

EVALUATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICE IN BIU ZONE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA.

¹Haman Modu, ²Ruth Ishaku and ³Alhaji Yakubu

^{1&3}Department of General Studies ²Department of Public Administration

^{1,2&3}College of Business and Management Studies Konduga

ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the implementation of continuous assessment in Biu zone senior secondary schools. The objectives of the study were to determine; the extent of implementation of C.A according to the guidelines given by the Federal Ministry of Education, the availability of materials for implementation of C.A in Biu zone, the extent of teacher's assessment of all domains of learning. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study was all twenty senior secondary schools and 500 teachers that teach at that level. A sample of 200 teachers was randomly selected from the twenty senior secondary schools. The study found that C.A was not implemented according to the guidelines given by the Federal Ministry of Education, there were no adequate facilities for CA implementation, teachers did not assess all the domains of learning. The Borno state ministry of education should supply adequate C.A. materials to schools and should make copies of the C.A. operation guidelines available in schools. Workshops and seminars should be organized for teachers to acquaint them with methods of assessment other than tests and assignments

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Continuous assessment (CA) was introduced into the Nigerian Education system through the National policy on Education (1977) which stated that, "Educational Assessment and Evaluation will be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on the continuous assessment of the progress of the individual" Before introduction of the C.A assessment of students in Primary, Secondary, and higher education were based on prescribed examination. A failure in a single examination deprives students from obtaining a certificate they worked for. In essence the students end up with nothing for their years of study. The National Policy on education (2004) guidelines on the C.A implementation stipulates that;

the students;

1. Educational assessment and evaluation will be based in part or whole on C.A of the students.
2. Primary school leaving certificate will be based on the C.A and it will be issued by Headmasters of school.
3. The Junior Secondary School Leaving Certificate will also be based on C.A and will be issued by the Principal of the Schools.
4. The Senior Secondary School Certificate will be based on weighted combination of the C.A and a final formal examination.
5. Universities and other institutions of higher learning are to introduce elements of C.A and incorporate data in the grading of students.

In Borno State the C.A system was adopted in 1982. A state C.A committee was set under the Director Inspectorate division in the Ministry of Education. But with the creation of Teaching Service Board in 2000, the responsibility was transferred to Director planning in the Teaching Service Board. At the zonal level there was a C.A Committee under the zonal Inspector of Education. The zonal committee co-ordinates C.A activity in all Secondary Schools and give situation report to the state C.A committee at the end of every term. The zonal C.A committee receives supply of C.A materials and delivers them to schools each term (if supplied). There was also a school C.A

committee under the principal in each school. All year group tutors, VP Principal Academics, Guidance Counselor, and CA master were members.

The State C.A committee in collaboration with zonal C.A committee organizes workshop for teachers annually. The state C.A committee supervises the zonal CA committee. It advises the Ministry of Education to supply the necessary materials needed for C.A implementation. The committee was responsible for the Junior Secondary School Examination and certification at the level. It is also responsible for placement of the students from Junior Secondary Schools to Senior Secondary Schools. The C.A as conceptualized had certain inherent problems and requirements. Azeke and Tukur (1996) observed that the continuous assessment means more work for the teacher. There is the possibility for teachers to refuse to do what they may consider as extra work. Conservative teachers may resist the Innovation and frustrate the implementation process since they are key persons in the System. Ikebunam and Sehina (1999) also observed that Continuous Assessment require Some skills to operate. For example, the construction of a good taste and other measurement devices and the administration, scoring and analysis are skill which most teachers may not have. According to Nworgu (2003), there is also the problem of comparability of standard arising from differences in the quality of assessment instrument and variability in scoring and grading in different schools.

Statement of the Problem

It was envisaged by the Federal Government that C.A. would reduce the effects of one-off assessment which was in practice then. The effects manifested in form of anxiety on part of students and teachers towards external examinations, rote learning by students, mass failure in external examinations, and too much emphasis on the cognitive domain of learning. Almost three decades after its introduction students in Biu zone are still anxious about external examinations, teachers give extra lessons and parents pay for it. Rote learning and mass failure in Examination still abound. Test items are still tied to paper and pencil work there by making the education system more favorable for those who are good in the cognitive domain only. This raised the question for this study; what is the extent for the C.A implemented in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to determine:

1. the extent of implementation of C.A according to the guideline given by the Federal Ministry of Education implementation committee.
2. the availability of materials for the implementation of C.A in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools.
3. the extent to which teachers assess all the domains of learning

Research Questions

1. Do Senior Secondary Schools teachers in Biu Zone Implement Continuous Assessment according to the guideline given by the Federal Ministry of Education Implementation committee/?
2. Are there adequate materials for the implementation of C.A in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools?
3. Do teachers assess all the domains of learning?

