

EVALUATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN DUTSIN-MA ZONAL EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the Continuous Assessment (CA) practices of secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance, Katsina State, Nigeria. Four objectives were formulated to guide the study, along with four corresponding null hypotheses. A survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of 323 public secondary school teachers within the zone, and a total population sampling technique was employed, allowing all 323 teachers to participate in the study. Data were collected using a researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled *Teachers' Continuous Assessment Practice Questionnaire (TCAPQ)*, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.882. The collected data were analyzed using the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), while Scheffé's post-hoc analysis was conducted to determine the sources of observed differences. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in teachers' continuous assessment practices based on department ($t = 0.813$; $df = 291$; $p > .05$) and school level ($t = 0.818$; $df = 291$; $p > .05$). However, significant differences were found based on gender ($t = -3.884$; $df = 291$; $p < .05$) and age ($F(2, 90) = 11.715$; $p < .05$). Consequently, the study concluded that gender and age significantly influence the continuous assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State. Based on these findings, it was recommended, among others, that Katsina State Ministry of Education should organize periodic training workshops and seminars for teachers on CA practices to strengthen teachers' competence in modern continuous assessment strategies across all subject areas.

Keywords: Evaluation, Continuous Assessment, Practices, Teachers

Introduction

The quality of a nation's education determines the quality of the products of its educational system, pace and level of overall social, political, technological and economic development. However, the hallmark of an educational system depends on the quality of its assessment practices. Assessment is a major tool employed in the process of appraising candidates' achievement; it plays a major role in the educational process and development. It helps to ascertain the extent to which the educational policy is successful and could be a sort of quality control for checking the educational policy vis-à-vis the curriculum.

Assessments to a large extent determine what, when and how students study. Teachers use it to discover the extent to which students have actually acquired knowledge and skills they are expected and for diagnosing learners' problems. Through assessment, teachers ascertain whether their teaching objectives were achieved and also appraise the performance of their students for the purpose of certification (Olutola, 2019).

Educational assessment involves collecting, analyzing, recording, and interpreting evidence of learning across diverse settings to inform stakeholders about learners' strengths and areas for improvement (Ejinkonye, Ezeugo, & Eleje, 2025). Ghaicha, (2016) defined assessment as any act of interpreting information about student performance, collected through any of a multitude of a means or practices. The role of assessment in the school setting cannot be overemphasized. Schools need to conduct examinations as yardstick for assessment and teacher's always conducting various evaluation in the school to achieve different objectives, but this is essentially internal. This internal evaluation can be teacher- made test, continuous assessment, school-based assessment and local tests (Olutola, 2015). Ogunniyi, (2015) perceived continuous assessment as a formative evaluation procedure concerned with finding out in a systematic manner the overall gains that a student has made in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills after a given set of learning experience.

Abadina (2017) defines continuous assessment as the systematic determination of the extent of students' progress or lack of it in School subjects including attitudes and values from the students to the last day in School. Continuous Assessment uses a variety of techniques for assessing the students in schools because it considers all the three domains of learning, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Apart from being formative in nature, a good continuous assessment system must be systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance-inspiring or oriented (Olutola & Nini, 2020). Some of the advantages of continuous assessment are, it is used to determine student's level of knowledge, skill and understanding when the subject/course is on-going; used to diagnose students learning problems and difficulties; helps the teachers to know the next instructional step to take when the course is on-going; used to evaluate the learning that has taken place in a lesson; assists the teachers to understand the students level of mastery in a particular subject; aids students good study habits and it helps the teachers to continuously monitor students' progress in a subject or course (Olutola, 2019, p. 267).

According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) Continuous assessment is defined as a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in cognitive affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour takes account in a systematic way in all his performance during a given period of schooling. Such an assessment involves the use of a greater variety of modes of evaluation for the purposes of guiding and improving learning and performance of students. Assessment in this form is regarded as adequate for assessing student's learning because of it is comprehensive, cumulative, systematic, guidance and diagnostic oriented. Alufohai and Akinlosolu (2016) investigated knowledge and attitude of secondary School teachers towards continuous assessment (CA) practices in Edo central senatorial district, Nigeria. Findings showed that, majority of the teachers' perceived CA practice as a systematic and comprehensive system of evaluation but have inadequate knowledge of its cumulative and guidance-oriented characteristics. Results also showed that years of experience and teachers' area of specialization are the only significant predictors of teachers' attitude towards CA practices among other variables (gender & age).

Awofala and Babajide (2013) study investigated the attitudes of (339) pre-service science, technology and mathematics (STM) teachers towards continuous assessment practices in Nigeria Based on the research findings a higher proportion of the pre-service STM teachers seemed to display positive attitudes toward most of the continuous assessment practices. The only potent predictor of pre-service STM teachers' attitudes toward CA practice among variables (gender and age) was the discipline of study.

Byabato and Kisamo (2014) investigated the implementation of School based continuous assessment in Tanzania ordinary secondary Schools (O'level) and its implications on the quality of education. They concluded that the implementation of School based CA are not carried out properly like many other problems like: Poor procedure for CA recording, lack of uniformity in both the assessment tools and lack of teachers' integrity (i.e inflation of marks & favourism).

