

**MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING EFFECTIVE CONTINUOUS
ASSESSMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE,
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study aimed at determining the managerial strategies used by secondary school Principals in Anambra State Nigeria for continuous assessment. The population of the study consisted of 6382 teachers in government own secondary schools and 257 Principals. The sample of the study comprised 630 teachers and 63 Principals. Three research questions guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher made validated questionnaire. The reliability of the study was determined using Cronbach Alpha formula and reliability of 0.79, 0.81 and 0.80 were got for sections B, C and D respectively. Data collected was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions. The study revealed among others that many managerial strategies especially provision of relevant

materials, regular meetings with teachers, team work are used by school Principals for continuous assessment. Strategies most poorly used include; budgeting sufficient time for supervision of teachers, application of research findings and developing simpler assessment procedures. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that government should provide sufficient fund and modern data storage systems to schools. Regular workshops should be organized for teachers and efforts should be made by the Principals to use valid and reliable tests in the schools.

Keywords: managerial strategies, continuous assessment, secondary school principals and Anambra State.

INTRODUCTION

Continuous assessment is an evaluation process in which changes in all aspects of the child's behaviour; cognitive, affective and psychomotive are systematically recorded from the day the child enters for a course of study to the day of completion. Okoye (2003) maintains that continuous assessment is a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in the cognitive, affective and psychomotive domain of behaviour systematically takes account of all his parlances during a given period of schooling, such that information obtained from the records can be used for guiding the students to develop more effectively and for making some decisions about the child at any time during and at the end of the study. Such assessment involves the use of great variety of modes evaluation for the purposes of improving the learning performance of the students continuous assessment is a fact finding academic activity usually undertaken to describe existing conditions at any given time (Yusuf, 2002).

In continuous assessment, numerical data collected are usually organized into interpretable forms on a number of variables. Onyejekwe (2006) sees continuous assessment as an effort in describing the progress that students had made towards a given educational goal at a given point in time. It is referred to as all the processes and products to describe the nature and the extent of students' learning. Ochuba (2009) avers that continuous assessment involves judgment and decision based on data and observations. It is a systematic recording of the students' progressive performance in all aspects of his development.

It is a means of quality control and for determining the level of accountability displayed by stakeholders in the industry and the effectiveness of teaching and learning as well as finding out students' achievement. Its major function is to guide, improve learning and performance of the students. It also seeks to motivate learners, identify students' strengths, weakness, and measures students' achievement and evaluate the students' mastering of skills. Assessment is said to be continuous when it is regular, cumulative and comprehensive. Continuous assessment is an important tool for enhancing effective teaching and learning processes in the school.

Historically, the concept of continuous assessment in Nigeria context became officially operative since 1985, consequent upon the production of a manual for its implementation in line with the objectives of the National Policy on Education (NPE) which was introduced in 1977 by the Federal Government of Nigeria and has been revised in 1998, 2004 and

2014. The adoption of continuous assessment programme was introduced alongside the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria. With the introduction of nine year basic education (UBE) in 1999, the school based assessment (SBA) was also launched at the lower, middle and upper basic levels of Nigeria Education.

The practice of continuous assessment continues at the secondary school level. The major objective of the Nigeria government in adopting continuous assessment (CA) system is making students' continuous assessment scores a substantial parentage of the final grade in certificate examinations. The importance of continuous assessment programme in the educational system in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Continuous assessment gives more comprehensive information on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of an individual if well implemented, especially at the primary and secondary school levels of education (Alausa, 2004).

At the secondary education level which is the education children receive after primary education, the students are directly under the teachers. As part of teaching and learning exercise, the teacher is expected to assess the students under him/her. Information obtained through such assessments is supposed to be part of the appraisal data in the school (Ughamadu, 2009). In Nigeria, the teachers are expected to adopt various continuous assessment methods. Specifically, the teachers should use tests, questionnaire, observation techniques and other tools to really determine whether or not comprehensive learning has taken place in a student (Onuka &Junaid, 2007). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the teachers' activities in the schools cannot be assured without proper supervision and direction of the Principals of the schools who are the Managers and consequently are major stakeholders in the implementation of all educational policies and programmes towards achievement of national goals. As part of the Principals' administrative roles, they should adopt good managerial strategies to ensure effective continuous assessment of the students by the teachers.

