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Evaluation of Continuous Assessment Practice by University Lecturers

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	The study evaluated the extent to which Continuous Assessment (CA) was practiced by university lecturers in Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria. The evaluation of continuous assessment focused on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour. That is teaching and learning should focus on these areas. Two research questions were raised, and two hypotheses were tested to achieve the purpose of the study. A sample of 200 lecturers was randomly selected using simple random sampling and stratifies random sampling techniques. A 5-point scaled questionnaire was used as an instrument to collect data. The validity of the instrument was determined through expert judgement and factor analysis. Thus the instrument has face and constructs validities. The reliability of the instrument was established through Cronbach Alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained as a measure of internal consistency. The data collected were analyzed. The research questions were answered with the use of mean. The hypotheses were tested with Z-test at .05 level of significance. The result of evaluation revealed that the extent to which university lecturers practice continuous assessment with emphasis on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour was low. There was no significant difference between male and female as well as junior and senior lecturers on the practice of continuous assessment in the university. It was noted that there should be a continuous and effective monitoring of continuous assessment practice by the university lecturers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) declared Continuous Assessment (CA) for primary, secondary and tertiary schools in 1979 in its National Policy on Education. It was maintained that Continuous Assessment (CA) should be practice by teachers at all levels of education [1]-[3]. The Federal Government pointed out that C.A would achieve the following;

(a) give the teacher greater involvement in the overall assessment of his or her pupils,
(b) provide a more valid assessment of the child's overall ability and performance,
(c) enable teachers to be more flexible and innovative in their instruction,
(d) provide a basis for more effective guidance of the child,
(e) provide a basis for the teacher to implore his or her instructional methods, and
(f) reduce examination malpractices [4].

This has also been stated by Osadebe (2015) [5]. Similarly, it was pointed out that:

> The universities and other institutions of higher learning will also be required to reconsider the practice whereby examination performance in a limited number of papers determines the grading of graduates and to explore ways of introducing an element of continuous evaluation (FMEST, p.2).

This supported the introduction of continuous assessment in the universities in Nigeria.

However, continuous assessment was introduced because of the problems associated with single assessment called examination. The single assessment only focused on the cognitive behaviour of students that is the students' intellectual ability (ability to think and reason). The other aspects of behaviour such as affective and psychomotor were not considered. The need to consider all the domains of behaviour brought in the lecturing of continuous in the university.

Evaluation would help to determine whether or not lecturers are fully practicing continuous assessment in line with the National Policy on Education and the Federal Ministry of Education Science Technology (1985) recommendations on continuous assessment. It recommends that the practice of CA should focus on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor of students' behaviour during and after teaching and learning [4].

When government introduced continuous assessment in the university, it expected high practice by the university lecturers. However, this could be verified through evaluation as in the case of this study. Evaluation would help to determine whether or not lecturers are fully practicing continuous assessment in line with the National Policy on Education and the Federal Ministry of Education Science Technology (1985) recommendations on Continuous Assessment. It recommends that the practice of Continuous Assessment should focus on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor of students' behaviour during and after teaching and learning. The extent of practice could be high or low. This could be verified through evaluation as in case of this study [4].

The study focused on the evaluation of continuous practice by university lecturers. It was based on evaluation theory of goal attainment model. The model determines the extent to which objectives of a given programme was achieved. Thus, the objective of Continuous Assessment (CA) was to ensure that the practice by university lecturers covers the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour.

Therefore, the use of goal attainment model in the study, helped to determine the extent to which continuous assessment objectives were achieved by the practice of university lecturers. It has been pointed out that continuous assessment is the frequent use of valid and reliable instruments or techniques such a test, observation questionnaire, interview, checklist, among others to obtain information about students behaviour upon which judgment is made [6]. It determines students' behavior in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Generally, the focus of assessment is to analyze information provided by test, interview, observation, check-list questionnaire, interview among others, and to combine the information to make complex and important judgment about individuals [5],[7]-[9]. Continuous assessment is focused on three domains of behaviour. These include cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

This will help to determine students' behaviour after lecturing and learning. It was also help to provide feedback and improvement in teaching and learning [5],[9],[10]. Continuous assessment is systematic, comprehensive cumulative and guidance oriented [4],[5].