Scope of the Study

The study covered twenty senior secondary schools in Damboa, Chibok, Biu, Hawul, Kwaya Kusar, Shani, and Bayo Local Government Areas of Borno State. The study compared teachers' C.A practices with the National Guideline on the implementation of CA. The study evaluated how teachers assess the None Cognitive domain of learning and The availability/ accessibility of facilities for the implementation of C.A was also evaluated.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Implementation of Continuous Assessment System

The Continuous Assessment system was introduced into the Nigeria Education system through the National Policy on Education (1977). The National policy prescribed the 6-3-3-4 system of Education to replace the 6-5-2-3 system. The former system was characterized by one-off type of assessment where students' learning achievement over a period of time were assessed by a single examination e.g. at the end of academic year for promotion or at the end of course for Certificate (NPE, 2004).

According to Nworgu (2003) this model of assessment is summative in nature. It was also noted by the West Africa Examinations Council (WAEC) (1989) that teachers teach exclusively for examination. The curriculum was relegated to the background and the examination syllabi were used by teachers. That limits their teaching and learning process.

Bajah (1990) confirmed this to the Uganda National Examination Board Test Development Staff, when he noted that the Examination "tail" had become so powerful that it was wagging the "curriculum dog". According to Nworgu (2003) the introduction of the Continuous Assessment was a step taken by the Federal Government to rectify the shortcomings of the one-off assessment system.

The National Policy on Education (1981) provides that evaluation of students' progress be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on the Continuous Assessment. It went further to state that, there will be no final examination at the end of six years of primary Education. Certificate at this level will be based on the Continuous Assessment and an examination to be conducted by the state Ministries of Education. While the Senior Secondary Certificate will be based on the Continuous Assessment and a National Examination.

A handbook of Continuous Assessment released by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (1985) defines Continuous Assessment as "Mechanism whereby the final grading of student in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behavior takes account in a systematic way of all their performance during a given period of study".

Such an assessment involves the use of a great variety of models of Evaluation for the purpose of grading and improving learning and performances of students. Nworgu (2003) characterized Continuous Assessment as cumulative, comprehensive and guidance oriented. Ehiemotor (2000) defines Continuous Assessment as "monitoring of the students through classroom evaluation",

Suleiman and Olayewole (2005) defines Continuous Assessment as a process for obtaining information that is used for making decision about students' curricular and educational programme and policies". Mazilincó and Gindiza (2005) said the concept of Continuous Assessment is "sitting beside a child to observe, document and describe qualitatively and quantitatively his or her cognitive, affective and psychomotor behaviors and in the process using the result as feedback to ensure valid identification of potentials as well as maximum desirable growth and development in which terminal judgment will be

made". Black and Williams (1998) used the term assessment to refer to all those activities undertaken by the teachers and their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities.

The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that assessment of students for certification will be based on the Continuous Assessment. Contrary to the old system where assessment of students for certification was based on one-off assessment by an external examination body. The one-off assessment was criticized as an inadequate measure of student's abilities. According to Oladini (2000) external examination set by external agencies were riddled with many disadvantages such as over estimation of student's abilities making the examination foreign to students, lack of diagnostic and guidance oriented propensity, creation of emotional problems to students, low coverage of content taught to learner, high failure rate, heavy dependence on rote memory and high rate of examination malpractice.

According to the National Policy on Education (2004) one of the objectives of Continuous

Onuka (2008) stated that continuous assessment is a part of teaching and learning process. This assertion is in line with the National Policy on Education (2004), and that Continuous Assessment provides information for career guidance and helps the teacher to assess his methodology and his performance and when incorporated in the assessment of students it would help to curb examination malpractice. Yoloye (2001) states, that formative evaluation is a part of teaching and learning process. It gives the teacher a feedback on the effectiveness of his methodology or otherwise.

Hassan and Adeyanju (2004) said that before the introduction of Continuous Assessment, examination had become threatening and anxiety provoking for both teachers and students. They stated that teachers were teaching exclusively for examination, while parents and students were engaged in all form of Examination Malpractices. The introduction of continuous assessment means that 40% of the scores of the final examination were already accounted for during the three years of study. According to the National Policy on Education Implementation committee (2004) Continuous Assessment would prepare students well for any examination.

Problems of Continuous Assessment implementation

Nworgu (2003) identified the following as problems in the implementation of continuous assessment.

