

Effect of Continuous Assessment on Students Academic Achievement in Economics in Public Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal Council, Nigeria

Abstract

This research work focused on the effect of continuous assessment on student's academic achievement in economics in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal council. Continued assessment has contributed to the growth of academic achievement of students in the sense that it is planned and graded to suit the age and experience of the students and is given at suitable intervals during the school year. To carry out this study, three research questions were formulated. A questionnaire consisting of (12) test items was administered to 360 students in (3) schools as the sample size was randomly selected from the total population of 3682 students from (10) public secondary schools. The mean formula was used for data analysis. The finding revealed that continuous assessment provides a more valid and reliable assessment and provides a more valid and reliable assessment of the learners' overall ability and performance. It provides a basis for monitoring a child's problems for effective guidance. The study therefore recommends that parents and teachers should go closer to the student, to be able to assess properly for them to achieve their objective goals.

Keywords: continuous assessment, students' Academic achievement, Economics, Education.

1. Introduction

Education is an important tool for change and development. This is in agreement with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More importantly any country and in particular, Nigeria depends on what international and technology (economics) can offer for national economic empowerment and development, Ajewole (2005). Prior to western education in Nigeria, education was mostly informal, closely linked to this oral and informal approach with a full observation. However, with the introduction of Western education in Nigeria, Western method of assessment was broken down into internal and external examination. The former is the type of test conducted at the end of every two weeks during the school year. Continuous assessment is a classroom strategy teachers implement to ascertain the knowledge, skills and understanding students obtain. Teachers administer assessment in a variety of ways over time to allow them to observe multiple tasks and information about what the student knows, understands and can do. The assessments are curriculum-based tasks previously taught in the classroom.

Continuous assessment was first introduced in primary and post primary schools in Nigeria in 2004 and was adopted in National policy on education (N.P.E). Prior to this, assessment of learners performance was based purely on one-short examination, that is, it's usually administered at the end

of the terms or school year. The introductions of continuous assessment based on these statements; to improve evaluation of learner's attainment by confirming that assessment is systematic, cumulative, comprehensive, and guidance- oriented.

The students are assessed in the three domains a number of times at certain intervals by using a variety of assessment strategies. Both the students and teachers have the impression that the purpose of education is to pass tests and not only this but to pass examinations. Continued assessment is systematic because it requires an operational plan. It is cumulative in nature also in that any decision making about learners is based on earlier decisions and it is guidance oriented as said above, in that any data information gathered on the learners will serve as the basis for further academic growth and development. That continued assessment has become part of the secondary school system is no longer in doubt. In fact, Onyeka (2005) also cited Cronbach (1970) who argues validity is the principal consideration in the use of any test. He further argues that a test whether produced by a psychologist for a publishing company or by a teacher in his/her classroom is valid for some purposes and invalid for others. Following this argument, it would be deduced that validity is the quality that must affect the value of a test. Continuous assessment is not merely testing (Osokoya , 2004). It is a process through which the quality of an individual's work of performance is judged and also retained (Mwebaza, 2010).

As regards economics, for instance, a child in senior secondary school who learnt the law of diminishing returns will be standing in a chance to forget it before the final (that is; termly examination), if the teacher who taught them refuses to give them weekly or even daily assessment. That is why Greany (2004) defines assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude or skill of the learner or group of learners. Thus in the context of education, assessment can be defined as a predetermined process through which the quality of student performance in the three domains of educational objectives (Cognitive, Affective and psychomotor domain) is judged. Assessment of student learning curriculum contents of many educational progress of students but remains the authentic yardstick for gauging the effectiveness of the teacher, the quality of instruction and in fact the functionality of any curriculum reform.

Continuous assessment as only a part of the field of educational evaluation is a method of evaluating the process and achievement of the students in educational institutions (Yoloye, 2003).

This means that continuous assessment could be used to predict future students' performance in the final examinations and the possible success of individuals at the workplace or on a particular job. The question arises whether the continuous assessment scores awarded become relevant in the grades obtained in the professional examination result, at least for evaluation purposes. Hence there is a need for a mere comprehension method of guiding student's performance in the school. This is where the introduction of continuous assessment has gained ground and popularity.

