



doi 10.5281/zenodo.7821116

Vol. 06 Issue 04 April - 2023

Manuscript ID: #0818

IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION ON ACADEMICS PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE

Oguejiofor, Chidumebi Ngozi
Ogbuanya, Patience Chiamaka
Onuorah, Helen Chinelo (PhD)

Department of Educational Management and Policy, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State.

Corresponding author: *Oguejiofor, Chidumebi Ngozi
Email: Cn.oguejiofor@unizik.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges of continuous assessment implementation on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The researchers adopted a descriptive survey research design for the study. The study was carried out in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of the study was made up of 820 permanent teaching staff from nine public secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The sample was drawn using simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire titled "Assessment of Continuous Assessment in Secondary Schools Questionnaire" (ACASSQ) structured on a four point scale and validated by three experts was used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined using Test-retest method and this yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79. From the findings of the study, it was discovered that continuous assessment is a great gain to the school because, continuous assessment helps in knowing the real ability and the development of the child. The challenges of Continuous Assessment is that: Health challenged students are not properly evaluated. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that; the government should employ qualified professional teachers in all subjects and equally motivate them by recognition, regular payment of salaries and allowances of staff as well as improved training should be encouraged.

KEY WORDS

Continuous Assessment, Implementation, Academic Performance.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License.

Introduction

One major innovation in our educational system is the introduction of continuous assessment as an important component for evaluation. Educational assessment and evaluation will be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual. In all secondary schools, continuous assessment account for 40 percent of the pupils' performance in each subject. Higher institutions of learning allow between 20 and 30 percent in course assessment Alex (2010).

Thus, in all institution of learning; assessment is not a new concept in education. In the United States for instance, continuous assessment is built into the teaching-learning process. In Nigeria, there are different views about the concept to the extent that some of them are misconceptions. In order to understand this concept, it is necessary to clarify these misconceptions. Continuous assessment is not continuous testing of the cognitive ability of students as practice in most of our secondary schools these days. For instance, what is practiced in many schools is continuous testing; where teachers administer test on students on weekly or monthly basis. Some schools set aside specific days in the month for what is referred to as continuous assessment scores for the term or year. The mode of interpretation does not take into consideration other factors that may affect the student and the learning process. Furthermore, the effective and psychomotor domains are neglected. Thus, the implementation of continuous assessment seems to have derailed from the mode of operation.

Greaney (2011) defines assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude, or skills of the learner or group of learners. Assessment is therefore a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged. When carried out as an on-going process, assessment is known a Continuous Assessment (CA). CA is a formative evaluation procedure concerned with finding out, in a systematic manner, the over-all gains that a student has made in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills after a given set of learning experience (Ogunnyi, 2014).

According to Aggarwal (2010), Continuous assessment (CA) is not simply continuous testing. Continuous assessment doest not solely depend on formal tests. Continuous assessment is more than giving a test; it involves every decision made by the teacher in class to improve students' achievement. Continuous assessment may take different forms such as formal questions given to students during class, take-home assignments/exercises and recapitulation exercises. Assessment is either internal /external. Internal assessment refers to school-based assessment, which includes class assignments, teacher-made tests, recap exercise, projects, all these tools form part of the classroom continuous assessment strategies. A continuous assessment strategy refers to the different tools/procedures used in the classroom to understand the academic achievement levels of learners in terms of their knowledge, attitudes and values. Also a strategy in assessment is a purposefully conceived and determined plan of action. It is a pattern of assessment that seems to attain certain outcomes and to guard against other Aggarwal, (2010). External assessment refers to tests that are produced by examining bodies away from school.

In order to evaluate the new educational system, one policy that cuts across all educational levels throughout Nigeria is that on continuous assessment. In section 1 of the National Policy on Education (revised 2011), which deals with the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria, paragraph 9(g) states that "educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by their being based in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual". This statement is well amplified in subsequent sections of the documents dealing with secondary education (section 4), Secondary Education (section 5), and Tertiary Education and finally in section 12 which deals

with the Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education. The repeated emphasis being placed on continuous assessment is a clear evidence of its importance. The National Steering Committee on Continuous Assessment in Nigeria schools led by Professor Yoloye regards Continuous Assessment as a method of ascertaining what a child gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, industry and character development, taking into account all his/her performances in tests, assignments, projects and other educational activities during a given period of term, year, or during the entire period of an educational level (Ipaye, 2012). It is also a method of using the recorded performances of each pupil to help him or her improve on his or her achievement through guidance. According to Ezewu and Okoye (2011), continuous assessment refers to a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes in his behavior, from the day he enters upon a course of study and from this purpose with a view to using them to guide and shape the student and to serve as basis for making important decisions about the child. In other words, continuous assessment should be systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance oriented.

