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CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND ECONOMICS STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ESAN SOUTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EDO STATE

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Abstract

The study examined continuous assessment and economics on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State. The descriptive research design using the survey was adopted in the study. The population of the study covers all the 264 Senior Secondary School Two (SSS2) students in the 16 senior secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State. The total of 132 Senior Secondary School two (SSS 2) representing 50% and all the students in the 16 senior secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State was drawn for the study. The instrument used for the collection of data was basically a researcher developed questionnaire titled: "Teachers' Continuous Assessment Practice Questionnaire". The test-retest the reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained on the instrument. Hence, the questionnaire was adjudged fit for use in the main administration. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to test the research hypotheses. The result from the study showed that there was a significant relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers, teachers' assessment feedback, teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State. It was recommended that simplified and concise interpretation of the continuous assessment policy provisions should be made into manuals, leaflets, and handbooks for distribution to teachers who are usually the implementers of most educational policies.

Keywords: Pre-evaluation information, Assessment feedback, Data gathering instrument and Students

Introduction

Continuous assessment is a device for monitoring and improving the learning and general performances of students based on systematic collection of comprehensive and diagnostic data over a specified period of time and as such is said to be cumulative (Nneji, Fatade, Awofala & Awofala, 2021). Its comprehensiveness, periodic, cumulative and guidance oriented features enhance the possibility for both the students and the teacher to get the requisite information that would guide the future development of the students in terms of subjects to be taken and career aspirations. Hence, this shows that continuous assessment is aimed at ensuring desirable changes in a learners' behaviour by the end of a lesson, school term or year. For a teacher to ensure desirable changes in a learners' behaviour by the end of a lesson, school term or year, there has to be a way of ensuring changes at each step of the process that adds up to the observable terminal desirable changes. This is done to take stock of observed progress or non-progress of learners; and determine the next appropriate step to encourage and maximize learning. In this case, learning or changes in behaviour is continuous, progressive and cumulative. Consequently, it does not take place only at the end of a term or year, but during each minute of every lesson. Thus, for the teaching-learning process to be effective, the collection of data on a cumulative and continuous basis is a 'must-do' for teachers. Data collected by teachers during assessment is obtained from a wide range of sources; weekly, fortnightly and termly, are drawn from the three main domains of learning -cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Marcus, 2020).

Although, this alternative to the traditional one-shot assessment is highly encouraged by the federal government with all enthusiasm; however, its implementation has been a bane of challenge among teachers and significant others in schools. Observation has shown that teachers, who are the implementers of the curriculum at the classroom level, seem to have little or no knowledge about what continuous assessment is, which is a systematic (periodic), progressive (comprehensive), cumulative and guidance oriented system of evaluation. Some knowledgeable teachers have negative predisposition or attitude towards it. Consequently, students' academic performance is adversely affected. Academic performance refers to the

level of actual accomplishment or proficiency one has achieved in an academic area, as opposed to one's potential. It implies the outcome of education, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Academic performance is commonly measured by examinations and continuous assessment. According to Alufohai and Akinlosotu (2016), teachers' continuous assessment (CA) practices could influence students' learning or their academic performance particularly in science subjects like Economics.

Economics is one of the non-vocational subjects that is taught at the Senior Secondary School (SSS) level and studied as a social science in higher institutions of learning. It is asubject that is concerned with the study of human behaviour in response to how they make choices between or among alternatives on a daily basis-at home, at work and around their immediate environment; in satisfying their numerous wants with limited available resources (Arewah & Akinlosotu, 2018). This definition shows that Economics has some inherent values to learners at all levels. Economics is not primarily a body of knowledge, it is a method rather than a doctrine, an apparatus of mind, a technique of thinking which helps its possessors to draw correct conclusion (iii) Vocational Training: - The vocational nature of Economics makes it readily acceptable among students. Economics as a subject is of direct utility in many branches of industries and commerce. It is also an essential part of most professional examinations like Banking, Accountancy and Secretariat. Unfortunately, Ohamobi and Ezeaku (2013) pointed out that the academic achievement of students in Economics in the past decade has been on the decline.As a result, the abysmal or poor performances of students have been traced to teachers - who are at the centre of curriculum implementation in the classroom level. In the course of implementing the directives of the Ministry of Education from the Curriculum guideline, teachers carry out certain continuous assessment practices namely: dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers, teachers' assessment feedback and teachers' use of data gathering instrument.

Dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers is against the principle of testing students haphazardly without giving them prior notice on the test or assessment. It is a continuous assessment practice that requires every teacher to test students before teaching a new topic, inform them about the number of tests scheduled for the term, the respective dates for each test and even the type of instruments to be used in specific tests and examinations (e.g. essay tests, multiple choice test, laboratory practical) among others. For instance, informing the students about a test, laboratory exercise, quiz, group seminar in the coming week may not only help keep students aware but also help to arouse their preparedness for better academic performance. After assessment or evaluation, it is expected that teachers provide an assessment feedback to the students to make them ascertain their academic stand or areas of inherent weaknesses that needs to be strengthened. This explains that assessment feedback requires classroom teacher to give examination and test scripts back to students after scoring (Nneji, Fatade, & Awofala, 2021). In addition, it may describe the responsiveness of the teacher in ensuring that students' performances in tests and examinations are made known to their parents, other teachers and other professional service providers in the school such as the guidance counsellors to ensure that possible areas of recurrent learning difficulties are addressed. It is generally expected that providing students such feedback after a brief class assessment will not only help to correct them but also help them to perform better academically in subsequent assessments.

Teachers' use of data gathering instrument is another continuous assessment practice that is required of every teacher to ensure that students are tested from all domains of learning –cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. To this end, teachers are expected to use various data gathering instruments such as: multiple choice (objective) tests, observational instruments, essay tests, projects and laboratory practical among others to assess students' achievement after a series of lesson. Due to the skills in pedagogy required to carry out this practices, the federal government has always recommended that only qualified and experienced teacher are employed to teach every subject at all levels. This further implies that improving the quality of the teaching staff that would be involved in the day to day assessment of the students, may be significant in raising students' academic achievement in schools. The relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students' academic performance has been carried out in studies. Nneji, Fatade, Awofala and Awofala (2021) investigated the attitudes of 305 Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) teachers towards assessment practices in Nigeria. Findings showed that a higher proportion of the STM teachers seemed to display positive relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students academic performance. Awofala and

Babajide (2013) investigated the attitudes of 339 pre-service Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) teachers towards continuous assessment practices in Nigeria within the blueprint of a descriptive survey research design in a conventional university. Results showed that dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers significantly influence students' academic performance.

The relationship between teachers' assessment feedback and students' academic performance has been carried out in studies. Obioma (2010) on a large scale survey of 3,325 primary and junior secondary school teachers across the six geo-political zone of Nigeria to examine the status, gaps and challenges of continuous assessment (CA) practices in Nigeria, found in general school that most teachers demonstrated low readiness and poor knowledge of the elementary concept of CA. The result showed that teachers' assessment feedback in carrying out continuous assessment practices was poor. Clement and Ayibatonye (2014) investigated the causes of science teachers' indifference to the implementation of continuous assessment in secondary schools in Rivers State. The population of the study was the whole science teachers teaching in the secondary schools. From the population a sample of 200 science teachers were selected through a stratified random sampling technique. Three research question and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The instruments the Teacher Continuous Assessment Attitude Rating Scale (TCAARS) was used to generate data. The instrument was validated and its reliability was tested using Kudar Richardson 20 formula r = 0.76. The data collected were analyzed; using simple percentage to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses. From results analyzed, it was found that many science teachers are not professionally qualified and as such lacked the morale and skills to construct and administer CA test in Secondary School. Majority of the teachers also demonstrated low effort in using some of the assessment instruments; consequently, assessment was haphazardly carried out.

The relationship between teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance has been carried out in studies. Fatade Awofala, and Awofala, (2021) investigated the attitudes of 305 Science, Technology and Mathematics (STM) teachers towards assessment practices in Nigeria. Findings among other result showed that a higher proportional of the STM teachers seemed to display positive attitudes toward most of the assessment practices, while their attitudes toward some assessment practices tended to be either negative or neutral. Alufohai and Akinlosotu (2016) investigated knowledge and attitude of secondary school teachers towards continuous assessment (CA) practices in Edo Central Senatorial District, Nigeria. Results showed that teachers' attitude towards CA practices was negatively skewed. The authors concluded based on findings that Result of hypotheses showed that the use of data gathering instrument by teachers was highly expedient and relevant in promoting students' learning outcome or academic achievement.

