

Standardized Test and Home Grown Tests: Substitutes or Complements?

Subir Bandyopadhyay
Professor of Marketing
Indiana University Northwest

Anna Rominger
Dean, School of Business & Economics
Indiana University Northwest

2008 Assessment Institute, Indianapolis
October 26-28, 2008

Agenda

- Merits and demerits of a Standardized Test (e.g., ETS Field Test) and a Home-grown Core Concept Test
- Challenges for Developing a Core Concept Test
- Should We Treat the Two Tests as Substitutes or Complements?
- Our Experience
- Concluding Comments

Standardized Tests Vs. Home Grown Tests

	Standardized Tests	Home Grown Tests
Merits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to implement • Provides an opportunity to a program to leverage student performance for its marketing and promotion • Provides comparative results that are useful to benchmark program performance against other programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides greater flexibility for analysis of results • More conducive to results for curricular development • Provides results that assess knowledge of core concepts that correspond to the program's curriculum
Demerits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per student is high, leading to student discontent • Difficult to use data from results to evaluate curriculum • Norm-based exam with percentile results are often misunderstood and mis-interpreted • Test questions may not reflect the curriculum of a given program, making continuous improvement difficult <p>* Adopted from Rotondo (2005)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited external validity • Requires cooperation from the entire faculty in development to establish internal validity • Requires careful handling of data to maintain integrity of results and allow for precise analysis • Test preparation requires considerable faculty time

Challenges in Developing a Home-Grown Core Concept Test

- Getting the entire Faculty to participate in the development of the question bank
- They must be part of the process of writing, editing, analyzing, and revising the questions
- Assigning responsibility in generating, administering, and evaluating the test
- Identifying an "Assessment Captain" who will spearhead the development process at the initial stage

What We Did

- Incorporated a Standardized Test (i.e., ETS Field Test) and a Home-grown Core Concept Test
- Two tests are administered on alternate semester s to keep a control on the cost
- The Core Concept test covered core areas (e.g., Ethics, Operation Management) for the program that are not included in the ETS Field Test

Coverage of Topics: ETS Major Filed Test Vs. Core Concept Test

Functional Knowledge Area	ETS Major Field Test	IUN Core Concept Test
Accounting	X	X
Economics	X	
Ethics		X
Finance	X	X
Legal & Social Environment	X	X
Information Systems	X	X
International Issues	X	X
Management	X	X
Marketing	X	X
Operation Management		X
Quantitative Business Analysis	X	

Comparison of Scores (Percent Correct)

	ETS	ETS	Core Concept Test	Core Concept Test
	Spring 2008 (N=15)	Fall 2007 (N=13)	Summer 2008 (N=12)	Fall 2007 (N=9)
Accounting	45	38	45.3	46
Economics	42	30	NA	NA
Ethics	NA	NA	56	68
Finance	49	32	44.7	48.7
Legal & Social Environment	39	37	NA	NA
Information Systems	56	46	56.7	54.7
International Issues	39	41	50.7	48.7
Management	48	41	47.2	45.6
Marketing	42	41	56.7	58.7
Operation Management			47	46
Quantitative	47	33	NA	NA

Comparison of ETS Major Field Test and Core Concept Test Scores

- Average percent correct for ETS=43.2
- Average percent correct for Core Concept test=50.3
- Pearson correlation coefficient=0.42

Note: only scores for common areas across two tests are included

Concluding Comments

- We use the ETS Major Field Test and The Core Concept Test as complements
- The Core Concept Test gives us scores of each student for each core area; the ETS does not provide this as part of their standard report
- We alternate the administration of the two tests. This helps us to (1) economize, and (2) reduce the text taking burden on our students
- Motivating students to do well in either test is very critical