linked to the concept of teacher assessment literacy (TAL), which has become central to current discussions on assessment quality and instructional improvement. TAL refers to the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions teachers require to design assessment tasks, interpret assessment evidence, and use assessment information to support learning rather than merely assign grades (Brown et al., 2024; Xu & Brown, 2016). Present-day perspectives describe TAL as a fusion of technical assessment competence and pedagogical judgement that guides classroom decision-making (Kang & Lam, 2024; Li & Gu, 2023). Teachers with stronger assessment literacy are expected to develop more valid assessment tasks, interpret student performance more accurately, and implement assessment practices that improve instructional quality. At the same time, assessment literacy is also assumed to influence teachers' feedback practices, since the effective use of assessment evidence depends on how information is communicated to learners for improvement.

Despite the growing importance of TAL within assessment reform efforts, empirical evidence indicates that many secondary school teachers still operate at basic to moderate levels of assessment literacy, notably in areas such as designing valid assessment tasks, interpreting assessment results, and using assessment evidence to improve instruction (Amilusholihah et al., 2025; Halim et al., 2024; Yusoff et al., 2025). Although professional development initiatives have been introduced in several educational systems, these programmes are often irregular and insufficiently sustained to produce considerable



improvements in classroom assessment practice (Li & Gu, 2023; Mrema et al., 2024). As a result, teachers may have limited capacity to implement school-based assessment effectively to support learning.

Within the AfL perspective, feedback practice is one of the primary ways in which assessment literacy translates into improved instructional outcomes and stronger SBA quality. Feedback connects assessment evidence to learning improvement by helping students identify gaps in their understanding and take corrective action. Effective feedback is expected to be timely, specific, constructive, and in accordance with clear learning goals (Parmigiani et al., 2025; Töllner et al., 2025; Van der Kleij, 2019). Studies indicate that meaningful feedback supports student motivation, engagement, and self-regulated learning, thereby elevating academic performance and classroom participation (Rana & Rana, 2025; Shah, 2022). However, classroom practice often reveals feedback processes that are heavily teacher-centred and grade-oriented, with limited student involvement in using feedback to improve learning (Halim et al., 2024; Kang & Lam, 2024). This suggests that feedback competence remains a weak area in teachers' assessment practice and may limit the instructional effectiveness of SBA.

These implementation concerns are also evident in the Nigerian secondary school system, where school-based assessment shows both policy aspirations and classroom realities. Although continuous assessment and school-based evaluation are formally embedded inside educational policy systems, classroom practice remains strongly influenced by high-stakes external examinations (Boris et al., 2022; Omonkhua, 2024). Existing studies report ongoing problems, including weak moderation procedures, inconsistent record-keeping, poor alignment between assessment tasks and curriculum objectives, and limited use of assessment evidence for instructional improvement (Babatimehin et al., 2025; Kaku & Williams, 2022). In some situations, examination malpractice and score inflation further weaken confidence in internal assessment systems (Abiade & Dasola, 2026; Boris et al., 2022). Consequently, school-based assessment is frequently treated as an administrative requirement rather than a meaningful instructional process capable of improving teaching and learning outcomes (Kaku & Williams, 2022; Uvie, 2021).

Despite policy attention to continuous and school-based assessment in Nigerian secondary schools, concerns persist about the quality and instructional use of classroom assessment practices. Teachers are expected to design valid assessment tasks, interpret student performance accurately, and use assessment evidence to support learning improvement. However, classroom assessment practice still appears heavily examination-oriented, whereas feedback activities are often limited to grading rather than instructional guidance. Consequently, school-based assessment may fail to consistently function as an effective instructional process that supports meaningful learning outcomes in classroom settings.