In Nigeria , in spite of the enormous role that economics plays in national development and the effect of government and other stakeholders in improving standard of education, Economics results in most

certified examination bodies like the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) have not been satisfactory. These have been attributed to many factors which include utilization of inappropriate teaching methods in schools, poor quality school science teachers and school location (Macmillan, 2012). The board aims and expectation of any teaching and learning program is productivity and positive evaluated end product (Achievement). But in recent times, there have been complaints from almost all quarters of the Nigerian society that the standard of education has subsided. Student's achievement in the senior school certificate examination (SSCE) conducted by WAEC and NECO has continued to deteriorate from year to year.

Some problems were identified by researchers as the reason behind this ugly trend. Studies of Olonade 2000; Ojo 2001; Aiyelabegan 2003; Akambi 2003; Bamidele 2004; Garba 2004; Akinola 2006; Apata 2007; and Aina 2012; revealed that poor academic performance and low enrolment in Economics are caused by: Ineffective teaching methodology, negative student attitude towards economics, and school location and gender inequalities among other problems. In spite of these research efforts on which of the factors could determine achievement of students in Economics, the performance of students continues to be generally poor. It is against this backdrop that this study needs to investigate the extent by which continuous assessment has an effect on the academic achievement of students in economics in public secondary school in Owerri Municipal Council, Imo State.

1.1 Objective of the Study

1. The objective of this study is to investigate the extent by which continuous assessment has an effect on the academic achievement of students in economics in public secondary school in Owerri Municipal Council. Specifically,
2. The study tends to; ascertain the extent teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students. Ascertain the extent of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment has been administered to them.
3. Determine the type of continuous assessment that is being administered.

1.2 Research Questions

To what extent do teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students? What is the effect of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment has been administered to them? What type of continuous assessment do the teachers give to the students?

2. Conceptual framework

2.1 Concept of continuous Assessment

Assessment can be defined as a process of collecting, reviewing and evaluating where one is and how well one is in making progress on anything of interest (Research Assessment Adviser, 2011). Assessment is that part of the learning process used to enhance the understanding of the current knowledge that a student possesses (Outcome Based Education and Assessment, 2011). Dimson (2007) goes further “to explain that assessment helps the teacher to understand his student background knowledge, discover what they have learnt and what they did not learn, assess the level of their learning, diagnose the students problem and plan remediation. Assessment procedure is an established or a particular way of carrying out assessment” (Alordiah 2010). Some assessment procedures are the traditional mode of assessment(TM), continuous assessment (CA) and school based assessment (SBA). The assessment practice in Nigeria education system is the continuous assessment procedure. The traditional mode of assessment mainly involves tests and examinations administered periodically either fortnightly or at the end of the term, year of course, hence it is being called a one short assessment (National Teachers institute, 2003). Hostel and Bloomfield as cited in Nworgu, (2003) defined “continuous assessment as the systematic collection of marks or grade over a period of time and their aggregation into a final grade”.

2.2 Concept of continuous assessment

“Continuous assessment can be regarded as a method of ascertaining what a student gains from schooling in terms of knowledge, industry and character development, taking into account all his/her performance in tests, assignment, projects and other educational activities during a given period of term , year or during the entire period of an educational level” (Onoka 2005,2006). “It is also a method of using the recorded performance of each student to help him or her improve on his or her achievement through guidance. In other words, continuous assessment should be 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 students and is given at suitable intervals during the school year. Appropriate timing saves students from been tested to death or becoming bored with frequent assessments” (Onoka 2005,2006).

According to the federal ministry of education handbook on continuous assessment (2000). Continuous assessment provides a more valid and reliable assessment of the learners overall ability and performance. It provides a basis for monitoring a child’s problems for effective guidance. It

reduces examination malpractice and also provides a basis for teachers to improve their instructional methods. The following features characterize continuous assessment. It is systematic, comprehensive, cumulative, diagnostic and guidance-oriented. Continuous assessment assessed learning in the three domain namely cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of knowledge'

Economics as a subject requires frequent assessment in order to make the students to concretize and retain what has been learnt. During the early stage of a child's development, the best skill the teacher uses is planned repetition and constant assessment which could be scored or not, this could in no doubt help the students to master the subject matter learnt. Comprehensiveness of continuous assessment means that it is not focused on academic skill alone. It embraces the cognitive, the psychomotor and the affective domains. A child is assessed as a total entity using all the psychometric divisions such as tests and non-techniques.

