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COUNSELLORS' PERCEPTION ON TEACHERS TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ONITSHA EDUCATION ZONE

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ABSTRACT
This study examined counsellors' perception on teachers towards the implementation of continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Aguata local government area of Anambra State. Four research questions were formulated to guide the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study was all 70 guidance counsellors in 31 public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State. The population was used as sample of its small size and therefore, there was no sampling. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Counsellors perception on teachers towards the implementation of continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Aguata Local Government Area" (COPOTICA). The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha estimate and it yielded a co-efficient of 0.78. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the research questions. Based on the findings, continuous assessment makes students develop good study habits, and it encourages healthy competitions among students. The study also recommended that schools should always make issue of continuous assessment a priority in all their teaching subjects. Counsellors and teachers should attend workshop and seminars in continuous assessment to shun all sorts of favoritism while implementing continuous assessment towards their students.

Keywords*:* Counsellors, Teachers, Continuous Assessment, Education,

Introduction

Educational assessment provides the necessary feedback require in order maximizing the outcomes of educational efforts. The assessment of learners learning provides objective evidences necessary in the decision –making process in education. The students in schools are directly under the teacher. As part of teaching and learning exercise, the teacher is expected to assess the students under him. Information obtained through such assessment is supposed to be part of appraisal data which the teacher is to carry out, for such as assessment to be useful, it must be detailed. One of the function of a school is the certification of the individual learner under its embrace (Idowu & Esere ,2009).To effectively carry out this role, assessment of one kind or the other is a prerequisite. The National Policy on Education (NPE) recommended the use of continuous assessment for taking cumulative decisions on students' level of attainment at the end of any level of schooling.

Wikipedia defined education as the process of felicitating leaning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values morals, beliefs and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling discussion and directed research. According to Kapur (2018) education renders a significant contribution in leading to effective growth and development of the individuals and teachers have an important role to play in imparting education to the students. A teacher is one who exerts some positive personal influence on an

individual so that such an individual may change his behaviour. According to Okeke in Afunago (2020) teacher as a concept could be restricted to include all those who are employed to perform highly specialized services of instructing. The teacher is he who has undergone the necessary academic and professional training for the purpose of transmitting knowledge, skills and behaviours patterns of the society of the youths.

Assessment is a means by which the teacher obtains information about knowledge gains, behavioural changes and other aspect of development of learners. According Spenalla (2019) assessment is a key component of learning because it helps student to learn that when students are able to see how they doing in class, they are able to determine whether or not they understood course material. She went ahead to opine that assessment helps motivate students. If students know they are doing poorly, they may begin to work together. According to Gawood (2017), explained that the term 'continuous assessment' used to describe assessment that are completed during the course module. Continuous assessment is a form of educational examination which evaluates the students' progress or performance throughout the duration of a course. It is a mechanism whereby students' final grading in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of the performance during a given period is evaluated (Chisara & Obinelli, 2020). Supporting the above definition, Ezewu and Okoye in Okezie (2014) viewed continuous assessment as a systematic and objective process of determining the extent student's performances in all the expected changes in behaviour, from the day he/she enters a course of study and in a judicious accumulation of all pieces of information derived from this purpose with a view to using them to guide and shape the student in his learning from time to time and to serve as basis for important decision about the child.

Continuous assessment is a classroom process that is integrated with instruction. (Abiy 2013, cited in Abejuhu, 2016). Chisara & Obinelli, (2020) cited some of the characteristics of continuous assessment which includes: being systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance oriented. Continuous assessment is systematic in the sense that it is planned, graded to suit the age and experience of the children and is given at suitable intervals during the school year. Comprehensiveness of continuous assessment means that it is not focused on academic skills alone. It embraces the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domain. Continuous assessment is guidance oriented means that the information collected is to be used by the counsellor for educational, vocational and personal-socio decision making for the child. Guidance and counselling activities thrive better on valid, sequential, systematic, continuous, cumulative and comprehensive information (Denga, in Okeke, 2017). Ifelunni in Okeke (2017) defined Counsellor as a trained expert with enough psychology necessary to understand and foretell human nature. In addition to his psychological groundedness, a counsellor is trained personnel in test construction and administration. He possesses demonstrable theories needed to understand clients' problems and be in a position to offer assistance.

