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**STUDENTS' NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AS CORRELATE OF THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NASARAWA STATE PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.**

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**Abstract**

*This study investigated students' negative attitude towards Continuous Assessment (CA) as correlate of academic performance in Nasarawa State public senior secondary schools. The study used a descriptive survey design. Both stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to obtained 380 students in public senior secondary schools who served as sample for the study. A structural instrument titled "students' Negative attitude towards CA as correlate of academic performance" (SNACACAP) was developed by the researchers. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The instrument was structured on a modified 4-point Likert-type scale. The instrument was validated by three lecturers in faculty of Education, Nasarawa State. A reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained using Pearson product moment correlation. The data were analysed using frequency count, mean scores, standard deviation and Pearson correlation to answer research questions and hypothesis. The findings of the study revealed the negative attitude towards CA among students' in school and its relationship with academic performance. It was therefore recommended that teachers should keep records properly for regular checking of student's performance and help them develop good habit of taking CA seriously.*

**Keywords:** *students Attitude, Negative, correlate, Continuous assessment, Academic performance.*

## Introduction

The essence of teaching is to bring quality learning which is often described as permanent positive change in behaviour with a utility value to the learner and to the society. But how do we determine whether learning has taken place. The public want to know whether the curriculum implemented has achieved its aims and objectives, teachers want to know whether what they are doing in the classroom is effective and the curriculum developer or planner wants to know how to improve the curriculum content. This takes us to curriculum evaluation. Curriculum evaluation could be the process of determining whether aims and objectives of a curriculum have been achieved.

Furthermore, curriculum evaluation is a process or cluster of processes that people perform in order to gather data that will enable them to decide whether to accept, change or eliminate something: the curriculum in general or an educational text book in particular (Danladi, 2006). According to Bathel and Hillary (2013), Curriculum evaluation is the formal determination of the quality, effectiveness or value of a programme, product, project, process, objectives and curriculum. In the same vein, Sowell (2000), noted that the aim of curriculum evaluation is to identify weakness and strengths as well as problems encountered in the implementation; to improve the curriculum process; to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and the return in finance allocation.

One of the landmarks in the Nigeria education system is the introduction of Continuous Assessment (CA) as an important component of curriculum evaluation will be liberalised by basing them in whole or in parts based on Continuous Assessment of the progress of the learner, Continuous Assessment is a process through which the quality of an individual's work or performance is judged (Nwabeza, 2010). According to Greany (2001), Continuous Assessment in schools refers to a system of Assessment which is carried out at predetermined interval for the purpose of monitoring teaching-learning, environment and improving the overall performance of the students (UBE, 2000). Obioma (2005) also pointed out that what is evident about continuous Assessment is that it is the opposite of an end of course, once and for all assessment of the learners. Continuous Assessment could be closely related to the specific objectives of instructions and is concerned with ensuring that one

step is taken before another as the system moves towards the attainment of overall long term objectives of an educational programme. Continuous Assessment goes beyond continuous testing but involves systematic observations and recording of the observable behaviour of the learner, with a view of determining the extent to which the objectives of a teaching programme are in the process of being attained and of taking appropriate action to improve teaching-learning situations, before things go really bad with respect to cognitive, affective, psychomotor learning outcomes (Awofola, 2013).

Continuous Assessment plays important role in improving students' learning (Obioma, 2005). It takes into account the learners or students and their performance through the entire period of schooling. An important aspect of Continuous Assessment is that it generates comprehensive data, for correcting students' deficiencies in learning and provision of appropriate guidance and counselling services to learners. It has the capacity to reduce threat and fear associated with one shot summative examination and encourages learners to develop good study habit as well as self-confidence (Nwabeza, 2010). All these could depend on the students' negative attitude towards Continuous Assessment. The way and manner students perceive Continuous Assessment would influence their academic performance. Some students may have negative attitude and they see Continuous Assessment as extra academic work which may translate into lack of interest and commitment in students' learning and hence poor performance. It is against this background that the researchers were motivated to embark on this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The aim of every educational programme is to help acquire a framework of knowledge and concepts that lead to the total development of the individuals. It is through the use of assessment that one establishes the extent to which educational goals have been attained. In fact, continuous Assessment has been introduced to measure, promote learning and improve students' performance. Continuous Assessment when effectively implemented can provide information necessary to serve the learning needs of the students.

