

Teachers' Characteristics as Determinants of Their Attitude towards Continuous Assessment Practices

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Abstract The study investigated teachers' characteristics as determinants of their attitude towards continuous assessment practices in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. Four research questions and four corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. A sample of 391 secondary school teachers was drawn from the population through proportionate stratified random sampling technique based on educational qualification, years of teaching experience and gender. An instrument titled Continuous Assessment Teacher's Attitude Scale (CATAS) which was developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The CATAS was validated by experts in educational psychology, measurement and evaluation based on face and construct validities. The reliability of the instrument (CATAS) was established through Cronbach Alpha technique and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.78. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation, chi-square, t-test of independent and one-way analysis of variance. The results revealed that proportion of teachers with positive and negative attitude respectively toward continuous assessment practices differ significantly in favour of those with positive attitude; educational qualification and years of teaching experience are good determinants of teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices while genders is not. Based on these results, recommendations were made including that teachers with negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices should be enlightened more on the importance of continuous assessment in schools.

Keywords: *teachers, qualification, experience attitude and continuous assessment*

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1. Introduction

Assessment in our educational system cannot be overemphasized because it is an approach that examine the activities and performance of both the learner and the teacher. It is a powerful process that can either optimize or inhibit learning depending on how it is applied. Hence, assessment is the bedrock of teaching and learning. According to Opara, Onyekuru and Njoku [1], assessment is all the activities teachers used to help students learn and judge their progress. Lambert and Lines [2] defined assessment as the process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about students' responses to educational task. It is an interactive process between teachers and students and it informs teachers how well their students are learning what they are teaching. McMillian [3] opined that assessment is the gathering, interpretation and use of the information to aid teachers decision making. Assessment is an umbrella concept that encompasses different techniques, strategies and uses. It is defined as the collection, evaluation and use of information to help teachers make decisions that improve

students learning. Salvia and Ysseldyke [4] see assessment as a process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions about individuals and groups. Linn and Gronlund [5] defined assessment as the full range of procedures used to gain information about students' learning (observations, ratings of performances or projects, paper-and-pencil tests) and the information of value judgements concerning learning progress.

Assessment in educational settings is a multifaceted process that involves for more than just administering a test. In assessing students, we measure their progress toward attaining certain competencies their schools and parents want them to master. The competence should be based on the three domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. In finding out how much the students have gained from lessons in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains is seen as continuous assessment.

Continuous assessment as defined by Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [6] is a mechanism whereby the final grading of a student in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains using data from tests, checklists, rating scales, projects, observation interview etc systematically takes account of all his performances during a given period of schooling. Onunkwo [7] opined

that continuous assessment is a method of appraisal in which students' achievements in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains are determined using scores obtained from various instruments like mid-term tests, homeworks, assignments, quizzes, practice sessions, laboratory, worksheets, classroom participation. All these assessment tools should complement each other having in mind that the objectives of continuous assessment is to make students learn consistently and effectively. Ezewu cited in Ukwuije and Opara [8] defined continuous assessment as an assessment procedure whereby each child's performance and progress in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psycho-productive areas of learning in the school up to the last day in it. Continuous assessment was introduced to influence the quality and style of teaching and learning to ensure that all learners learn by utilizing a range of teaching learning and assessment strategies. Continuous assessment is school-based process that uses a variety of assessment tools to measure behaviour or learners performance. Continuous assessment can be done in both formative and summative assessment. Formative assessment is the frequent interactive assessment of students' progress and understanding of what goes on in the instructional process to identify whether instructional objectives are being achieved from both the learners and teacher's perspectives. Summative assessment occurs at the end of a class, course, semester or academic year and it measures learning outcomes and reports these outcomes to students, parents and administrators. One of the functions of the school is the assessment of the learners on what they have been taught with the intent of determining how well such learners have attained the objectives of a particular subject taught. In this case some teachers may exhibit positive or negative attitude towards continuous assessment practices.

