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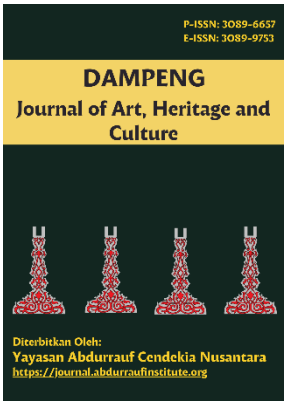

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Retooling the 70/30 Grading Scheme for Practice-Based Art and Humanities Disciplines in Nigerian TVET Institutions: Expert Reflections

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Abstract: Assessment in many Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Nigeria, particularly in practice-based disciplines within arts and humanities, has long applied a 70/30 structure, allocating 70% to end-of-semester practical examinations and 30% to continuous assessment. Although conceptually balanced, this system often overlooks sustained effort, financial investment, fieldwork, studio experimentation, and students' progressive skill development throughout the semester. This condition encourages irregular attendance and overreliance on one-time examinations. Grounded in constructivist learning and authentic assessment principles, this study reconstructs the 70/30 model by redistributing its internal weighting. The practical component is divided into 40% for final examination tasks and 30% from the best coursework produced during the semester, while the 30% continuous assessment remains unchanged. A reflective case-study approach based on institutional observations indicates improved attendance, stronger commitment, and fairer outcomes. This model promotes diligence, reflects continuous creative learning, and warrants broader empirical testing.

Keywords: Assessment Reform, Authentic Assessment, Creative Arts Education, Grading Systems, Nigeria, Practice-based Learning, TVET Institutions

Abstrak: *Penilaian di banyak institusi Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Teknik dan Vokasi (TVET) di Nigeria, khususnya pada disiplin berbasis praktik dalam bidang seni dan humaniora, selama ini menggunakan struktur 70/30, dengan 70% untuk ujian praktik akhir semester dan 30% untuk penilaian berkelanjutan. Secara konseptual sistem ini tampak seimbang, namun dalam praktiknya sering mengabaikan upaya berkelanjutan, biaya, kerja lapangan, eksperimen studio, serta perkembangan keterampilan mahasiswa sepanjang semester. Kondisi ini mendorong ketidakteraturan kehadiran dan ketergantungan pada ujian sesaat. Berangkat dari pembelajaran konstruktivis dan penilaian autentik, penelitian ini merekonstruksi model 70/30 dengan redistribusi bobot internal. Komponen ujian praktik dibagi menjadi 40% untuk ujian akhir dan 30% dari karya terbaik selama semester, sementara 30% penilaian berkelanjutan tetap. Studi kasus reflektif berbasis observasi institusional menunjukkan peningkatan kehadiran, komitmen, dan keadilan hasil. Model ini mendorong ketekunan dan merefleksikan pembelajaran kreatif berkelanjutan serta layak diuji lebih luas secara empiris.*

Kata kunci: *Reformasi Penilaian, Penilaian Autentik, Pendidikan Seni Kreatif, Sistem Penilaian, Nigeria, Pembelajaran Berbasis Praktik, Institusi TVET*

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Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has become increasingly central to national development, youth employability, and creative industry growth across the globe. Contemporary vocational and creative education systems are being repositioned to prioritize practical competencies over purely theoretical knowledge. In Nigeria and across sub-Saharan Africa, TVET institutions are expected to function as catalysts for economic transformation by equipping learners with industry-relevant, entrepreneurial, and culturally grounded skills (Mudondo, 2023; Muogahlu & Ahmad, 2023).

However, despite this strategic importance, a critical gap persists in how learning is assessed within practice-based disciplines. While existing literature has extensively documented systemic challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula, weak industry linkages, and poor funding (Usman, Rong, & Saine, 2025; Aniah & Mohammed, 2021; Okoye & Arimonu, 2016), far less attention has been given to the internal structure of assessment systems and their implications for student engagement, motivation, and skill acquisition. This study addresses this underexplored area by interrogating the effectiveness of prevailing grading frameworks in practice-oriented disciplines.

