

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS IN AFRICAN STATES

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses on positive aspect of the subject matter, continuous assessment and financial constrains in African states which is broadly, divided into two parts, the first aspect deal with continuous assessment which is the methods of finding out what the students have gains in school activities in terms of knowledge, reasoning, character, development and industry. The second aspect discusses about the financial constraints which refers to “inability” created by lack of funds, the difficulties arising from none or inadequate funding of educational sectors that affects most of the African educational sectors. Finally, conclusion is drawn and recommendations were proffered.

INTRODUCTION

The international policy on education (NPE 1981) revised (2013),it views education as not a small venture to be toyed with, because it involves huge sums of government or individual fund that it is also contributing to the national and international economy and general development of the nations. The industrial, technological and manpower development of the Nations are highly depends on the development of education. It creates political and social awareness to international community as they may be aware of their political rights and aspiration. It is also a sector that holds so much to its peoples which is not to be treated with levity but education in Nigeria and the African states i.e. Niger, Togo, Congo, Mali, Burundi, etc, has suffered and it is still suffering from the serious neglect by the government of the day, no wonder the nations remains economically unsuitable after years of independence.

A suitable educational system will certainly stabilized the nation to achieve in the educational industry therefore, it demands a proper effective and efficient educational planning that considers exigencies of the time, it functionality and practicability that needs the fully backed up with a competent assessment method that will address the problems of the systems as a whole.

DEFINITION OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The Nigerian ministry of Education Handbook on Continuous Assessment (1985) revised 2014, defined continuous assessment as: A mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in the cognitive, effective and Psychomotive behavior systematically takes account of all its performance during a given period of schooling. Such assessment involving the use of a variety

on the modes of evaluation for the purpose of, guiding improving the learning and performance of the students. (Wzewu & Okoye, 2014) they are of the opinion that Continuous assessment is a systematic and objective process of determining the extents of a student's performances in all expected changes from the day embarks on a course of study in a continuous and progressive manner up to the end of such course of study, and it is also a judicious accumulation of all pieces of information derived from a students in his learning from time to time and to serve as a basis for taking decision about the students.

Ohuche & Fumi (2016) they viewed it as a method of finding out what the students have gained from the learning activities in terms of knowledge, thinking, reasoning, character development and industry. Various tools may be used, besides accurate record of such are further use for the purpose of providing information to parents, guardians and others who can use for the purpose of assessment, rather it must be seen as a strategy or an approach of assessing a learner.

THE AIMS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The aims of introducing continuous assessment in schools as contained in thje handbook on continuous assessment of South African Republic (FMEST, 1985) revised 2017 those considers continuous assessment as: -

1. To liberalize education assessment and evaluation.
2. To replace the basic of certifying final examination with a system that takes into account the learner`s performance throughout the entire period of schooling, that the result will be more valid and more indicative of the leaner`s ability.
3. To improve the method of selection into schools by incorporating head of schools, to performance continuous assessment into the common entrance examination results.
4. To give the teacher an opportunity to participate in the final assessment of the pupils/students by recording all students gains in a semester/term.
5. To encourage teachers to introduce innovation in their teaching, since their assessment of pupils in such innovation will become part of the pupil`s final assessment.
6. To enable the use of assessment result for the guidance of the pupil`s leaning and preparation for a career choice.
7. To reduce the incidence of examination malpractice and leakage in the final examination, that is if a student scores high marks in continuous assessment, he need not to look for a leakage in final examinations.
8. To enable the teachers to improve their performance regularly from the feedback they obtain on assessments.
9. To ensure consistency, clarity and uniformity in educational practice throughout the federation and ensure an orderly development of the country`s educational policy.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

The four revised characteristic of continuous assessment which distinguished it from the old method of assessing students in all African countries as contains in the communiqué raised after

meeting with the ministers of education of African states held at federal ministry of education Abuja Nigeria in 23rd October 2017 that the African states, policy of education should be unified according to region i.e. North Africa, west Africa, south Africa, east Africa and central Africa respectively.

