

**IFE JOURNAL OF THEORY AND
RESEARCH IN EDUCATION**

ISSN: 0794-6754

IJOTRE

**Journal of the Institute of Education
Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile – Ife.**

**Bi-Annual
Vol. 25 No. 1, 2024**

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IFE JOURNAL OF THEORY AND RESEARCH IN EDUCATION
(IJOTRE)

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TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES IN BENIN METROPOLIS, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

OMOIGUI Loveth Eseosa

Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology,
Faculty of Education, University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria
Tel: +234-8062363911

&

UYIGUE Amen Valentine

Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology,
Faculty of Education, University of Benin,
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
E-mail: valentine.uyigue@uniben.edu
Tel: +234-8056742588

Abstract

This study investigated the attitude of secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment (CA) and the practices in the Benin metropolis, Edo State. CA is acclaimed by education professionals as a tool for students learning, given direction to teachers' instruction and diagnosing learning difficulties. The proper implementation is an important requirement for educational advancement; the teacher is saddled with the responsibility, being the implementer. As implementers of CA their attitude towards it as well as the forms of CA used is the focus of this study. The population of the study comprised 636 teachers in public secondary schools in the Benin metropolis, a sample of 100 was selected for the study using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire having a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of .072. Two research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated. Data were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation for the research questions while the t-test statistics for hypotheses testing. Results obtained revealed that the teachers use oral discussion as the main form of assessment techniques for CA and also their attitude was positive. Other findings are: there was no significant difference in teachers' attitude towards CA by educational qualification among others. It was recommended among others that teachers maintain their positive attitude towards CA and also Regular training and retraining on the importance and forms of continuous assessment for the younger teachers to help change their attitude and comply with CA practices.

Keywords: Attitude, Continuous Assessment, Cognitive Domain, Learning, Summative Assessment.

Introduction

The development of any nation depends greatly on the quality of education acquired by its citizens. This has resulted in government and other donor agencies making an effort to ensure that the aims and objectives of education are attainable. The attainment of educational goals and objectives are functions of the educational gains or attainment of those exposed to instructional experiences. Albeit, how much has been gained from the instructional experience can only be ascertained through assessment, this accounts for the importance of assessment in education.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in her National Policy on Education (NPE) stipulates the importance of assessment in education. In that document, it was enshrined that advancement from one class to another shall be based on continuous assessment for basic one to six (primary 1-6), while it will be based on continuous assessment and examination conducted by the State and the Federal Government Examination Boards in the case of Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSC). At the end of the secondary years course (Senior Secondary), the Senior School Certificate shall be based on continuous assessment and a national examination.

The function of a school is to facilitate learning; assess learning achievement and the certification of learners under its embrace, amongst others. To execute these responsibilities effectively, assessment of one kind or the other is a desideratum. Assessment is the gathering of data on students learning and understanding (Tomas de Aquino, 2020). Assessment is a means whereby the teacher obtains information concerning knowledge gains, behavioral changes, and other aspects of the development of learners. It entails the intentional effort by the teacher to measure the effect of the instructional process as well as the overall effect of school learning on students' behavior.

Assessment can either be terminal or continuous (Uyigue & Omorogiwa, 2015). Terminal or summative assessment is usually administered at the end of an instructional experience, while continuous assessment is conducted as instruction is ongoing. Continuous assessment is envisaged to encompass the three domains of learning; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

Continuous assessment encompasses a series of planned and systematic gathering of information about a learner, which will enable the teacher to make an authentic and valid decision about the learner. Continuous assessment can be described as a systematic process of measuring learners' achievement using a multiplicity of techniques over some time to determine as well as guide the student's learning, with the intent that such achievement score will reflect the actual learning that had occurred. There exist several techniques or tools that a teacher can employ in assessing a student. Teachers implement continuous assessment in a variety of ways such as the use of tests, questionnaires, observation technique, interview, sociometric technique, project technique, among others, to allow them to observe multiple tasks and to collect information about what students know, understand and can do. The nature of continuous assessment of learning must be seen to be objective

and a true representation of the amount of learning that has taken place. If the assessment of achievement is based on a single technique such as the end of term or year examination, chances are that the amount of learning that has taken place may not have been properly measured. In a bid to measure the actual learning that has taken place, there is a need for several test and non-test techniques to be used and as well for it to be over some time and not just one short test experience. Some factors could contribute to the effective implementation of continuous assessment practices among which are: the attitude of the teachers, the teacher's gender, educational qualifications as well as the age of the teacher.