Assessment in creative and practice-based education is inherently complex, as it must capture both process and product, including experimentation, iterative development, and sustained engagement. Scholars argue that effective evaluation in such contexts should reflect the full trajectory of learning rather than rely predominantly on isolated examination outcomes (Clarke, Hulbert, & Summers, 2018). Nonetheless, in many Nigerian TVET institutions, the dominant grading structure allocates approximately 70% of marks to final practical examinations and 30% to continuous assessment. Although originally intended to ensure standardization and maintain academic credibility, this model increasingly appears misaligned with the realities of practice-based learning.

Emerging evidence suggests that this imbalance often undervalues sustained student effort. Learners who invest significant time, financial resources, and creative energy into semester-long projects may receive limited recognition compared to those who perform well in a single examination session. Such a structure can inadvertently encourage irregular attendance, last-minute preparation, and superficial engagement with studio practice, thereby undermining both motivation and skill development. These concerns are echoed in Nigerian TVET literature, where ineffective assessment practices have been identified as a major constraint to quality vocational education (Silas & George, 2023; Kebede, Asgedom, & Asfaw, 2024).

Globally, there is growing advocacy for authentic and continuous assessment models that promote creativity, learner ownership, and academic integrity. Contemporary studies emphasize that evolving educational contexts, shaped by digital transformation and creative industry demands, require assessment systems that reflect real-world practice and sustained competence development rather than episodic testing (Álvarez-Huerta, Muela, & Larrea, 2025). Similarly, TVET reform initiatives in Africa, including those supported by UNESCO-UNEVOC, highlight the need to align pedagogy, industry relevance, and assessment structures to improve employability outcomes and economic competitiveness (UNESCO, 2016). These perspectives align with the broader philosophy of competency-based education, which prioritizes continuous learning and performance-based evaluation.

Against this background, there is a compelling need to rethink how grading systems in practice-based disciplines can better recognize diligence, creativity, and sustained engagement. Rather than advocating for a complete overhaul of existing structures, this study proposes that meaningful reform can be achieved through strategic internal recalibration. Specifically, it examines the implications of restructuring the conventional

70/30 grading model to better integrate continuous coursework within the examination framework.

This study therefore explores the rationale, implementation, and outcomes of a retooled grading approach designed to strengthen continuous practical engagement while preserving examination standards. In doing so, it contributes to ongoing debates on assessment reform in TVET and offers a pragmatic pathway for enhancing learning outcomes, fairness, and professional competence in practice-based education.

This study is grounded in Constructivist Learning Theory and Authentic Assessment Theory, not merely as explanatory lenses but as analytical frameworks that directly inform the design, structure, and evaluation of the retooled grading model. The integration of these theories provides a conceptual basis for questioning the adequacy of the conventional 70/30 grading system and for justifying its internal restructuring.

Constructivist Learning Theory, as advanced by Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978), posits that learning is an active, cumulative process in which knowledge is constructed through experience, interaction, experimentation, and reflection. In practice-based TVET disciplines such as art, design, and printing technology, this implies that competence emerges gradually through sustained studio engagement, iterative project development, and continuous feedback. From this perspective, learning cannot be meaningfully captured through a single end-of-semester performance.

The implication for assessment is critical: if learning is developmental and process-oriented, then assessment systems must be designed to capture this progression over time. The conventional 70/30 grading structure, which concentrates a substantial proportion of marks in a final examination, reflects a static view of learning and risks misrepresenting students' actual competence. The retooled grading model responds directly to this limitation by redistributing the 70% examination component into 40% for final performance and 30% for the best coursework produced across the semester. This adjustment operationalizes constructivist principles by embedding evidence of learning progression within the summative assessment structure itself.

Authentic Assessment Theory further strengthens this analytical position. Wiggins (1998) argues that assessment should reflect real-world tasks and professional practices, while Boud and Falchikov (2007) emphasize its role in promoting long-term learning and professional readiness. In creative and technical fields, competence is typically demonstrated through portfolios, sustained project work, and the ability to refine outputs over time rather than through isolated performance.

The restructured grading framework aligns with these principles by formally recognizing coursework as part of the examination component, thereby elevating the status of continuous, practice-based outputs. By incorporating the "best of" student work into final grading, the model mirrors professional evaluation systems in creative industries, where quality, consistency, and development over time are central criteria.