The university lecturers are expected to lecture their students and assess them continuously, after teaching and learning in the areas of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. This is in line with the National Policy on Education by Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN). The different learning outcomes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains should be assessed each time they teach or contact students. This has been variously recommended by FMEST (1985), Aiken (1976), Gronlund (1985), Ukwuije and Orluwene (2012), FGN (2004), and Osadebe (2015[b]) [3]-[5],[11]-[13]. University lecturers should be familiar with the objectives in the domains of students' behaviour. It appears that most of the lecturers do have enough knowledge of students' instructional objectives [9]. It has been pointed out that when continuous assessment is investigated, the three domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor should be identified [3]-[5]. This will help the university lecturers to understand the focus of continuous assessment in schools. It will also help them to prepare their lectures in various courses or subject areas.

In the cognitive domain, there are six levels. These include; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. This has been pointed out by Bloom (1956), Gronlund (1985) and Osadebe (2014[a] & 2015[b]) [5],[9],[12],[14]. The cognitive domain focuses on students' intellectual ability. That is, ability to think and reason. Achievement test, aptitude test and intelligent test are the instruments used in measuring students cognitive behaviour, in terms of learning outcomes, lecturers should ensure that at the end of every lecture, students should be able to define, explain, describe, convert, defend, compute, manipulate, differentiate, distinguish, compile combine compose compare, justify among others in the topics taught or lectured. The learning outcomes would help the lecturers to continuously assess the students.

In the affective domain, the levels include receiving, responding, valuing, organization and characterization by value complex [5],[15]. The affective domain shows how a student feels, expresses emotion interest and general conduct. Questionnaire, observation, checklist, interview are some of instruments used in measuring affective behaviour.

In the psychomotor domain, the levels include: perception, set mechanism, complex overt response, adaptation, origination [12],[16],[17]. It is an aspect of behaviour that indicates how a learner makes use of the body for education purpose [5]. It describes individual skills. These include skills in writing, drawing, running, driving speaking, among others. Lecturers should note that at the end of every instruction, the students should be able to assemble, build change compose connect, create, dismantle, drill, screw, fix, grip, sew, sketch, among others.

The cognitive affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour are interrelated [5]. A student may exhibit all the forms of behaviour during and after an instructional process. These techniques or instruments include: test, questionnaire, interview, oral question, checklist among others. Data collected should be used for decision making. There are related studies on continuous assessment practice from different aspects. These are from different areas. These include Omole (2007), Christensen (2013c), Odubenu (2015a) and Osadebe (2015b) [5],[18]-[20]. The studies were more in primary and secondary schools. There was no specific study known to the researcher that has been carried out among university lecturers on the practice of continuous assessment. This was the gab the study covered.

Continuous assessment is expected to be practice by male and female as well as junior and senior university lecturers. The successful practice of continuous assessment in the university in line with the National Policy on Education depends on the lecturers. Therefore, the practice of continuous assessment by university lecturers in the study considered the sex and rank of the university lecturers.

Evaluation implies judgment. The study judge the extent to which university lecturers practiced continuous assession: It has been pointed out that Evaluation is judgment based on valid and reliable data or evidence [21]. The data required for evaluation could be obtained through the use of test, questionnaire, interview, checklist among others. The study evaluated continuous assessment practice by university lecturers through the used of a questionnaire. The word evaluation is a broad term that is applied to educational programme. It is a judgment based on a given bench mark or criteria. It helps to find out the extent to which programme objectives are achieved as well as the extent of individual's performance [12]. Evaluation is a derived statement of fact such pass, fail, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, high, low among others [21].

The following **Research Questions** were answered.
1. What is the evaluation of continuous assessment practice by male and female university lecturers?
2. What is the evaluation of continuous assessment practice by junior and senior university lecturers?

The following null **Hypotheses** were tested at .05 level of significance.
1. There is no significant difference between male and female lecturers on the evaluation of continuous assessment practice in the university.
2. There is no significant difference between junior and senior lecturers on the evaluation of continuous assessment practice in the university.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The study evaluated or judged the extent to which university lecturers practice continuous assessment with emphasis on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the students behaviour. The dependent variable was practice. The independent variables include sex and rank of university lecturers. Therefore, the practice of continuous assessment depends on the sex and rank of university lecturers.

A sample of 200 university lecturers was randomly selected using simple and randomly selected using simple and proportionate stratified random sampling techniques based on the sex and rank of university lecturers (120 male and 80 female). A 5 – point scaled questionnaire was used. The validity of the instrument was established through expert judgment and factor analysis. Therefore, the instrument has face and construct validities. The reliability of the instrument was estimated with Gronbach Alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.86 was obtained as a measure of internal consistency.