Although existing studies have examined assessment literacy, formative assessment, and feedback practices, these variables are still often investigated separately rather than as linked factors that influence SBA quality. This limits understanding of how teacher assessment literacy influences feedback practices and of how both variables jointly contribute to the quality of school-based assessment, particularly in examination-driven secondary school environments (Kang & Lam, 2024; Karaman, 2021; Pastore, 2023). Furthermore, much of the available evidence originates from non-African or higher education settings, consequently reducing its direct relevance to secondary education systems in developing countries such as Nigeria (Aba-Wajji et al., 2026; Bwembya & Daka, 2024). Within Nigeria, existing research has



mainly focused on implementation challenges and examination malpractice, with comparatively limited attention to the relationships among TAL, feedback practices, and SBA quality at sub-national levels such as Cross River State (Babatimehin et al., 2025; Boris et al., 2022; Uvie, 2021).

In reaction to these gaps, the present study is grounded in the Assessment for Learning (AfL) perspective, which views assessment as an integral component of instruction aimed at improving learning through the continuous generation and use of classroom evidence (Halim et al., 2024; Pastore, 2023). Within this perspective, teacher assessment literacy is viewed as a basic professional competence that permits teachers to design appropriate assessment tasks, interpret student performance accurately, and apply assessment evidence to instructional decision-making. However, assessment literacy alone may not automatically improve assessment outcomes unless it is translated into effective classroom practice. For this reason, teachers' feedback practices are positioned in this study as the instructional mechanism through which TAL influences the quality of school-based assessment. Teachers with stronger assessment literacy are therefore expected to deliver clearer, more timely, and more instructional feedback capable of improving classroom assessment processes and supporting student learning.

Ultimately, the interaction between teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices is presumed to influence the quality of school-based assessment, which is conceptualised in this study in terms of validity, reliability, fairness, conformity with curriculum objectives, and instructional usefulness (Babatimehin et al., 2025; Bwembya & Daka, 2024). Accordingly, teacher assessment literacy is treated as the antecedent variable, feedback practices as the instructional mechanism, and school-based assessment quality as the outcome variable among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine the relationships among teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study expressly seeks to:

1. determine the relationship between teacher assessment literacy and the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State;
2. examine the relationship between teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices in school-based assessment;
3. assess the relationship between teachers' feedback practices and the quality of school-based assessment; and
4. determine the joint predictive influence of teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices on the quality of school-based assessment.





Hypotheses of the study

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between teacher assessment literacy and the quality of school-based assessment.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices in school-based assessment.
3. There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' feedback practices and the quality of school-based assessment.
4. Teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices do not jointly and significantly predict the quality of school-based assessment.

Conceptual framework of the study

The conceptual framework of this study is presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 explains the expected relationships among teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and the quality of school-based assessment in secondary schools. The framework positions teacher assessment literacy as a major predictor of school-based assessment quality. Teachers with stronger assessment literacy are expected to design more appropriate assessment tasks, interpret student performance more accurately, and take informed instructional decisions that improve classroom assessment quality. The framework also treats feedback practices as an important instructional factor influencing SBA quality. Effective feedback characterised by clarity, timeliness, and instructional usefulness is expected to improve students' understanding of their performance and strengthen the instructional value of assessment activities.

The framework further assumes that teacher assessment literacy influences teachers' feedback practices, since assessment competence affects how teachers communicate assessment information to learners. Consequently, both teacher assessment literacy and feedback practices are expected to independently and jointly influence the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria.



