

ATTITUDE OF JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS TO CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN MUNICIPAL EDUCATIONAL ZONE, KANO STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the attitude of junior secondary school teachers' to continuous assessment practices. It determined the level of teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment practice in schools and explored the challenges that militate against effective application of continuous assessment. The study equally examined the relationship between teachers' knowledge and attitude towards continuous assessment practice. Descriptive survey research design was used in the study. A total of 294 teachers across 28 junior secondary schools in the municipal education zone of Kano State formed the study population out of which 152 were drawn as sample using simple random sampling technique. A researcher-made questionnaire titled "Attitude of Teachers towards Continuous Assessment Practices" (ATCAP) was used as the data collection tool. The reliability index of the instrument was determine using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test in which knowledge of continuous assessment (CA) had an index of .78, attitude had .81 while challenges had .76 reliability index. Frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used in answering research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed in testing the hypothesis. Findings of the study revealed that junior secondary school teachers had positive attitude and high knowledge of continuous assessment. The demanding nature of teaching, overcrowded classrooms and the tedious processes of continuous assessment were found to be the major factors that militate against the proper use of CA. A statistically significant positive relationship ($r = .354, p = .000, p < .05$) was found between teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment and their attitude towards it. The study recommended that school administrators should inculcate a positive attitude in their teachers towards the practices of continuous assessment through routine workshops and seminars with a view to improving their knowledge of continuous assessment and its practice.

Keywords: Teachers, Attitude, Continuous Assessment

Introduction

The cardinal objective of the school system is to bring desired changes in the behaviour of students through thoroughly taught schemes that are based on the provisions of the curriculum. Teachers have to continuously assess learners to evaluate the attainment of the lesson's objectives using continuous assessment as a viable means of communication between teachers and students. Mwebaza, (2010) posits that through assessment, the quality of teacher's work or performance is judged. Thus, assessment serves as a gauge for teachers' performance and an index for the overall school success. Hayford (2007) views it as an avenue through which teachers drill their students in the form of classroom exercises, tests, home work, and projects with a view to collecting numerical scores that serve as students' termly and annual records. The Hong Kong Education Commission (2000) defines assessment as collecting evidence of the learner's learning. This shows that assessment is part and parcel of the teaching process. Assessment is instrumental in providing information to teachers and learners on the level of knowledge attained and where improvements are needed. Continuous assessment could be internal or external. Internal assessment is mainly for formative evaluation while external assessment is for certification purposes, quality assurance measure and it serves as a means of obtaining feedback on curricular and teaching effectiveness. Mwebaza (2010) is of the view that assessment should involve the regular collection of data across all aspects of learning. Thus, teachers are expected to document their students' academic records continuously to make meaningful academic decisions. Odelola (2005) believes that for assessment to be effective, teachers should be mindful of the changing nature of the society. Learners should not be subjected only to learning and understanding but should be trained to be reflective thinkers that could critically think, analyse and infer.

Continuous assessment was introduced in Nigeria to improve learning achievement and quality control. The national policy on education highlighted the need for continuous assessment to integrate all types of evaluations. The policy states that “educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by being based in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual” (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

Due to the imperatives of educational assessment, the national policy on education made it mandatory that continuous assessment be used at all educational levels for the evaluation of students' achievement, hence teachers are expected to have adequate knowledge of continuous assessment (CA) and use it for effective evaluation of students' attainment of the educational goals. However, Vandeyar and Killen (2007) opined that variations in teachers' conception of assessment led to diversity in its practice. They identified three groups of educators based on their conception of the term 'assessment'. The first group views assessment as a way of gathering data on which academic decisions are based. This class of educators makes assessment an integral part

of their teaching and emphasise formative assessment. The second group consists of educators that see assessment as an instrument for making learners responsible for their learning. Teachers within this category emphasize formal and summative assessment and often distance themselves from learners' poor performance. The third category consists of educators who view assessment as a way of making teachers and schools accountable for the whole educational processes. They favour summative assessment practices that emphasize the generation of marks that can be reported to external agencies. These show that the teachers understanding of what continuous assessment entails is major factor in its implementation. Fakeye and Adefisoye (2016) reveal that when the teacher is favourably disposed to the use of assessment and corrective feedback, he incorporates it in the lesson plan.

