



TEACHERS' CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS EDUCATION

Korode, Abbagana Kolo
Department of Educational Foundations and Administration
School of General Education
Federal College of Education, Yola, Adamawa State

ABSTRACT: The concepts of education, teacher and continues assessment have been identified as keys elements to the success of students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary schools. Identified and highlighted also is teacher's professional and committed to teaching profession. The feature of continuous assessment and its usage has been articulated. The concept of CAS quality and records keeping as related to students' educational performance. Lastly CAS as an innovation of students; assessment clearly stated and same recommendations are made for betterment of CAS in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: Concept of Education, Teacher, Continues Assessment and Student Academic Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Education remains the instrument for academic progress, social mobilization, political survival and effective national development of any nation in the world. Education is the fundamental instrument for development of any nation. Fabunmi (2019) stated that education is a process of transmitting social values to citizen with a view to enhances their knowledge, productive capacity, income and contribution to national development. This means education paves way for total transformation of the mind and ideas for self-improvement and relative enhancement of standard of living of individual, society and country in general. The hope of every country in the world says Alaka (2011) is to develop human capital for effective functioning of the society. Education in Nigeria according to Obadara (2013) is an invaluable instrument of political, social,

economic, scientific and technological development. This could be achieved through qualified, dedicated, committed and motivated teachers because, teacher is a great adviser in making anybody's choice to build a career. Teacher is the only person who believes that you can achieve something in your life. A teacher is the only person who enjoys the success of a student and helps you to turn your weakness into your strength.

There is need to clarify who is a teacher from the claims in some quarters that everybody is a teacher because at one time or the other, we teach ourselves, others, coworkers and employees. We also teach our children, siblings, parents, friends and even enemies. This implies that throughout our lives, we are engaged in teaching. In a strictly professional sense, this explanation is too general as everybody in the world is a teacher. A teacher could be seen as a professionally prepared person who is charged with the responsibility of disseminating positive knowledge, attitudes and skills to learners in the school. Professional teachers are distinguished from quacks by the following qualities; punctuality at all school functions, cleanliness, honesty, patience, resourcefulness, discipline, good sense of humor, firmness, fair in decision making, motivate learners, a continuous learner by attending workshops, seminars, conferences, refresher and in-service courses. The strength of any profession depends up on the degree of commitment of its members, teaching is no exception. This means that the strength of teaching profession depends upon the commitment of the teachers. A committed teacher is one whose behaviour is consistent with philosophy of education.

The committed teacher according to Cagri (2013) is someone who:

- Desire to be a good teacher: perhaps the most important characteristics of a committed teacher is that he/she wants to teach and do it well. The committed teacher, enjoys working with strong desire to help each student develop full potential.

- Fulfilling professional responsibility: the committed teacher recognizes professional responsibilities to students, colleagues, administrators, parents and the community, accepts, as the members of the teaching profession, the responsibility of advancing the course of education, improving the quality of teaching, promoting the welfare of other teachers, and elevating the status of the profession.
- The purveyor of facts: The committed teacher realizes that education is more than accumulating of factual information, the presentation of such information can perhaps be more effectively accomplished by the utilization of teaching machines, television, and other technological devices

Teachers at all levels of the educational system are expected to stimulate students' spirit of understanding, inquiring, and the acquisition of knowledge and thoughtful formulation of worthy goals. Teachers must work towards providing opportunities for the practice of individual right for equal educational opportunity and success through individual effort for students' academic performance. Academic performance refers to the process where students' performances are measured by examination within the content of a curriculum. James (2014) viewed academic performance as the ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate knowledge verbally or on paper. In other words, academic performances refer to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers. Academic performances generally refer to how well students accomplished their tasks. Therefore, academic performances can be seen generally as a pedagogical terminology used while determining learners in formal education and is measured through reports, examinations, researches, and relating with numerous facts or variables exerting influence. The National Policy on Education (2013), has identified school academic performances content according to subjects classified as core or elective subjects. Academic

performance is therefore a cardinal concept in education. The centrality of this concept is derived from the goal of instruction which is to bring about desired changes in knowledge, skills and aptitudes of students. In this context secondary school is a very important level of education in Nigeria.