Statement of the Problem

Continuous assessment as a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in the cognitive affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour takes into account in a systematic way all performances during a given period of Schooling. Continuous Assessment uses a variety of techniques for assessing the students because it considers all the three domains of learning, namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Since it is an innovation in educational system aimed at providing a better alternative to the practice of basing the continuous assessment of learner on one end of term examination system practiced. BECE claims that its awards of junior secondary School certificate (JSS) is based on the written examination which takes ratio seventy and continuous assessment with ratio 30 (Wilmot & Yakasai, 2016). Despite the claim of BECE of their assessment on ratio 70:30, the students' academic performance in JSS is not encouraging

In our Schools, teachers are over-burdened with working hard as a result of the failure of government to employ more teachers, this makes some of the teachers to give students arbitrary continuous assessment scores to the students without conducting continuous assessment for them. As one of the emphases of education is the implementation of continuous Assessment Practices in our Schools. Therefore, this study evaluates the continuous assessment practices of teachers of Secondary Schools in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality assurance, Katsina State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance based on Departments.
2. Determine the difference in the continuous assessment practices of male and female secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State.
3. Examine the difference in the continuous assessment practices of the secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance based on age.

4. Find out the difference in Continuous Assessment Practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina state based on School levels.

Hypotheses

The null hypotheses below were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance based on Departments.
2. There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of male and female secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State based on Gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of the secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance based on age.
4. There is no significant difference in Continuous Assessment Practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina state based on School levels.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design. The population comprised three hundred and twenty-three (323) public secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance (DZEQA) of Katsina State. A total population sampling technique was initially employed to include all 323 teachers as the study sample. However, due to security challenges affecting some schools, only two hundred and ninety-three (293) teachers from eighteen (18) secondary schools were accessible and participated in the study, while four (4) schools were not visited because of insecurity concerns in their locations.

Data were collected using a researcher-designed structured questionnaire titled *Teachers' Continuous Assessment Practices Questionnaire (TCAPQ)*. The instrument consisted of twenty-two (22) items designed to assess teachers' continuous assessment practices in Dutsin-Ma Quality Assurance Zone, Katsina State. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale of Very Frequently (VF), Frequently (F), Sometimes (S), and Never (N). The questionnaire was administered directly to the teachers in the selected schools, and confidentiality was assured.

To establish the validity of the instrument, it was presented to two experts who examined and confirmed its face, content, and construct validity. A pilot study was conducted using forty (40) teachers from four (4) secondary schools in Katsina town that were not part of the main study. The split-half method was employed to determine reliability, and the instrument yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.882, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The collected data were analyzed using t-test for hypotheses one, two, and four, while hypothesis three was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Scheffé's post-hoc test was conducted to identify the sources of significant differences. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Testing Hypotheses

In this study, four (4) hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance. The researcher used t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools to analyze the hypotheses formulated for the study.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance based on Departments.

The t-test analysis was used to determine the Continuous Assessment Practices (CAP) among secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance based on Departments.

Table 1: t-test showing the difference in the continuous Assessment Practices (CAP) among secondary School teachers based on departments

Variable	Departments	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal.	Sig. t-value
	Arts	153	62.3007	9.3753			
CAP					291	0.813	0.417 (NS)
	Science	140	61.4500	8.4448			

CAP: Continuous Assessment Practices NS: Not significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

The result in table 1 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.813 is greater than 0.05 level of significant alpha level ($t = 0.813$; $df = 291$; $p > 0.05$). This implies that the departments of the secondary Schools teachers have no significant difference on their continuous Assessment Practices in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is retained

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of male and female secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State based on Gender.

The t-test analysis was used to determine the Continuous Assessment practices of male and female secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State.

Table 2: t-test summary showing the difference in the CAP of male and female secondary School teachers

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal.	Sig. t-value
	Male	212	60.6698	9.3040			
CAP					291	-3.884	0.000 (S)
	Female	81	65.0988	6.9922			

CAP: Continuous Assessment Practices; S: Significant at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Table 2 also reveals that the calculated t-value of -3.884 is significant at 0.05 alpha level ($t = -3.884$; $df = 291$; $p < 0.05$). This implies that there is significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of male and female secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State. The result in table 4 above also revealed that female teachers had a higher mean of 65.0988 than their male counterparts with mean of 60.6698. This implies that, Continuous Assessment Practices of female teachers is higher than their male counterpart in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance. Therefore, hypothesis two is rejected.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of the secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance based on age

The ANOVA analysis was used to determine the continuous assessment practices of the secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance based on age.

Table 3: ANOVA summary showing the difference in the CAP of the secondary School teachers based on age

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F- Value	Sig. F-Value
Between Group	1743.700	2	871.850		
Within Group	21582.020	290	74.421	11.715	0.000
Total	23325.720	292			

Table 3 revealed an F-value of 11.715 which is significant at 0.05 alpha level. This means that there is significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of the secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance based on age. This implies that, secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance are statistically different in their continuous Assessment Practices in respect of their age. Therefore, hypothesis three is rejected. Scheffe's post hoc analysis was carried out to find the source of the differences.

