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Improving the Implementation of CA Policy: An Assessment of Selected Secondary Schools in Oyo State and Implications for Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract: *Continuous Assessment (CA) is a method of finding out what the students have gained from learning activities in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. This study evaluated the implementation of continuous assessment policy in selected secondary schools of Oyo State. Also, influence of selected teachers' characteristics and school variables (educational qualifications, teachers' experience, infrastructural facilities and frequency of assessment) on the implementation of CA policy in selected secondary schools of Oyo State was examined. The study was a descriptive type using survey method. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of 600 Social Studies teachers from 33 Local Government Areas of Oyo State from the three senatorial districts into which the Local Government Areas could be classified. Proportional sampling procedure was used by the researcher to select the sampled 330 Social Studies teachers from the selected public schools and 270 Social Studies teachers from the selected private schools. The data collected were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and chi-square to test the null hypotheses generated for this study. Result indicated that there was no significant difference in the implementation of C.A by Social Studies teachers on the basis of their qualification in Oyo state. The finding also revealed that there was a significant difference in the implementation of CA in Social Studies in the Upper Basic Social Studies on the basis of teachers' experience. More so, there was a significant difference between public and private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of infrastructural facilities for the implementation of CA. And lastly, there was a significant difference between public and private Upper Basic Schools in the regularity of CA as regards the number of times students are assessed. The implications of these findings are that: Upper Basic Schools of Oyo State have more experienced Social Studies teachers, Private upper basic schools have more infrastructural facilities for the implementation of CA, and there is regularity of CA in the private basic schools. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others, that the government should make provision for Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities to update and keep proper record of C.A. Also, government should allot enough funds for the up-keep of Upper Basic Schools and make adequate provision for chairs and lockers for effective implementation of CA IN Oyo State Upper Basic Schools.*

Keywords: *Implementation, Continuous Assessment, Policy, Upper Basic Schools, Social Studies Teachers.*

INTRODUCTION

Social studies is simply defined as the study of man and his way of life. Alberta (2000) defined social studies as "a school subject that should assist students to acquire the basic knowledge, skills and positive attitudes needed to be responsible citizens and contributing members of society". This encompasses a student's learning about the social, political, physical, economic, and religious spheres of human life.

This definition points to a need for social studies to be taught as a subject across all levels of education, especially at the basic (primary) and Junior secondary levels, which represent the first points of contact of the student with contemporary issues in the human society, as they prepare to become responsible members of society. These issues range from globalization, to local and international conflict, and the environment, technology, and issues embodied by the millennium development goals (MDGs – now upgraded to SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals), as enumerated in the National Curriculum of Social Studies (NERDC, 2007).

All learning must dovetail into a form of assessment, which measures, at different levels, if learning has really taken place, and how much the student has learnt, without which the learner/student may not obtain maximum benefits from his education (Adebowale & Alao, 2008). Indeed, assessment has evolved from merely providing a yardstick for promotion to the next class/level, to measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of both teaching and learning, Gronlund (2002). Assessment in the Nigerian education system consists of periodic tests and examination, usually administered by teachers, ministries of education, or supranational/national examination bodies like WASSCE/NECO.

Continuous Assessment (CA) according to (NTI 2006) is the assessment practice that broadens and expands the form, mode, means and scope of assessment in the school, in order to facilitate and enhance learning. CA can take three forms which are pre-instruction assessment (diagnostic), assessment during instruction (informative) and the one at the end

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of instruction (summative). Ezewu & Okoli (1986) referred to CA as a systematic and objective process of determining the extent of a student's performance in all the expected changes in his behavior, from the day he enters a course of study and a judicious accumulation of all pieces of information derived from this purpose with a view of using them to guide and shape the student and to serve as basis for making important decisions about him.

Adewumi (2007) described CA as a method of finding out regularly and thoroughly what pupils have gained form learning activities in terms of knowledge, understanding, thought process, character development and industry. In effect, CA aims to get the true picture of a student's ability. Hence, CA allows teachers to modify their pedagogical strategies to include the construction of remediation activities for pupils who are not working at the expected grade level and the creation of enrichment activities for pupils who are working at or above the expected grade level. The continuous assessment process supports a cycle of self-evaluation and pupil-specific activities by both pupils and teachers.