Attitude is a complex psychological construct that plays an important role in the explanation of behaviour reviewed. The interest in the concept is not surprising because Williams and Iruloh [9] opined that if the attitude of a person towards a given object is known, it can be used in addition to other situational variables to explain and predict the actions and reactions of the individual specific circumstances. In support of the statement, Opara and Ekeh [10] state that attitude (whether positive or negative) cannot just happen but is moderated by certain factors or variables such as self-concept, gender, anxiety, motivation and others. Kpolovie, Joe and Okoto [11] defined attitude as the intensity and direction of a person's ideas, fears and convictions about objects, events, people or things. An attitude is a behavioural predispositions that describe a person's tendency to perform certain classes of responses towards specified class of stimuli which can either be persons, objects or ideas. It is common for teachers to exhibit either positive or negative attitude towards continuous assessment practices. Alufohai and Akinlosotu [12] reported that teachers have positive attitude towards carrying out the continuous assessment practices in Esan Central Senatorial District of Edo State. Certain factors can determine the attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment practices such as educational qualification, years of teaching experiences and gender.

Educational qualification refers to the highest level of an individual teachers educational attainment such as

bachelors, masters, or doctorate degrees which an individual has acquired whether by full-time study or part-time awarded by the educational institutions. The minimum qualification required for an individual to practice in the teaching profession is the National Certificate in Education (NCE) [13]. However, it is not uncommon to find individuals who practice as teachers with lower qualifications in some schools mostly in private schools. Hence, a teacher's qualification may have a significant role in the attitude of teachers towards continuous assessment practices.

Teachers years of teaching experience is another variable that may determine their continuous assessment practices. Experience is said to be the best teacher which implies that as one acquires experience he or she becomes better in whatever he or she is doing overtime. Teacher's years of teaching experience is the length of years the teacher is in the teaching profession and it has been perceived to be one of the most important factors of teachers' effectiveness. In the teaching profession, it has been observed that some teachers are fairly new in the teaching job while others have spent a considerable length of time in the profession. This implies that teachers differ in their years of teaching experience and these differences may influence their attitude towards continuous assessment practices.

Gender is a psycho-physiological process that identifies a person as a male or female in terms of their role or function in the society [14]. Hence, gender is the biological properties that defines a person as a male or female. In the teaching profession there exist male and female teachers that may have positive or negative attitude towards continuous assessment practices. The question goes, which of the two categories (male or female) are more effective in their attitude (positive or negative) towards continuous assessment practices. Therefore, a teacher's gender may influence his or her attitude towards continuous assessment practices.

Based on the researcher's personal observation and experience, secondary school teachers in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area differ in their attitudes towards continuous assessment practices and certain factors may influence the way they carryout the continuous assessment. Hence, the researcher deemed it necessary to find out the extent certain factors such as educational qualification, years of teaching experience and gender determine teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment practices.

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the proportion of teachers who have positive and negative attitude towards continuous assessment practices?
2. To what extent does teacher's educational qualification determine their attitude towards continuous assessment practices?
3. To what extent does teacher years of teaching experience determine their attitude towards continuous assessment practices?
4. To what extent does gender determine teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment practice?

The following null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. The proportion of teachers who have positive and negative attitude towards continuous assessment practices do not differ significantly.

2. Teacher's educational qualification does not significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices.
3. Teachers years of teaching experience does not significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices.
4. Gender does not significantly determine teacher's attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

2. Method

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school teachers in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample of 391 (30% of the population) senior secondary school teachers was drawn from the population of 1302 SSS teachers (Source: State Ministry of Education, 2018) through proportionate stratified random sampling technique based on educational qualification, years of teaching experience and gender. An instrument titled Continuous Assessment Teachers' Attitude Scale (CATAS) which was developed by the researcher was used for data collection. The instrument had two sections of A and B. Section A was teachers' characteristics of educational qualification, years of teaching experience and gender. Section B had 20 items on teachers attitude towards continuous assessment practices which was developed in a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). These response options were weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively for positive items and 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively for negative items. The mean score of CATAS was used to determine positive and negative attitude respectively. Those teachers with the mean (\bar{x}) score of 50 and above are for positive attitude and those below mean (\bar{x}) score of 50 are for negative attitude. The CATAS was validated by experts in Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation based on face and construct validities. The reliability of the instrument (CATAS) was established through Cronbach Alpha technique and the reliability coefficient obtained was 0.78. Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while chi-square, t-test of independent mean and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level.