Management strategy functions are blueprint for formulation and implementation of objectives, goals and initiatives. Expectedly, the strategies to be adopted should focus on the following areas; supervision, motivation, provision of relevant materials, guidance, proper documentation, follow-up system, workshops and staff orientation programmes inspection and workable time-table for school activities. This study therefore was geared towards determining the managerial strategies used by school Principals for ensuring effective continuous assessment of students in Anambra State, and it examined the challenges limiting the process of continuous assessment in the schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to examine managerial strategies used by school Principals for ensuring effective continuous assessment in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools.

Specifically, the study examined:

1. Managerial strategies used by Principal to ensure effective continuous assessment of students by teachers.
2. Challenges encountered by Principals in promoting continuous assessment in schools.

3. Measures that can be adopted to ensure effective continuous assessment in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the managerial strategies used by Principals to ensure continuous assessment of students by the teachers.
2. What are the challenges encountered by Principals promoting continuous assessment in schools.
3. What measures can be adopted to ensure continuous assessment of students by the teachers.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. Nworgu (2015) defined survey as a method of obtaining data and describing in a systematic way the characteristics, features or facts about a given population. By using the survey design the researcher collected information from teachers in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools to determine the managerial strategies used by Principals to ensure continuous assessment in schools and limiting factors to continuous assessment. The study population comprised 6382 teachers and 257 principals in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools. The State is divided into six education zones namely; Aguata, Awka, Nnewi, Ogidi, Onitsha and Otuocha.

The sample of the study was made up of 630 teachers and 63 principals selected using multi-stage sampling procedure. At the first stage, three zones were randomly selected from the six education zones which include; Nnewi, Awka and Aguata. At the second stage, stratified random sampling technique was adopted to select 210 schools from each zone. Stratification was based on location of the school reflect the Local Government areas in each zone. In each of the schools, 10 teachers were randomly selected. The Principals of the selected schools were used totaling 630 teachers and 63 principals that constituted the study sample of 693.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire, titled Principals' Managerial Strategies for Continuous Assessment (PMSFCA) designed by the researchers. The instrument had four sections, A, B, C and D. Section "A" contained information on personal data of the respondents, Section "B" contained items on managerial strategies used by Principals to ensure continuous assessment in the schools. Section "C" had items on challenges limiting continuous assessment in schools while Section "D" had items on measures to be adopted to enhance continuous assessment in schools. The instrument was scored on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA = 4points), Agree (A = 3points), Disagree (D = 2points) and Strongly Disagree (SD = 1point). The instrument was face validated by three experts in educational management from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University Anambra State, Nigeria. Based on the comments made by the experts some items were restructured.

The reliability of the instrument was established using 25 respondents that comprised 20 teachers and 5 principals from Enugu State of Nigeria. Cronbach Alpha was used to compute the reliability. The estimated internal consistency computed were 0.79, 0.81 and 0.80 respectively which were considered high enough for the study. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of three research assistants who were properly briefed on what to do to achieve good return. Twenty three copies of the questionnaire given to teachers could not be retrieved and used for data analyses. The research questions were answered using statistical mean weighted. An item with mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted while item with a mean score of less than 2.50 was rejected.

Research Question 1:

What are the managerial strategies used by school principals to ensure continuous assessment of students by the teachers?

Table 1:

Mean ratings of teachers on principals’ managerial strategies.

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Decision
1	Provide teachers with the necessary materials for effective continuous assessment	3.44	Accept
2	Budget sufficient time for visiting teachers in classes or staff offices	2.15	Reject
3	Assist teachers to solve peculiar continuous assessment problems	2.93	Accept
4	Conduct regular meetings with teachers	3.03	Accept
5	Develop assessment procedures that are less cumbersome	1.86	Reject
6	Encourage teachers to participate in workshops and seminars and orientation programmes	2.78	Accept
7	Collect and distribute data on areas of teachers’ need on continuous assessment	2.03	Reject
8	Create warm friendly condition in the school	2.93	Accept
9	Application of research findings in continuous assessment	1.25	Reject
10	Reduce job stress among teachers by encouraging team work	3.30	Accept
11	Listen to feedback from teachers regarding solution to students’ academic progress	2.81	Accept
12	Encourage periodic inspection by visiting professionals to assist teachers	2.81	Accept

Table one shows that teachers consider certain managerial strategies important for continuous assessment of students. The items with mean rating of 2.50 and above were accepted as strategies for ensuring effective continuous assessment.