The importance of secondary education in the Nigerian Educational System cannot be under rated. Apart from Serving as the link between primary and tertiary Education, it provides opportunity for a child to acquire additional knowledge and skills, beyond the primary level. A major factor that necessitates the importance of secondary education in Nigeria is that the education being provided at the primary level is proving to be insufficient for a child to acquire permanent literacy, communicative, and numeracy skills expected of the learner at the end of the training (Cynia, 2011; Ige, 2011 and Yusuf, 2012). Secondary education started some decades after the development of primary education, particularly when the need for outputs of primary schools to further their education in secondary schools became necessary. In Nigeria, secondary education according to Yusuf (2012) started in 1859. The aims and objectives of secondary schools' education as stated in the National Policy on Education (N.P.E, 2013) as preparing an individual for useful living within the society, and higher education.

Specifically, it aims at: Providing all primary school leavers with the opportunity for Education at higher level irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background; Offering diversified curriculum to cater for differences in talents, opportunities, and future roles; Providing trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; Developing and promoting Nigerian languages, arts and culture in the context of the world's cultural heritage, Inspiring students with a desire for self-improvement and achievements of excellence. Fostering national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity, to Raises a generation of people who can think for

themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, Respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals, and live as good citizens; and, providing technical knowledge and vocational skills, necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial, and economic development. To achieve these objectives, Continuous Assessment becomes necessary in Nigerian secondary schools. One of the most important and significant developments in Nigerian educational system was the introduction of the use of Continuous Assessment (CA) in evaluation of students in at all levels of schooling. By implication, every teacher from secondary level of education should understand and practice Continuous Assessment. Continuous assessment can be defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of all performances during a given period of schooling.

Korode (2018) viewed continuous assessment as a method of assessment in which the teacher periodically ascertains what the learner has gained in terms of knowledge, thinking, reasoning, character formation, learning activities using various instruments like tests, assignments, projects, observation, interviews and questionnaires. Continuous assessment demands that the teacher takes into consideration information obtained from all sources about the student. It is usually well focused by being closely related to what was actually taught. In fact, the feedback mechanism that forms part of it, ensures that educational goals are attained. It requires the use of tests, observation and interview, to get a general impression of who the student is and what can be done to assist in areas of difficulty. National Policy on Education (NPE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) observed that the existing practice of basing the assessment of students work on final examination and on one-short examination only is no longer tenable. At the end of the secondary years course (Senior Secondary) a formal examination will be given but the performance during the three years will be weighted and taken into account for certificate purpose. The university and other institutions of higher learning will also be required to explore ways of introducing

an element of continuous assessment of their students. The NPE changed the old British system of education which was practiced in Nigerian secondary schools to the 6-3-3-4 system, which was American in nature. The new policy which was introduced in early 1980s stood for six years of primary education, three years of junior secondary schools and three years of senior secondary schools. CA shall constitute 40% of the total marks obtainable (100) in every subject. Idowu and Esere, (2009) stated that to effectively carry out this role, CA is a prerequisite. CA is a means whereby the teacher obtains information about knowledge gains, behavioural changes and other aspects of the development of learners. It involves the deliberate effort of the teacher to measure the effort of the instructional process as well as the overall effort of school learning on the behaviour of students. CA covers all aspects of school experience both within and outside the classroom. It covers the cognitive as well as the affective and psychomotor aspects of learning.

In Nigeria, educational planners and administrators are now more conscious than ever before of their role in the nationwide scheme of curriculum innovation. Not only have new courses been introduced and new contents injected into existing subjects, a fundamental change in the system of assessment of students' performance has also emerged through the formalization of Continuous Assessment as a major component of evaluation process. Section One Paragraph 9(g) of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004) stated 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". The main system of evaluation in the past was by means of end-of course examination; that is, one examination at the end of all teaching and learning during the year. It neglected the assessment of non-cognitive educational objectives and created a lot of social and psychological problems for the learners. The mode of evaluation also denied teachers the opportunity of participating fully in the final assessment of their students. In view of the problems associated with the above

system of evaluation, the Federal Government introduced a new system of evaluation which is 'Continuous Assessment'. The new system therefore takes care of the problem of the old system.

The major evidence weighted in support of continuous assessment in schools is that students who are assessed continuously obtain better results than those of equal ability, assessed through a single examination (Nneji, Fatade, Awofala, and Awofala, 2012). This is because continuous assessment allows for more opportunities to test a wide range of abilities over a longer period of time than through a single examination. Thus, the basic characteristics of CA are majorly four (Ojo, 2008) Thus, CA should be Systematic, Comprehensive, Cumulative and Guidance oriented.

