

## An Appraisal of the Perception of the Continuous Assessment Practice among Primary School Teachers in Ogun State

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### Abstract

The study sought to examine primary school teachers' perception of the Continuous Assessment Practice in Ogun State. Four research questions were raised. The sample for the study consists of two hundred (200) teachers who were randomly selected from the four geopolitical zones in the Ogun State. The questionnaire was the only instruments used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using t-test of significance at 0.05 level of confidence. The result of the findings reveals that primary school teachers have high perception of continuous assessment practice. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perception of the continuous assessment practice. Besides, young and old teachers significantly differ from each other while there is no significant difference between the perception of continuous assessment practices among public and private school teachers. Based on these findings, it was concluded that continuous assessment practices were poor and the implementation of continuous assessment is bedeviled with several difficulties. Therefore, recommendations were made that the ministry of education should establish a uniform standard of assessment and the system of weighting scores from different assessments should be used from school to school.

**Keywords:** appraisal, continuous assessment, perception, primary school teachers

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### Introduction

Continuous Assessment has been defined by several authors each from its own perspective (Federal Ministry of Education, 1985; Falayajo, 1986; Yoloje, 1989; Emeke, 1996). Continuous Assessment (CA) is a method of finding out how much the students have gained from lessons in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Mgbor & Mgbor, 2006). It is a kind of assessment that is largely internal but can also be used as part of external examinations, as in Junior Secondary Certificate Examinations Council (JSCE). The West African Examination Council and National Examination Council also make use of CA as part of certification decisions. Emeke (1996) defined CA as the systematic use

of varied and reliable multiple assessment tools at regular intervals, to determine the performance and ability of the learner in three domains of behavior with the aim of getting truest picture and helping him/her in the development of its full potentials.

Integration of continuous assessment in certification grades in Nigeria is now the fact of history. The National Policy on Education provides that certification at the primary school level shall be wholly based on CA and issued by the head teacher of the school while that at the secondary school level shall be based on a combination of performances in CA and an

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external examination (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The positive potentials of this innovation in assessment have been well documented in literature (Okonkwo, 2002, 2006; Taylor, 2003). It does not appear, however, that these potentials are being realized.

Continuous Assessment has been described as the best thing that has happened to the system of assessment in the Nigerian educational institutions. If CA is implemented effectively as outlined by the then Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (FMEST, 1985), the Nigerian educational system stands to reap abundance of benefits.

By its nature, CA should be systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance-oriented. Being systematic implies that CA activities should be planned and executed according to the plan rather than a spur of the moment exercise. There are two aspects to its comprehensiveness. The first is that assessment must encompass all domains of behavior which are the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Assessment also has to do with the involvement of a variety of instruments. In so doing, information would be generated from a variety of situations and so, result in a more complete, and hence more valid, impression of the student (Okonkwo, 2006).

The primary aim of CA is not to grade a child or decide whether he or she has 'passed' or 'failed'. It is to help the child in personal development by highlighting his/her strengths and weaknesses and suggesting where he/she needs to put more effort and in what areas he/she is most likely to excel. In this respect, CA is guidance-oriented. The importance of CA has been well spelt out by Oyinloye, 2002 are that:

- It helps the teacher to prepare lessons in detail and keep cumulative records for the students;
- CA as formative evaluation leads to i. Improvement in statement of curriculum objective; ii. Development and organization of learning experiences; and iii. Strength and weakness of plans;
- It helps the teachers to know how much the students have gained from lessons

in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills and adjust the method of teaching if the need arises;

- Judgement about the efficacy of the chosen learning experience, the content, the method and manner of their usage depends entirely on CA;
- It enables the teachers to be more flexible and innovative in their instructions;
- Teachers no longer teach the students for examination alone because the CA is meant to help in instruction;
- It assist the Child in terms of academic and non-academic achievement for a more effective choice of career (Badmus & Omoifo, 1998);
- CA reduces examination malpractice in secondary schools because the child is supervised by his/her teachers;
- It makes children to work harder, helps the students to be punctual in school, respect the teachers and the school authority;

As laudable as the importance of CA, many scholars (Emeke, 1999; Ojo, 2001; Mgbor & Mgbor, 2006; Osunde & Ughamadu, 2006) have reported that the implementation of CA in school is bedeviled with some problems. Some of these problems are: Incomparability of standards, poor record keeping and continuity of records, non-usage of other assessment tools (apart from testing), non-assessment of the affective and psychomotor domains and poor test construction (Adisa, 2003; Ojo 2007).