Ipaye in Afunago (2020) summarizes the nature of continuous assessment which includes:

i. The termly summarizes incorporate assessment of work done week or periodically.
ii. The works assessed will not necessarily be tests only; it will include projects, essays, home work and so on.
iii. The end of term scores may incorporate scores from the affective and psychomotor areas.
iv. The termly summarizes of academic work, end of term test scores and affective scores are combined in given proportions otherwise known as weighing.

The objectives of continuous assessment in our school as stipulated by the Federal Ministry of Education are:

a. To have something to report on parents or some interested others
b. To identify levels of ability, achievement and affective development of various individuals and groups of students.
c. To diagnose learning difficulties in individuals and strengths and weakness in group performance for the purpose of improving instructions.
d. To assess special aptitudes and interest for counselling purposes.

e. To reduce examination malpractices and leakage in final examinations.
f. To provide a valid assessment of the child's overall ability and performance.
g. To assess group gains in co-operatively developed standardized instruments in the evaluation of some locally introduced innovative programmes.
h. To enable the teacher regularly improve his own performance from the feedback he gets from assessment.
i. To ensure consistency, clarity, and uniformity in educational practice through the federation and ensure an even and orderly development of the country.

Okezie (2014) summarizes the rationale for continuous assessments in schools which includes, assessment is a very important part of teaching and learning process, it gives a true picture of the pupil's ability, it facilitates appropriate guidance of the pupils, it makes teachers become innovative and creative, it helps teachers to assess their own teaching and it helps to reduce examination malpractice. Ochuba (2013) opines that continuous assessment has so many purposes and it is integral to the teaching and learning circle. Its chief function is to guide and improve learning and performance of the students. In the area of improving learning it seeks to motivate students, identify students' strengths and weakness, measure students' achievement, at best may be seen as just part of evaluation.

The implementations and impacts of continuous assessment lie heavily on the teachers. In fact, the success or failure of any evaluation (continuous assessment) strategies or techniques depends on the relevant to which the teachers implement the policy because the teachers are the coordinator of the classroom activities and the ones who implements or translate them into actions. Therefore, the knowledge of continuous assessment devotion, quality and effectives of teacher are the utmost importance in the implementation of continuous assessment. Obviously, the teacher may encounter some challenges in a bid to successfully implement the continuous assessment.

High rate of student population adversely affect the effective impacts of continuous assessment because the increase in the number of a teacher can handle is burdensome and boring to teach ,observe ,assess ,and record effectively. Lack of finance, infrequent evaluation due to lack of expertise, poor record keeping, lack of instrument for measuring non-cognitive domain, unenthusiastic attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment, If these problems go on abated and continuous assessment conducted in like manner that would yield an invalid and unreliable result which would effectively affect the performance of the students on their academic activities, students may lose confidence in it. It is in light of these and other related problems that the study sought to examine counsellors' perceptions on teachers towards implementation of continuous assessment in public secondary in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research question guided the study:

1. How do teachers perceive continuous assessment?
2. What are the teachers' strategies in implementing continuous assessment of the students'?
3. What are the challenges encountered by teachers' in the implementation of continuous assessment?
4. What are strategies to overcome the challenges of continuous assessment by teachers?