Therefore Continuous assessment is said to be systematic in the sense that it is planned, graded to suit the age and experience of the children and is given at suitable intervals during the school year. Appropriate timing saves students from being tested to death or becoming bored with too frequent assessments. Comprehensiveness of continuous assessment means that it is not focused on academic skills alone. It embraces the cognitive, the psychomotor and the affective domains. A child is assessed as a total entity using all the psychometric devices such as test and non-test techniques. Cumulative characteristics of continuous assessment means that all information gathered on the individual has to be pooled together before a decision can be taken. To say that continuous assessment is guidance oriented means that the information so collected is to be used for educational, vocational and personal-social decision-making for the child. Guidance and counseling activities thrive better on valid, sequential, systematic, continuous, cumulative and comprehensive information (Denga, 2013). Conceptually as well as in practice, continuous assessment provides feedback to children and teachers. Such feedback provides information which is used for purposes of improving on the child's performance or modifying the content, context and methods of teaching, as well as in making a variety of other decisions. Based on these the study aimed to cover the evaluation of challenges of continuous assessment implementation technique in teaching and learning in Enugu south Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of continuous assessment technique in our school system brought in certain problems that require the attention of both the government and other agencies involved in educational administration. These problems need to be identified so that possible solution could be proffered to them. Continuous assessment increased the workload of teachers thereby reducing efficiency and productivity. The attempt to conduct and record assessment regularly often lowers the teacher's ability to cover the scheme of work on schedule. Inadequate equipment and other instructional materials in teaching aids and understaffing tend to reduce the efficiency and effectiveness expected of the students and this hampers the proper implementation of programme. Inadequate financing of continuous assessment technique in schools is also one of the problems affecting this programme. The difficulties of quantifying and assessing hand work materials, local crafts and other subjects that are practically oriented and constant writing of reports, progress charts and record of other faults often deviate the attention of teachers from class work (Teaching). The problems of continuous assessment technique affect the record of transferring students because of the differences in timing of assessment between different schools within the same state, the

researcher therefore, aim to find out the challenges of continuous assessment implementation on academics performance of secondary school students.

Research Questions

1. How does continuous assessment improve the cognitive ability of students in secondary schools in Enugu South local Government Area of Enugu State?
2. How does continuous assessment improve student's attentiveness in the classroom among secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State?

Literature Review

Concept of Continuous Assessment

Ani (2016) posits continuous assessment as a method of assessment in which the teacher periodically or intermittently ascertains what the learner has gained in terms of knowledge, thinking, reasoning, character learning activities using various instruments like tests, assignments, projects, observation, interviews and questionnaires. Ani (2016), Continuous assessment (CA) can be defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of all his or her performance during a given period of schooling. One of the distinctive features of the new policy on education is its emphasis on continuous assessment.

According to Enem (2012), continuous assessment (CA) is defines as the method of ascertaining what a student gains from school in terms of knowledge, industry and character development, taking into consideration all his/her performance, in test, assignment, projects and other educational activities during a given period of the year, or during the entire period of an educational level. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2017) stated that educational assessment and evaluation will be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual. The policy also prescribed the central guidelines that should be adopted by states and schools nationwide and suggested the type of continuous assessment instruments that could be used to achieve the ideals and objectives of continuous assessment. Continuous assessment (CA) was first introduced in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria in 1977, following the adoption of the National Policy on Education. Before 1977, assessment of learners' performance was purely based on one-shot examinations usually administered at the end of the term or school year. Obioma (2011) in Ifiokobong (2015) posits that the introduction of continuous assessment was to render assessment school based, improve evaluation of learners' attainment by ensuring that assessment is cumulative, systematic, and comprehensive and guidance oriented. In spite of this, observations continued to show that there are problems of the effective implementation of continuous assessment in Nigeria (Ani, 2016). With the commencement of the implementation of the 9-years Basic Education Curriculum in September 2008 in Nigeria, the Nigerian National Council on Education has approved a new National framework for conducting continuous assessment in schools in Nigeria (NERDC, 2007). There is a plan also to improve the capacity of teachers on the effective implementation and the new national framework on continuous assessment.

