

## **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 two hundred (200) teachers who were randomly selected from the four geopolitical zones in Ogun State. A 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 about continuous assessment practice. There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perception of the continuous assessment practice, there is a significant difference between young and old teachers 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 was poor and the implementation of continuous assessment is bedeviled with several difficulties. Therefore, recommendations were made that ministry of education should establish a uniform standard of assessment, and a uniform system of weighting scores from different assessments should be used from school to school

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Perception, Continuous Assessment, Primary school Teachers.

### **1. Introduction**

Continuous Assessment has been defined by several authors each from its own perspective (Federal Ministry of Education, 1985; Falayajo, 1986; Yoloye, 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 the three domains of behavior with the aim of getting his truest picture and helping him develop fully his potentials.

Integration of continuous assessment in certification grades in Nigeria is now a fact of history. It is a matter of national policy. The National Policy on Education provides that certification at the primary school level shall be wholly based on CA and shall be 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 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 adjudged 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 namely, the cognitive, affective and psychomotor. The other aspect 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 to 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 details and keep cumulative records for the students;
- CA as formative evaluation leads to improvement in i. 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 to adjust the method of teaching if the need arises;

- Judgement about the efficacy of the chosen learning experience, the content, the method, 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;
- 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. Part of these problems include comparability of standards, record keeping and continuity of records, use of assessment tools (apart from testing), assessment of the affective and psychomotor domains and 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 include courses, like 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 of teachers with long experience than those with short experience and it is expected that more of this teachers would be female.

Based on this background, this study is interested in finding out 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.

**2. Research Questions**

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

- What is the general perception of teachers about continuous assessment practices in Ogun State?
- Is there any significant difference between male and female teachers' perception on the continuous assessment practices in primary schools?
- To what extents will the teachers' years of teaching experience determines their perception of continuous assessment practice?
- Is there any significant difference between the perception of continuous assessment practice among primary school teachers in public and private schools

**3. 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 Ogun state. The sample consists of two hundred teachers randomly selected from the four geo-political 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.

**4. Results and Interpretation**

Result of the study with particular reference to Research Question 1 is shown below on table 1.

**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 school should be while the remaining sixty-five teachers which constitute 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 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 showed a non-significant outcome ( $t = 0.188, P > 0.05$ ). This shows that teachers do not differ significantly in their perceptions of the continuous assessment practice in their schools by teachers' gender. Though the mean scores for male lecturers (61.25) was more than that of the female lecturers that was 59.69. However, the difference is not statistically significant.

**Research question 3: To what extents will the teachers' years of teaching experiencedetermine 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 statistic 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 the 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.

**5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The first research question which sought to find out teachers general perception 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 the how continuous assessment should be practiced but they also know that they have not been implementing it correctly as they ought to 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 may be due to the fact that every teacher irrespective of sex is given the same opportunity to conduct continuous assessment for their pupils 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 been conducting continuous assessment in the same way, majorly by not actually practiced it the way it ought to be done as majority of the school only rely on testing the students on cognitive domain alone as practicing continuous assessment.

In conclusion, the results of this study apart from bringing out the fact that continuous assessment is not being effectively practiced in Ogun state primary schools, have also pointed out that primary school teachers in Ogun state irrespective of gender, years of experience and even the school type have not been conducting continuous assessment as it should be practice within the school system. There is therefore, 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, there is every possibility of success of continuous assessment.

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