Cumulative characteristics of continuous assessment means that all information gathered on the individuals has to be pooled together before a decision can be taken. To say that continuous assessment is guidance oriented means that the information so collected is to be used for educational, vocational and personal social decision making for the students.

Conceptually as well as in practice, continuous assessment provides feedback to learners and teachers. Such feedback provides information which is used for modifying the child's performance or modifying the content, context and method of teaching as well as making a variety of other decisions. The effectiveness of the economics teacher and validity of the instruction can also be ascertained from the feedback gathered after assessment test or quiz. This feedback will help to determine the causes of poor performance of students in economics, whether it is from the subject teacher, the students or the instruction and also it will help to provide the solution to the problem of poor performances in the area of economics. Webb and Briars in Omirin and Ale (2005) argued that "assessment must be an interaction between the teacher and students with the teachers continually seeking to understand what a student can do and how a student is able to do it". Onyeka (2005) also cited Yuloye (2000) who pointed out that continuous assessment is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of student in educational institution; this means that continuous assessment could be used to predict future student performance in the final examinations and the possible success at the workplace or on a particular job, (Yuloye 2000). Indeed in secondary schools, assessment of students learning in the classroom has been an interval component of the teaching and learning-learning process because there is much effort by the teacher to teach a lot of content to students. However, to Kellagan and Greany (2003) that "kind of assessment is subjective, informal, immediate, ongoing and intuitive as it interacts with as it occurs. Although the main argument behind the adoption of continuous assessment is to avoid focusing all efforts, time and energy on just one exam, this is true in secondary schools".

Griffith (2005) has also indicated that “in a goal economy assessment of school achievement is changing mainly because in an ever-changing knowledge based society, students would not only be required to learn and understand the basis also to think critically to analyze, and to make inference for making decisions. It is therefore critical that continuous assessment could utilize strategies that are able to measure the changing student’s abilities and attitudes”.

2.3 Advantages of continuous Assessment

One of the expected advantages of continuous assessment lies in its being guidance oriented. Since it will involve data gathering over a long period of time, it will yield more accurate data reaching the teachers early enough to modify instruction. This could play a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of a learner's weakness of properly anchored in what occurs in the classroom.

Another advantage of continuous assessment is that it places teachers at the center of all Performance assessment activities. It encourages more teachers’ participation in the overall assessment or grading of his/her learners. Through this approach, teachers would be able to integrate assessment and access results into instructional practice. Teachers will be expected to incorporate assessment into the large framework and possibly to provide evidence regarding how assessment information is used to inform and guide instruction for individual learners. The continuous assessment strategies in secondary school level. According to Onuka (2006) “there is a need to use a variety of instruments to effectively measure the student’s traits and their results are used to assist the students to improve themselves”.

In addition lewin (2003) recorded that, “over the years, various attempt have been made in many countries to improve the quality of examinations through the continuous assessment provisions for example in Tanzania, the National Examination council for Tanzania (NECIA) in the late 1970’s established continuous assessment programs to monitor student academics progress in the whole education cycle from lower classes to higher classes. In many schools, regular testing takes place on weekly, fortnight, monthly, mid-term, termly and yearly basis”.

According to Fairant (2000) “continuous assessment is increasing as a strategy to prepare students for terminal Examination. For instance, the results obtained from continuous assessment can be used to identify the student’s weak area so that teachers can give them special support in those areas. Continuous assessment results can also inform decision making in terms of determining as to whether students should be promoted from one class to another. Continuous assessment or school based assessment should test the total growth of their counterparts. The student is in the non-scholastic area and therefore should be built into the teaching learning process”. (Graume and Naido, 2004), this implies that “helping students acquire the needed knowledge and skills would require changes in the public examination system and assessment techniques at the school and classroom level”.