There is evidence that the teacher trainees (NCE & Faculty of Education) must have been exposed to the rudiments of CA in the College of Education as well as the University because of the curriculum and subject methodology courses which they are exposed to and these includes such courses as measurement and evaluation that emphasize CA. Be that as it may, teachers still exhibit deficiencies in the knowledge and implementation of CA. One would think that experienced teachers would have no problems in this direction. Ojo (2007) cited Oladiti (1985) submitted that experiences are merged with intelligence to alter behavior. The greater the

relevant experience in a given field or performance of an act, the easier the learning of fresh ideas in that particular field or performance of related action. There has been a reduction in the employment of teachers for primary schools because of the economic situation. As such, there are more teachers with long years of experience than those with small years of experience and it is expected that majority of these teachers would be female since teaching

afford female gender opportunities to take good care of their families.

Based on this background, the study investigated the perception of primary school teachers in Ogun State about the continuous assessment practice in schools. This perception would also be investigated across gender, years of experience and school type.

## Research Questions

In other to guide this study, four research questions were raised:

1. What is the general perception of teachers about continuous assessment practices in Ogun State?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female teachers' perception on the continuous assessment practices in primary schools?

3. To what extent will the teachers' years of teaching experience determine their perception of continuous assessment practice?
4. Is there any significant difference between the perception of continuous assessment practice among primary school teachers in public and private schools?

## Literature Review

Assessment is not merely testing (Osokoya, 1996). It is a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged (Mwebaza, 2010). In relation to school setting, Greaney (2001) defines assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude, or skills of the learner or a group of learners. Thus, in the context of education, assessment can be defined as a predetermined process through which the quality of a student's performance in the three domains of educational objectives (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) is judged. Assessment of students learning of curriculum contents in the area of knowledge, skills, and values is a major pre-occupation of many educational reforms. This is because results from such assessment not only provide feedback regarding the educational progress of students but remain the authentic yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of the teacher, the quality of instruction and, in part, the functionality of any curriculum reform. Continuous assessment as an assessment carried out in an

on-going process (Mwebaza, 2010) is an objective judgment considered an important part of structured assessment purposely designed and administered to enable the teacher to evaluate some aspect of a student learning at a specific time.

According to Awofala and Babajide (2013), Continuous Assessment is more than giving a test; it involves every decision made by the teacher in class to improve students' achievement. Continuous assessment as a part of the field of educational evaluation is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of students in educational institutions. Continuous Assessment has been recognized as an integral part of everyday classroom instruction and a key tool to ensure quality learning. Accordingly, every educational institution, irrespective of its level, has been using C.A. as a key to determine students' learning achievement and identify their learning difficulties for special supports, to improve teachers' pedagogical practices and the quality of education in general (Abejehu, 2016).

Obioma (2010) examined in a large-scale survey of 3,325 primary and junior secondary school teachers across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria the status, gaps and challenges of continuous assessment (CA) practices in Nigeria and found that, in general, school teachers demonstrated poor knowledge of elementary concept of CA. Many teachers misapplied the CA instruments leading to more of continuous testing of learners instead of continuous

assessment. C.A. is part and parcel of instructional process that has to be taken as a key tool in educational quality assurance endeavor. But there is discrepancy between the perceived purpose of C.A. and its actual practice. The submission and research findings from some of these scholars gave an insight for more research effort on the Continuous Assessment Practices among teachers in the Ogun state.

## Methodology

The design for this study is a descriptive design of a survey type. The population for the study comprises all middle basic primary school teachers in the Ogun state. The sample consists of two hundred teachers randomly selected from the four geopolitical zone in Ogun State. A well-structured questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection in this study. The only instrument used for data collection was designed and validated by the researcher. The instrument has two sections. Section A sought demographic information of the respondents while section B elicited information on perception of respondents on continuous assessment practices in schools.

The instrument was given to two experts in the area of measurement and evaluation who were senior colleagues in the Department to establish its face and content validity. Their suggestions and modifications were incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha statistical tool and the coefficient was found to be 0.79. Data collected were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using percentages and the t-test of significance at 0.05 level of confidence, multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance.

## Results and Interpretation

The result of the study with particular reference to **Research Question 1** is shown on Table 1 below:

*Table 1. General Perception of Teachers about Continuous Assessment Practice*

Perception Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low Perception	65	32.5
High Perception	135	67.5
Total	200	100

The result on Table 1 reveal that majority of the teachers (one hundred and thirty-five) indicated high perception about what proper continuous assessment practices in schools should be while the remaining sixty-five teachers - only 32.5% - have low perception of continuous assessment

practices among primary school in Ogun state. Therefore, one can conclude that majority of the teachers have high perception about a proper way of continuous assessment practices in school.