Furthermore, a critical factor for success in every activity is one's attitude. A positive attitude towards one's job will invariably bring success on the job. It serves as 'push factor' to struggle to attain excellence. Conversely, individuals with a negative attitude will practise undeserving acts that may lead to failure (Faleye and Adefisoye, 2016), hence the need for teachers to develop self-commitment towards continuous assessment in schools. Students of teachers who practise continuous assessment extensively will often have better performance than their counterparts of the same ability who are assessed through a single examination (Nneji, Fatade, Awofala, & Awofala, 2012; Mwebaza, 2010).

Teachers need to regularly evaluate their students' level of the attainment of the set objectives. As a crucial part of the school evaluation system, educators should have full knowledge of continuous assessment use it as stipulated to avoid a haphazard evaluation of students' progress. However, despite the threat posed by non-adherence to CA on learning outcome, previous studies (Clement & Ayibatonye, 2014; Fakeye, 2016) revealed that most teachers at the junior secondary school level ignore the use of continuous assessment. Majority of the junior secondary school teachers view continuous assessment as just additional marks to be attached with the examination scores in the final assessment. Such an attitude suggests that most of the continuous assessment marks given by teachers are arbitrarily. This study examined the attitude of junior secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment practices in municipal education zone of Kano State. The objectives of the study are therefore to:

- I. determine the attitude of teachers' towards continuous assessment practices in the municipal education zone of Kano State.
- II. examine the level of teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State.
- III. examine the challenges that militate against effective use of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State.

- IV. examine the relationship between teachers' knowledge and attitude towards continuous assessment practice in the municipal education zone of Kano State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- I. What are the attitudes of teachers towards continuous assessment practices in the municipal education zone of Kano State?
- II. What are the levels of teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State?
- III. What are the challenges that militate against teachers' effective use of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State?
- IV. Is there any significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and attitude towards continuous assessment practice in the municipal education zone of Kano State?

Methods

Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study consists of 294 junior secondary school teachers from 28 schools in the municipal educational zone of Kano State. A sample of 152 teachers was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The sample size was drafted with the table for the determination of sample size developed by Research Advisors (2006). A researcher-made questionnaire titled "Attitude of Teachers towards Continuous Assessment Practices" (ATCAP) was used to collect data. The instrument consisted of four sections. Section A covered demographic information of the teachers. Section B solicited information on teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment, consisted of 10 items on a four point Likert scale. Section C asked questions on knowledge of continuous assessment, it had 9 items on a four-point Likert scale while Section D was on the challenges of effective implementation of continuous assessment; it consisted of 5 items on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument was validated by professionals from the test and measurement department, Bayero University Kano. A reliability test was then conducted using Cronbach's Alpha reliability test with a sample of 30 respondents. It was found that the construct of knowledge of continuous assessment had an index of .78, the construct of Attitude had .81 while that of challenges had .76 reliability index. A total of 152 questionnaires were administered with the aid of a research assistant. A hundred and thirty seven (137) properly-filled questionnaires were retrieved. The collected data was statistically analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions with a decision rule of mean score of 2.5 and above as accepted. Pearson Product Moment

Correlation (PPMC) was used in testing the stated null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of teachers' towards continuous assessment practices in the municipal education zone of Kano State?

In order to answer this question, the data collected in Section B was subjected to statistical analyses of mean and standard deviation. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers Attitude towards Continuous Assessment Practices

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Conducting continuous assessment is part and parcel of my duty as a teacher.	55 (40%)	76 (56%)	6 (4%)	---	3.35	.56	Accepted
I conduct continuous assessment to my students as stipulated.	44 (32%)	34 (25%)	28 (20%)	31 (23%)	2.66	1.15	Accepted
I do offer additional continuous assessment to boost the performance of my students.	3 (2%)	9 (7%)	61 (45%)	64 (67%)	1.64	.70	Rejected
I do not consider the practice of regular continuous assessment as tedious exercises.	9 (7%)	37 (27%)	65 (47%)	26 (19%)	2.21	.82	Rejected
The use of continuous assessment increases my knowledge of students' weaknesses and strengths.	101 (74%)	26 (19%)	9 (6%)	1 (1%)	3.65	.63	Accepted
The use of continuous assessment enables me to inculcate reading culture to my students.	107 (78%)	27 (20%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	3.75	.51	Accepted
I have passion towards conducting continuous assessment to my students.	112 (82%)	22 (16%)	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	3.78	.49	Accepted
My knowledge of continuous assessment motivates my usage of the system.	91 (66%)	38 (28%)	8 (6%)	----	3.60	.59	Accepted
The use of continuous assessment increases my knowledge as a teacher.	67 (49%)	49 (36%)	14 (10%)	7 (5%)	3.28	.84	Accepted
Tight teaching schedule does not prevent me from conducting continuous assessment.	7 (5%)	5 (3%)	64 (47%)	61 (45%)	1.69	.77	Rejected