2.4 Continuous Assessment Strategies and Student Performance.

According to Onuka (2006), what is termed “Assessment” in many schools today is summative, final administration; rigorous and content-driven rather than formative, diagnostic; private, suggestive and goal oriented as such can be regarded as grading. Summative assessment entails the focus on final examination by teachers, parents and students. Surprising formative assessment is geared towards the consideration of student performance in the final examination rather than inculcating students with problem solving, critical thinking and life skills. Performance is defined in terms of results (Maidens 2000) in addition, Rellaghan and Greany (2003) noted that “when continuous assessment has important consequences attached to performance, they are likely to impact directly on teaching and learning and so merit consideration as a mechanism for improving student achievements”. Onuka(2006) also found out that “in Nigeria there was a comprehensive implementation of continuous assessment and feedback for the improvement of the educational system for the accomplishment of learning objectives effectively”. According to Onuka and Oludipe(2005) that “there was a significant remediation for poor performance as a result of the application of the feedback mechanism resulting from formative evaluation of learners”.

Furthermore, Etienne(2007) contended that “the pretest against final examination by the students in France in May 1968 was the perfect opportunity for students to point at the unfair and risky final assessment in their schools. They made it clear that such examinations merely represented the performance of the moment and not the efforts made throughout the year”.

Students insisted on the risk that even the best prepared student could have a problem on the day of the examination and come out in favor of continuous assessment in order to reduce the risk through some difficulties which are likely to occur during implementation of the recap exercises as well. Greany and Naido(2004) also noted that “up to high school level , the assessment of students is done in terminal, half yearly and annual examinations at the schools”. Maduas and Kellaghan(2000) contended that, “when continuous assessment tools are applied over a period of time, they give an indication whether improvement is taking place or not. However, in secondary schools of Masaka district in central Uganda, it cannot be over emphasized that the measurement of these domains using continuous assessment makes it good for improving learning objectives and outcomes”. This is because in his research Kallegham and Greany (2003) noted “a deficiency in the practice of continuous assessment. Since there is a need to improve student’s performance in the final examination (SSCE). Finally the need exists to find out if the students exposed to numerous/high continuous assessments perform better than their counterparts”.

3. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework in this section seeks to hinge the work to an existing theory. Some theories in education which are postulated by great psychologists and scholars in education are reviewed in this section.

Edward Lee Thorndike (1874-1949) was an American psychologist who devoted his life to comparative psychology and the learning process which led to the theory of connectionism and helped by the scientific foundation for modern educational psychology. He also worked on solving Industrial problems such as employee exams and testing. Thorndike opposed the idea of general intelligence and highlighted four important attributes of intelligent behavior. . Attitude or level

. Breath or Range

. Speed

. Area

Attitude or level: This shows the level or difficulty of a task that can be prepared by an individual, the harder task performed by the individual the more intelligent he is. Level is an important factor of intelligence but it cannot be measured alone.

Range: Range refers to the number of tasks at a given degree of difficulty one can perform. The greater the number of different tasks of uniform difficulty one can carry out, the more intelligent he is. Thorndike observed that the range of intelligent growth is determined not only by the level or attitude but also by range of experience and opportunity to learn and perform better in the task ahead.

Speed: The rate at which one can produce correct measure within a given time, the more intelligent.

Area: it is the total number of situations which an individual is capable of responding at each level. Area means the summation of all the range at each level of intelligence processed by an individual Chauhan as cited in Nwamuo and Ikpeazu et al(2006) opined that all intelligent tests consist of these four attributes. As an individual, we give him a certain number of tasks (area) and these tasks vary in difficulty (attitude), the tasks are responded to in a given time (speed) and there are certain numbers of items at each level of difficulty (range).

Edward Thorndike Theory to continuous assessment as predictor to success in examination. Since learning occurs in a piece-meal fashion and for a series of trial and error. For learning to actually take place and be called at any point in time for assessment, the piece-meal fashion implies that the learner takes time gradually by reassessing what has been learnt over time to know if actually learning has taken place. A particular concept is well understood and assessed before moving into new ones. By this the learner can be assessed at any point in time and no doubt he/she will do well. In all, if the short assessment was successful over time, it will be predicted that at the final examination, there is no doubt he will not perform well no matter the nature of the examination.