SYSTEMATIC

Continuous assessment is systematic in the sense that it requires concerted planning which predetermines every action in the assessment process. The evaluation instruments are skillfully constructed with specific purpose in mind. The administration of the instrument is carefully planned well ahead of time so that nothing happens by accident. Statement concerning the nature of instrument and time of testing is determined and incorporated into the teachings and scheme of work ever before the commencement of teaching. Keeping records of all assessment data are also well planned. Thus continuous assessment is systematic in that everything happened and because they have been scheduled to happen and not by accident. The systematic nature of CA demands that every assessment activity that is to be conducted by every teacher in the school is clearly articulated in the school plan. The teacher is expected to have been informed by the beginning of the school term or session about the nature of assessment activities he/she is to use in the classroom. This is expected to be in tandem with the recommendations provided in the subject curriculum as published by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). In the curriculum, appropriate assessment tools/techniques that are suitable for the topic identified

are made. This is aimed at assisting teachers with inadequate knowledge of assessment techniques to be able to vary the tools employed in the collection of CAS. Thus, once the CA committee does its work of adequately informing the teachers in the school what assessment activity is expected to be conducted at any identified period of the school term, the assessment activities in such a school is systematic.

COMPREHENSIVE

The focus in continuous assessment is on instructional objectives, that is, all areas of learning outcomes, knowledge, feelings and skill acquisition. These technically are referred to as cognitive, affective and psychomotor outcomes. All aspects of the student are important, a variety of tools and instruments like test, observation, project, interviews are used to collect information about the student to reflect the three domains. This means that in continuous assessment, the learner's progress in a course, interests, attitudes, work behaviour, adjustment and self-esteem will be assessed and reported upon using a variety of assessment instruments. In this way, it is possible to provide a holistic description of who the student is. It is as a result of this that continuous assessment is seen as comprehensive. The comprehensive nature in this implies that the teacher will have to conduct series of assessment activities at different stages of teaching and learning in the classroom. The comprehensive nature of CA demands that the assessment activity of the teacher is expected to cover the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of the students' behaviour. The Affective activities that could be factored in to assessment include class attendance, punctuality, attitude to school work/subject activities, neatness, respect for rules and regulation, cooperation with colleagues, leadership qualities, courage, perseverance, comportment, effort at knowing etc. Examples of psychomotor activities include drawing, painting, running, jumping, dancing, typing, etc. The third of the characteristics of CA is its cumulative nature.

CUMULATIVE

Continuous assessment is cumulative because all the assessment data about a particular student at any point in a programme from the day he/she enters into a course of study up to the point in time is skillfully kept and subsequent discussion about a student takes into account all previous discussion about him/her that makes it mandatory on every teacher to keep an up-to-date record on every student. Any decision about a student is not based on the result of a single one-shot. The accumulated records of the secondary school student should guide in determining what a student should do after the secondary school programme. In actual fact, the records for decision-making about a student both current and previous are pooled together for such decisions to be reliable and dependable.

The cumulative nature of CA necessitates that the average CAS of every student in a particular session is carried over to the next class level till the last class of the school level. This is to ensure that the students are not put under the challenge of any teacher who may not be forthright in the administration of CA for any particular school term. The performance of any student could vary over time due to a number of reasons, this shortcoming could be overcome by the determination of average CAS of other terms or session since the intention of assessment is not to make students fail but to have a valid basis for the classification of students into various ability levels. Therefore, the final CAS of any student at any level of schooling is the composite of all the CAS obtained from time to time in a particular term and this is carried forward till the end of school year as the average score that is to be sent out to either the ministry or any of the examination bodies for use as part of the final certification score for the student. The information collected about a student has to be used to guide the student's further development. The students have to be assisted to make educational and career decisions, based on their performance and interest. The school on its part benefits as the information gathered can be used to improve teaching and learning.

RATIONALE FOR ADOPTING CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The following according to Ojo in Korode (2018) constitute the bases for adopting continuous assessment in Nigerian schools.