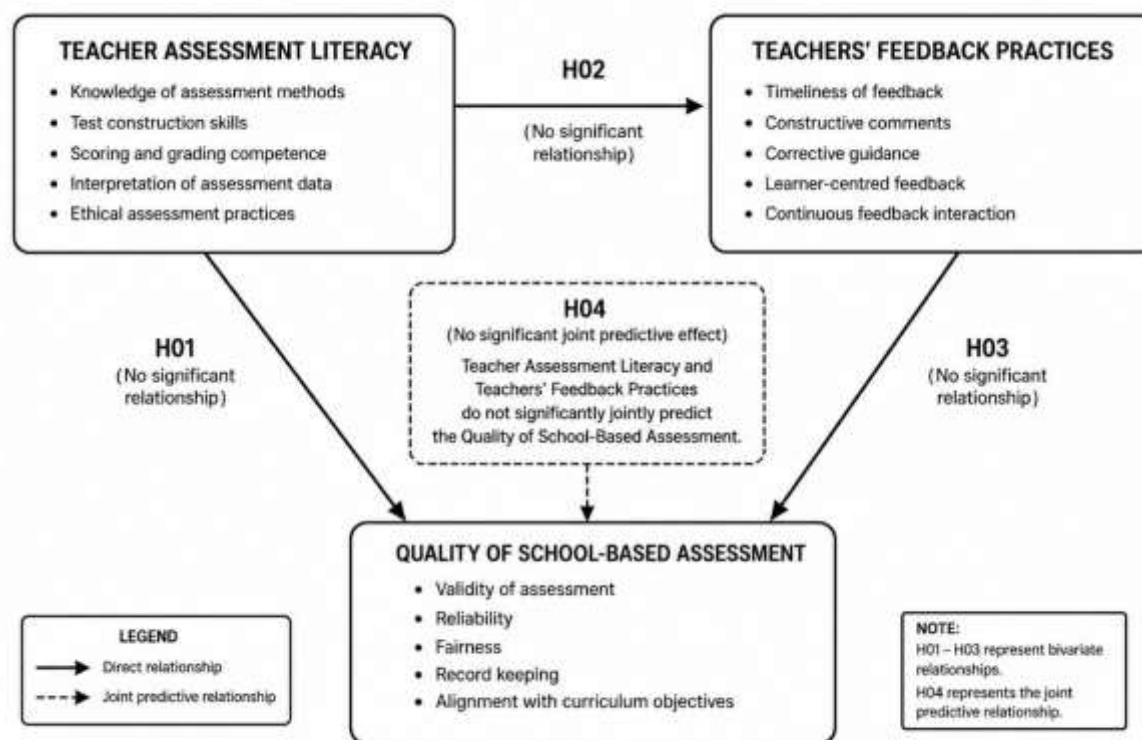


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional correlational survey design. The design was considered appropriate because the study examined the relationships among teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and the quality of school-based assessment without manipulating any of the study variables. The design also enabled the determination of the extent to which teacher assessment literacy and feedback practices jointly predict the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria. The correlational approach was particularly suitable because the study focused on naturally occurring career and teaching variables within school settings.

Study participants

The study population comprised all teachers in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. According to records obtained from the Cross River State Secondary Education Board, there were 4,003 teachers serving across 290 public secondary schools in the state's three education zones. The population distribution is presented in Table 1.



Table 1: Population distribution of teachers in public secondary schools in Cross River State

Education Zone	Number of Schools	Population		
		Male	Female	Total
Calabar Zone	92	657	1,036	1,693
Ikom Zone	111	817	435	1,252
Ogoja Zone	87	738	320	1,058
Total	290	2,212	1,791	4,003

Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board

The sample size for the study was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations. After computation, it was revealed that the minimum required sample size for the study was 364 teachers. However, to reduce the possible effects of non-response, incomplete questionnaire return, and participant attrition, the sample size was increased by 20%, consistent with recommendations for survey-based educational research. The attrition adjustment yielded an additional 73 participants, resulting in an adjusted sample size of 437 teachers. Accordingly, a final sample size of 437 teachers was used for the study.

A multistage sampling procedure was adopted to ensure adequate representation of teachers across the three education zones in Cross River State. The procedure was implemented in four stages. At the first stage, the state was stratified into three existing education zones: Calabar, Ikom, and Ogoja. Such stratification was necessary because the zones differ in terms of school distribution and teacher population. Stratifying the population ensured that teachers from all parts of the state were adequately represented in the study.

At the second stage, the sample size of 437 teachers was proportionately distributed across the three education zones using the Neyman proportionate allocation formula. The formula was used to ensure that each education zone was represented in proportion to its teacher population size. Using the Neyman proportionate allocation procedure, 185 teachers were selected from the Calabar Education Zone, 137 from the Ikom Education Zone, and 115 from the Ogoja Education Zone. At the third stage, a simple random sampling technique was used to select public secondary schools within each education zone. Lists of all public secondary schools in each zone were obtained from the Cross River State Secondary Education Board and served as sampling frames. Schools were then selected by ballot without replacement until the required number for each zone was obtained.