Even through continuous Assessment is very crucial in terms of improving students' learning and academic performance. It is much disturbing that some

students may have negative attitude towards Continuous Assessment. They see Continuous Assessment as monotonous and increased burden of academic work, miss continuous assessment regularly without cogent reason, attend continuous assessment with less curiosity and preparedness, lack commitment and seriousness, answer Continuous Assessment questions haphazardly and to say the worst, absent themselves from school whenever continuous assessment is supposed to be conducted.

Continuous Assessment supposed to prepare the students for examination. Apart from contributing to the final grade or score, it provides the students with the opportunity to know their weakness and strengths, to know areas they should improve upon. All these may not be achieved if the students are uncommitted and uninterested in Continuous assessment. The performance of such students would have deteriorated overtime. It is worrisome to see students' going unperturbed about it. A problem like this is worthy of investigation because of its adverse influence on students' academic performance. From the above discourse, the problem of students' academic performance could be in the students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment which prompted the researchers to go into this study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed at investigating students' negative attitude towards Continuous Assessment as correlate of their academic performance in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools. Specifically, the study intended to:

1. Determine the students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools.
2. Determine the extent of the relationship between students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment and academic performance in Nasarawa state Public Senior Secondary Schools.

### **Research Questions**

To guide this study, the following research questions were framed:

1. What is the students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools?

2. What is the extent of the relationship between students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment and academic performance in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools?

### **Research Hypothesis**

For the purpose of this study, the hypothesis below was developed:

**HO:** There is no significant relationship between students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment and academic performance in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools.

### **Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey method was used to conduct the study since it enabled the researchers to gather information about the population of the study. The population of this study composed of 72,243 students from all Public Senior Secondary School in Nasarawa State, Nigeria. A sample of 380 students was used for the study based on Krajcic and Morgan Table for determination of sample size.

The researchers used both stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select the respondents. The stratified random sampling was used to group the Public Senior Secondary School into strata as Local Government Area (LGA). Subsequently, a simple random sampling was used to select one school each from the 12 Local Government Areas of the State and 350 students were randomly selected from the sampled schools. The instrument used for collecting data for this study was titled "Students Negative Attitude towards CA as correlate of Academic Performances (SNACACAP) was divided into sections: Section A contains demographic data and Section B has items on research questions. The items were structured using modified 4 points Likert-type rating scale with the following grading: strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. The mean score is 2.5 (4+3+2+1/4). To ascertain the validity of the instrument, it was given to three lecturers in Nasarawa State University to vet. They made corrections and suggestions which were taken into consideration. At the second look, the lecturers adjudged the instrument valid.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, it was pilot tested using 30 students. The split half method was adopted and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to compute the reliability of coefficient of the questionnaire and yielded a reliable coefficient of 0.71 which means that the instrument is reliable. The data collected were analyzed using mean scores, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The mean score were used to answer research questions when the mean score is 2.5 and above, it was accepted in explaining the phenomenon while mean score below 2.5 was adjudged weak and rejected in explaining phenomenon. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient.

## Results

**Research question 1:** What is the students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools?

**Table 1:** Students' Mean Responses on Negative Attitude towards CA

| S/N | Statements  | Mean | SD   | Decision |
|-----|---|------|------|----------|
| 1   | I perceive continuous assessment (CA) as to demanding which overburden me with various forms of assessment. | 2.80 | 0.95 | Accepted |
| 2.  | I perceive CA as being monotonous, receptive and tasking to me.   | 3.16 | 0.70 | Accepted |
| 3.  | I perceive CA as extra academic work which makes learning uninteresting.                                    | 2.67 | 0.94 | Accepted |
| 4.  | I perceive CA as boring and tedious to me.  | 2.72 | 1.00 | Accepted |
| 5.  | I don't like having CA regularly  | 3.45 | 0.62 | Accepted |
| 6.  | I sometimes miss CA   | 2.50 | 1.08 | Accepted |
| 7.  | My teachers always give impromptu CA especially test.   | 3.29 | 0.70 | Accepted |
| 8.  | I don't like teachers who conduct CA regularly.   | 3.48 | 0.62 | Accepted |