Frequent interaction between pupils and teachers means that teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their learners. These exchanges foster a pupil-teacher relationship based on individual interactions. Pupils learn that the teacher values their achievements and that their assessment outcomes have an impact on the instruction that they receive. One-to-one communication between the teacher and the pupil can motivate pupils to continue attending school and to work hard to achieve higher levels of mastery (Educational Quality Review, 2003).

The recognition of this significant role of assessment made the FRN (2004) in its policy document on Continuous Assessment (CA) to stipulate that it forms 30% of students' overall assessment (NTI, 2006). The policy guidelines also recommended the following requirements in administering CA:

- Students are to be given an average of 9 periodic assessment per academic session and 3 end-of-term examinations
- Class assessment should be made up of diverse evaluation tools such as class assessments, projects, assignments etc. Copies of such class work are to be kept for inspection.
- Promotion to the next class should be based on three terms' weighted scores in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains.
- The minimum pass mark in each of the three domains, should be 40%.
- A learner must score a minimum of 40% in five subjects in the cognitive domain and at least 40% in either the affective or the psychomotor domain to be promoted.
- A learner who scores below 40% will be provided counselling services, while the parent/guardians would be invited for discussion aimed at helping the child to improve.

In order to be able to do a valid and reliable assessment of each pupil's behavioural traits, the teacher who is to assess this aspect, must also keep weekly records on the student which will facilitate term assessment. Also, the school must strive to provide opportunities for the development of desired attributes highlighted under the guidance of willing, dedicated and knowledgeable teachers.

Teacher quality is a key element to students' academic success, but there is no unanimous position among researchers on the specific characteristics that influence classroom outcomes (Rivkin *et al.*, 2005). Richard and Zammarro (2009) in a study titled 'teachers' qualifications and students' achievement in urban elementary schools concluded that teachers' success in the classroom is unrelated to their qualification, but correlates with teachers' experience. Conversely, Adaramola & Obomanu (2011) reported poor performance among students in Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMT) subjects due to a lack of qualified teachers. In this study, variables of qualification, experience, and school type were used since no teaching method however well formulated can take the place of teacher's qualification and experience. Also the influence of infrastructural facilities as well as funding on the implementation of CA was also looked into in this study.

In his study on effectiveness of professional versus non-professional teachers in selected secondary schools in Kwara state, Awoyemi (1985) revealed that teachers with more years of teaching experience are more effective than those with less years of experience. Also, Okonkwo (2000) considered teachers' experience as an important factor to student success. He opined further that the root cause of mass failure in examination these days lies in teachers' experience and students' lack of determination and preparation. In a study by Abiri (1986) on teachers experience, using students' achievement as a yardstick, he found out that teachers' experiences do not have any significant relationship with students performance in some selected subjects.

It is important to stress that the level of teacher's education goes a long way in the success of education industry. Trained and qualified personnel are very essential for the delivery of quality education. Fafunwa (1971), while making remarks on teacher education, training and qualifications said that if the African teachers are to cope adequately with the monumental task ahead of them, they have to be well trained.

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It is important here to explain an important variable in this study – school type. This is simply a categorization of schools into public schools, that are being controlled by the government, and private schools, where individuals are given enterprising tickets to operate schools with little or no control by government. Private and public schools were compared by Tooley, Dixon, and Olaniyan (2005) across India, Ghana and Nigeria. The result shows that private schools were markedly superior to government schools in terms of teaching facilities and so on. All these could account for the differences in academic achievement.

This study involved both public and private upper basic Social Studies teachers (in Oyo State) as sample subjects, to evaluate the difference in implementation based on the pre-identified factors of teacher qualification, experience, infrastructure, funding and compliance with the CA policy guideline on regularity of CA. Research hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- There will be no significant difference in the Social Studies teachers' implementation of CA in the Upper Basic schools in Oyo State on the basis of qualification.
- There will be no significant difference in the Social Studies teachers' implementation of CA in the Upper Basic schools in Oyo State on the basis of their working experience.
- Significant difference would not exist between the public and private Upper Basic schools in the provision of infrastructural facilities for the implementation of CA.
- Significant difference would not exist between the public and private Upper Basic schools in the provision of funds for the implementation of CA.
- Significant difference does not exist between public and private Upper Basic Schools in the regularity of CA as regards the times students are assessed