The more a student, solve problems from the continuous assessment given, the more versatile and mastering of the content learnt. As the learner gets grounded in constant practices of solving problems, there is no doubt that he will not do well in the final examination , he has more chances of transferring the knowledge when required , because learning has taken place.

A student under constant assessment will likely do well in the final examination because his mistakes will be corrected and will not likely repeat such during the examination. He stands a better chance to do well than a student without assessment that goes for an examination.

The theoretical framework in this section is borrowed from Albert Bandura. Bandura altered the label of his theory from social learning to social cognitive, both to distance it from prevalent social learning theories of the day and to emphasize that cognition plays a critical role in people's capability to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information and perform behaviors.

Albert Bandura

Albert Bandura(1977) is a social learning theorist who integrated behavioral and cognitive theories of learning in order to provide a comprehensive model that could account for the wide range of learning experiences that occur in the real world. Bandura and Walters outlined the key tenets of social learning theories as follows:

Learning can occur by observing a behavior and by observing the consequences of the behavior (vicarious reinforcement).

Learning involves observations, extraction of information from those observations and making decisions about the performance of the behavior (Observational learning or modeling) learning can occur without an observable change in behavior.

Reinforcement plays a role in learning but is not entirely responsible for learning.

The learner is not a passive recipient of information cognition, environment and behavior mutually influences each other.

In social learning theory, the concept of reciprocal determinism is an important factor. This notion states that as an individual's behavior is influenced by the environment, the environment is influenced by the individual's behavior.

Relating Bandura's theory to continuous Assessment

The learner on his part must try to follow the examples the teacher gives in the classroom, this will help the learners solve other related problems and so, transfer of learning. With this, no doubt such a person will do well in an examination.

Bandura posited the idea of imitating someone as a role model. A learner should be careful on who to take as a role model or even the group to join as an Economics student. As a leader, do not associate with lazy groups, one who cannot be of help to study hard rather join the group that helps you solve some questions given in the classroom. This will help the learner during examinations.

3.1 Albert Bandura's Triangular Theories

The reciprocal nature of the determinants of human functioning in social cognitive theory makes it possible for therapeutic and counseling efforts to be directed at personal, environmental or behavioral factors strategies for increasing well-being can be aimed at improving emotional, cognitive, or motivational process, increasing behavioral competencies, or altering the social condition under which people live and work.

Albert Bandura as a model in the theoretical framework explained that teachers have the challenge of improving the academic learning and confidence of the students in their charge using social cognitive theory as a framework, teachers can work to improve their fault, self-beliefs and habits to thinking (personal factors) improve their academic skills and self-regulatory practices (behavior), and alter the school and classroom structures that may work to undermine student success (Environmental factors).

4. Empirical Framework

Okwu and Orum (2013) carried out “research where they examined junior secondary school certificate examination results as predictors of student's performance in Economics at the senior secondary school certificate examination in Benue state Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 2700 graduate students in junior secondary school from 2000-2004 and the sample of the study is 300 students. The main objective for this study is to establish the predictive value between junior secondary school graduates from 2000-2004, who are also the senior secondary school graduates of 2003-2007 respectively. The records of their final assessments were considered at each level of their secondary education. Correlation Coefficient for the overall scores of the (junior secondary certificate examination) and the (senior secondary certificate examination) were joined. All the correlation Coefficient was found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance and hence the null hypothesis for the study was rejected at the 0.05 level of significance. It is concluded that some positive relationship

exists between JSCE and SSCE which is the predictive value in question. The study recommended that serious attention should be given to the students' preparation terms at the JSCE level to have a greater positive effect on their performance at the SSCE level".

The work of Okwu and Orum was limited to the relationship between continuous assessment and external examination via JSCE and SSCE results in Benue state, while the present study seeks to find the relationship between continuous assessment and internal examination in Owerri municipal council.

