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## Perception of Multiple-Choice Questions: Its Challenges and Implication among Grade 12 Senior High Students of Mindanao State University-Sulu

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the perception of multiple choice questions (MCQ) among grade 12 senior high students of Mindanao State University-Sulu. The descriptive survey method was used in this study. Random sampling was used to select 100 students, 50 from the GAS strand and 50 from STEM strand Grade 12 Senior high school students. The researcher prepared a survey questionnaire to obtain the necessary data. It was revealed that MCQ is challenging foremost due to the need to answer critically under time pressure. Consequently, they need to manage their time in order to answer every subject. The challenge of MCQ also lies in the difficulty of the subject. Also, the result revealed the implications of MCQ tends to urge students to answer each subject at a limited time pressure students that they experience test anxiety. Meanwhile, there is a need to look into the level of difficulty of the subject matter, which requires students' rigorous preparation before the exam. More so, MCQ develops students' analysis on problem-solving which provides them with a real-time experience of taking major exams and develops time management in studying and strategies in answering as it encourages them to answer with persistence and resilience.

### 1. Introduction

In the Philippines, multiple choice questions (MCQs) are used as an assessment tool in conducting and administering national examinations, from measuring students' competency in grade school admission examinations from high schools to colleges and to licensure examinations to aspiring professionals. Baghaei et al. stated that multiple-choice tests are of considerably widespread use as a means of objective measurement.<sup>1</sup> The main reason behind such popularity is the many dominant advantages associated with multiple-choice tests.<sup>2-4</sup> They can be used for diagnostic as well as formative. In addition, they are scored easily, quickly, and objectively either by human beings or by scoring machines. These and many similar advantages make

multiple-choice tests suitable for a wide range of purposes ranging from classroom achievement testing to large-scale standardized tests.

A study by Klufa points out that regarding entrance examinations, multiple choice questions are preferred so that the results of tests can be obtained quickly, and there is clearly no impact of any subjective factor in evaluation.<sup>5</sup> Seeing its relevance to major examinations in the academe like college entrance exam and, to some extent, the exam to be taken by future professionals in the Philippines like the civil service exam and other licensure exams, the Mindanao State University Sulu Senior High School took the initiative and used this test format in their quarterly assessment in all subjects for two years. Moreover, the two main strands offered in the said school were

science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and the general academic strand (GAS). These couple of years in senior high school have introduced and exposed students to multiple-choice question exams. With this, the researcher determined students' perceptions of the challenges and implications of this test format to the college entrance examination.

Furthermore, there have been a wide variety of international research studies by foreign writers on the multiple-choice questions (MCQs) on different aspects, but few research studies about it were conducted in the Philippines. In fact, this kind of test format is used by the professional regulation commission (PRC), which serves forty-three various regulated professions of aspiring professionals who take the licensure examinations annually.<sup>6,7</sup> This study aimed to investigate the perception of multiple-choice questions (MCQ) among grade 12 senior high students of Mindanao State University-Sulu.

## 2. Methods

This study was an observational study with a descriptive approach. The premise of this study is located at the Department of senior high school, Mindanao State University-Sulu, Sulu, Philippines. This study utilized 100 students as the respondents. They were selected randomly, wherein fifty students from STEM and another 50 fifty students from GAS. A checklist questionnaire was used as the research

instrument. It was guided by the objectives of the study. It is composed of two parts; the former is a demographic profile that solicits which strand the respondent from, and the latter is close-ended statements in which the respondents must check their level of agreement. The ratio scale was classified as strongly agree (4.0-3.5), agree (3.49-2.5), disagree (2.49-1.5), and strongly disagree (1.49-1.0) as verbal descriptions. The collected data were presented in tables and narrative explanations.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows that the respondents strongly agree that multiple choice questions (MCQ) are quite challenging because of the time pressure while they must think critically in order to answer. On the other hand, they agreed on the following responses: they find the need to exert more effort in studying because of MCQ. Consequently, it develops their reading comprehension, rote memory, familiarization skills as well as techniques in shading under time pressure.<sup>8,9</sup> Students see it to manage their time in order to answer every subject, and admittedly, students who have little to no preparation tend to guess answers. In addition, MCQ has difficulty with the subject matter. The total mean is 3.24 with the description agreement. The respondents agreed on all the perceived challenges of multiple-choice questions.

Table 1. Perceived challenges of multiple-choice questions.

No	Challenges	Mean	Description
1	Answer under time pressure	3.58	Strongly agree
2	Time management in order to answer every subject.	3.14	Agree
3	Little to no preparation tends to guess answering	3.12	Agree
4	A need to exert more effort in studying	3.33	Agree
5	Improves rote memory	3.30	Agree
6	Develops critical thinking ability	3.52	Strongly agree
7	Develop reading comprehension under time pressure	3.32	Agree
8	Develop techniques in shading	2.81	Agree
9	Difficulty with the subject matter	3.05	Agree
10	Develop familiarization skills.	3.23	Agree
Grand mean		3.24	Agree

Table 2 shows that respondents strongly agreed that MCQ urges the student to answer each subject at a limited time, of which lack of preparation results in the difficulty of the exam. Correspondingly, students tend to experience test anxiety. Meanwhile, the respondents agreed that MCQ develops students' analysis on problem-solving which provides them with a real-time experience of taking major exams. Students tend to focus on the level of difficulty of the

subject matter of MCQ, which requires students to have rigorous preparation before the exam. Eventually, students develop time management in studying and strategies in answering as it encourages them to answer with persistence and resilience.<sup>10-12</sup> The overall mean is 3.37 with the corresponding weighted arithmetic mean "agree". This stated that the respondents agreed with the implication of multiple-choice questions.

Table 2. The perceived implication of multiple-choice questions.

No	Implication	Mean	Description
1	MCQ urges students to answer each subject for a limited time.	3.53	Strongly agree
2	MCQ develops strategies for answering	3.15	Agree
3	MCQ encourages students to answer with persistence and resilience	3.10	Agree
4	MCQ provides real-time experience in taking major exams	3.43	Agree
5	It involves students' rigorous preparation before the exam	3.33	Agree
6	It develops time management in studying	3.23	Agree
7	Students focus on the level of difficulty of the subject matter	3.38	Agree
8	It develops student's analysis on problem-solving	3.48	Agree
9	Lack of preparation results in the difficulty of the exam	3.56	Strongly agree
10	Students tend to experience test anxiety	3.54	Strongly agree
Grand mean		3.37	Agree

#### 4. Conclusion

Practicing MCQ as a test format provides the students to develop skills and adapt to it in the long run. Students would be able to condition their minds and cope with their stress and tension. Nonetheless, MCQ inculcates memory retention, and students may condition themselves to avoid test anxiety.

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