Attitudes is a learned tendency to view and judge things in a certain way. This can include an evaluation of people, issues, objects, policies, or events. It is an umbrella term that consists of our opinions, emotions, perceptions, beliefs, expectations, values, and intentions (Kendra, 2024). It could be positive or negative (Psychology Magazine, 2023). A positive attitude shows receptiveness of the attitude object while a negative attitude shows resentment, it is believed that when a teacher has a positive attitude towards CA such a teacher is most likely going to be receptive and committed to its implementation. The sex of a teacher could also be a factor in the implementation; this is because the implementation of CA places some level of demand and responsibility on the teacher. Therefore, the "stress" associated may act as a barrier, especially for the less energetic female teachers. Educational qualification also is another issue to consider in the implementation as it is generally believed that the higher the educational qualification of the teacher the more the teacher is equipped to handle the implementation of CA even more effectively and efficiently compared to the less qualified who may do same at great cost in terms of time, skill required and professionalism. Years of work experience are intertwined with age the longer one stays on the job the more experience they are expected to have, all things being equal, this is believed will affect their disposition towards and assignment, the implementation of CA, therefore the older teachers are expected to be favorably disposed to the implementation of CA haven gathered much experience over time.

Investigating the attitude of teachers towards the practice of continuous assessment has gained some level of attention over the years. Different national and international research findings reveal teachers have both negative and positive attitudes to the practice. For example, research conducted by Abu (2013), Awofala and Babajide (2013) showed that teachers have a positive attitude toward the practice of continuous assessment in the way they consider continuous assessment as a suitable and important instrument to support their teaching and the students' learning, but, this is contradicted by other research work of Alufohai and Akinlosotu (2016) who found out that teachers display negative attitude towards the practice of continuous assessment and Oguneeye (2002) that concluded in a study that the continuous assessment practices in school are faulty and a deviation from what it ought to be as stipulated in the Policy guidelines. In conducting the continuous assessment as an academic requirement, the attitude of teachers is quite crucial to see

to its effective implementation. Attitude plays out in the positive or negative assessment of people, objects, events, activities, ideas, or just about anything in one's environment. It could also be described as an enduring system of beliefs that can be examined or expressed cognitively (how one thinks or reasons through an attitude), emotionally (how one feels regarding an attitude), and behavior-wise (how one acts on an attitude) which are formed from our experiences and serve as a guide to future behavior (Alutu & Ojiyi, 2015). These authors emphasized that changing an individual's behavior is possible once their attitudes have been identified.

The quality of the teachers who are saddled with the responsibility of continuous assessment is also a factor that may be considered in the effective implementation of continuous assessment, Fasasi (2006) asserted that teachers in Nigerian schools were not professionally qualified. As a result, despite the teachers' understanding of the need for continuous assessment, their quality of teaching and application of continuous assessment is likely to be low. Consequently, this educational attainment of the teachers will have effects on their job performance and the learners. It is expected that the more qualified the teachers are, the more concerned and more responsible they become in the implementation of continuous assessment. Also, it is asserted that there is the problem of unqualified personnel to implement and operate the continuous assessment (Patrick & Uvietesivwi, 2018). To have an effective implementation of continuous assessment, teachers should have acquired the requisite skills needed. The teacher must be knowledgeable in interpreting the scores and grades awarded to students using the various measuring instruments, demonstrate competence in the construction of tests, questionnaires, checklists, and rating scales, and so on, for assessing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains or learning outcome (Patrick and Uvietesivwi, 2018) among others. In a study done by Opara, (2018) it was said in that study that the educational qualification of the teacher is a determinant of their attitude towards continuous assessment practice in secondary schools. However, Mordecai (2013) in a study asserted that the educational qualification of the teachers does not affect their attitude toward the practice and implementation of continuous assessment.

It is generally believed that males are more energetic and more likely to be concerned and involved in the series of activities that CA entails, these activities many may consider as stressful. Continuous assessment for some teachers is a stressful exercise and as such, the teachers having such disposition may not be willing to participate as required. This perceived stress is capable of invoking negative emotions and such a teacher will see the implementation of continuous assessment in a bad light thereby having a negative attitude towards its practices. In a study conducted by Awofala & Babajide (2013), the authors concluded that the sex of the teachers might not be a potent factor in their attitude towards continuous assessment practices. Also in a similar study Opara, (2018) asserted that gender is not a significant determinant of teachers' attitudes toward continuous assessment practice.

Teachers are key stakeholders in the CA policy reform because their efforts are essential in the implementation process. A study carried out in Tanzania on secondary school teachers' perception of continuous assessment practice by Ndalichako (2013) indicated that age as a variable has no significant effect on teachers' continuous assessment practice, in the same vein Awofala and Babajide (2013) in their study stating that the age of the teacher was not a significant determinant of their attitude toward continuous assessment practice. However, a study by Metin (2011), revealed that teachers under the age of 25 years have a more positive attitude toward performance assessment at the classroom level. This is also in line with Kanatli (2009) that teachers between ages 21-25 have more positive attitudes toward assessment practices than older teachers. This is to say that, young teachers have a more positive attitude toward assessment practice than older teachers. Dosumu (2002) observed that the more experienced a teacher is, the more he begins to understand and appreciate some important test construction skills. In the study of Alufohai (2016), results showed that years of teaching experience and teachers' area of specialization are the only significant predictors of teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment practices also Opara, (2018) affirmed this position in her study. Years of teaching experience have a relationship with the age of the teachers because many of the teachers that have put in more years into the teaching profession are most likely to also be well advanced in biological age.