Research Question 2:

What are the challenges encountered by principals in promoting continuous assessment in schools?

Table 2:

Challenges encountered by school Principals in promoting continuous assessment in Anambra State Public Secondary Schools.

S/N	Item Description	Mean	Decision
1	Non-availability of relevant materials	2.10	Reject
2	Poorassessment skills of some teachers	2.38	Reject
3	Negative attitudesof some teachers	3.35	Accept
4	Inadequate storage devices for documentation	3.40	Accept
5	Lack of sufficient funding to sustain the programme	3.40	Accept
6	Lack of valid and reliable tests	3.27	Accept
7	Large class size	3.76	Accept
8	Over loaded Curriculum	3.12	Accept
9	Poor knowledge of modern statistical tools of some teachers	2.35	Reject

Findings on table 2 shows that items3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 which fall above the acceptance level of 2.50 indicated that the items are accepted as challenges encountered by principals in ensuring continuous assessment in the schools. Items 1, 2 and 9 were considered as non-limitingfactors to continuous assessment in schools.

Table 3:

Measures to be adopted by school principals to ensure continuous assessment of students.

S/N	Item description	Mean	Decision
1	Set appropriate standard to ensure valid and reliable test	3.25	Accept
2	Develop assessment procedures that are simple to apply	2.71	Accept
3	Help teachers to update their knowledge through in-service training, workshops and seminars	3.03	Accept
4	Organize training on modern statistical tool to ensure effective continuous assessment	3.00	Accept
5	Encourage team work to reduce work stress on the teachers	2.96	Accept
6	Adopt feedback system to help both the teachers and students	2.75	Accept
7	Provide teachers with necessary materials for effective continuous assessment	3.75	Accept
8	Monitor teaching and assessment process	3.65	Accept
9	Provision of modern storage equipment	3.26	Accept
10	Build new classrooms to decongest large class size	3.82	Accept

Table 3 findings indicated that items 1-10 with mean ratings between 2.71-3.82 were considered as measures to be adopted to enhance continuous assessment in schools.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on research question one show that managerial strategies adopted by principals for continuous assessment in the schools include: Provision of necessary assessment materials, assisting teachers to solve peculiar assessment problems, conducting regular meetings with the teachers, encouraging teachers to participate in relevant workshops and

seminars, maintaining friendly environment in the school, encouraging team work, listening to feedback from teachers which is in line with Onuka and Junaid (2007) and encouraging periodic external inspection of the teachers' performance.

The results imply that school principals in Anambra State use some good strategies to achieve educational goals as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2004). However, the findings revealed that some important strategies which include; budgeting sufficient time for supervision of teachers' activities in the school, developing simpler assessment procedures, collecting and applying research findings on continuous assessment are not used by school principals in Anambra State to improve continuous assessment.

Factors discovered to be limiting effective continuous assessment in schools include; Negative attitudes of some teachers, inadequate storage facilities, lack of sufficient funding, lack of standardized tests, large class size and over-loaded curriculum. The findings are in line with the challenges identified by Yusuf (2002) in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Measures suggested to enhance effective continuous assessment in schools include. Setting appropriate standard to ensure valid and reliable tests in the schools, developing simpler assessment procedures, updating teachers' knowledge, organizing training on modern statistical tools, encouraging team work, feedback from teachers providing relevant materials, monitoring teaching and assessment processes in the school and building more classrooms.

Conclusion

The study has shown that school principals in Anambra State, Nigeria have adopted some useful strategies to ensure effective continuous assessment in schools. It implies that school Principals as the Chief Executives know the importance of continuous assessment to academic activities and students' achievement in the schools. The major factors limiting the effectiveness of continuous assessment as indicated in the findings include; lack of sufficient funds, over-loaded curriculum, inadequate modern storage facilities are beyond what the principal can tackle hence there is need for concerted efforts among the stakeholders to improve teaching and learning activities in the schools.

Recommendation

Based on the findings discussed above, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should provide sufficient funds and modern data storage equipment to schools.
2. The Government in collaboration with the school managers should organize regular workshops, seminars and conferences for teachers.
3. Principals as a matter of great importance should allocate sufficient time for instructional supervision and continuous assessment processes.
4. The principals should ensure use of valid and reliable tests in the school.

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