Adeyemi (2010) conducted "a search where they examined the predictive ability of credit grades in Economics in Secondary School Examination in predicting the success of students in educational management in universities in Ekiti and Ondo states, Nigeria. The main objective of this study is to establish the predictive value of credit in Economics in Senior Secondary Certificate examination as a predictor of success in educational management in universities in Ekiti and Ondo state, Nigeria. The research employed a descriptive research; the student's population of study was 27,691 which comprised all the students from the three (3) universities in the two states. 400 students were purposely sampled for the study; data were collected through an inventory and analyzed using t-test correlative analysis, analysis of variance and linear regression. The finding revealed that there was a significant relationship between the entry grade point of credit in economics and the performance of educational management students' measured by the cumulative grade point Average (CGPA) in university in the two states. It is recommended that more emphasis should be given to the teaching of Economics in secondary schools in the two states to enable better performance of students in the universities". The study carried out by Adeyemi(2010) focus "on the academic grades of students in Economics in senior secondary school Examination as a predictor to their success in educational management in universities in Ekiti and Ondo state , while the present study looked into school continuous assessment as a predictor to academic success in internal termly examination".

Onyeka(2005) carried out research where they examined the effectiveness of school-based continuous assessment as a predictor of performance in senior school certificate examination in physics, chemistry and biology. The study was carried out in Owerri educational zone of Imo state. Ten (10) secondary schools were purposefully chosen from nine (9) local government areas in the zone with a total population of 23,605 students.

In each school 50 students, who offered the three subjects were selected for the study. Five consecutive sessions 1995/2000 were studied. Three research objective and research question guided the study. The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to answer the three research questions. The established relationships were subjected to T-test statistic to determine the level of significance in each case, the null hypothesis was rejected. They made recommendations as educational bodies should enforce continuous assessment at every level of education. Onyeka (2005) examined effectiveness of school based continuous assessment as predictor of performance in senior school certificate examination in three science subjects via physics, chemistry and biology while the present study was carried out under social science subject via Economics.

5. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study as it entails the collection of data from a defined population to describe opinion, status, and views of the population using the variable under study, to collect detailed and factual information that describes an existing phenomenon (Akuezilo and Agu, 2003). This design was also appropriate in order to explain how the teachers in senior secondary school conduct continuous assessment strategies.

The area used in this study is Owerri municipal local government area in Imo state, Nigeria. Its headquarters is in the city of Owerri. It has an area of 58 km² and a population of 127,213 at the 2006 census. Owerri municipality is bounded in the west by Owerri, in the south by Owerri north. It is made up of mainly urban areas. It is a densely populated area where transactions as well as centers for businesses are at their peak. The council comprises people from different ethnic, religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. This makes students of the school heterogeneous in nature. This is the best reason for choosing the area of the study.

The population of the study comprises all the SS2 students in all public senior secondary schools with a population size of three thousand six hundred and eighty two (3682). The population of the study is shown in the tables.

Table 1: Population distribution of all SS2 Students

S/N	NAMES OF SCHOOL	TOTAL
1	Boys Secondary School New Owerri	195
2	Owerri City College, Owerri	490
3	Comprehensive Development Sec. School Owerri	601
4	Emmanuel College Owerri	170
5	Government Technical College Owerri	390
6	Government Secondary School Owerri	462

7	Ikenegbu Girls Secondary School Owerri	637
8	Imo Girls College Owerri	300
9	Urban Development Secondary School	283
10	Young Scientist College Owerri	154
	Total	3682

Source: Secondary Education Management Board Owerri, 2017

The sample consist of 360 Senior Secondary Economics students which were selected from three (3) Secondary schools Owerri Municipal. In each of the selected schools, all the students offered Economics. Simple random techniques were used to select three schools out of the ten schools in the Owerri Municipality. Below shows the number of schools and both students will be sampled for the study.

Table 2: Sample of numbers of schools and student

S/N	NAMES OF SCHOOL	TOTAL NUMBERS OF STUDENTS
1	Government Technical College Owerri	120
2	Government Secondary School Owerri	120
3	Ikenegbu Girls Secondary School Owerri	120
	Total	360

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled ‘effect of continuous assessment on secondary school’. The questionnaire was divided into two parts, parts A was the introductory section which looked at the arranged in a modified 4point likert scale using letters with the corresponding weights.

SA=strongly Agree (4 points)

A=agree (2 points)

D=Disagree (points)

SD=Strongly Disagree (1 points).

The instrument that was used for collecting data was presented to two experts in measurement and evaluation and one expert in Economics Education in Alvan Ikoku federal College of Education for content and face validity. All the questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the sampled students in their respective schools at a prearranged time with the permission of the school authorities. The students were given twenty minutes to respond to the items after which the questionnaires were collected to ensure the validity and reliability of analyzing them.

6. Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using statistical weighted mean; the research question was analyzed using statistical mean. The responses of the respondents were grouped on a table and analyzed with reference to the research question.

$$\text{Mean} = X = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

Where X = Mean

Σ =summation

F = Frequency

N = Total number

$$\text{Assumed Mean} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = 2.5$$

A criterion mean 2.5 will be accepted and any mean below 2.5 will be rejected.

Research Question One: To what extent do teachers carry out continuous

Table 3: mean responses of the respondents on the extent that teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students (N=360)

S/N	QUESTIONNAIRES	SA 4	A 3	D 2	SD 1	Total	X
1	Continuous assessment is given to students on every lesson taught.	99 396	126 378	84 168	51 51	360 993	2.75
2	Teachers give class work to students every day after teaching a particular topic.	75 300	150 450	120 240	15 15	360 1,005	2.79
3	Teachers give take home assignment to student each day they come to school regular	114 456	135 405	90 180	21 21	360 1,062	2.95
4	Teachers always conduct test to students at every middle of the term.	186 744	117 351	54 108	3 3	360 1,206	3.35
Over all mean		$\frac{2.79 + 2.79 + 2.95 + 2.95 + 3.35}{4} = 2.96$ $\infty 3.00$					

From table 1 above, (1,2,3, and 4) had made a mean score above the cutoff points of 2.5 in response to the extent teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students. The analysis shows that students are given continuous assessment on every lesson taught, teachers give classroom and take home assignments to students each day, and also teachers always conduct tests to students at every middle of the term.

Consequently, the overall mean shows the mean score of 3.00, which means that there is a high extent by which teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students.

Research Question Two. What is the effect of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment has been administered?

Table 4: Mean responses of the respondents on the effect of providing feedback to student after continuous have been administered (N=360)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X
5	Continuous assessment helps the student to perform well in school examinations.	195 780	129 780	33 66	3 3	360 1,236	3.43

Effects of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment have been administered.

Research Question Three: What type of continuous assessment do the teachers give to the student?

Table 5: Mean response of the respondent on the type of continuous assessment that teachers give to students. (N=360)

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X
9	Teachers always give tests to the students always.	75 300	90 270	117 234	78 78	360 883	2.45
10	Take home assignment is given to student regularly	60 240	147 441	120 240	33 33	360 954	2.65
11	Teachers give class work after every lesson	75 300	165 495	96 192	24 24	360 1,011	2.80
12	Midterm test is compulsory for students in every middle of the term	240 960	60 180	42 84	18 18	360 1,242	3.45
	Overall men	2.45 +	2.65	+2.80	+3.45	=	2.83
				4			

In the table 3 above, items (10, 11, and 12) score above the cutoff point 2.5 in response to the type of continuous assessment that teachers give to the student. The analysis shows that take home assignments are given to students regularly, teachers give class work after every lesson, midterm tests are compulsory for students in every middle of the term.

However, item 9 showed a mean score below 2.5 indicating that teachers do not test the student always. Consequently, the overall mean shows the mean score of 2.83. This means that there is a high extent to the type of continuous assessment that teachers give to the student.

In table 1, all the items scored above the cutoff point of 2.5 and the overall mean of 3.00, showing that there is high extent by which teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics student, in other words teachers give continuous assessment on every lesson, teachers gives classwork and take

home assignment to students every day and also teachers conduct test to student at every middle of the term.

In table 2, all the items showed a mean score above the cutoff point of 2.5 and consequently have an overall mean score of 3.31. Indicating the effect of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment has been administered. Above all includes performances in school examination, reduces anxiety and examination malpractice and mastering of topics

In table 3, all the items (10-12) scored above the cutoff point of 2.5 and the overall mean score is 2.83. Indicating the type of continuous assessment that teachers give to students which includes take home assignment, class work and midterm tests.

7. Discussions of the findings

In table 1, the entire items scored above the cutoff point of 2.5 and the overall mean 3.00, showing that there is a high extent by which teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students. In other words teachers give continuous assessment on every lesson, teacher's give class work and take home assignments to students every day, and also teachers conduct tests to students at every term.