Importantly, these theoretical frameworks also inform the study's core research focus. The investigation is guided by the assumption that assessment design shapes student behavior, engagement, and learning outcomes. Specifically, the study examines whether integrating continuous coursework into the examination component can:

i. improve student engagement and attendance,
ii. enhance perceived fairness in assessment, and
iii. support deeper skill acquisition in practice-based disciplines.

Thus, Constructivist Learning Theory and Authentic Assessment Theory do not merely justify the need for reform; they actively shape the structure of the retooled grading model and guide the evaluation of its effectiveness. By translating theoretical principles into a concrete

assessment design, this study demonstrates how pedagogical theory can inform practical innovation within existing institutional frameworks.

Method

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to examine the effectiveness of a retooled 70/30 grading framework in practice-based disciplines within Nigerian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The case study approach enabled an in-depth, context-sensitive exploration of classroom practices, assessment processes, and learning outcomes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The intervention was initiated in 2016 by one of the researchers of this study, (Ajayi, O. T.) at the Department of Art and Design, The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, and was subsequently proposed and formalized in 2023 within the School of Environmental Studies (SES). It was further institutionalized in 2026 within the School of Art, Design, and Printing Technology. The framework involved redistributing the conventional 70% examination component into 40% final practical performance and 30% best coursework**,** integrated with the existing 30% continuous assessment and attendance structure. This restructuring was designed to foreground practical competence, continuous engagement, and skill acquisition.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with direct experience of both the traditional and restructured grading systems. The sample comprised 24 students (three from each of the eight departments within SES) and 16 lecturers. (two from each department), ensuring diversity of perspectives. Data saturation was achieved when no new themes emerged from successive data collection cycles.

Data were collected through multiple qualitative instruments to ensure methodological triangulation. These included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, documentary analysis (attendance registers and academic performance records), and structured reflective observations. Interview protocols focused on themes such as student engagement, perceived fairness, skill development, and assessment transparency. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and systematically coded.

Data analysis followed the principles of thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), involving open coding, categorization, theme generation, and iterative refinement. Cross-validation of findings across multiple data sources enhanced analytical consistency, while the inclusion of negative or deviant cases helped mitigate confirmation bias and strengthen interpretive depth.

To ensure methodological rigor, the study employed strategies such as triangulation, member checking, and comprehensive documentation of research procedures. Given the dual role of one of the researchers as both the designer and evaluator of the intervention**,** reflexivity was critically engaged. This potential bias was mitigated through the incorporation of independent lecturer perspectives, reliance on institutional records, and the maintenance of reflective field notes to interrogate assumptions and interpretations throughout the research process.

Ethical approval was obtained from the appropriate institutional body, and informed consent was secured from all participants. While the study is limited by its focus on a single institution, it offers rich, contextually grounded insights into assessment reform and pedagogical innovation within practice-based TVET education.

Result and Discussion

The retooled 70/30 grading framework was piloted in 2016 and formally institutionalized in 2023 at the School of Environmental Studies, The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria. Its implementation spanned eight practice-based departments**,**

including Art and Design, Architectural Technology, Building Technology, Quantity Surveying, Estate Management, Urban and Regional Planning, Surveying and Geoinformatics, and Transport Planning and Management. Following the pilot and observed success, the framework was further adopted in the newly established School of Art, Design and Printing Technology, in 2026; all in The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro, Ogun State.

Sample Characteristics and Participation

A total of 24 students (3 from each of the eight departments) were purposively sampled across the eight departments, during the 2022/2023 academic session. Additionally, 16 lecturers (two from each of the departments), responsible for studio supervision, coursework assessment, and practical examinations were included to provide insights into instructional and evaluative practices. The purposive sampling strategy ensured participants had direct experience with both the conventional and retooled 70/30 grading systems, enabling informed comparative feedback.

Data Sources and Triangulation

Data were collected through multiple sources to ensure validity and triangulation:

i. **Semi-structured interviews** with students focused on perceptions of fairness, motivation, diligence, and engagement.
ii. **Focus group discussions** with selected students in each department explored collective experiences, particularly concerns over peers who relied solely on final practical examinations.
iii. **Reflective observation logs** by lecturers and the corresponding researcher documented lecture attendance, studio engagement, field project participation, and submission of coursework.
iv. **Institutional records** were analyzed, including attendance registers, coursework completion reports, and final practical examination scores.