1. Systematic: in very step it have to be judiciously planned. Mpka M. A, (2017) observed that the operation of continuous assessment requires that a defined program of assessment must be written fragmentally about the assessment which must be specified, the variety of assessment procedures to be use must be known, the persons who will be involves and their responsibilities must be spelt out. Parents, teachers, educational officials and even the general public are all to be fully aware of what happen, where and when. It does allow for any quest work even in the measurement to be mark or instruments to be used. This carefully worked out programme will ensure systematic approach to the assessment when, what was obtainable before.
2. Comprehensive: Hamid & Ekey (2014) observed that continuous assessment is comprehensive because it uses a variety instrument to determine pupil`s performances. Ojerede and Omo (2014) they argue that the pupils are seen in their totality; their cognitive, effective and psychomotor domains were considered. In a continuous assessment system, not only that objective in all three domains are emphasized, but also the extent of their attainment deliberately assessed and used for decision about the student. Moreover, all objectives are amendable to one type of assessment procedure, various techniques must be used to the system. The result in that more valid and more complete picture of the individual is all of these make continuous assessment to be comprehensive.
3. Cumulative: the cumulative nature of continuous assessment entails that all information`s about a student should be skillfully recorded. Therefore, any judgment on student at any moment must takes account of all records of his/her progress from the time he/she embarked upon the study up to that point of time. This cumulative nature makes it mandatory for a student`s performance during the term/semester so as to contribute quantitatively to his/her grade.
4. Guidance: the cumulative nature of continuous assessment entails that all record of character obtained regularly on the facts about every pupil`s and progress `in all areas of leaning these facts are used by both the teacher and the student to seek and to offer guidance whenever necessary. Guidance and counseling assists pupils to have a positive image of sense of directives and skills in solving problems. But this idea can only be achieved if guidance and counseling are based on facts that truly it reflects the actual strength and weakness of the question. Hence it is only continuous assessment planned and practiced as explained above that can do so at appropriate time. That is why continuous assessment is said to be guidance oriented.

PROBLEMS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

- 1) Time constraints: continuous assessment takes much of the teacher's time in writing test and recording the result. In many instances the results are not ready in good time for giving an immediate feedback to students. Especially in a class of large number of students. i.e. Nigeria, South Africa, Mali etc. are not controlling the number of students to seat in classroom.
- 2) Competence of the teacher: it demands highly technical and computational skills, some of the teachers do not have sufficient time but yet they are required to make several tests every week or month. Such teaches may surely make bad tests, which will not be to the interest of continuous assessment, though Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Tunisia has introduced that all teachers must obtains certificate in education. In order to become a qualified teacher.
- 3) Scarcity of resources: scarcity of money and materials are handicaps to the operation of continuous assessment. Continuous assessment makes frequent administration of the observation which consumes large quantities of stationeries, such involves high cost of money. The problems are that, in the present meager allocation for education it will be difficult for many public schools to meet their needs without excessive charges on their pupils. Some of the instruments required for non-cognition assessment are standardized and above to be bought in large number from the publishers. Hence it cost a lot of money, impact it is clearly known that all African educational sectors are facing in adequate funds to meet their educational objectives.
- 4) Record keeping and continuity of records: Another problem of continuous assessment is that it involves a lot of record keeping in the areas of physical development. And must of the teachers in African states are very weak in terms of record keeping. Therefore, most of the information's on pupils may likely to be lost or to be falsified by the teachers concerned, and this is detrimental to the students who are being assessed.

OTHER LIMITATIONS ON CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

1. It reduces examination zealousness, which is bad for students who obtain good marks in their class works that may not brother to study hard for the final examination that contribute to developing a weak class work.
2. Students may become unduly dependent on the teacher and class work at the cost of doing work by themselves since they know that their grade could be merely by doing well on their assessment.
3. Continuous assessment demands much of teachers' time and energy sometimes at the cost of actual teaching. As a result, some teachers become dishonest about it and award marks to student arbitrarily without any assessment.
4. The substantial dependence of the pupil's grade on class teachers' assessment may create room for fraudulent practices by teachers of low integrity. This raised question of how to maintain comparable standards across the schools.

