STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS MATHEMATICS.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out students' perception of continuous assessment and its impact on their attitude towards mathematics in government owned secondary schools in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State. The sample of the study was made up of 330 students. Two research questions were used for the study A structured questionnaire rated on 5-point Likert scale was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using means. Findings revealed among other things: that students perceive continuous assessment as an innovative practice. It also showed that the students have developed a positive attitude towards mathematics. Recommendations included among other things that teacher should keep adequate record of their students academic performance for immediate and future use, there should be adequate monitoring of students whenever they were given any academic work.

Background of the Study

Continuous assessment is a periodic and systematic method of assessing and evaluating a student's attributes. Information collected from continuous behaviors of students will help teachers to better understand their strength and weaknesses in addition to proving a comprehensive picture of each student over a period of time.

Continuous assessment involves a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes in his behavior of all information derived with a view of using them to help the student. Continuous a matter of fact involves the students period of schooling .It is not only doing tests and assignment that are given to the students by the teacher. It cuts across other social activities like interest, creativity instead of intellectual ability alone.

Continuous assessment is introduced to guide and assist students in making decision about their future career. Affect, cognition and action characterize attitude. Attitude
involves an individual whole reaction towards his behaviors. Their future career will be determined from their attitude towards an academic performance of that career.

Mathematics as one of the subjects in academics has been known as what majority of students dislikes as being a difficult subject. The researcher holds the view that the students lack interest in the subject and also the patience to acquaint themselves with the rudiments of the subject, hence the massive failure in the subject in most public examinations.

However, the introduction of continuous assessment in secondary schools has no really facilitated the understanding of mathematics, as the subject content are now broker in parts for easy assessment of students on the completed topics. Continuous assessment requires 100% attention of the students. It enables the students to be present at school on a regular basis. Because of this regular attendance at school for tests and assignments, it now creates an avenue for most students to be up and doing in their subjects especially in mathematics.

Writing on the perception of students on the effect of continuous assessment on mathematics achievement, Nwana (1980) suggested the assessment in which a teacher and his students are actively involved in meaningful activities. Therefore, introduction of continuous assessment in the school system has a number of advantages. It will provide a more reliable assessment of student's abilities than the single examination. With continuous assessment, students are involved in more intensive classroom exercises.

Osafihim (1982) stated that continuous assessment would restore normalcy and sanity to teaching/learning and evaluation in our school thus lowering the tension, fear and anxiety associated with examination. It promotes passing examination and ensures more effective realization of the nation's educational aims and objectives.

In teaching/learning situation, the learners need to be guided into areas where he/she is competent. The result obtained from continuous assessment would provide the means of diagnosing the learners' problem, so as to identify his strengths and weaknesses. It also involves the 'dos' and 'don'ts' of student's activity in school.
Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is as follows:

1. To determine how secondary school students in Orumba South perceive continuous assessment.

2. To determine the extent to which students perceptions of continuous assessment affect their attitude towards mathematics.

Research Questions:

The following questions will guide the study:

1. How do secondary school students in Orumba South perceive continuous assessment?

2. How do students' perceptions of continuous assessment affect their attitude towards mathematics?

Instrument For Data Collection

The major instrument used for collection of data for this study is questionnaire. The questionnaire items were developed based on the two research questions guiding the study.

Population:

The population of the study comprised of all Senior Secondary School (iii) in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques:

The sample of the study consists of 30 Senior Secondary (iii) Students, which were randomly selected from each of the schools in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra State, using simple random sampling. Note that in schools where the senior secondary (iii) students are 30 or less than 30 students in number, all the students were used. A total of 330 students were used for the study.
TABLE ONE: The schools used are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>NO OF STUDENTS TAKEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Girls' High School Umunze</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All Saints' Secondary School Umunze</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Technical Secondary School Umunze</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Community Secondary School Ihite</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Victory High School Ezira</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Basdem Secondary School Isulo</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New Bethel Secondary School Isulo</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Boys Secondary School, Ogbunka</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Girls Secondary School, Ogbunka</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Boys Secondary School Owerre-Ezukala</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Girls Secondary School Owerre-Ezukala</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students' questionnaire dealt with items bordering on:

i. Students' perception of continuous assessment.

ii. The impact of students' perception of continuous assessment on their attitude towards mathematics.

Method of Data Collection:

Researcher to evolve greater percentage returns personally administered the questionnaire and collected it.

Method of Data Analysis

Data was analyzed, using simple mean. To make any decision about the responses, any item with a mean score of 3.05 and above is taken as accepted while an item with a mean less than 3.05 are rejected.
Findings/Result

Research Question one: How do secondary school students perceive continuous assessment?

Table Two: Students' Mean Response on Their Perception of Continuous Assessment Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>perceive continuous Assessment practice in Schools as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A welcome Development in Nigeria Educational system.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>An innovative idea</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A strategy to spur Students to work hard</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It is Counter-productive</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>An exercise for Students to pay more attention in class</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>An avenue to check on Examination malpractice</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand mean = 21.38
Mean of means = 3.56

From table 2 above, items 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 have a mean score of 3.76, 3.97, 4.12, 4.12 and 3.79 respectively, which is above the cut off mark of 3.05. This shows that students have a positive perception on the continuous assessment practice in Senior Secondary schools. Item 4, which scored 1.62, is below the cut off mark of 3.05. Therefore, the practice does not mean counterproductive on the students. The mean of means is 3.56; and it is above the cut-off mark of 3.05 means that the research question one, which states that how do secondary school students perceive continuous assessment. From the result of 3.56, of mean of means, students in senior secondary school accepts continuous assessment practice as an exercise to improve their academic uplift.
Research Question Two: How do students’ perceptions of continuous assessment affect their attitude towards mathematics?