Implementing Continuous Assessment within the School

The National Policy recognizes that government is aware that the administration of continuous assessment within schools will pose certain significant problems to both the teachers and the educational system itself. The policy further advocated training programmes for teachers who will be central to the achievement of continuous assessment and other objectives of school evaluation programme. There is the need to design an operational plan so that uniformity in both standards and

record keeping across and within schools will be maintained. Such model is necessary so as to facilitate the transfer of student's records from school-to-school without much distortion to his/her previous records. It is expected that the students, teachers, guidance counselor, principals and stakeholders in teaching-learning setting should be considered in the administration of continuous assessment (FRN: 2013). According to Okwudire (2015) understanding the concept of continuous assessment makes the implementation easier both for teachers and students.

Implementation Problems of Continuous Assessment

According to Ifiokobong (2015) some of the implementation problems include:

- **Comparability of Standard:** Comparability of standards arises from the differences in the quality of tests and other assessment instruments used in different schools. The ways and manner assessment instruments are developed and administered in various schools could present problems in scoring and grading of achievement in various school subjects.
- **Record Keeping and Continuity of Records:** Continuous assessment cannot be meaningful except there is a meticulous keeping of accurate records for each students/pupils throughout the child's period of schooling. Since these records are expected to be cumulative from class-to-class and from school-to-school, there is the need for some uniformity in the kinds of records kept and the format for keeping such records. A child with the same level of education can move from one school to another because of parents transfer from one place to the other. This will lead to the transferring the child's records from the previous school to the new one.
- **Storage Facilities:** In continuous assessment, associated with the problem of record keeping is the storage facility for safe keeping of records. Most secondary and secondary are poorly equipped for such a function.
- **Unqualified Personnel:** There are no qualified personnel to implement and operate continuous assessment. Many teachers do not possess the necessary skills in developing valid assessment instruments for the evaluation of behavioural outcomes in the three domains. Continuous assessment requires the overall ability of every child in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor.
- **Large Number of Students:** For effective assessment, the teacher needs to spend time on each child by helping and observing. The teacher has to teach less number of students per class. By this, the teacher will teach, assess and provide feedback to the children individually. Presently the number of students per class can be more than fifty. This makes it too difficult for teachers to teach and evaluate effectively, even if they have the competency.
- **Misinterpretation of Guideline:** Some principals and teachers think that assessments are limited to paper and pencil tests and examination. Teachers can summarize pupils score, class work and assignments to make up a grade for a given period. Teachers seem to be confused in the amount of material content that should be covered by each test. In other words, should a test cover only the materials taught after an assignment has been made or should the test content be extended to the earlier and related materials taught after the preceding tests? Ani (2016) reported that most teachers opined that each test should include the earlier and related materials taught before and after each preceding test. This is necessary because a test limited in content to the materials taught after the last test would not give the students an opportunity to use knowledge which has been acquired before the last test. Besides, that would not make for an effective transfer of knowledge on the part of the students coupled with the need for adequate vertical integration of the subject content by the teacher.

Theoretical framework

John Dewey Theory

This theory was propounded by John Dewey in the year 1893. October 20, 1959 marked the one-hundredth anniversary of John Dewey's birthday. This eminent thinker of the Progressive movement was the dominant figure in American education. His most valuable and enduring contribution to our culture came from the ideas and methods he fathered in this field. He is probably most famous for his role in what is called progressive education. Progressive education is essentially a view of education that emphasizes the need to learn by doing.

Dewey believed that human beings learn through a 'hands-on' approach. This places Dewey in the educational philosophy of pragmatism.

Pragmatists believe that reality must be experienced. From Dewey's educational point of view, this means that students must interact with their environment in order to adapt and learn. Dewey felt the same idea was true for teachers and teachers and students must learn together. His view of the classroom was deeply rooted in democratic ideals, which promoted equal voice among all participants in the learning experience.