At the fourth stage, teachers were selected from the sampled schools using simple random sampling. Lists of teachers in each selected school were obtained from school administrators and used as sampling frames. Teachers were thereafter randomly selected by ballot until the required number of participants





from each school was reached. Only teachers who were actively involved in classroom teaching and school-based assessment activities at the time of the study were included in the sample. The multistage sampling approach was considered appropriate because it improved representativeness across education zones and schools while reducing sampling bias.

Instrumentation and Measures

Data for the study were collected using a well-structured questionnaire titled “Teacher Assessment Literacy, Feedback Practices, and School-Based Assessment Questionnaire” (TALFPSBAQ). The instrument was designed to measure the major variables of the study and consisted of three sections: the Teacher Assessment Literacy Scale (TALS), the Teachers’ Feedback Practices Scale (TFPS), and the School-Based Assessment Quality Scale (SBAQS). All items in the instrument were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4).

Section A of the instrument measured teacher assessment literacy using an adapted version of established teacher assessment literacy frameworks and validated formative assessment literacy scales. The section was developed primarily from the works of Xu and Brown (2016), Pastore and Andrade (2019), Yan and Pastore (2022), Chan and Luk (2021), and Tajeddin et al. (2022). The scale assessed teachers’ competence in assessment planning, test construction, interpretation of assessment evidence, scoring and grading practices, feedback use, and instructional decision-making. This section consisted of 20 items designed to evaluate the extent to which teachers possessed the professional knowledge and competencies required for effective classroom assessment practice.

Section B measured teachers’ feedback practices using items adapted from formative assessment and assessment literacy literature, particularly studies that conceptualise feedback as a central component of formative assessment practice and teacher assessment literacy (Xu & Brown, 2016; Pastore & Andrade, 2019; Yan & Pastore, 2022; Chan & Luk, 2021). The scale examined dimensions such as the timeliness and clarity of feedback, constructive guidance, learner-oriented feedback, corrective support, and the instructional usefulness of feedback. The section contained 15 items intended to assess how teachers communicate assessment information to students for learning improvement purposes.

Section C measured the quality of school-based assessment using a researcher-developed scale based on the literature on school-based assessment quality, reliability, validity, and evaluation systems. The section was informed by the works of Ghazali (2016), Williams-McBean (2018), and Owusu-Darko (2025), which discuss important dimensions of effective school-based assessment systems, including validity, reliability, fairness, accordance with instructional objectives, and the quality of the assessment process. The scale assessed dimensions such as validity, reliability, fairness, conformity with curriculum objectives, adequacy of assessment records, and instructional usefulness of assessment activities. This section consisted of 18 items designed to evaluate the extent to which school-based assessment practices met acceptable instructional and assessment quality standards in secondary school settings.





Validity and Reliability

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Psychology from a public university in Nigeria. The experts examined the instrument for clarity, relevance, adequacy of content coverage, appropriateness of item structure, suitability of language, and conformity with the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Their observations and recommendations guided the modification, refinement, and restructuring of the instrument before final administration.

To establish the instrument's reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 40 teachers from public secondary schools outside the sampled schools but within the study area. Data from the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach's alpha to assess the instrument's internal consistency. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.87 for the Teacher Assessment Literacy Scale, 0.84 for the Teachers' Feedback Practices Scale, and 0.89 for the School-Based Assessment Quality Scale. These coefficients indicated satisfactory internal consistency and confirmed the instrument's reliability for the study.

Ethical Considerations, Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant educational authorities, including the Cross River State Secondary Education Board and principals of participating schools. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and assured that participation was voluntary. The respondents were also assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and that the information would be used strictly for academic purposes. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before administration of the instrument.

The researcher personally administered the questionnaires, assisted by three trained research assistants. Permission was obtained from school administrators before administration of the instrument. The purpose of the study and instructions for completing the questionnaire were explained to the respondents before administration. Copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved immediately after completion to reduce the possibility of non-response and instrument loss.