Mean and standard deviation was used in answering Research Question 1. From Table 1, the respondents showed that continuous assessment is part of their duties as teachers (M= 3.35), and they conducted continuous assessment as stipulated (M= 2.66). They equally showed that continuous assessment increases their knowledge of students' weaknesses and strengths (M= 3.65) and assists in inculcating the reading

culture in students (M = 3.75). It imbues teachers with the passion for continuous assessment (M = 3.78), makes them feel motivated (M = 3.60) and increases their knowledge as teachers (M = 3.28). On the other hand, the respondents were found not to offer additional continuous assessment to boost students' performance (M = 1.64) as they considered continuous assessment tedious (M = 2.21) and that tight teaching schedule prevented them from regular continuous assessment practice (M = 1.69).

Research Question 2: What is the level of teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State?

To answer this question, the data collected Section C of the ATCAP instrument was subjected to statistical analysis of mean and standard deviation. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers Knowledge on Continuous Assessment

ITEM	S	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Continuous assessment is a practice of checking learners' attainment of lesson objectives in a continuous way.	17 (12%)	58 (42%)	54 (40%)	8 (6%)	2.61	.78	Accepted
Continuous assessment serves the purpose of guiding and improving students' performance.	77 (56%)	42 (31%)	15 (11%)	3 (2%)	3.40	.77	Accepted
A well planned continuous assessment provides feedback the teachers and learners.	44 (32%)	34 (25%)	28 (20%)	31 (23%)	2.66	1.15	Accepted
A sound continuous assessment serves as a yardstick for measuring students' attainment of lesson objectives.	34 (25%)	46 (34%)	24 (17%)	33 (24%)	2.59	1.10	Accepted
A continuous assessment allows the students to know how well they are progressing in their learning.	60 (44%)	27 (20%)	25 (18%)	25 (18%)	2.89	1.16	Accepted
The practice of continuous assessment equips the teachers with the kind of remedies and supports to provide to the students.	36 (26%)	47 (34%)	23 (17%)	31 (23%)	2.64	1.10	Accepted
The practice of continuous assessment compels students to concentrate their efforts on learning.	71 (52%)	37 (27%)	24 (17%)	5 (4%)	3.27	.87	Accepted
Strict compliance to the principles of continuous assessment does not increase teachers' work load.	55 (40%)	36 (26%)	20 (15%)	26 (19%)	2.87	1.14	Accepted
The use of continuous assessment fosters students with all round skills.	48 (35%)	30 (22%)	35 (26%)	24 (17%)	2.74	1.11	Accepted

Table 2 shows teachers knowledge of continuous assessment. Computed responses on the table shows that the respondents believed that continuous assessment is a practice of checking learners' attainment of lesson objectives ($M = 2.61$), serves the purpose of guiding and improving students' performance ($M = 3.40$), provides feedback to the teachers and learners ($M = 2.66$), allows students to know how well they are progressing in their learning ($M = 2.89$), equips teachers with the kind of remedy and support to provide to the students ($M = 2.64$) and compels students to concentrate on learning ($M = 3.27$). They are of the view that continuous assessment increased work load ($M = 1.14$) and does not give students all round skills.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges that militate against teachers' effective use of continuous assessment in the municipal education zone of Kano State?

To answer this question, data collected on Section D of ATCAP instrument was subjected to statistical analysis of mean and standard deviation. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Challenges towards Continuous Assessment

ITEM	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Lack of proper knowledge of continuous assessment desists me from implementing it as required.	---	---	56 (41%)	81 (59%)	1.40	.49	Rejected
Continuous assessment practice are tedious and time consuming.	36 (26%)	47 (34%)	23 (17%)	31 (23%)	2.64	1.10	Accepted
The demanding nature of teaching consumes the time that would otherwise be used in continuous assessment.	71 (52%)	37 (27%)	24 (17%)	5 (4%)	3.27	.87	Accepted
Overcrowded classrooms make teachers avert continuous assessment practices.	55 (40%)	36 (26%)	20 (15%)	26 (19%)	2.87	1.14	Accepted
The frequent nature of continuous assessment makes its practice boring.	48 (35%)	30 (22%)	35 (26%)	24 (17%)	2.74	1.11	Accepted

Table 3 provided the results of responses on challenges against the use of continuous assessment. From the table, the major challenges are that the practice is tedious and time consuming ($M = 2.64$), teaching is demanding ($M = 3.27$) and classrooms are overcrowded (2.87). Respondents are of the view that lack of proper knowledge ($M = 1.40$) and the frequency of continuous assessment ($M = 1.11$) were not among the factors against the proper use of continuous assessment.