According to Adeyemi (2010), teachers play an important role in determining the student's " academic achievement. Researchers have never reached a consensus on the specific teacher factors that influence students" academic achievement (Rivkin *et al.*, 2005). Some studies found that teachers' experience and educational qualifications significantly influenced students' academic achievement (Njeru & Orodho, 2003; Ankomah *et al.*, 2005; Ugbe & Agim, 2009; Asikhia, 2010; Yala & Wanjohi, 2011; Olaleye, 2011). When conducting research on factors contributing to under achievement of Zambian female students in O-Level Physics examinations, Maguswi (2011) found that lack of qualified teachers of Physics had a significant contribution. Moreover, a study done by Adaramola & Obomanu (2011) in Nigeria found that lack of qualified teachers led to consistent poor performance of students in SMT subjects.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey method was used in this study. This method describes the characteristics of a named population by eliciting responses to questions posed by the researcher to the respondents. A total of 725 Social Studies teachers, spread across the 667 public Schools and 541 private upper basic schools in Oyo State, were identified as the population for this study. Simple random sampling was used to select 600 teachers, with 330 and 270 purposively selected from public and private schools respectively. The instrument for this study was a researcher - designed questionnaire tagged "Continuous Assessment Policy in Selected Upper Basic Schools in Oyo State: Implication for Social Studies Teachers (CAPIIUBS)". It contained sections A & B. Section "A" contained question items designed to elicit personal data of each respondent. Section "B" contained questions based on the research hypotheses. The research hypotheses were analysed using Chi-square statistical analysis at a 0.05 significance level (alpha level).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Ho_1: There is no significant difference in the implementation of C.A in the Upper Basic schools on the basis of teachers' qualification in Oyo State.

Table 1. χ^2 Analysis showing difference in the implementation of C.A. in the Upper Basic schools on the basis of teachers' qualification (social studies) in Oyo State

Qualification		Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Social Studies				Total	df	Cal χ^2	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
		SD	D	A	SA					
NCE (S.S)*	Count	34	64	117	15	230				
	E.C*	38.3	57.1	117.3	17.3	230.0				
	Count	28	60	180	77	345				
B. A. Ed. (S.S)	E.C	25.9	57.5	176.0	85.7	345.0				
	Count	0	0	1	2	3	9	8.427	0.492	N.S
M. Ed. (S.S)	E.C	0.2	0.5	1.5	0.7	3.0				
Others (Geog, Hist,	Count	2	6	8	6	22				
Govt, Econs and	E.C	1.7	3.7	11.2	5.5	22.0				
CRS)										
	Count	45	100	306	149	600				
Total	E.C	45.0	100.0	306.0	149.0	600.0				

**S.S – Social studies; E.C – Expected count*

Table 1 indicated that the calculated χ^2 value is 8.427 with p-value of 0.000 computed at alpha level 0.05. Thus, hypothesis one is hereby accepted and the null hypothesis upheld- that is there is no significant difference in the implementation of CA in the upper basic schools in Oyo state on the basis of teachers' qualification in Oyo State.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference in the implementation of Social Studies C.A in the Upper Basic schools on the basis of teachers' experience in Oyo State

Table 2. χ^2 Analysis showing difference in the implementation of Social Studies C.A. in the Upper Basic Schools on the basis of teachers' experience in Oyo State

Teachers' Experience		Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Social Studies				Total	df	Cal χ^2	Sig, (2-tailed)	Decision
		SD	D	A	SA					
Less	Count	115	42	32	26	215				
Experienced	E.C*	53.4	40.1	50.5	71.0	215.0				
Experienced	Count	34	70	109	172	385				
	E.C	95.6	71.9	90.5	127.0	385.0	3	96.421	0.00	S
	Count	149	112	141	198	600				
Total	E.C	149.0	112.0	141.0	198.0	600.0				

** E.C – Expected count*

From table 2, it can be observed that the calculated $\chi 2$ value is 96.421 with p-value of 0.00 computed at alpha level of 0.5. Thus hypothesis two (2) is hereby rejected and the alternative hypotheses accepted- that is there is a significant difference in the implementation of CA in the Upper Basic schools in Oyo State on the basis of teachers' experience. This is in favor of experienced teachers because the positive responses under experienced teachers that is 281 (109+172) positive responses is more than that of less experienced teachers which is 58.

Ho_3: Significant difference does not exist between the public and the private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of infrastructure for the implementation of CA in Oyo state.