Research Method

The population of the study was all public senior secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State. The population of the study was all 70 guidance and counselors in 31 public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State. The population was used as sample of its small size and therefore, there was no sampling. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Counsellors perception on teachers towards the implementation of continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Aguata Local Government Area" (COPOTICA). The reliability of the instrument was determined using

Cronbach Alpha estimate and it yielded a co-efficient of 0.78. The instrument was structured on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SD = 4points), Agree (A=3point), Disagree (D=2points) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). Means rating between 0 – 1.44 is rated as SD, 1.5 – 2.44 is rated as disagree, 2.5 to 3.44 is rated as agree while 3.5 to 4.0 is rated as strongly disagree. Mean and standard deviation scores were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: How do teachers perceive continuous assessment?

Table 1: Mean rating by counselor on how teachers perceive continuous assessment

SN	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Continuous assessment acts as a figurative arrow that will guide the teacher on how to process with classroom instruction.	3.17	0.70	A
2	Continuous assessment evaluates special aptitudes and interest of students for counselling.	3.22	0.61	A
3	Through continuous assessment teachers can improve on their method of teaching.	3.27	0.63	A
4	Continuous assessment encourages healthy competitions among students.	3.44	0.69	A
5	Through continuous assessment students know their strength and weakness.	3.15	0.92	A
6	Continuous assessment makes student to develop good study habits.	3.18	0.89	A
7	Teachers are able to determine the pervious knowledge of student.	3.03	0.98	A
8	Teachers' workloads are reduces as a result of continuous assessment.	3.09	0.95	A
9	Through regular testing continuous assessment reduces examination anxiety on the part of the students.	3.02	1.02	A
10	Regular assessment makes students to take responsibility for their own learning.	3.36	0.89	A

Summary of result in tables1 showed that the respondents (counsellors) agreed on all the items as on how teachers perceive continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State with it rated as encouraging healthy competitions among students (Mean = 3.44) and making students to take responsibility for their own learning (Mean = 3.36) ranking highest among the items. The implication of the result is that the continuous assessment is useful and should be prioritize as part of formative and summative assessment as well as in grading the overall achievement of students in various subjects.

Research Question 2: What are the teachers' strategies in implementing continuous assessment of the students'?

Table 2: Mean ratings on strategies used by teachers in implementing continuous assessment

SN	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
11.	Using observational tools to observe and record an individual behaviour.	3.10	0.89	SA
12.	Quiz to assess the level of students knowledge on subject matter.	3.33	0.71	A
13.	Use of structured /unstructured questionnaire.	3.17	0.73	A
14.	Making use of assignment.	3.29	0.73	A
15.	Teachers making use of examination to implement continuous assessment	3.01	0.93	A
6	Using of checklist.	3.13	0.71	A
17.	Use of interview to determine students' educational capabilities towards learning.	3.17	0.73	A
18.	Teachers make use of projective techniques to implement continuous assessment.	3.19	0.73	A
19.	Teachers' socio metric techniques to assess students' behaviour.	3.01	0.93	A
20.	Teachers use classroom guidance and administrative functions to implement continuous assessment.	3.16	0.69	A

Summary of result in tables2 showed that the respondents (counsellors) agreed on all the items as the strategies used by teachers in implementing continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State with quiz to assess the level of students knowledge on subject matter (Mean = 3.33) and use of assignment (Mean = 3.29) ranking highest among the strategies. The implication of the result is that the strategies are useful and are used by in assessing students

continually in the course of teaching learning process to measure their level of understanding of what is been taught periodically.

Research Questions 3: What are the challenges encountered by teachers' in the implementation of continuous assessment?

Table 3: Mean ratings on challenges encountered by teachers' in the implementation of continuous assessment.