5. Student may still spend substantial part of the time preparing for tests and assessment, rather than learning specific task or skills.
6. The complex methods of reporting students' performance to compute and more parents to interpret may sometimes be justified just to favour the parents.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Finance is very important factor in school administration. John (2011) it is because whatever plans the educational administrator's initiates can only be realized when there is enough funds to cater for it. Otherwise such beautiful plans may end up in the drawing paper. It is only finance that can translate plans into action. Jorce (2012) financial constraints therefore refers to inability created the by the difficulties arising from none or inadequate funding of educational system. Over the years the inadequate allocation to education is referred to as financial constraints. From federal, state or local governments of any African states has been one of the lowest concentration, some African countries due to the lower income of some nations i.e Madagascar, Niger, Kenya, Mali, Brandi, etc. as a result, it has always been difficult to realize the aspect of education which money develops. In fact either directly or indirectly money is essential in the realization of all the aims and objectives of education that explains the slow pace of development on African educational industry.

Education as a matter of fact is one of the biggest industries in Africa, states i.e. Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa Malawi, Rumelia, Senegal, Tunisia, Ghana, etc as its contribute much to the nation's economy and development the inefficient funding to education therefore amounts to economic suffocating, where industrial and technological development are delayed as a result of shortage of manpower occasioned by lack of proper funding of education to train the educational personnel, though in Nigeria TETFund has taken care of educational development while in south Africa and Libya they use petroleum reserve fund to cater educational expenses.

There is no limit to what financial constraints can do to educational administrators and the several educations, hence the paper mention just a few:

THE FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS EXCLUSIVE RESULT

1. In fractural development will be delayed
2. Equipment's and materials to realize the aims of educational cannot be purchased.
3. Payment of teacher's salaries and other allowances may be hampered.
4. Employment will not be conducted.
5. Seminars, conference etc. will not be ascertains
6. Training and retraining of teachers will not be possible
7. Engineering and technological innovations will be very weak.
8. Scientific discovery will not be possible
9. Sponsorship on education will not be taken place
10. Educational competitions and comparative visit will not be possible.

CONCLUSION

For an effective and efficient educational system in African states, there is need for proper planning with adequate financial backing; and a good assessment method devoid of subjectivity which seeks not only to be evaluated with full financial backing but to compete with other developed countries of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continuous assessment

- i. Teachers need to be more serious and make more sacrifice in order to cope up with the volume of work involved in continuous assessment.
- ii. More teachers should be employed to march the over-growing pupil's enrolment in schools.
- iii. The African governments should adopt the use of computer to each teacher so as to ease the problems of teacher's records.
- iv. All school should be encouraged to employ the new technology in teaching e.g. the use of computer and other modern teaching aids.
- v. Teachers should be aware of other teaching techniques such as assignment, observation and peer appraisal techniques, etc.
- vi. Governments should subsidize the production of continuous assessment materials so that it will be affordable.
- vii. Effort should be encouraged to develop the teaching materials locally and produce them cheaply rather than to depend on imported teaching equipment's/materials, though Nigeria, Madagascar, South Africa Egypt, Uganda, Ghana, Morocco, Benin Republic, etc. has already developed in producing different kinds of teaching materials/equipment's.

2. Financial constraints

- i. All African governments should make funds available to educational administrators so as to enable them to realize their planned pertaining the education so as to prove a meaningful result.
- ii. All school administrators in African states should properly managed the scares recourses available to them in order to boast higher funding
- iii. In African schools in education should create some financial resources in addition to government cash allocation.
- iv. Training and retraining of teachers should be constantly adhered and financially equipped in all African educational sectors.
- v. Research and development should fully be financed at all time so as to the maximum requirements for standard education.

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