Data collected for the study were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and study variables. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis four, which examined the joint predictive influence of teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices on the quality of school-based assessment. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

A total of 437 copies of the questionnaire were administered to teachers in public secondary schools across Cross River State. Of this number, 421 copies were completed correctly and returned, for a response rate of 96.3%. The returned questionnaires were used for data analysis.





Descriptive statistics of study variables

Descriptive statistics were computed to determine the mean and standard deviation scores for teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and quality of school-based assessment. The results presented in Table 2 indicate that teachers reported moderately high levels of teacher assessment literacy and school-based assessment quality. Teachers' feedback practices recorded a moderate mean score, suggesting that although feedback practices were noticeable among teachers, they were not consistently strong across schools.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Teacher Assessment Literacy	3.11	0.46	Moderately High
Teachers' Feedback Practices	2.97	0.51	Moderate
School-Based Assessment Quality	3.04	0.49	Moderately High

Hypothesis One

There is no statistically significant relationship between teacher assessment literacy and the quality of school-based assessment. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teacher assessment literacy significantly predicts the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State. The results in Table 3 revealed that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers. The model explained approximately 37% of the variance in school-based assessment quality. Teacher assessment literacy made a significant positive contribution to the prediction of school-based assessment quality. Since the obtained p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The finding indicates that increases in teacher assessment literacy were associated with improvements in the quality of school-based assessment.

Table 3: Simple linear regression analysis of teacher assessment literacy and quality of school-based assessment

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	37.91	1	37.91	250.46	.000
Residual	63.38	419	0.15		
Total	101.29	420			

Note: $R = .61$, $R^2 = .37$, $Adj. R^2 = .37$;





Constant ($B = 1.12$, $SE = 0.13$);

Teacher Assessment Literacy ($B = 0.62$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .61$, $t = 15.83$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Two

There is no statistically significant relationship between teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices in school-based assessment. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teacher assessment literacy significantly predicts teachers' feedback practices. The result presented in Table 4 indicated that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted teachers' feedback practices ($R = 0.54$, $R^2 = 0.29$, $F(1, 419) = 172.49$, $p < .05$). The regression model accounted for approximately 29% of the variance in teachers' feedback practices. Teacher assessment literacy made a statistically significant positive contribution to teachers' feedback practices ($\beta = 0.54$, $t = 13.13$, $p < .05$). Since the p-value was less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This evidence suggests that teachers with stronger assessment literacy were more likely to engage in effective feedback practices during school-based assessment activities.

Table 4: Simple linear regression analysis of teacher assessment literacy as a predictor of teachers' feedback practices ($N = 421$)

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	31.72	1	31.72	172.49	.000
Residual	77.03	419	0.18		
Total	108.75	420			

Note: $R = .54$, $R^2 = .29$, $Adj. R^2 = .29$;

Constant ($B = 1.31$, $SE = 0.14$);

Teacher Assessment Literacy ($B = 0.53$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .54$, $t = 13.13$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Three

There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' feedback practices and the quality of school-based assessment. Simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether teachers' feedback practices significantly predict the quality of school-based assessment. The results presented in Table 5 revealed that teachers' feedback practices significantly predicted the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State. The regression model explained 34% of the variance in school-based assessment quality. Teachers' feedback practices made a significant positive contribution to the prediction of school-based assessment quality. This finding indicates that improvements in teachers' feedback practices were associated with higher-quality school-





based assessment. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that improvements in teachers' feedback practices were associated with higher-quality school-based assessment.

Table 5: Simple Linear regression analysis of teachers' feedback practices and quality of school-based assessment

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	34.51	1	34.51	214.32	.000
Residual	67.44	419	0.16		
Total	101.95	420			

Note: $R = .58$, $R^2 = .34$, $Adj. R^2 = .33$;

Constant ($B = 1.27$, $SE = 0.12$);

Teachers' Feedback Practices ($B = 0.60$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .58$, $t = 14.64$, $p < .05$).