Statement of the Problem

Continuous assessment is quite essential in teaching and learning; it lays more emphasis on comprehensive information about the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of an individual, if well implemented. However, the extent to which teachers can effectively execute continuous assessment is quite worrisome. Many teachers seem not to understand the meaning, purpose, and practice of continuous assessment; they see it as an introduction capable of wasting their time, energy, and materials. Despite the seemingly wide acceptance of continuous assessment as a tool for improving learning, many teachers conduct weekly or monthly tests, but the outcomes of the tests seems not to be used to improve teaching and learning. The importance and the ways the teacher views continuous assessment inform their attitudinal disposition. This accounts for this empirical undertaking of finding out the CA practices in schools and the attitude of the implementers (teachers) towards the implementation of continuous assessment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the implementation of continuous assessment practice in secondary schools in the Benin metropolis; and determine what form of assessment is employed in the implementation of CA. The study is also aimed at finding out the attitude of the teachers towards the implementation as well as investigating if teachers' attitude to the implementation is dependent on their educational qualification, sex, and age.

Research Questions

The following research questions are meant to guide the study as the answer will empirically be provided.

1. What are the forms of continuous assessment used by teachers in Benin Metropolis, Edo State?
2. What is the attitude of public secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses of significant difference in teachers' attitude based on their qualification, sex and age were formulated and tested at an alpha level of .05.

1. There is no significant difference between more and less educated public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State
2. There is no significant difference between male and female public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State
3. There is no significant difference in public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State based on the age range of the teachers

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised 636 teachers in public secondary schools in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. A sample of 100 teachers was selected from 10 secondary schools out of the thirty-four public secondary schools in the metropolis. The Simple Random Sampling technique was used in the selection of a sample from the available population. The instrument used in the collection of data was a questionnaire titled "Continuous Assessment Practice Questionnaire" (CAPQ), adapted from (Adebowale and Alao, 2008). The questionnaire was divided into three sections (Sections A, B, and C). "Section A" requested for personal information of the respondents. Section B (checklist) contains items that were used to obtain information on CA practice from the teachers, while "Section C" contains items on teachers' attitudes towards CA, this section was a four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree = 4 points, Agree = 3 points, Disagree = 2 points and Strongly Disagree = 1 point. The reliability of the instrument was determined by administering 20 copies to teachers. It was administered and collected on the spot. The Cronbach Alpha statistic was used to establish the internal consistency of the items in "Section C" and a reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained which is an indication that the instrument was reliable. The completed questionnaires were scored and analyzed using descriptive (frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) to answer the research questions while inferential statistics (t-test) for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the forms of continuous assessment used by teachers in Benin Metropolis, Edo State?

Table 1: Descriptive of the Forms of Continuous Assessment Used by Teachers

S/N	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Ranking	Remarks
1	Oral Discussion	3.40	.59	1st	Used
2	Quiz	3.35	.73	2nd	Used
3	Assignments	3.31	.60	3rd	Used
4	Test	3.28	.64	4th	Used
5	Class Presentations	3.26	.76	5th	Used
6	Projects	3.17	.82	6th	Used
7	Excursion	2.97	.80	7th	Used
8	Examinations	2.86	.91	8th	Used

Table 1 shows the descriptive data of the forms of continuous assessment used by teachers in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. From the table all items have mean values greater than 2.50 for a four-point Likert scale, this implies that the respondents agreed to the use of all the stated items. Although from observation of the mean ranking, oral presentations came first with a mean of 3.40 while examination was the least with a mean of 2.86.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of public secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State?

Table 2: Descriptive in Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers Attitude towards Continuous Assessment

Variable	N	Calculated Mean	Std. Dev.	*Cut-Off Point	Remarks
Attitude towards	100	33.81	4.24	25.00	Positive

*10 items x 2.5 = 25.00

Table 2 shows the descriptive data of the attitude of public secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. From the table, the total number of respondents is N = 100, and the mean score = 33.81 ± 4.24 Standard Deviation. When the calculated mean is compared with the scale's Cut-Off point, it would be said that the teachers have a positive attitude towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State.