Method

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design for this study. The area of the study is Enugu South local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of this study is made up of 820 permanent teaching staff from the nine public secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. The sample size was selected by using simple random sampling. Five schools were selected from nine secondary schools in Enugu East. 100 secondary school teachers were selected from the five (5) secondary schools in the area of the study making it 20 teachers from each school. The instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire titled Impact of Continuous Assessment in Secondary Schools Questionnaire (ICASSQ). The researcher adopted face and content validity. To validate; the researcher sent the instrument ICASSQ to experts for validation required. Data was analyzed using Mean statistics.

Results

Research Question 1

To what extent has continuous assessment been of great gain to the school system?

Table 1: Responses on extent continuous assessment techniques has been of great gain to the school system.

S/N	ITEM	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
1.	Continuous assessment helps in assessing the 3 domains of educational development of a child	30	22	29	19	2.63	Agreed
2.	Continuous assessment helps in knowing the real ability of the child	30-	22	29	19	2.63	Agreed
3	It helps the teacher to know if what he/she taught is understood by the pupils	28	24	20	28	2.52	Agreed
4	In terms of placing pupils in their positions continuous assessment helps the teacher a lot.	31	21	30	18	2.65	Agreed

The table above reveals that mean ratings of all response items is above 2.5 the acceptance level with grand mean of 2.7 which shows agreement.

Research Question 2

What are the problems of continuous assessment on students' academic performance?

Table 2: Responses on problems of continuous assessment on student's academic performance.

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D	X	DECISION
5.	Health challenged students are not Properly evaluated	49	11	16	24	2.85	Agreed
6.	Intelligent but not regular students in Lesson or class perform very low	48	16	13	23	2.89	Agreed
7	Continuous Assessment gives room for Exam malpractice and Unhealthy competition	48	23	18	11	3.08	Agreed

The table above reveals that mean scores of all response items is above 2.5 with grand mean of 2.7 which shows is regards as agreement

Discussion of Findings

Research Question one was analyzed in table 1, the results reveals that mean scores of respondents in all response items are above 2.5 that is 2.6, 2.6, 2.9, 2.8, 2.8 and a grand mean of 2.7 which shows that continuous assessment is important to students' academic performance. This agrees with the findings of Ani (2016) that continuous assessment helps students to perform better in examinations.

In table 2, the results reveals that mean scores of five response items are 2.8, 2.7, 2.6, 2.8 and 2.6 are above the acceptance level of 2.5 with grand mean of 2.7 which indicates that problems could arise as result of those that have health issue during period may not be properly assessed and final result may not be true picture of the results on the assessment. This agreed with the findings of Ani (2016) that despite efforts on continuous assessment there still exist some problems as regards poor implementation and evaluation by some teachers.

Conclusion

The study concluded that teachers are the key evaluators and implementers of continuous assessment in schools thus required professional and qualified teachers who understand the need for effective continuous assessment in schools, poorly implemented continuous will affect educational goals, individual aspiration and future national development adversely. The school managers should put more of their efforts in supervision of instructions, instructional materials and teachers to ensure that the educational goal of the nation is achieved. The school managers and government should continually organize training and retraining of teachers in modern and technological instructional materials for improved evaluation and implementation of continuous assessment in schools.

Recommendation

From the analyses done, the researcher recommended the following;

1. The government should employ qualified professional teachers in all subjects and equally motivate them by recognition, paying salaries and allowances regularly and give them training.
2. The government should provide necessary infrastructure and also trained personnel to handle the equipment accordingly.

References

- Alex M. (2010). Relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement amongst pre-university students. *Journal of Applied Sciences*, vol. 2(10) , 174-177.
- Greaney, V. (2011). *Using Assessment to improve the quality of Education* Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Education Planning
- Ogunniyi, M. Y. (2014). Problems and prospects of implementation of continuous assessment in Nigerian schools. *GidanWaya Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*. .
- Aggarwal, D. (2010). Lessons from around the World. How Policies, Politics and Cultures Constrain and afford Assessment Practices. *The Curriculum Journal* 16(2) 249-261 Activities. London, Paul Champman.
- Ezewu, A., & Okoye, B., (2011). Feedback as a Poor Performance Remediation a Report Submitted for Publication in *Journal of education*, University of Calabar, 2005 Nigeria.
- Ipaye, A.O. (2012). Academic performance five factors inventory. Ibadan: StirlingHorden Publishers.
- Denga, S. A. (2013). *Effects of Student Self-Assessment on Knowledge Achievement and Academic Thinking*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Integrated English Language Program-II (3rd, Cairo, Egypt, April 18–19, 2001). ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 452 731