3. Results

The results are presented according to research questions and hypotheses.

In order to answer research question 1, data collected were used to determine the proportion of teachers who have positive and negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices. To achieve this, percentage was used to determine those with positive and negative attitude.

Table 1 reveals that 256 teachers representing 65% of the teachers had positive attitude toward continuous assessment practices while 135 teachers representing 35% of the teachers had negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices. This implies that teachers with

positive attitude toward continuous assessment practices are more than those with negative attitude.

Table 1. Distribution of teachers based on their continuous assessment practices attitude ratings.

Teachers' Attitude	Number	Percentage
Positive	256	65
Negative	135	35
Total	391	100

In order to test hypothesis 1 of no significant different in the proportion of teachers who have positive and negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices, chi-square analysis was used.

Table 2. Chi-square analysis of teachers' positive and negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

Teacher's attitude	O	E	df	Chi-cal	Chi-crit	Result
Positive	256	195.5	1	37.44	3.84	Significant
Negative	135	195.5				

Significant level = 0.05.

Table 2 shows that the calculated chi-value of 37.44 is greater than the critical chi-value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level with degree of freedom as 1, which supports the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, an alternate hypothesis was established which states that the proportion of teachers with positive and negative attitude respectively toward continuous assessment practices differ significantly in favour of the teachers with positive attitude.

In order to answer research question 2 and test hypothesis 2, data collected were used to determine the extent teachers' educational qualification influence their attitude toward continuous assessment practice. To achieve this, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 3. Mean ratings and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of educational qualification on teachers attitude toward continuous assessment practices

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD
NCE	65	66.08	6.43
B.Ed/B.Sc	237	67.55	7.53
M.Ed/M.Sc, Ph.D	89	65.29	8.60
Total	391	66.79	7.66

Analysis of Variance					
Source of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	369.091	2	184.546	3.177	0.043
Within group	22535.712	388	58.082		
Total	22904.803	390			

Table 3 reveals the mean (\bar{x}) scores of influence of educational qualification on teachers attitude toward continuous assessment practices. From the result, the teachers with NCE had a mean score of 66.08, those with B.Ed/BSc had mean (\bar{x}) score of 67.55 while teachers with M.Ed/MSc and Ph.D had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 65.29. Based on the mean (\bar{x}) scores, teachers with B.Ed/BSc

had the highest mean scores, followed by those with N.C.E. and lastly those with M.Ed/MSc and Ph.D.

When, result was subjected to one-way analysis of variance, an F-calculated value of 3.177 was obtained with a significant level of 0.043 which was less than the probability level of 0.05. Hence, a null hypothesis of no significant was rejected and the alternate accepted. Therefore, teachers' educational qualification significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

In order to answer research question 3 and test hypothesis 3, data collected were used to determine the extent teachers' years of teaching experience influence their attitude toward continuous assessment practices. To achieve this, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis.

Table 4. Mean ratings and analysis of variance (ANOVA) of years of teaching experience on teachers attitude toward continuous assessment practices

Group	N	\bar{x}	SD
1 – 10 yrs	168	66.19	6.24
11 – 20 yrs	135	67.84	8.88
21 yrs and above	88	65.40	8.59
Total	391	66.58	7.82

Analysis of Variance					
Source of variation	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	364.331	2	182.165	3.009	0.050
Within group	23488.718	388	60.538		
Total	23853.049	390			

Table 4 shows the mean (\bar{x}) scores of influence of teachers' years of teaching experience on their attitude toward continuous assessment practices. From the result, the teachers with 1-10 yrs of teaching experience had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 66.19, those with 11-20yrs experience had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 67.84 while those with 21yrs and above had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 65.40. Based on the mean (\bar{x}) scores, teachers with 11-20yrs teaching experience had the highest mean score, follow by those with 1-10yrs teaching experience and lastly those with 21yrs and above.

When, result was subjected to one-way analysis of variance, an F-calculated value of 3.009 was obtained with a significant level of 0.050 which was equal to the probability level of 0.05. Hence, a null hypothesis of no significant was rejected and the alternate accepted. Therefore, teachers' years of teaching experience significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

In order to answer research question 4, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question while t-test of independent mean was used to test the null hypothesis.