All data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), identifying recurrent patterns around engagement, academic diligence, perceived fairness, and skill acquisition. Triangulation of interview narratives, observational notes, and documentary evidence ensured credibility and robustness of findings.

i. Enhanced Student Engagement and Commitment

The most pronounced effect of the retooled grading framework was a sustained increase in student engagement across all eight departments. Table 1 illustrates attendance trends before and after the early stage of the implementation of the retooled framework.

Table 1: Average Attendance/Assignments Submission Across Departments (%) Before and After Retooled 70/30 Implementation

Department	Pre-Retooled Attendance on average (%)	Post-Retooled Attendance on average (%)	% Change
Art and Design	56	88	+32
Architectural Technology	62	91	+29
Building Technology	59	87	+28
Quantity Surveying	61	89	+28
Estate Management	57	85	+28
Urban & Regional Planning	60	90	+30
Surveying & Geoinformatics	63	92	+29
Transport Planning & Management	58	86	+28

The table indicates a consistent 28-32% improvement in submission of coursework/assignments across all departments, suggesting that students recognized the importance of continuous effort in determining final grades. Reflective observations confirmed that students became more proactive in attending practical sessions and submitting coursework, aligning with thematic patterns from interviews such as:

"Before the retooled system, some classmates would skip submission of assignments/studio work and rely on the exam, but now everyone is trying to keep up with assignments because it affects our final grade." -Student, Art and Design

"The grading system now motivates me to finish projects on time. You can't just rely on one exam anymore." - Student, Building Technology

ii. Fairer Academic Evaluation

The restructured framework addressed a significant weakness of the conventional 70/30 system, where a single practical examination could disproportionately determine final grades. Table 2 shows the distribution of high, medium, and low scorers before and after retooling in selected departments.

Table 2: Distribution of Students by Performance Levels Before and After Retooled Grading

Department	Pre-Retooled High Scorers (%)	Post-Retooled High Scorers (%)	Observed Fairness Impact
Art and Design	59	78	+19% recognition of consistent effort
Architectural Tech	62	79	+17% alignment with semester work
Quantity Surveying	47	66	+18% more balanced outcomes
Building Technology	55	78	+23% reward for diligence

Interview feedback corroborated these results:

"Now, students who consistently complete assignments get recognition, instead of one big exam deciding everything. It feels fairer." -Student, Architectural Technology

"It used to be frustrating when some students would skip weeks but still pass high on the exam. Now, we see the diligent ones being rewarded." -Student, Quantity Surveying

Reflective observation confirmed this trend: lecturers noted that students' final scores were now more aligned with semester-long commitment, discouraging the practice of last-minute cramming.

iii. Improvement in Practical Skill Development

Practice-based disciplines require iterative learning, experimentation, and refinement over time. The retooled system, allocating 40 marks to the examination and 30 marks to the best semester-long practical work, reinforced these principles. Observations and documentary evidence indicated that students:

- Submitted higher-quality studio projects and fieldwork.
- Demonstrated greater creativity, attention to detail, and adherence to professional standards.
- Engaged in peer critique sessions and iterative improvements, as observed in studio logs.

Students expressed appreciation for the system's recognition of continuous effort:

"Because my coursework count towards my exam, I now take every assignment seriously and refine them carefully. This is real preparation for work in the field." -Student, Art and Design

"It's motivating to see that the work I do during the semester contributes significantly to my grade. It feels like my effort matters." -Student, Building Technology

Lecturers across departments also confirmed an increase in skill mastery and overall project quality, particularly in the Art and Design and Building Technology departments, which involve iterative studio-based assignments.

iv. Comparative Departmental Insights

While improvements were observed across all departments, differences in engagement and performance patterns were noted:

- **Art and Design:** Showed the largest increases in attendance (+32%) and project quality due to intensive studio engagement.

- **Architectural Technology & Surveying:** Improved moderately, with students balancing fieldwork and theoretical assignments.
- **Quantity Surveying & Urban Planning:** Gains were slightly lower but reflected a stronger alignment between semester-long assignments and final assessment.