- By the end of the course in secondary education, students sit for an external examination. In certifying the students, the teacher has little or no input at all in the assessment procedure. This denies the teacher the opportunity to participate fully in the final assessment of his students. Worst still, these external examining bodies hire other teachers to mark and grade the students work. Since assessment is an integral part of teaching-learning process, it becomes necessary that the teacher should be involved in the final assessment of the students he/she has taught.
- One-shot external examination cannot be indicative of the overall ability of the student. An assessment that takes into account the student's performance throughout the entire period of schooling will be more valid, more reliable and more indicative of the student's overall ability than a single examination.
- The summary of results by the external examination bodies does not reflect all the assignments, class works, weekly tests and quizzes which the teacher has given the students. End-of-course external examination hampers the teachers' readiness and frustrates their willingness to introduce innovations into the teaching because a final external examination does not take account of such innovation. Teachers are supposed to be encouraged to be flexible and innovative.
- Assessment has been on the cognitive aspects of the student's behaviour, ignoring affective and psychomotor behaviour such as attitude, interest and industry of the student. Continuous assessment procedure takes care of this problem.
- Traditional approach to assessment procedure provides scanty information. This information does not indicate much and it does not give a true picture of the overall performance of the student. Continuous assessment gives more comprehensive information on

the cognitive, affective and psychomotor measures of an individual if well implemented.

QUALITY OFS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT RECORDS

Continuous assessment records in schools include:

- Different types of learner's records kept in the school. The records must be accurate description of each learner.
- The record should protect the school against litigation in case the parent become unsatisfied with the report made on their wards.
- It should be completed and comprehensive enough.
- It should be simpler, organized under theme and presented in a language that is easily understood by every member of the teaching profession.
- It should be easily retrieved for decision making, counseling and stored in locked-up steel cabinets to prevent destructions if there are no electronic storage facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Some of the implementation problems include:

- **Comparability of Standard:** Comparability of standards arise 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 by various teachers could present problems in scoring and grading of achievement in various school subjects.
- **Continuity of Records:** Continuous assessment cannot be meaningful except there is a meticulous keeping of accurate records for each student throughout the student'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 student 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 student'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 of the secondary schools are poorly equipped for such a function.
- **Unqualified Personnel:** There are inadequate 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 behavioral outcomes in the three domains. Continuous assessment requires the overall ability of every student in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor.
- **Large Number of Students:** For effective assessment, the teacher needs to spend time on each student 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 student individually. Presently the number of students per class can be more than 50-70 or even more in one class. 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 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. Korode (2018) 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.

ADVANTAGES OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Continuous assessment if properly executed should be helpful in the following ways:

- If all aspects of the student are assessed; it would encourage total development of the student.
- Since preparation for continuous assessment requires constant focus on the part of the student, study habit may be enhanced.
- Continuous assessment forms part of the final assessment of students, teachers are encouraged as they feel relevant in the scheme of things.
- The fear of failure by student would be reduced and examination malpractices minimized if not completely eradicated.
- A true picture of the student's capability is obtained as all the performances throughout the period of schooling are used. This equally will enhance the credibility of final results that student obtain.
- It can equally be used to assess the performance of the teacher and subsequently the school, particularly as trend in performance may emerge.

Continuous assessment (CA) should be administered in a certain specified manner. According to the policy demand, there should be a functional CA Committee in each school. The CA committee says Ojo (2008) should plan the schedule of assessment activities for the school year or term. The Vice Principal (Academic) is expected to serve as the chairperson of the CA committee while the school counselor serves as the secretary and custodian of all CAS in the school. It is the responsibility of the committee to identify the assessment activities for the term and articulate them clearly for every teacher in the school, usually at the start of the term or session.

In teaching and learning, feedback is an important tool for the sustenance of good performance as well as a veritable instrument for the improvement of poor performance. The teacher is expected to give prompt feedback to students whenever any assessment activity is conducted. If and when the teacher will be unable to give feedback, it is important that students are not given any assessment task because once students discover that the teacher will not mark the test, assignment or class work given to them, the tendency is for them not to take the teacher serious again. When the students are sure that their teacher will mark any assessment task given to them and report same to them on time, and when they are also made to realize that every assessment task counts, then, they will take their teacher seriously and would always want to prepare ahead for any task to be given by the teacher. Many teachers have a poor conception of what CA should actually be (Jumare, 2015). Experience showed that whenever it was time for the conduct of CA activities, about 89% of teachers in the secondary school administered class test only on their students without giving them any other assessment task. Many teachers opine Nneji, Fatade, Awofala and Awofala (2012) have negative attitude to marking and this has been affecting the way they conduct their assessment activities in the class. It is expected that the teachers employ varying techniques at different occasions to obtain students' CAS.