The data collected were analyzed in line with the research questions and hypotheses. The research questions were answered with the use of mean. A bench mark of 60 was used as a mean for evaluation to answer the research questions. Therefore, a mean of 60 and above indicated high practice of continuous assessment practice by university lecturers. Hence, below the mean of 60 showed low practice of continuous assessment by university lecturers. The hypotheses were tested with Z-test at .05 level of significance.

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Results

The results of the study were presented in tables in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

Research Question One: What is the evaluation of continuous assessment practice by male and female university lecturers?

Table 1. Mean Analysis of Male and Female University Lecturers on Continuous Assessment Practice

Gender	N	Calculated mean	Bench mark mean	Evaluation
Male	120	53.6	60	Low
Female	80	52.5	60	low

Table 1 indicates that the mean for male university lecturer was 53.6 while that of female was 52.5. The mean scores of both male and female were below the bench mark mean of 60 showing low practice of continuous assessment. Thus, the evaluation revealed low practice of continuous assessment by male and female university lecturers.

Research Question Two: What is the evaluation of continuous assessment practice by junior and senior university lecturers?

Table 2. Mean Analysis of Junior and Senior University Lecturers on continuous Assessment Practice

Rank	N	Calculated mean	Bench mark mean	Evaluation
Junior	120	50.5	60	Low
Senior	80	52.6	60	Low

Table 2 showes that the mean score for junior lecturers on the practice of continuous assessment was 50.5. While that of senior lecturers was 52.6. The mean score of both junior and senior lecturers were below the bench mark mean of 60 indicating low practice of continuous assessment in the university. Therefore, evaluation revealed low practice of continuous assessment by junior and senior university lecturers.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant different between male and female lecturers on the evaluation of continuous assessment practice in the university.

Table 3. Z – Test Analysis of Male and Female University Lecturers on Continuous Assessment Practice

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Calculated Z-value	Critical Z-value	Evaluation
Gender	120	53.6	8.5	0.86	1.96	Accepted
Female	80	52.5	9.1			

Table 3 indicates that the calculated Z – value of 0.86 was less than the critical Z – value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. The hypothesis was accepted. The result maintained that there was no significant difference between male and female lecturers on of continuous assessment practice in the university. The evaluation showed low practice of continuous assessment that was generally accepted.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant different between junior and senior lecturers on the evaluation of continuous assessment practice in the university.

Table 4. Z – Test Analysis of Junior and Senior University Lecturers on Continuous Assessment Practice

Rank	N	Mean	SD	Calculated Z-value	Critical Z-value	Evaluation
Junior	120	50.5	8.8	1.58	1.96	Accepted
Senior	80	52.5	9.5			

Table 4 showes that the calculated Z – test of 1.58 was less that the critical Z-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance. The hypothesis was therefore, accepted. The result revealed that there was no significant difference between junior and senior lecturers on the evaluation of continuous assessment practice in the university. Evaluation revealed low practice of continuous assessment that was generally accepted.

3.2. Discussion

The result of evaluation revealed that the extent to which university lecturers practice continuous assessment in line with the National Policy on Education, and the Handbook on Continuous Assessment by Federal Government of Nigeria was low. There was no significant difference between male and female as well as junior and senior lecturers on the practice of continuous assessment in the university. The result was similar to the findings of Omole (2007), Odubenu (2015[b]) and Osadebe (2014[a] & 2015[a]) who carried out their studies on continuous assessment in primary and secondary schools and found low practice [5],[9],[18],[20]. Since there was a low practice of continuous assessment across the school levels then there should be continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement on the practice of continuous assessment in schools.

The result was contrary to the Federal Government of Nigeria (1981, 1988 & 2004) expectation that continuous assessment should be highly practiced by all university lecturers as contained in the National Policy on Education [1]-[3]. Lecturers were expected to practice continuous assessment with emphasis on cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of students' behaviour [4].

4.   CONCLUSION

The study was carried out to evaluate the extent of continuous assessment practice by university lecturers in line with the National Policy on Education, and Handbook on continuous assessment by Federal Government of Nigeria. It was evaluated that the extent of continuous assessment practice by university lecturers was low. There was no significant difference between male and female as well as junior and senior university lecturers on the practice of continuous assessment. The university lecturers should be encouraged to practice continuous assessment in line with the educational policy for university education.

Therefore, there should be effective monitoring and evaluation for improvement on the practice of continuous assessment in the university. This would help to improve the practice of continuous assessment by university lecturers.

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