**Research question 2: Is there any significant difference between male and female teachers' perception on the continuous assessment practices in primary schools?**

*Table 2. Summary of the t-test Statistic of the Gender Difference of Teachers' Perception of the Continuous Assessment Practice*

Gender	N	Mean	SD.	df	t.cal	Sig. t	P	Remark
Male	68	61.25	6.76	118	1.324	0.188	0.05	Not sig.
Female	132	59.69	5.86					

The result on Table 2 reveals a non-significant outcome ( $t = 0.188$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). This shows that teachers do not differ significantly by gender in their perceptions of the continuous assessment

practice. Though, the mean scores for male lecturers (61.25) were more than that of the female lecturers - 59.69. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

**Research question 3: To what extent will the teachers' years of teaching experience determine their perception of the continuous assessment practice?**

Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis of teachers' Years of Teaching Experience on Perception Scores

Multiple R	=	0.141
R <sup>2</sup>	=	0.020
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	=	0.012
Standard Error	=	6.37

*Table 3. Analysis of Variance of Multiple Regression Analysis*

Source	Sum of squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig. of F.
Regression	97.725	1	97.725	2.409	0.188
Residual	4787.600	118	40.573		
Total	4885.325	119			P<0.5

The regression analysis on Table 3 depicts that the correlation of teachers' years of teaching experience with the perception of the continuous assessment practice is 0.141 with a corresponding R<sup>2</sup> of 0.020 indicating that teachers' years of experience only accounted for 2% of the variance in teachers' perception scores.

Analysis of variance table show F value of 2.409 and it reveals that the teachers' years of experience in teaching will not significantly determine teachers' perception of the continuous assessment practice in school.

#### Research question 4: Is there any significant difference between the perception of continuous assessment practice among primary school teachers in public and private schools?

Table 4. Summary of the t-test Statistics of the Gender Difference of Teachers' Perception of the Continuous Assessment Practice

School Type	N	Mean	SD.	df	t.cal	Sig. t	P	Remark
Private	77	52.09	7.55	198	0.22	0.982	0.05	Not sig.
Public	123	52.11	6.65					

The result in Table 4 revealed a non-significant outcome ( $t=0.022$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). This means that the difference between the mean perception score of private and public primary school teachers on the continuous assessment practice is not statistically significant. The mean perception score of 52.09 recorded by the private school

teachers is not significantly better than the mean perception score of 52.11 recorded by public school teachers. Hence, there is no significant difference in the perception of public and private school teachers on the continuous assessment practice in Ogun State primary schools.

#### Conclusion

The first research question which sought to find out general perception of teachers of the continuous assessment practice revealed that majority of the teachers have high perception about the proper way of continuous assessment practice at the primary school in Ogun State. This finding supported that of Mgbor & Mgbor (2006) and Emeke (1999) that primary school teachers had necessary information on how continuous assessment should be practiced but they also know that they have not been implementing it correctly as they ought to be due to some identified problems which have been hindering successful implementation of continuous assessment.

The results of research question 2 indicate that teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the continuous assessment practice across schools by teachers' gender. This is because every teacher is given the same opportunity to conduct continuous assessment for their pupils irrespective of their gender and they are aware of the importance of continuous assessment to their pupils' progress and success in education. Both male and female teachers at one point or the other were also trained in the rudiment of continuous assessment in tertiary institutions.

Findings from research question 3 reveal that the teachers' years of teaching experience in teaching is not a significant determinant of their perception of the continuous assessment practice in school. This finding may be due to the fact that both young and old teachers have the same privilege of conducting continuous assessment for their pupils.

The results of research question 4 reveal that teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the continuous assessment practice across schools by school type. The reasons for this might be because all teachers irrespective of school type have the same perception about continuous assessment taken it to be continuous testing. And their perception is also reflected in the way they conduct continuous assessment as well, majority of the school only rely on assessment of the students on cognitive domain alone without giving importance to the assessment of the affective and psychomotor domains.

In conclusion, apart from bringing out the fact that continuous assessment is not being effectively practiced in Ogun state primary schools by teachers as they perceived continuous assessment as continuous testing instead of assessing the students on the three

domains of behavioral objectives vis-à-vis cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain, they assessed them on cognitive domain alone. The results of this study also revealed that, irrespective of gender, years of experience and even the school type, primary school teachers in the Ogun state have not been conducting continuous assessment as it should be done within the school system. Based on these findings, there is the need to revisit the whole concept of continuous assessment in our

educational system as well as tackling the problem of comprehensiveness and comparability of continuous assessment scores. It is hoped that if all the schools make conscious efforts to follow a greater or substantial part of the specifications on the implementation and monitoring of continuous assessment as in the Federal Government Handbook on Continuous Assessment, the whole essence of continuous assessment will be realized.

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