THE IMPACT OF ONLINE TESTING MODE ON BUSINESS ASSESSMENT TEST PERFORMANCE BEFORE AND DURING COVID

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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to share our experience when implementing online assessment format of BAT (Business Assessment Test) in pandemic and further comparing the learners' BAT results when transitioning in-person assessment to online assessment at a university in Southern California. We examine 4,413 observations of students' BAT scores from Spring 2017 to Spring 2022, which covers prior- and COVID-era. The findings of learners' exit performance throughout the pandemic era enable us better fine-tune online assessment tool when we resume in-person instruction. The analytical results shed light on the deficiencies of learners' mastery which better guide us to design the "closing-the-loop" pedagogy.

Keywords: Business Assessment Test, Online Testing, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Over a decade, many publishers continuously pooled significant resources to ameliorate their courses platforms aiming to foster the interaction between the learners and course material. Nonetheless, the digital content delivering mode is not well positioned to take away the traditional campus-based learning experience for college students. Inside Higher Ed (Inside Higher Ed June 2022) reported that National Center for Educational Statistics surveyed approximately 25% of the college students enrolled in at least one online course in 2014 and online course enrollment reached 75% of college students in 2020. Despite the rising number online course offerings, many colleges and universities were ill-prepared to swiftly convert traditional face-to-face instructional and testing modalities to online formats in pandemic because online education was often perceived as auxiliary service instead of the forward-thinking education paradigm. The institutional procedure barriers to some extent prevent the agile adoption of online platforms. Consequently, the unexpected outbreak COVID-19 in March 2020 expose the fragility of the digital capacities and the fragmentation of tech support across higher education system. The imminent logistic challenges of tech support across higher education institutions are to better learners' virtual learning and testing experience. The dire needs of thousands of colleges and universities are to deliver instructions and conduct testing seamlessly during national pandemic era because the continuation of educating millions of students is imperative for the college administrators and faculty, alike. The digital transformation is not an "one size fits all" approach when converting face-to-face instruction and testing to asynchronous online, synchronous online, or HighFlex online formats. So called "best practices" vary from course to course. The lack of comfort of using online tools during COVID-19 period profoundly

increase the workloads to our faculty and likewise our students endure the high stress levels to deal with evolving content delivery modes and testing platforms (Johnson, et. al., 2021; Jung, et. al., 2021). Consequently, many higher education institutions have offered grade reports options for the students, like pass/fail to give students more breathing room to ease their anxiety (Inside Higher Ed November 2020).

This study attempts to share our experience when implementing online assessment format of BAT (hereafter, Business Assessment Test) in pandemic and further comparing the learners' BAT results when transitioning in-person assessment format to online assessment format at one public university in Southern California. We examine 4,413 observations of students' BAT scores from Spring 2017 to Spring 2022, which covers prior-COVID era and COVID-era. BAT assessments are administered in the capstone course offered to all undergraduate students at College of Business thus their BAT scores would be considered as Student Exit Assessment, which is part of the portfolio of assessment tools to comply AACSB Standard 5: Assurance of Leaning. In addition, we further investigate whether the learners' attributes like major, gender, language or ethnicity can explain the variations in their BAT scores.

Our study is motivated by the concerns of the prevalent equity gaps in higher education. First, decades of inequity are deep-rooted in every facet of higher education. Minoritized students often underperform their white and affluent counterparts across of course completion and graduation rates (Carnevale and Strohol, 2013; Perna and Finney, 2014; Witham et al., 2015). COVID disruption could exacerbate the performance gap across subpopulation of students. Many prior studies have documented how higher education institutions, faculty and students adapted to new normal of "virtual learning" environments (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020; Barber, 2021; Brown et. al., 2021; Chen et. al., 2021; Chen et. al., 2022). But few studies try to explore the connection between learners' assessment results and their demographic data. Thus, our student aims to examine BAT outcomes through the lens of diversity and inclusion. Second, the findings of learners' exit performance throughout the pandemic era will enable us better fine-tune online assessment tool when we resume in-person instruction. Third, the detailed analytical results are expected to shed light on the deficiencies of learners' mastery in certain subjects which better guide us to design the "closing-the-loop" pedagogy.

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