- a. Comparability of standard: This could arise from differences in the quality of tests and other assessment instruments used in different schools. Apart from qualitative differences, the way and manner tests are administered in various schools could present problems of scoring and grading of achievement in various subjects.
- b. Record keeping and continuity of record: Another problem is related to record keeping. Continuous Assessment cannot be meaningful except there is accurate keeping of records for each student. Since these records are expected to be meaningfully cumulative from class to class and from school to school, there is the need for uniformity in the kinds of record kept and format for keeping such records.
- c. Storage Facilities: Also associated with the problem of keeping is the storage facility for safe keeping of record.
- d. Unqualified personnel: There is the problem of qualified personnel to operate the continuous assessment system. Many teachers do not possess the necessary competence or skills in developing valid Assessment instruments for evaluation of behaviour outcome in the three domains.
- e. Large number of pupils: To operate continuous assessment successfully teachers need to spend time on each child, helping and observing him. Thus, implying that, the teacher has to teach less number of pupils per class. This will enable the teacher to assess and provide feedback.
- f. Misinterpretation of guidelines: Misinterpretation of guidelines provided by the various ministries of Education is a serious problem to some teachers.
- g. Other areas of Confusion are;
 - i. The amount of material or content to be covered by the teacher in each test.
 - ii. What happens when assignment is given and some students failed to submit their scripts? In this case giving a zero score to the student does not reflect his true ability.

According to Michael and Odeno (2001) a number of constraints such as inadequate number of teachers to teach the core subjects, poor laboratory facilities, and lack of textbooks are among factors that frustrate the smooth implementation of continuous assessment

Method of Assessment Used by Teachers for CA

The teacher is the key person in the implementation of C.A. If the teacher fails to perform there is no way C.A. can succeed. A study by Ogundulunwa (2011) on the Competence of teachers in Administration of C.A. in secondary schools, found that teachers are more familiar with use of test than non-test techniques of Assessment of student behaviour. It also found that there is no uniform operational plan in use for implementation of Continuous Assessment. Finally, it found that

majority of teachers have never attended any workshop on C.A, implementation. Another study by Esere and Idowu (2011) found that the Assessment practice of most teachers fall short of being comprehensive and guidance oriented. The study also found that most of the teachers are more familiar with the assessment of the cognitive domain only. Another study by Ajagi and Ajagi (2011) on the competence of teachers in Ogun State found that, most teachers cannot construct multiple choice items and have no idea about how to use instrument for the assessment of the psychomotor and affective domains.

Another study by Macdonald (2006) found that, teachers give Assessment and group project to students but hardly mark them, that means students do not get feedback from teachers as and when due. Another study by Ajagi and Akorede, found that teacher's competence and skills are growing out-dated and inadequate to meet current demand for effectiveness

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Survey research design was used for this study. According to Mishra (2005) survey is appropriate when collecting data that are to be analyzed comparatively to bring out group similarities and or differences. It also allows for collection of information from samples through the use of questionnaire. The design was found appropriate for this study because, it allowed the researcher to make a comparative evaluation of group similarities and or differences of the variables under consideration. The study also collected information from samples of the population through the use of questionnaire which survey was the appropriate method for obtaining such information.

Population and Sample

The population for the study consists of 500 teachers in 20 Senior Secondary Schools in Biu zone. The population comprised of 350 male and 150 female teachers. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 200 teachers from the 20 Senior Secondary Schools. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) Simple random sampling technique is the best method when selecting sample from a large population and especially when undertaking a survey research. It gives each member of the population equal opportunity for being selected to represent the population. The sample size of 200 was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for selection of samples.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for research question one was analyzed by contrasting the CA implementation guideline with school practices. Research question two was analyzed by computing the percentage of schools with materials for the implementation of CA. Research Question three was analyzed by computing the percentage of teachers that use each of the methods of assessment used for CA. Research Question four was analyzed by computing the percentage of items that conform to item construction guidelines. Percentage was used because the researcher was interested in extent of implementation of C.A.

DATA ANALYSIS RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study.

Data Analysis and Result

To answer the research questions raised in the study, data collected were analyzed using percentage and the results presented in tables.

Operation of continuous Assessment according to Federal Ministry of Education

Research Question 1: Do schools operate Continuous Assessment according to the guideline given by the Federal Ministry of Education?