One critical cause of the teachers' negative attitude to assessment activities is the negative attitude of student-teachers to assessment-related courses while in the training college or university. Experience has shown that many education students in the higher institutions do not hide their dislike for Tests and Measurement courses, probably because of their quantitative nature. Thus, many deliberately absent themselves from classes and even when they attend, they hardly pay attention in such class, and where this is even not the case, they give little attention to the course(s) immediately after the semester examination, thereby throwing away their lecture notes on the grounds that the course has been completed and they should have

nothing to do with its note again. This results in their forgetting all assessment-related principles quickly, even before they get employed to the teaching service. When this happens, the teacher will have very little expertise to conduct his/her assessment activities properly. It is also a matter of common knowledge that many school administrators are not sincere in their supervision of assessment activities in their schools. Some Vice Principals or even principals have on a number of times rejected true CAS submitted by subject teachers on the grounds that students' scores were too low and that it will not project the school well if the CAS is to be submitted to the ministry or examination bodies. Not only this, it is also a generally held view that any poor CAS so submitted will negatively affected their students' performance in public examinations, since such scores are to form a part of their overall assessment scores. This practice was confirmed by Awofala and Adeneye (2012) while investigating the practice of CA in Nigerian secondary schools. It was discovered that many school heads took the submission of high scores very seriously and they have on a number of occasions rejected poor CAS submitted in the school and also see the teacher involved as one of those seeking the failure of the Principal of the school. For CAS to make sense those involve must be objectives toward CAS as part of students' academic performance in Nigerian secondary school system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Measurement experts should be invited to educate teachers and principals in the area of development of assessment.
- Teachers should be well equipped so that they will serve as a great vehicle for the practices of CAS in secondary schools.
- Teachers should use varieties of assessment practices in order to elicit information on the various attributes possessed by an individual student.
- Teachers should be committed to the use of continuous assessment on a regular basis. As the name suggests, the assessment should be done frequently.

- Teachers should pay particular attention to the proper practice of continuous assessment based on the principles and concept of the policy to reduce the problems of comparability of standards, records and record keeping bedeviling the National Policy on Education.
- Government should train and post more guidance counselors into the secondary schools to help in ensuring that continuous assessment practices of the teachers are properly monitored and done well.

REFERENCES

- Alaka, A. A. (2011). Fund mobilization, allocation and utilization as predictors of Students' achievement in public secondary schools in Nigeria 2001-2005. Unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Ibadan.
- Awofala, F. T & Adeneye, O. A. (2012). Effects of framing and team assisted individualised instructional strategies on senior secondary school students' attitudes toward mathematics. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 6(1), 1 – 22.
- Cağrı, T. (2013). Commitment to school and students: *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Science* 3(1), 336-340.
- Fabunmi, M. (2019) Management in Education: The integrity Questions, A paper presented at Modibbo Adama University of Technology, Yola, 24th annual lecture, Wednesday 10th April, 2019.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). National Policy on Education (4th ed.). Abuja: NERDC.
- Ige, M. (2013) Provision of secondary education in Nigeria: Challenges and way forward. *Journal of African Studies and Development*. 5(1) 1-8.
- James, A. (2014). What are the Issues in Teaching History? *Issues in Teaching History*, 2 (1) 11 – 21.

- Jumare M.A (2015) Educational management and ethics, professional diploma in education programme course material, institute of education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Korođe, A.G.K (2018) The role of continuous assessment and students' academic achievements in Nigerian School System. a paper presented at teachers' capacity building workshop of bin Affan tahfizul qur'an primary and secondary school, opposite F.G.G.C, Yola. Walowol Gugu, Yola South LGA, Adamawa State Saturday 22nd December
- National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013). Federal Government of Nigeria. Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Nneji, L. M. Faḡade, A. O., Awofala, A. A. & Awofala, A. O. A. (2012). The attitude of some Nigerian science, technology, and mathematics teachers towards assessment Practices, *International Journal of Mathematics Trends and Technology*, 3(3), 110-116.
- Ojo, O. O. (2008). Item Writing Practices among Secondary School Teachers in Onḡo State. Unpublished Master of Education Thesis, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.
- Yusuf, A. F. (2012). Influence of Principals' Leadership Styles on Student Academic achievements in Secondary School in Osun State, Nigeria. *Journal of Innovative Research in Management and Humanities*. 3 (1), 113 – 121.