Hypothesis Four

Teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices do not jointly and significantly predict the quality of school-based assessment. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the joint predictive influence of teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices on the quality of school-based assessment. The results presented in Table 6 revealed that teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices jointly exerted a statistically significant influence on the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State. The regression model explained approximately 50% of the variance in school-based assessment quality. Teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices independently made significant positive contributions to the prediction of school-based assessment quality. Since the obtained p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. The evidence shows that stronger teacher assessment literacy and more effective feedback practices were associated with improved quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Multiple regression analysis of teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices on quality of school-based assessment

Model	SS	df	MS	F	p	B	SE(B)	β	t
Regression	50.92	2	25.46	209.84	.000				
Residual	50.73	418	0.12						
Total	101.65	420							





Constant	.000	0.82	0.15	—	5.37
Teacher Assessment Literacy	.000	0.43	0.05	0.41	8.92
Teachers' Feedback Practices	.000	0.37	0.05	0.35	7.61

Note: $R = .71$, $R^2 = .50$, $Adj. R^2 = .49$, $Std. Error = .351$.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study deliver empirical support for the Assessment for Learning (AfL) perspective, which positions assessment as an instructional process rather than merely an evaluative activity. Across the four hypotheses tested, teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices emerged as important explanatory factors in understanding variations in the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria. The evidence shows that the effectiveness of school-based assessment depends less on policy provisions alone and more on teachers' professional competence in generating, interpreting, and using assessment evidence within classroom practice.

The first finding revealed that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted the quality of school-based assessment. This suggests that teachers with stronger assessment competence are more likely to implement assessment practices that are valid, reliable, instructionally useful, and congruent with curriculum objectives. The finding supports Xu and Brown's (2016) view that assessment literacy extends beyond applied testing knowledge to encompass informed instructional decision-making grounded in assessment evidence. The predictive strength observed in this study indicates that the quality of school-based assessment is closely linked to teachers' ability to design appropriate assessment tasks, interpret student performance accurately, and apply assessment information meaningfully within instruction.

The finding also supports Pastore and Andrade's (2019) argument that assessment literacy is a multidimensional professional competence encompassing conceptual understanding, pedagogical judgement, and classroom application. Within the context of secondary education in Cross River State, weaknesses commonly associated with school-based assessment systems, such as poor alignment between assessment tasks and instructional objectives, inconsistent grading practices, and limited instructional use of assessment evidence, may therefore reflect deficiencies in teachers' assessment literacy rather than weaknesses in policy design itself. This explains why school-based assessment reforms sometimes produce limited classroom improvement despite formal policy support. When teachers lack sufficient assessment competence, assessment practice tends to become procedural and examination-oriented rather than formative and instructional.

The second finding revealed that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted teachers' feedback practices. This finding is important because it explains one mechanism by which assessment literacy influences classroom assessment quality. Teachers who better understand assessment principles appear



more capable of communicating assessment details effectively to learners. In other words, assessment literacy influences not only what teachers assess, but also how they react to student performance during instruction. This finding is consistent with the AfL perspective, which conceptualises feedback as an integral component of formative assessment rather than a separate instructional activity. Xu and Brown (2016) and Yan and Pastore (2022) argued that teachers' ability to provide meaningful feedback depends substantially on their understanding of assessment evidence and learning progression. Teachers with stronger assessment literacy are therefore more likely to identify learning gaps accurately and provide feedback that guides improvement.

The finding also explains why feedback practices often remain weak despite policy emphasis on formative assessment. In many secondary school settings, teachers may rely mainly on scores, grades, or brief evaluative comments because they lack the deeper competence to translate assessment evidence into instructional guidance. Consequently, feedback becomes corrective rather than developmental. The finding, therefore, suggests that improving feedback practices may require strengthening teachers' assessment literacy rather than emphasising feedback techniques alone. It further supports perspectives that conceptualise assessment literacy as situated professional practice rather than static technical knowledge (Chan & Luk, 2021).