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Table 3. $\chi 2$ Analysis showing difference between Public and Private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of infrastructure for the implementation of Continuous Assessment in Oyo state

School Type		Provision of infrastructure for the implementation of Continuous Assessment				Total	df	Cal $\chi 2$	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
		SD	D	A	SA					
Public Upper Basic School	Count	129	103	74	24	330				
	E.C	85.2	77.0	85.2	82.5	330.0				
Private Upper Basic Schools	Count	26	37	81	126	270	3	164.884	.000	S
	E.C	69.8	63.0	69.87	67.5	270.0				
Total	Count	155	140	155	150	600				
	E.C	155.0	140.0	155.0	150.0	600.0				

* *E.C – Expected count*

Table 3 revealed that the calculated $\chi 2$ value is 164.884 with p-value of .000 computed at alpha level of 0.05. Hypothesis three (3) is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted- that there is a significant difference between public and private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of enough infrastructural facilities for the implementation of CA in Oyo state Upper Basic Schools. This is in favour of the Private Upper Basic Schools. The reason is because if we compare the positive responses in both public and private schools, one would notice that private schools have higher number of positive responses (i.e. 207 positive responses).

Ho_4: Significant difference does not exist between the public and private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of adequate funds for the implementation of CA in Oyo State.

Table 4. $\chi 2$ Analysis showing difference between Public and Private Upper Basic Schools in the Provision of Adequate Funds for Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Oyo State Upper Basic Schools

School Type		Provision of adequate funds for the implementation of Continuous Assessment				Total	df	Cal $\chi 2$	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
		SD	D	A	SA					
Public Upper Basic School	Count	142	101	68	19	330				
	E.C	137.5	104.0	68.2	20.4	330.0				
Private Upper Basic Schools	Count	108	88	56	18	270	3	0.714	.870	NS
	E.C	112.5	85.0	55.8	16.6	270.0				
Total	Count	250	189	124	37	600				
	E.C	250.0	189.0	124.0	37.0	600.0				

* *E.C – Expected count*

Table 4 indicated that the calculated $\chi 2$ value is 0.714 with p-value of 0.870 at alpha level of 0.05. Hypothesis five (4) is hereby accepted- That there is no significant difference between the public and private Upper Basic Schools in the provision of adequate funds for the implementation of CA in Oyo State.

Ho_5: Significant difference does not exist between public and private Upper Basic Schools in the regularity of CA as regards the times students are assessed

Table 5. $\chi 2$ Analysis Showing Difference between Public and Private Upper Basic Schools in the regularity of Continuous Assessment as regards the times students are assessed in Oyo State Upper Basic Schools

School Type		Regularity of Continuous Assessment test scores				Total	df	Cal $\chi 2$	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
		SD	D	A	SA					
Public Upper Basic School	Count	160	110	36	36	330				
	E.C	104.5	83.6	65.4	76.4	330.0				
Private Upper Basic School	Count	30	42	83	115	270	3	193.441	.000	S
	E.C	85.5	68.4	53.6	62.6	270.0				
Total	Count	190	152	119	139	600				
	E.C	190.0	152.0	119.0	139.0	600.0				

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It can be observed from table 5 that the calculated $\chi 2$ value is 193.441with a p-value of 0.000 at alpha level 0.05. Thus, hypothesis eight (5) is hereby rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld- that there is a significant difference between the public and private Upper Basic Schools in the regularity of CA as regards the times students are assessed. This is in favour of private schools because they have a higher number of combined positive responses than public schools i.e. 198 positive responses.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this study revealed that the implementation of CA by Social Studies teachers in Upper Basic Schools in Oyo State was not affected by their qualification. However, more experienced teachers were better at implementing CA than their less experienced colleagues. It was also found that both private and public Upper Basic Schools in Oyo State had enough classrooms for teaching and assessment, but the public schools were more likely to lack or have inadequate infrastructural facilities like chairs and lockers that could be used by the students for learning. Many of the private schools also reported Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities like computers, which aid the teachers in the teaching and administration of assessment. These facilities were rare or lacking in public schools. Finally, the study found that teachers in private schools assessed their students more regularly when compared with their counterparts in public Upper Basic Schools in Oyo state.

In view of the findings of this paper, the researcher recommends that the Oyo state Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) should provide specialized training for teachers in lieu of experience to improve implementation of CA, towards achievement of the policy objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education document. The government should also make provision for lacking/inadequate important infrastructure like chairs and tables, including up-to-date Information Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, for the administration of CA. There is also a need for improved funding to support the administration of assessments, especially CA, which should be administered three (3) times as stated in the policy document.

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