Research Question 4: Is there any significant relationship between teachers' knowledge and attitude towards continuous assessment practice in the municipal education zone of Kano State?

To answer this question, the data collected on sections B and C of the ATCAP instrument were subjected to the statistical analysis of PPMC. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Relationship between Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude towards C.A

Variables	M	SD	r	Sig.	Decision
Attitude towards CA	26.00	2.43	.354	.000	Significant
Knowledge of CA	25.70	6.14			

PPMC was used to determine the relationship between teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment and their attitude towards continuous assessment practices. From Table 4, the obtained correlation value ($r = .354, p < .05$) showed that a statistically significant relationship existed between teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment and their attitude towards continuous assessment.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated junior secondary school teacher's attitude towards continuous assessment practices.

The findings of the study revealed that the teachers had a positive attitude towards continuous assessment. The result was in agreement with the finding of Adeneye and Babajide (2013) that teachers exhibited positive attitudes in a series of continuous assessment practices with a few of their attitudes on assessment practices being either negative or neutral. Conversely, the work of Dessie (2015) revealed that the practice of continuous assessment by teachers was very low. He posited that most teachers ignored the fact that continuous assessment is a compulsory exercise for teachers. He pointed out that the use of classwork and assignment by teachers at the end of a lesson is inadequate, hence the need to integrate different assessments throughout the course of learning. This calls for workshops and seminars for teachers with the sole aim of positively reshaping their attitude towards continuous assessment.

The study also revealed that junior secondary school teachers in municipal educational zone of Kano State possess high knowledge of continuous assessment. The findings disagree with Obioma (2013) that school teachers often displayed poor knowledge of the basic concepts of continuous assessment and contradict the submission of Bello and Tijjani (2003) that teachers are wanting in the use of assessment. Consequently, Patrick and Uvietesivwi (2018) buttressed the need for teachers to be knowledgeable in

interpreting the scores and grades awarded to students using the various measuring instruments. Teachers should also demonstrate competence in the construction of tests, questionnaires, checklists and rating scales for assessing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains or learning outcome.

The study identified the tedious nature of continuous assessment, the demanding nature of teaching and overcrowded classrooms as the major factors which militate against the effective use of the continuous assessment in schools. This corroborates the discovery of Hayford (2007) that high number of students in classrooms and teachers' lack of adequate training serves as impediments for the effective use of continuous assessment. Adebowale and Alao (2008) also identified factors that impede the effective use of continuous assessment in schools to include poor skills in test construction and administration as well as teachers' lack of interest in keeping assessment record-sheets. They maintained that these and many other factors hampered the effective use of continuous assessment in schools.

The study revealed that a statistically significant positive relationship exists between the variables of teachers' knowledge of continuous assessment and that of attitude towards the use of continuous assessment. This was based on the obtained results ($r = .354$, $p = .000$, $p < .05$) which imply that teachers with more robust knowledge of continuous assessment would have a positive attitude towards its use. However, Patrick and Uvietesivwi (2018) asserted that teachers were commonly found to display less attention and portray unprofessional conducts towards continuous assessment implementation. They attributed this to the demanding nature of the teaching profession. Thus, to have a systemic continuous assessment implementation, teaching should be made less cumbersome and teachers should be mentally and professionally prepared to appreciate continuous assessment as of primal importance to evaluation process.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that junior secondary school teachers in Kano municipal educational zone of Kano State possessed a positive attitude towards continuous assessment practices. They also possessed high levels of knowledge of continuous assessment but the time consuming and tedious nature of CA, the very demanding nature of teaching and the overcrowded classrooms are the major factors that militate against effective use of continuous assessment by teachers. Furthermore, teachers with high levels continuous assessment knowledge exhibited positive attitudes towards continuous assessment practices.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

- I. The ministry of education should regularly organise seminars and workshops for teachers to reshape their attitude towards continuous assessment.
- II. Teachers should appreciate continuous assessment because it served as catalyst that equips them with the kind of remedies and supports to provide to students.
- III. School administrators should device a way of reducing the tedious and time consuming nature of continuous assessment by providing grade sheets to teachers, and ensuring proportionate course allocation to teachers. Overcrowded classrooms should be decongested to give room for easy conduct of continuous assessment.
- IV. Teachers should engage in brainstorming to demonstrate a positive attitude towards continuous assessment.

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