The third finding revealed that teachers' feedback practices significantly predicted the quality of school-based assessment. This suggests that feedback functions as a major instructional mechanism linking assessment activity to learning improvement. The finding indicates that school-based assessment becomes more instructionally meaningful when teachers provide timely, constructive, and learner-oriented feedback. Within the AfL framework, this is expected because feedback is regarded as one of the main processes through which assessment evidence influences learning and instructional adjustment. The finding supports Van der Kleij's (2019) argument that effective feedback improves the usefulness of assessment by helping learners identify performance gaps and understand how to improve.

The finding also implies that the quality of school-based assessment cannot be judged solely by the technical quality of assessment tasks or records, but also by how effectively assessment information is transformed into useful instructional guidance. This helps explain why some school-based assessment systems fail to improve classroom learning despite frequent assessment activities. If feedback is delayed, vague, judgmental, or focused mainly on grades, assessment information loses much of its instructional value. The moderate level of teachers' feedback practices noted in the descriptive findings further suggests that although feedback activities are present in schools, the instructional effectiveness may still be inconsistent.

The fourth finding revealed that teacher assessment literacy and teachers' feedback practices jointly exerted a significant influence on the quality of school-based assessment. The joint predictive model explained approximately half of the variance in school-based assessment quality, indicating that the two variables together constitute major determinants of assessment quality in the study context. The finding demonstrates that assessment quality is not produced by isolated competencies, but by the interaction between teachers' assessment knowledge and their educative enactment of that knowledge through feedback practices.

The finding supports the study's conceptual framework, which positions feedback practices as the instructional mechanism through which assessment literacy influences school-based assessment quality. The stronger beta weight for teacher assessment literacy suggests that assessment competence acts as the foundational professional resource underpinning effective classroom assessment practice. However, the significant contribution of feedback practices indicates that assessment knowledge alone is insufficient unless translated into meaningful instructional action. This explains why some teachers may understand assessment principles theoretically without necessarily implementing highly effective classroom assessment practices.

Generally, the outcomes imply that improving the quality of school-based assessment in secondary schools calls for sustained professional development that simultaneously strengthens teachers' assessment literacy and formative feedback competence. The results suggest that reforms designed solely to expand continuous assessment structures without improving teachers' classroom assessment capability may produce limited instructional improvement. Consequently, strengthening teacher assessment literacy and feedback practices appears central to improving the instructional quality, fairness, and educational usefulness of school-based assessment in secondary schools.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among teacher assessment literacy, teachers' feedback practices, and the quality of school-based assessment among secondary school teachers in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings established that teacher assessment literacy significantly predicted both teachers' feedback practices and the quality of school-based assessment, whereas feedback practices also significantly predicted school-based assessment quality. In addition, teacher assessment literacy and feedback practices jointly exerted a significant influence on the quality of school-based assessment. The findings suggest that effective school-based assessment depends largely on teachers' professional competence in designing, interpreting, and using assessment evidence within classroom instruction. The study therefore reinforces the Assessment for Learning perspective, which views assessment as an instructional process intended to improve teaching and learning rather than merely assign grades or satisfy administrative requirements.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational authorities and school administrators should organise regular professional development programmes to strengthen teachers' assessment literacy, notably in areas such as assessment development, interpretation of assessment evidence, scoring procedures, and the instructional use of assessment information.
2. Teacher training institutions and professional development agencies should more strongly integrate formative assessment and feedback competence into teacher education and in-service training programmes to improve teachers' ability to use assessment for learning.



3. Secondary school teachers should be motivated to adopt more learner-centred and instructional feedback practices that move past grades and scores toward constructive guidance that supports student improvement and self-regulated learning.
4. School administrators should strengthen internal moderation and monitoring procedures to improve the validity, reliability, fairness, and accordance with the curriculum of school-based assessment practices in secondary schools.
5. Educational policymakers should shift the emphasis from procedural compliance in continuous assessment to capacity building that improves teachers' practical classroom assessment competence and their classroom use of assessment evidence.
6. Professional learning communities should be encouraged within schools to enable teachers to share effective assessment strategies, feedback approaches, and best practices for implementing school-based assessment.

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