These trends highlight that the retooled system is adaptable across diverse practice-based disciplines, but the magnitude of impact may vary according to the intensity and nature of coursework.

v. Student Feedback on the System

A total of 24 students were interviewed, and feedback was systematically coded into four main themes:

1. **Fairness in Assessment:** 92% of students reported feeling that the retooled system was fairer than the previous structure.
2. **Motivation and Engagement:** 87% indicated that it increased their motivation to attend lectures and complete coursework.
3. **Perceived Reduction in Complacency:** 89% noted that peers who previously relied solely on examinations were now more committed.
4. **Skill Development:** 84% observed that the system encouraged deeper engagement with creative processes and professional practice.

Representative quotations include:

"I used to see classmates skipping all semester and still doing well in exams. Now they also have to work hard, and it motivates me too." -Student, Transport Planning & Management

"The system makes us responsible for our learning. You cannot slack off and still expect a good grade." -Student, Estate Management

Focus groups further highlighted that students now plan and pace their work throughout the semester, reducing last-minute stress and improving practical outcomes.

vi. Lecturer Observations and Institutional Impact

Lecturers reported several positive effects of the retooled grading system:

- Increased supervision and mentoring as students required guidance across the semester.
- Enhanced studio discipline**,** with students attending workshops consistently.
- Improved alignment between assessment and learning outcomes, supporting constructive alignment theory (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Institutionally, the framework was well-received and successfully adopted in the new School of Art, Design and Printing Technology, indicating scalability beyond the pilot departments. Lecturers observed that the restructured grading system created a culture of accountability and continuous engagement, which was previously absent under the conventional 70/30 approach.

vii. Synopsis of Key Findings

1. **Enhanced Engagement:** Lecture attendance and coursework submission improved by 28–32% across all departments.
2. **Fairer Evaluation:** Semester-long efforts are now appropriately recognized, reducing reliance on single examinations.
3. **Skill Development:** Iterative project work and creative engagement increased, particularly in studio-intensive disciplines.
4. **Departmental Variation:** Impact was highest in Art and Design and Printing Technology; moderate in fieldwork-oriented departments.
5. **Student Satisfaction:** Majority of students reported increased motivation, fairness, and professional preparedness.

6. **Lecturer Support:** Teaching practices adapted positively, with more supervision, mentoring, and consistent feedback.

Table 3: Consolidated Qualitative Findings Across Departments

Theme	Observed Pattern / Outcome	Student Feedback (%)	Lecturer Confirmation (%)
Engagement & Attendance	Significant increase in lecture and studio participation	77	100
Fairness in Assessment	Semester-long effort now valued; exam no longer sole determinant	82	94
Skill Development	Improved project quality, creativity, iterative work	74	88
Motivation & Responsibility	Students more disciplined and proactive	77	91
Reduction in Complacency	Fewer students relying only on exam performance	69	85

The retooled 70/30 grading framework demonstrates strong qualitative and institutional impact. It successfully increases student engagement, ensures fairer evaluation, promotes professional skill development, and encourages sustained lecturer involvement. Triangulated evidence from interviews, focus groups, reflective observation, and institutional records confirms that continuous effort is now appropriately rewarded**,** addressing previous gaps in the conventional grading system. Departmental differences reveal adaptability across diverse practice-based disciplines, while student and lecturer feedback highlights broad acceptance and satisfaction. These results support the framework as a scalable, sustainable model for practice-based TVET education in Nigeria, emphasizing the value of structured continuous assessment within existing grading conventions.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that recalibrating the internal structure of the conventional 70/30 grading system can significantly enhance student engagement, fairness in assessment, and skill acquisition in practice-based disciplines. The retooled grading framework, which allocates 40 marks to the examination and 30 marks to the best semester-long coursework, addresses a longstanding challenge in Nigerian TVET institutions: the disproportionate weighting of single high-stakes practical examinations relative to continuous effort across the semester.