Table 3: Mean Response of Students on How Perception of Continuous Assessment Affect Their Attitude to Mathematics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>AG</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>DA</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>My study habit towards mathematics has improved</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I felt repulsive towards mathematics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I felt being forced to study mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I felt being attracted towards the study of Mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I felt happy being taught mathematics</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I felt like doing Projects, assignment daily in mathematics</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand mean = 19.77  
Mean of means = 3.30

From table 2 above, the students accepted that with the introduction of continua assessment their study habit towards mathematics has improved. They disagreed feeling repulsive towards mathematics. They also disagreed that continuous assessment is a way of forcing them to study mathematics. Items 2 and 3 have mean scores of 1.73 a 1.71 respectively which is below the cut-off point of 3.05. In item 4, students agreed that their affinity has increased towards mathematics. In item 5, they feel happy and good when mathematics is taken place. They also agreed that they like doing assignments and carrying out projects in mathematics. Items 1, 4, 5, and 6 have a mean
score of 3.91 that is above the cut-off point of 3.05. They are 3.91, 4.75, 3.82 and 3.85 respectively. The mean of means which reads 3.30, is above the cut-off mark of 3.05, which means that the research question two which states: How do students perception of continuous assessment affect their attitude towards mathematics, implies that their attitude towards mathematics has changed for better.

Discussion of Findings:

Continuous assessment has helped Nigerian Educational system to improve. In this belief, students and teacher relationship has improved and a meaningful activity is being achieved at the end. This phenomenon can be viewed from Nwana (1980) where he said that assessment, in which a teacher and his students are actively involved, is a meaningful activity. Therefore, through continuous assessment, the students and their teachers for the development of the country will calve new innovations out.

Continuous assessment is an innovative idea. Due to continuous research through tests and assignments, new ideas were being built. Nwana (1980) also supports this argument, because when the teacher and the students involve themselves with meaningful activities, they develop new ideas.

Continuous assessment is a strategy to spur students to work hard. If a student does not involve themselves in assignments and tests, they will not feel like a student. Again, their final examination will not be satisfactory. So they work hard in order to achieve good grades at the final examination. Therefore, a meaningful activity is being achieved at the end, Nwana (1980).

Continuous assessment is a way out of examination malpractice. Yolaya (1984) also sees it as a method whereby the final grading of the students, takes account in a systematic way of their whole performance during a given period of schooling.

My study habit has improved and is attracted towards the study of mathematics. Students study habit has changed from what it used to be. This is because continuous assignments and tests have increased their reading habit more especially in mathematics. Also their attraction towards the study of mathematics was as a result of continuous practice with the subject. Hence their interest in mathematics increases whenever they are carrying out any assignment on the subject. Ezewu and Okoye (1982) said that every learner in the school shows behaviors in cognitive, affective and
psychomotor domains, and there is need for assessing cognitive, affective and psychomotor behavior of the learners.

Since students’ gains from continuous assessment at the final grading, which are an integral part of the continuous assessment, their happiness increases whenever such opportunity is being given. So on effect, they have shown a change in behavior towards learning. According to Ezewu and Okoye (1982), continuous assessment is a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student’s performance in all expected changes in his behavior. Also due to the increase in the final grading, which continuous assessment has helped students to gain, they develop interest in carrying out more research, assignments and projects in mathematics in order to beef-up their scores at the long run. Yolaya (1984) sees continuous assessment as a method whereby the final grading students, takes account in a systematic way of their whole performance during a given period of schooling.

Implication of the Study

The implication of the finding of the research is that if continuous assessment has not been introduced in secondary school, the students' performance may not have improved tremendously. Students will be depending on examination malpractice in the final examination. Continuous Assessment is: a tool towards checking examination malpractice in schools.

It also implies that the scaring phenomenon of students on mathematics will increase, more especially during the final examination. Also, there will be no concrete mastery of the subject before the final examination.

Recommendations

The researcher is making the following recommendations based on the result of the findings:

1. To enable students co-operate with their teachers in implementing the continuous assessment programme; the students should be enlightened on the favorable effect of continuous assessment on their academic performance.

2. A popularization campaign of the concept of continuous assessment. In its ramification should be' carried out by the federal ministry of education to enlighten teachers' assessment.
3. The teachers should keep adequate record of their student's academic performance for immediate and future use.

4. There should be adequate monitoring of students whenever they were given any academic work to do, whether for record purposes or not.

5. The best student on the continuous assessment result in mathematics should be rewarded with a gift or an award.

6. Lastly, federal government should assist by providing adequate and appropriate instrument for continuous assessment to enable teachers carry out the programme effectively and efficiently. School administrators should show keen interest in providing the necessary materials.

**Conclusion:**

From the findings of the study, therefore the researcher concludes that introduction of continuous assessment in secondary school has alleviated the students from the tension of not passing the final examination and the necessity of involving in continuous assessment.

It also helped the students to be conscious of their studies. A large number of students have accepted the usage of continuous assessment record as an integral part of the final examination. So at this stage, therefore, the students' performance in academics depends on their effective performance in continuous assessment and this will entail their performance in future life in general.

**REFERENCES**