Reports from several researchers reveal that student's performances in Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) have been persistently below 40%. According to WAEC Chief Examiner's Report (2015), students under achievement in Economics can be attributed to their lack of familiarity with common Economics concepts, poor knowledge in the fundamental principles and procedures from practical Economics and haphazard continuous assessment practice by teachers. Teachers' attitude and readiness could be said to be an important factors in carrying out continuous assessment practices in schools because they are the major implementers of the curriculum at the classroom level. However, observation has shown that most teachers in secondary schools in Edo State are unwilling to undertake some fundamental continuous assessment practices. Such practices among others include: planning the time to assess student, the type of instrument to use, determine the area of learning domain to assess, learn scoring technique and how to assess students' overall progress based on their cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.

It is arguable that a teacher who has acquired some formal training from a Teacher Training Institution (TTI), College of Education or it's like could possess better continuous assessment (CA) skills than teachers that have not received such formal training. Similarly, a teacher with years of experience in the school system could have better skills on continuous assessment rudiments than a seemingly fresh graduate teacher with little assessment experience in the teaching field. Furthermore, while a number of teachers are knowledgeable about continuous assessment practices; some consider it a laborious and uninteresting task. Consequently, some of them shy away from undertaking this 'all important' part of the teaching-learning process that provides them with feedback from their class instruction.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between teachers' assessment feedback and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.
3. There is no significant relationship between teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Methodology

The descriptive research design using the survey was adopted in this study to examine the effects of continuous assessment on Economics students' performance in senior secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State. This research design was employed because the variables of the study were not manipulated and opinions of a representative sample was sought and presented in their natural setting to draw inferences. The population of the study covered all the 495 Senior Secondary School (SSS) Two students (SSS2) students offering Economics and their Economics teachers in the seventeen (17) senior secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State. A total of 240 Senior Secondary School two (SSS2) students and all the Economics teachers in eight selected senior secondary schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State were drawn for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select eight (8) of the seventeen secondary schools. The instrument that was used for the collection of data is a researcher developed questionnaire titled: "Teachers' Continuous Assessment Practice Questionnaire". The questionnaire was designed to obtain the necessary information needed from Economics teachers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections and categorized into Sections A and B. Section A contains questions relating to the bio-data of the respondents (teachers) which includes: the name of their school and sex. Section B contained 15-items designed to elicit information on teachers' continuous assessment practices. The items cover: dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers (items 1-5), teachers' assessment feedback (items 6-10), and teachers' use of data gathering instruments (items 11-15).

Students' raw scores in their last promotion examination will be collected from the promotion examination of senior secondary school two (SSS2) students in Economics in 2017/2018 school year. Students' performance in their last promotion examination were used in place of students' results in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for two (2) reasons: Firstly, students' results in their last promotion examination provided information on the most recent performance of every student in all the domains of learning (cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills) within the same school where they were taught by their teachers. On the other hand, in West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE), it is possible for students taught by one teacher to register and write their examinations in another school. Hence, SSCE results do not fully represent results of only students from their school but also include the results of 'foreign students' who only migrated to a new school for purpose of the examination. Consequently, using the WASSCE result could be misleading and may interfere with teacher continuous assessment measured in the study.

Results of students in their last promotional examination were used. The level of aggregate or cumulative performance of students in their last promotional examination; as conventionally reported in the school broad sheet: 70-100% (Excellent/Distinction), 60-69% (Very Good), 50-59% (Good/Credit/Average), 49-40% (Pass) and below 40% (Fail).Hence, the overall score or grade of each student will rated as shown below: 60 - 100% (Pass) - 4; 50 – 59% (Average) - 3; 45– 49% (Poor) - 2; 44% and below (Failed) –1.The content validity of this instrument was carried out by the project supervisor and two other experts in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction (Ambrose Alli University). In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Their responses in the first and second tests was analysed using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The result of the coefficient produced an r-value of 0.72 which showed that the instrument was reliable. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the Economics teachers in schools after the permission of principals was solicited. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was

used to test research hypotheses 1, 2 and 3. The entire hypotheses were tested at 0.05 percent level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Table 1: Correlation analysis on Dissemination of Pre-evaluation Information by Teachers and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r-cal.	p-value	Remark
Teachers' dissemination of pre-evaluation information to student	240	2.52	.952	.181*	.005	Reject null hypothesis (p<0.05)
Students' academic performance		2.50	.877			