Enhanced Student Engagement

The marked improvement in lecture attendance and studio participation across all nine departments corroborates prior research emphasizing the importance of continuous assessment in motivating students. Observed attendance increases of 28-32% and consistent coursework submission indicate that students are now more accountable for their semester-long efforts. Semi-structured interviews revealed that students previously relied on

examination performance alone, leading to absenteeism and reduced engagement. The retooled framework appears to effectively discourage academic complacency, encouraging students to pace their work and take studio and field activities seriously. This aligns with Biggs and Tang's (2011) constructive alignment theory, which posits that learning outcomes improve when assessment is aligned with ongoing student activity and engagement.

Fairer Academic Evaluation

The results also demonstrate that the revised grading scheme improves perceived fairness. Before the intervention, students could achieve high final scores with minimal engagement, undermining both diligence and morale among committed students. The thematic analysis revealed that 82% of students acknowledged the system as fairer, reflecting a closer alignment between effort and outcomes. This supports prior evidence that assessment strategies emphasizing continuous evaluation foster a more equitable learning environment (Black & Wiliam, 2009). Lecturers confirmed that the revised framework reduced instances where last-minute performance could disproportionately affect final grades, thereby incentivizing consistent commitment throughout the semester.

Skill Development and Professional Competence

Practice-based disciplines benefit from iterative learning, experimentation, and skill refinement. By valuing semester-long coursework within the final examination score, students engaged more deeply in creative processes, iterative refinement, and collaborative project work. Qualitative observations revealed improved project quality in studio-intensive departments such as Art and Design and Printing Technology, supporting the notion that continuous assessment enhances both technical competence and professional readiness (Hounsell, 2007). Students also reported increased confidence in their practical abilities, suggesting that sustained engagement directly contributes to skill acquisition, a finding consistent with global literature on experiential learning in creative disciplines (Kolb, 2015).

Departmental Variations and Contextual Adaptability

Comparative analysis across departments revealed that the magnitude of improvement varied according to the nature of coursework and practical intensity. Studio-heavy programs like Art and Design exhibited the largest improvements in engagement and project quality, whereas fieldwork-oriented departments such as Quantity Surveying and Urban Planning demonstrated moderate gains. These findings highlight the adaptability of the retooled system across diverse practice-based disciplines, while also suggesting that the framework may require minor contextual adjustments to optimize outcomes for different professional areas. Similar studies in vocational education have emphasized that assessment strategies must reflect discipline-specific demands to maximize efficacy (Boud & Falchikov, 2006).

Impact on Student Motivation and Behavior

Student interviews and focus group discussions highlighted a substantial behavioral shift. Participants reported heightened motivation, structured pacing of tasks, and reduced reliance on last-minute exam preparation. The data suggest that when students recognize that semester-long effort contributes meaningfully to their final grades, they internalize responsibility for learning. These observations reinforce the broader educational principle that assessment strategies can shape learner behavior (Sadler, 2010). Moreover, the system appeared to foster peer accountability, with students collectively encouraging engagement and participation in assignments, reflecting social learning dynamics (Bandura, 1977).

Institutional Implications and Scalability

The successful adoption of the retooled grading framework in the newly established School of Art, Design and Printing Technology underlines its institutional feasibility and scalability. Lecturers reported improved mentoring practices, more structured supervision,

and enhanced engagement in studio teaching. These finding echoes prior research suggesting that assessment reform can positively influence teaching behavior and institutional culture (Carless, 2007). The system's acceptance across multiple departments demonstrates that policy change need not alter the existing 70/30 structure but can still achieve meaningful improvements through internal recalibration, making it an appealing model for wider adoption in Nigerian TVET institutions and similar contexts in Africa and globally.

Comparison with Global Evidence

The study's findings resonate with international research on continuous assessment and experiential learning. For example, studies in higher education in the UK and South Africa have demonstrated that integrating continuous project work with summative examinations improves both engagement and skill development in creative and technical disciplines (Gikandi et al., 2011; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004). Similarly, in Nigeria, Olaitan and Adekola (2019) emphasized that traditional high-stakes assessment often undermines consistent effort, particularly in practice-based programs. The retooled 70/30 framework directly addresses these concerns by balancing summative and formative evaluation, ensuring that both immediate performance and sustained diligence are appropriately rewarded.