SN	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
21.	Lack of finance to buy certain materials needed for continuous assessment	3.40	0.69	SA
22.	Some teachers lack technical know- how to construct valid assessment instrument.	3.53	0.51	A
23.	Poor record keeping.	3.17	0.73	A
24.	Unenthusiastic attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment.	3.29	0.73	A
25.	Due to high population of students.	3.01	0.93	A
26.	Teachers do not make use of scheme of work as a teaching guideline to assign students.	3.13	0.71	A
27.	Teachers do not make use of different varieties of assessment technique such as test in administration of continuous assessment.	3.17	0.73	A
28.	Lackadaisical attitude by government in providing funds for the purchase of materials for evaluating students.	3.19	0.73	A
29.	Teachers give limited number of continuous assessment because of high population.	3.01	0.93	A
30.	Lack of instruments for measuring non-cognitive domains like socio-metric instruments, rating scales and checklists.	3.67	0.49	A

Summary of result in tables3 showed that the respondents (counsellors) agreed on all the items as the challenges encountered by teachers' in the implementation of continuous assessment in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State with lack of instruments for measuring non-cognitive domains like socio-metric instruments, rating scales and checklists (Mean = 3.67) and Some teachers lack technical know- how to construct valid assessment instrument (Mean = 3.53) ranking highest among the challenges. The implication of the result is that the continuous assessment can be improved as an assessment technique in secondary schools if the challenges are effectively addressed.

Research Question 4: What are strategies to overcome the challenges of continuous assessment?

Table 4: Mean rating on strategies to overcome the challenges of continuous assessment by teachers

SN	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
31.	Continuous assessment should be handled by trained and professional teachers.	3.40	0.59	SA
32.	Seminars and workshops on continuous assessment must be organized for teachers in order to improve their skills and knowledge.	3.38	0.61	A
33.	Government should release funds for the materials use in continuous assessment.	3.17	0.73	A
34.	Some trained staff on continuous assessment should often visit schools to inspect and enlighten teachers on the importance of continuous assessment.	3.29	0.73	A
35.	Teachers should give continuous assessment as when due.	3.01	0.93	A
36.	Home work, test and assignment should be included as tools for continuous assessment.	3.13	0.71	A
37.	Teachers should give continuous assessment at least four times before the end of each term.	3.17	0.73	A
38.	Educational planners should include continuous assessment in the curriculum.	3.19	0.73	A
39.	Teachers should eliminate issue of favoritism in marking continuous assessment.	3.01	0.93	A
40.	Teachers should not be exposes and encourage to the practice of reporting assessment scores.	3.67	0.49	A

Result as present in tables 4 revealed that the counsellors agreed on all the items as the strategies to overcome the challenges of continuous assessment by teachers in public secondary schools in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State with continuous assessment handled by trained and professional teachers (Mean = 3.40) and organizing seminars and workshops on continuous assessment8for teachers in order to improve their skills and knowledge (Mean = 3.36) ranking highest among the strategies. The implication of the result is that the gains inherent in continuous can be well harnessed in secondary schools in the study area and Nigeria generally if the above listed strategies

are considered and effectively implemented in the schools. This would enhance the academic achievement of students as their weaknesses and strengths will be captured and worked on by teachers using different continuous assessment strategies.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is undisputable fact that continuous assessment plays very fundamental roles in enhancing academic achievements of students. It would also help the students in learning effectively because they will consider the totality of learning and will also remove anxiety posed by one shot test administered previously. This study would help counsellors to know the abilities, capacities, interest and aptitude of students through continuous assessment and well as the challenges teachers face in implementation of continuous assessment. Finally, it will be a source of information for the National Council for Education on the areas where the new evaluation techniques should be improved for maximum efficiency in our educational system.

Recommendations

As regards to the findings of this study, the following recommendations would really be useful to better our students' academics performance as well as our educational institutions.

1. All the schools in Onitsha education zone should embark on assessing their teachers on their knowledge of continuous assessment.
2. Government through school counsellors should organize workshop, seminars, and conferences for teacher on how to implements continuous assessment in their schools.
3. Teachers in secondary schools should avoid using only terminal examination in assessing their learning abilities.
4. Teachers should shun all sorts of favoritism while implementing continuous assessment to their students.
5. The ministry of Education should put in place regulations, check and balances to ensure that different continuous assessment strategies are used both in public and private owned schools.

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