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).***

Result in Table 1 showed that the mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard score (S.D) of the respondents (N=240) were 2.52 and .952 for teachers' dissemination of pre-evaluation information to student and 2.50 and .877 for students' academic performance respectively while the Pearson correlation coefficient of .181 was statistically significant (p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' assessment feedback and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Table 2: Correlation analysis on Teachers' Assessment Feedback and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r-cal.	p-value	Remark
Teachers' assessment feedback	240	2.53	.945	.169**	.009	Reject null hypothesis (p<0.05)
Students' academic performance		2.50	.877			

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).***

Result in Table 2 showed that the mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard score (S.D) of the respondents (N=240) were 2.53 and .945 for teachers' assessment feedback and 2.50 and .877 for students' academic performance respectively while the Pearson correlation coefficient of .169 was statistically significant (p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' assessment feedback and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Table 3: Correlation analysis on Relationship between Teachers' Use of Data Gathering instrument and Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in Esan South East Local Government Area of Edo State

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	r-cal.	p-value	Remark
Teachers' use of data gathering instrument	240	2.54	.939	.164**	.011	Reject null hypothesis (p<0.05)
Students' academic performance		2.50	.877			

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).***

Result in Table 3 showed that the mean ($\bar{X}$) and standard score (S.D) of the respondents (N=240) were 2.54 and .939 for teachers' use of data gathering instrument and 2.50 and .877 for students' academic

performance respectively while the Pearson correlation coefficient of .164 was statistically significant ($p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Esan South East local government area of Edo State.

Discussion

The result showed that there is a relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students' academic performance in Esan South East local government area of Edo State. The result agreed with that of Fatade, Awofala and Awofala (2021) who found that a higher proportion of the STM teachers seemed to display positive relationship between dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers and students academic performance. The result is in line with that of Awofala and Babajide (2013) who found that dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers significantly influence students' academic performance.

The result showed that there is a relationship between teachers' assessment feedback and students' academic performance in Esan South East local government area of Edo State. The result is in line with that of Obemeata (2019) who found that teachers' assessment feed back in carrying out continuous assessment practices was poor. The result supported that of Marcus and Ayibatonye (2014) who found that many science teachers are not professionally qualified and as such lacked the morale and skills to construct and administer CA test in Secondary School. Majority of the teachers also demonstrated low effort in using some of the assessment instruments; consequently, assessment was haphazardly carried out.

The result showed that there is a relationship between teachers' use of data gathering instrument and students' academic performance in Esan South East local government area of Edo State. The result corroborates with that of Fatade Awofala, and Awofala, (2021) who found that a higher proportional of the STM teachers seemed to display positive attitudes toward most of the assessment practices, while their attitudes toward some assessment practices tended to be either negative or neutral. The result is in line with that of Alufohai and Akinlosotu (2016) who found that the use of data gathering instrument by teachers was highly expedient and relevant in promoting students' learning outcome or academic achievement.

Conclusion

Teachers' continuous assessment practice is one of the vital roles performed by teachers in secondary schools. Based on findings, it is concluded that teachers' continuous assessment practices in the form of dissemination of pre-evaluation information by teachers, giving of assessment feedback to students and use of various data gathering instruments by teachers promote students' academic performance in schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the study:

1. Simplified and concise interpretation of the continuous assessment policy provisions should be incorporated into manuals, leaflets, and handbooks for distribution to teachers who are usually the implementers of most educational policies. These services should be done for free in order to ensure a wide circulation and acceptance.
2. Monitoring and supervision of the implementation of such policies should be stepped up and reinserted into the research policy, formulation policy, and implementation evaluation cycle. It should not be done in the usual "scapegoat finding" mode, but in the performance support and enhancement type.
3. Regular workshops and seminars should be organized for teachers in schools to further the knowledge and understanding of continuous assessment policies, programs, and implementation to neutralize confusion and misunderstanding.

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