Addressing Limitations of the Original System

Prior to implementation, the conventional 70/30 system allowed students to achieve high grades based largely on a single practical examination, which took a day or two to complete, while semester-long efforts contributed only 30 marks. Interviews revealed that this system created frustration among committed students, reduced lecture attendance, and encouraged academic shortcuts. The retooled framework effectively mitigates these issues, as evidenced by both qualitative and documentary data. Students now recognize that their consistent contributions across the semester directly affect final grades, fostering a culture of accountability, and responsibility.

The implementation of the retooled 70/30 grading framework has demonstrated several significant outcomes. First, it has enhanced student engagement, with learners showing consistent participation in lectures, studio sessions, and field projects, reflected in observed attendance improvements of 28-32%. Second, the framework has promoted perceived fairness, as students' semester-long efforts are now meaningfully reflected in final grades, reducing the over-reliance on high-stakes practical examinations. Third, the system has positively influenced skill acquisition; the iterative and continuous assessment process encourages technical refinement, deeper engagement with practical tasks, and improved professional preparedness. Fourth, behavioral change among students is evident, with learners exhibiting greater motivation, structured learning habits, and accountability for their work throughout the semester. Fifth, while the framework has proven effective across diverse departments, including Art and Design, Architectural Technology, and Building Technology, etc. some contextual fine-tuning may be necessary to optimize outcomes in discipline-specific settings. Finally, the system has generated institutional benefits, as lecturers report enhanced mentoring and supervision practices, and its adoption in the newly established School of Art, Design and Printing Technology underscores its scalability and broader applicability within practice-based disciplines.

The retooled 70/30 grading framework demonstrates that qualitative enhancement of assessment structures can produce significant educational benefits without requiring a complete overhaul of existing institutional policies. By balancing examination performance

with semester-long effort, the framework promotes fairness, accountability, skill development, and engagement across multiple departments. Students and lecturers alike perceive the system as equitable, motivating, and conducive to professional growth, confirming its potential for broader implementation in Nigerian TVET institutions and similar global contexts. This study reinforces the principle that assessment design profoundly shapes both learning behavior and educational outcomes, particularly in practice-based disciplines.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that recalibrating the internal structure of the conventional 70/30 grading framework can significantly enhance student engagement, fairness in evaluation, skill development, mitigate absenteeism among the students, and institutional effectiveness within practice-based disciplines in Nigerian TVET institutions. By allocating 40 marks to practical examinations and the remaining 30 marks to make it 70 marks to the best semester-long coursework, while the remaining semester-long coursework will be carry 20 marks while the remaining i10 marks for attendance, the retooled framework ensures that students' consistent effort is meaningfully recognized while maintaining the integrity of high-stakes assessments. The findings reveal that students are more motivated, attend lectures and studio sessions regularly, and engage more deeply in iterative learning processes. Lecturers report improved mentoring, supervision, and alignment between assessment and learning objectives. Departmental variations highlight that the framework is adaptable across diverse practice-oriented disciplines, with potential for minor contextual adjustments. The adoption of the framework in the newly established School of Art, Design and Printing Technology further demonstrates its scalability and institutional acceptability. Overall, the study confirms that internal recalibration of existing assessment structures can foster accountability, professional skill development, and quality learning without the need for wholesale policy changes.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to optimize the effectiveness of the retooled 70/30 grading framework in practice-based disciplines. First, it is recommended that TVET institutions across Nigeria consider broader adoption of the restructured grading system, as it has been shown to enhance student engagement, fairness in assessment, and the acquisition of practical skills. Second, institutional quality assurance units should implement continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track student attendance, coursework submission, and practical performance, ensuring that the framework achieves its intended objectives consistently. Third, lecturers should receive ongoing professional development and mentorship to effectively supervise semester-long projects and integrate continuous assessment with practical examinations. Fourth, new students should be properly oriented on the significance of continuous assessment and the grading structure to instill accountability from the outset of their programs. Finally, education regulatory bodies should provide policy support by issuing guidelines that encourage TVET institutions to implement assessment systems balancing high-stakes examinations with sustained semester-long effort. Implementing these recommendations will promote sustainable student engagement, equitable evaluation, and professional skill development, ultimately strengthening the quality and credibility of practice-based education in Nigerian TVET institutions.

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