Hypotheses Testing:

1. There is no significant difference between more and less educated public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State

Table 3: Independent Sample T-test of Difference in the Attitude towards CA between More and less educated Teachers

Qualifications	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
Sub-degrees/First degrees	56	33.93	4.04	98	.314	.754
Higher degrees	44	33.66	4.51			

$\alpha = .05$, $p > .05$ Not Significant

Table 3 shows the difference between more and less educated Teachers public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. From the table, the number of respondents N (Sub-degree/First degree = 56; higher degrees = 44) while Mean values and (standard deviations) are 33.93 (4.04) and 33.66 (4.51) for the less educated and more educated respectively. The t-value of .314 is not significant, because, the *p-value* (.754) is greater than the *alpha level*. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that both more and less educated teachers have the same attitude toward continuous assessment.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test of Difference in the attitude of Teachers towards CA by sex

Sex	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
Male	48	34.44	4.09	98	1.431	.156
Female	52	33.23	4.32			

$\alpha = .05$, $p > .05$ Not Significant

Table 4 shows the difference between male and female public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. From the table, the number of respondents is N (Male = 48; Female = 52) while Mean values and (standard deviations) are 34.44 (4.09) and 33.23 (4.32) for male and female teachers respectively. The t-value of 1.431 is not significant, because, the *p-value* (.156) is greater than the *alpha level*. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained. This implies that both male and female teachers have the same attitude towards continuous assessment.

1. There is no significant difference in public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State based on the age range of the teachers

Table 5: Independent Sample t-test of Difference in public secondary school teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State based on the age range of the teachers

Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)
≤35years	82	33.18	4.27	98	3.316	.001
>35years	18	36.67	2.68			

$\alpha = .05$, $p < .05$ Significant

Table 5 shows the difference between Teachers in public secondary schools' attitudes towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State by age brackets. From the table, the number of respondents within the age brackets $N (\leq 35 \text{ years} = 82; > 35 \text{ years} = 18)$ while Mean values and (standard deviations) are 33.18 (4.27) and 36.67 (2.68) respectively. The t-value of 3.316 is significant, because, the *p-value* (.001) is less than the *alpha level*. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Teachers' attitudes differ by age bracket.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that the teachers have a positive attitude towards continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State. This finding is in agreement with the research works of Alufohai and Akinolosotu (2016); Abu (2013); Awofala and Babajide (2013) who found in their different studies that the majority of teachers display a positive attitude towards the practice of continuous assessment. However, it negates that of Oguneeye (2002). Although the study of Oguneeye (2002) seems to have been done long ago, this may be responsible for this contrary position as the teacher's attitude would have improved over time, since according to Alutu and Ojiyi (2015) attitude can change when positive effort is targeted to it.

Other findings from this study revealed that there was no significant difference between more and less educated-teachers' attitudes toward continuous assessment. Educational qualification does not affect their attitude toward continuous assessment. This aligns with the position of Mordecai (2013) that there was no significant difference between teachers having a first degree and those with higher degrees in implementing continuous assessment programs. Contrary to Opara, (2018) who said that the educational qualification of the teacher is a determining factor in their attitude towards continuous assessment practice. The implication of this finding of no difference in attitude by educational qualification may not be unconnected to the fact that once a teacher is recruited into the teaching profession there is in-service training that may have compensated for the educational differences.

Also, a finding was that there was a significant difference in public secondary school teachers' attitudes towards continuous assessment based on the age range of the teachers. This implies that teachers in public secondary schools' attitudes towards

continuous assessment in Benin Metropolis, Edo State differ when their age brackets are considered. The teachers that are more than 35 years old have a more positive attitude towards continuous assessment when compared statistically with teachers of lesser age. This corresponds with the documentation of Metin (2011) whose study revealed that there are significant differences in continuous assessment attitudes when the teachers' age is brought into perspective and that of Opara, (2018). On the other hand, this finding was contradicted by Awofala and Babajide (2013) who observed that age had no statistically significant effect on pre-service STM teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment. It is theoretically believed that the professional experience of a teacher is a positive function of age, as the teacher advances in age while doing the job and tends to also advance in experience. The experiences so gathered over the years may have instilled that attitudinal change hence their positive attitude.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that teachers in public secondary schools in the Benin metropolis employ various assessment techniques in the conduct of continuous assessment and that the teachers also have a positive attitude towards continuous assessment. It is also concluded that the educational qualification of the teacher as well as the teacher's sex do not affect attitude towards CA however the age of the teacher does.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were put forth:

1. Teachers should ensure to maintain their positive attitude toward continuous assessment due to the perceived impact on teaching and students' learning.
2. It is envisaged that regular training and retraining of teachers on the importance and forms of continuous assessment for the younger teachers would help change their attitude and comply with CA practices.
3. It is also worth noting that emphasis should not be on formal higher education certificates or degrees as well as the sex of the teacher, as empirical evidence has shown that it does not contribute to attitudinal dispositions to continuous assessment.

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