This is in line with the findings of Fairant (2000) who stated that "continuous assessment is being used increasingly as a strategy to prepare students for terminal examination. For example the result obtained from continuous assessment can be used to identify the student's weak areas. He also opined that continuous assessment results can also inform decision making in terms of determining whether students should be promoted from one class to another".

In table 2, all the items scored above the cutoff point of 2.5, and the overall mean of 3.31. Which indicates the effect of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment has been administered? Above all include performance in school examinations, reduced anxiety and examination malpractice of students after making it for them to know their performance.

This is in line with the findings of Rellaghan and Greany (2000) that "continuous assessment has important consequences attached to performance, when they are likely to impact directly on teaching and learning and so merit consideration as a mechanism for improving achievement". In addition to that, Greany and Naido (2004) also noted that "up to high school level, the assessment of students is done in terminal, half yearly and annual examinations".

The table 3 outlines the type of continuous assessment that teacher's give to students which includes take home assignments, class work and midterm tests. This generalization will be identified by the overall mean score 2.83 indicating that all the items will be accepted by the respondents with regards

that there is a high extent to the type of continuous assessment that teachers give to the students. However item 9 showed a mean score below 2.5 indicating that teachers do not test the student always.

This is in line with the findings of Greany (2004) he sees assessment as any procedure or activity that is designed to collect information about the knowledge, attitude or skills of the learners. He is of the view that assessment can be seen as a predetermined process through which the quality of student performance in the three domains of educational objective (cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain) is judged.

8. Conclusion

From the findings of this research study, the respondents concluded as follows:

- (1) There is a high extent by which teachers carry out continuous assessment among economics students.
- (2) The effect of providing feedback to students after continuous assessment have been administered includes performing very well in school examination, reduces anxiety and examination malpractice include mastering of topics.
- (3) Teachers should give students take home assignments and class work at every lesson taught. The inclusion of midterm tests is compulsory for students in every middle of the term.

The results of the study have shown some educational implications.

Firstly, it will enable teachers to know how to apply the different types of grading system used at different levels of education. Secondly, school authorities need to organize seminars for teachers regularly on how to assess all the domains of learning. Thirdly, a student under the regular assessment by the teacher has the tendency to perform better in an examination. Finally, the study will lead to further in-depth study on continuous assessment of students in economics in public secondary school and their academic achievement.

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- (1) Teachers need to improve in continuous assessment because the practice links to another benefit relating to raising standards of all students. Since there are students with diverse needs in senior secondary schools, the improvement in teacher's continuous assessment practice has the potential to help all students including low achievers to improve. This will also go a long way in helping to achieve one of the objectives of the educational reforms to provide quality education for all.

(2) The teacher's behavior must be friendly and equal to all students, and teachers should also avoid the habit of assigning marks unnecessary without looking into the performance of the student because continuous assessment provides feedback to both students and teachers, such feedback provides information which is used or modifying on the student's performance or modifying the content, context and method of teaching as well as in marking a variety of other decision.

(3) The effectiveness of the economics teacher and the validity of the instruction can also be ascertained from the feedback gathered after assessment test or quiz, this feedback will help to determine the causes of poor performance of students in economics, whether it is from the subject teacher, the student or the instruction and also it will help to provide solution to the problem of poor performance in the area of economics.

(4) Parents should be concerned about the type of assessment that their children undergo in school because students under constant assessment will likely do well in the test or final examination and the mistake they made will be corrected and will not likely repeat such during the examination. The student stands a better chance to do well than a student without assessment that goes for an examination.

The study is time consuming owing to the fact that the questionnaires were difficult to be filled out and gathered from the respondents. This research is aimed at covering all the public secondary schools in Owerri municipal council of imo state, but due to insufficient resources and time constraints, three schools were selected for thorough investigation. Research is a continuous process and based on this, the researcher advice individuals who come across the study to engage in further studies based on the following:

- (1) The study should be carried out in other local government areas in imo state to further highlight more students' academic achievement in Economics in public secondary school in Owerri municipal council.
- (2) The study should be repeated at intervals of two (2) years to proffer solution to continuous assessment in secondary school in imo state.

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