Table 5. Mean rating, standard deviation and t-test analysis of gender on teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	SD	df	T-cal	t-crit	Sig	Result
Male	188	66.31	6.22	389	.664	1.96	.507	Not significant
Female	203	66.83	9.06					

Table 5 indicates that male teachers had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 66.31 and a standard deviation of 6.22 while female teachers had a mean (\bar{x}) score of 66.83 and a standard deviation of 9.06 on their attitude toward continuous assessment practices. This shows that female teachers had more positive attitude toward continuous assessment practices than male teachers based on their mean (\bar{x}) scores. When the mean (\bar{x}) scores were subjected to t-test analysis, a calculated t-value of .664 was obtained. The result of the analysis reveals that t-calculated of .664 obtained was significant at .507 which was greater than the probability level of 0.05 and less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 alpha level and 389 degree of freedom. Based on this result, the null hypothesis was retained implying that gender does not significantly determine teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices.

4. Discussion of Findings

The result of the study reveals that the proportion of teachers with positive and negative attitude respectively toward continuous assessment practices differ significantly in favour of the teachers with positive attitude. This was revealed by the calculated chi (χ^2) value of 37.44 which was greater than the critical chi (χ^2) value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom of 1. The finding of this result is in line with Alufohai and Akinlosotu [12] who found out that teachers have positive attitude toward carrying out continuous assessment practices.

The result of this study also shows that educational qualification significantly determine teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices. This was revealed by an F-value of 3.177 which was significant at 0.043. The F-calculated of 3.177 was greater than the F-critical of 3.02. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Orluwene [15] who found out that qualification types of the teachers significantly influence the way secondary school teachers practice classroom related assessment activities. Also the finding is in line with Shandomo [16] who investigated on the relationship between demographic and attitudinal characteristics of primary school teachers and implementation of the continuous assessment in Swaziland and found out that least qualified teachers are implementing continuous assessment than their more highly qualified colleagues.

Again, the result indicates that teachers' years of teaching experience significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices. The mean (\bar{x}) scores of 66.19, 67.84 and 65.40 for 1-10yrs, 11-20yrs and 21yrs and above were respectively obtained. This reveals that teachers with 11-20yrs teaching experience had the highest mean score, followed by those with 1-10yrs and lastly those with 21yrs and above teaching experience. It also reveals that the F-calculated value of 3.009 was significant at 0.05 which was equal to the probability level of 0.05. This implies that teachers' years of teaching experience significantly determine their attitude toward continuous assessment practices. This result is similar to that of Yan and Cheng [17] who found out that primary

school teachers' years of teaching experience was a significant determinant in the attitude of teachers towards formative assessment. This result is not supported by Odili [18] who conducted study on Assessing secondary school teachers' competencies in continuous assessment skills in Delta State and found out that there was no significant difference between the teachers' with 0-10years experience and the teachers with 11 years and above experience of test construction and assessment outcomes.

Finally, the result reveals that gender does not significantly determine teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices. The mean (\bar{x}) scores of 66.31 and 66.83 for male and female teachers respectively, were obtained. When the mean (\bar{x}) scores were subjected to t-test analysis, a calculated t-value of .664 was obtained. This reveals that the t-calculated of .664 obtained was significant at .507 which was greater than the probability level of 0.05. This implies that gender does not significantly determine teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices. This result is in concordance with Alufohai and Akinlosotu [12] Adeneye, Awofala and Babajide [19] who found out that gender does not predict the attitude towards continuous assessment.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study, show that proportion of teachers with positive and negative attitude respectively toward continuous assessment practices differ significantly in favour of those with positive attitude. Also educational qualification and years of teaching experiences significantly determine teachers' attitude toward continuous assessment practices while gender does not.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following were recommended.

1. Those teachers with negative attitude toward continuous assessment practices should be enlightened more on the importance of continuous assessment in schools.
2. Only qualified teachers who have an idea of continuous assessment should be employed in the school system.
3. More experienced teachers should guide the less experienced teachers in administration of continuous assessment.

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