Table 4: Scheffe's post – hoc table showing the difference in CAP of secondary School teachers based on age.

		Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Age	N		
25years – 30years	110		64.6636
31years – 40years	131	61.1527	
41years and above	52	57.9038	
Sig.		0.053	1.000

Table 4 above shows Scheffe's Post –hoc analysis of continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers based on age and a significant difference was revealed. The table reveals that secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance between 25years – 30 years old have the highest mean score of 64.6636, followed by those between 31year – 40years with mean score of 61.1527 and those between 41year and above with least mean scores of 57.9038. This implies that the lower the age of secondary School teachers, the higher their continuous Assessment Practices and the higher the age of secondary School teachers, the lower their continuous assessment practice.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant difference in Continuous Assessment Practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina state based on School levels.

Table 5: t-test showing the difference in the CAP of secondary School teachers based on School levels

Variable	School Level	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal.	Sig. t-value
CAP	Junior	110	62.4455	7.47177	291	0.818	0.414(NS)
	Junior	118	61.5628	9.71773			

CAP: Continuous Assessment Practices; NS: Not Significant

Table 5 also shows that the calculated t-value of 0.818 is not significant at 0.05 alpha level ($t = 0.818$; $df = 291$; $p > 0.05$). This means that there is no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State based on School levels. This implies that both junior and senior secondary School teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Quality Assurance of Katsina state are not statistically significant in their continuous assessment practice. Therefore, hypothesis two is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from hypothesis one indicated that there is no significant difference in the continuous assessment (CA) practices of secondary school teachers based on their departments. This result is consistent with the findings of Alufohai and Akinlosolu (2016), who reported that although teachers from different educational specializations may have varying levels of exposure to CA techniques, departmental affiliation does not significantly influence their approach to continuous assessment. This suggests that CA practices are not inherently discipline-specific but are generally applicable across departments.

Findings from hypothesis two revealed a significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of male and female secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State. This outcome aligns with the findings of Awofala and Babajide (2013), who observed that although gender was not a strong predictor, it nonetheless influenced teachers' attitudes toward continuous assessment. Differences in CA practices between male and female teachers may be attributed to social, cultural, or professional

expectations. These findings point to the need for further investigation into gender-responsive training and interventions aimed at promoting equity in assessment practices.

Findings from hypothesis three showed a significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance based on age. This result supports Alufohai and Akinlosolu (2016), who found that age significantly shapes teachers' attitudes toward continuous assessment. Younger teachers may be more receptive to contemporary CA strategies, whereas older teachers may tend to rely more on traditional assessment methods. This highlights the importance of age-sensitive professional development initiatives to strengthen older teachers' competence in implementing effective CA practices.

Findings from hypothesis four revealed no significant difference in the continuous assessment practices of secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State based on school levels. This contrasts with the findings of Byabato and Kisamo (2014), who reported significant variations in CA implementation across school levels in Tanzania, largely due to the distinct challenges encountered at each level. However, in the present study, CA practices appear to be consistent across different school levels within the Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance.

Conclusion

This study investigated the continuous assessment (CA) practices of secondary school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Zonal Educational Quality Assurance of Katsina State with respect to department, gender, age, and school level. The findings revealed that there is no significant difference in CA practices based on department and school level, indicating that continuous assessment is implemented in a relatively uniform manner across subject areas and categories of schools. This suggests that CA practices are not inherently discipline-specific and can be effectively applied across different academic contexts within the zone.

However, the study found significant differences in CA practices based on gender and age. These results imply that demographic characteristics influence how teachers approach and implement continuous assessment. While gender differences may be linked to varying attitudes or professional experiences, age differences suggest that generational factors affect the adoption of modern assessment strategies. Therefore, to ensure more effective and equitable implementation of CA, there is a need for gender-responsive and age-sensitive professional development programmes, alongside sustained monitoring and support within the educational system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made, along with the relevant implementers:

1. Katsina State Ministry of Education should organize periodic training workshops and seminars for teachers on CA practices to strengthen teachers' competence in modern continuous assessment strategies across all subject areas.
2. Katsina State Ministry of Education, Educational Quality Assurance Officer, School Administrators and Educational Non-governmental organizations should design professional development programmes to address gender-related gaps in continuous

assessment approaches. This will promote balanced and equitable assessment practices among teachers.

3. School Principals and Zonal Education Authorities, should be organize mentorship programmes where younger teachers share innovative CA strategies and experienced teachers provide pedagogical guidance to improve continuous assessment practices.
4. School Inspectors should maintain uniformity and quality assurance in CA implementation across all schools to ensure consistency in continuous assessment practices.
5. Regular supervision, feedback mechanisms and evaluation of CA practices should be institutionalized by Katsina State Ministry of Education to ensure effective implementation and continuous improvement.

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