To answer this research question data collected from teachers on methods of assessments used for C.A. were analyzed using percentage and the results presented in Table

Operation of continuous Assessment according to the Guideline given by the Federal Ministry of Education

S/N	Guidelines	School practice	F	%
1	60% should be allocated to C.A	30% is given to C.A	20	100%
2	Frequency of assessment should be three times per term	Average of two times per term	17	85
3	At least 40% score in five subjects should be the basis for promotion	Automatic	18	90
4	Mark scripts and end of term report card should be given to students as a feed back	Marked scripts only are given	18	90
5	Teachers should use phrases like “Active in class, shows dislike for the subject, good performance” to comment on students’ performance	Adjective like, Good, Fair, poor were used	16	80
6	Mean C.A score of students from SS1-SS3 should be given to WAEC and NECO as part of final assessment	Mean C.A score for SS3 only is given	18	90
7	Should C.A committee should comprise of year group tutors, Vice principal academics, Guidance counselor, continuous Assessment master and the principal	Same	14	70
8	Zonal C.A committee should comprise of principal, Vice principals, C.A Masters and Zonal Deputy Director	None	20	100%

Table above shows that teachers do not implement C.A according to the guidelines given by the Federal ministry of Education. According to the guideline assessment in the area of cognitive domain should be three times per term but the frequency of assessment in 85% of the schools is less than that. The basis for promotion is at least 40% score in five subjects as well as the psychomotor and the affective domains of learning but 90% of the schools give Automatic promotion to students. weighted CA score of students from SS1 – SS3 should be given to WAEC and NECO to form part of the SSCE examination scores. But in all the schools only SS3 test score were used.

Availability of Materials for the Implementation of C.A. in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools

Research Question 2: Are there adequate materials for the implementation of C.A. in Biu zone Senior Secondary Schools?

To answer this research question data collected were analysed using percentage and the results presented in table below

Distribution of materials for CA found in Schools.

S/N	Materials for the implementation of C.A	Number of schools available	%
1	Class mark list (form C.A 1A)	18	80
2	Psychomotor and affective domain (form C.A 1B)	0	0
3	Summary of annual record (form C.A 2A and 2B)	0	0
4	Cumulative record card (form C.A 3A and 3B)	0	0
5	Termly report card	0	0
6	File cabinet for safe keeping of records	10	50
7	C.A operation handbook	0	0
8	Standard instrument for measuring non – cognitive domain	0	0
9	Good school library	8	40
10	Equipped science laboratories	7	35
11	Question bank at school level	0	0

According to result in the table above there are no adequate facilities for the implementation of C.A in Biu Zone senior secondary school. Form C.A 1B which is a tool for measuring the psychomotor and affective domains was not available. Form CA 2A and CA 2B which is used for summary of assessment of both the cognitive and affective domains were also not available. This implies record keeping on both the cognitive and affective domain was poor. There is no feedback to parents and students as schools do not issue report cards at the end of term.

Use of Different Assessment Methods

Research Question 3: Do teachers assess all the domains of learning?

To answer this research question data collected were analyzed using percentage and the results presented in table below

Methods of Assessment Used by Teachers for C.A

S/N	Type of Assessment	Frequency and percentage of usage					
		1 st Ass		2 nd Ass		3 rd Ass	
		Used	Not used	Used	Not used	Used	Not used
1	Test	160(80)	40 (20)	100 (50)	100 (50)	40 (20)	160 (80)
2	Assignment	120 (60)	80(400)	60 (30)	140 (70)	30 (15)	170 (85)
3	Project	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
4	Anecdotal records	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
5	Interview	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
6	Observation	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)

7	manipulated situation technique	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
8	Questionnaire	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
9	Socio-metric technique	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
	Total						
	Total	200		200		200	

The analysis of table above shows that teachers do not use all the assessment methods as recommended by the guideline on the implementation of CA. They use only test and assignment which were suitable for the assessment of cognitive domain. Other methods like interview, observations, manipulated situation technique and socio-metric technique which are suitable for the assessment of affective and psychomotor domain are not used.

Summary of Findings.

1. Continuous Assessment is not implemented in Biu Zone Senior Senior Secondary Schools according to the Guidelines given by the Federal Ministry of Education. Seven out of the eight guidelines were violated.
2. There are no adequate materials for the implementation of C.A. in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools. A checklist of eleven items was made and only four were found to be reasonably available.
3. Teachers do not use methods assessment that assesses the psychomotor and affective domains of learning. They use only test and assignment for assessing students which measures the cognitive domain only, other methods of assessment suitable for the measurement of the non-cognitive domains are not used.
4. Teachers in Biu Zone Senior Secondary Schools do not conform to the Guidelines on test construction. An analysis of teacher made test items conformity to guidelines on construction in both essay and objective test items showed that Teachers conformity to the Guidelines ranges from 0% to 100%.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this study C.A. has not been implemented according to the guidelines given by the Federal Ministry of Education. There were no adequate materials for the implementation of C.A. in Biu zone senior secondary schools. Teachers do not use methods of assessment suitable for the assessment of psychomotor and affective domains therefore; some aspects of students' behavior were not assessed. Teachers do not conform to most of the guidelines on test construction. Based on the outcome of this study the researcher concludes that anxiety towards external examination, rote learning, mass failure in external examinations, etc. still persist because C.A has not been properly implemented in BIU Zone Senior Secondary Schools.

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