|                     |  |             |      |                 |
|---------------------|--|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 9.                  | I sometimes answer CA questions any how without curiosity and seriousness.   | 3.23        | 0.79 | Accepted        |
| 10.                 | I sometimes don't prepare adequately for CA.                                 | 3.30        | 0.70 | Accepted        |
| 11.                 | I sometimes lack commitment and dedication regarding CA.                     | 2.68        | 0.94 | Accepted        |
| 12.                 | CA sometimes discourages me from attending classes/lessons in school.        | 2.81        | 0.95 | Accepted        |
| 13.                 | CA contributes to my absenteeism in school.                                  | 2.66        | 1.06 | Accepted        |
| 14.                 | CA makes me unserious about academic work because it is too demanding of me. | 3.02        | 0.91 | Accepted        |
| 15.                 | CA makes me lazy especially group assignment or project work.                | 2.37        | 1.05 | Accepted        |
| <b>Overall Mean</b> |  | <b>2.94</b> |      | <b>Accepted</b> |

Table 1 presents mean and standard deviation scores on the responses of students on negative attitude towards continuous assessment in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools. The table revealed that all items were accepted irrespective of variations in standard deviation of the items for example I sometimes don't prepare adequately for CA, I sometimes lack commitment and dedication regarding CA, it sometimes discourages me from attending classes/lessons in school and CA makes me unserious about academic work because it is too demanding of me with mean values of 3.30, 2.68, 2.81 and 3.02 respectively that had their mean values above 2.50 and their standard deviation ranged between 0.70 and 1.06 which showed that their responses were far apart and were accepted. The overall grand mean of 2.94 was obtained which showed that students negative attitude towards continuous assessment in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools was high.

**Research question 2:** what is the extent of the relationship between students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment and academic performance in Nasarawa state public senior secondary Schools.

**Table 2:** Students' Mean Responses on extent of relationship between Negative Attitude toward CA and academic performance.

| S/N | Statements   | Mean        | SD   | Decision        |
|-----|--|-------------|------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Missing or irregular writing reduces my academic performance in school.  | 3.16        | 0.79 | Accepted        |
| 2.  | Inadequate preparation for CA by me decreases my academic performance in school.                               | 2.67        | 0.94 | Accepted        |
| 3.  | Lack of interest in CA reduces my academic performance in school.  | 2.72        | 1.00 | Accepted        |
| 4.  | Perceiving CA as being monotonous and tasking reduces my academic performance in school.                       | 3.45        | 0.62 | Accepted        |
| 5.  | Perceiving CA as extra-academic work prevents me from having good academic performance in school.              | 2.55        | 1.08 | Accepted        |
| 6.  | Answering CA questions anyhow without curiosity and preparedness leads to poor academic performance in school. | 3.29        | 0.70 | Accepted        |
| 7.  | Lack of commitment and dedication leads to poor academic performance in school.                                | 3.48        | 0.62 | Accepted        |
| 8.  | Perceiving CA as being boring reduces my chances of having good academic performances.                         | 3.23        | 0.79 | Accepted        |
| 9.  | Perceiving CA as too demanding prevents me from having good grades in school.                                  | 2.93        | 1.07 | Accepted        |
| 10. | Perceiving CA a being tedious which overburdens me with academic work reduces my performance in school.        | 3.30        | 0.70 | Accepted        |
|     | <b>Overall Mean</b>  | <b>3.08</b> |      | <b>Accepted</b> |



Table 2 presents mean and standard deviation scores on the responses of students on the extent of relationship between negative attitude towards CA and academic performances in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools. The table revealed that all items were accepted irrespective of variations in standard deviation. The items had their mean values above 2.50 and their standard deviation ranged between 0.62 and 1.07 which showed that their responses were far apart and was accepted. The overall grand mean of 3.08 was obtained which indicated that the extent of relationship between students' negative attitude towards CA and academic performance was high.

**Testing of hypothesis:**

**HO:** There is no significant relationship between students' negative attitude towards CA and academic performance in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools.

**Table 3:** Person Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on relationship between students' negative attitude and academic performance.

|                            | N   | Mean    | SD      | Corr.<br>Index | Critical<br>r | DF  | R    | Dec.<br>Rule |
|----------------------------|-----|---------|---------|----------------|---------------|-----|------|--------------|
| Students negative attitude | 380 | 228.145 | 27.0678 |                |               |     |      |              |
| Academic Performance       | 380 | 31.454  | 5.982   | .841**         | .185          | 378 | .000 |              |

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

According to the outcome of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Statistics in Table 3, significant relationship exists between students' negative attitude toward CA and academic performance. Reason being that the calculated correlation index value of -841\*\* is higher than the critical r value of -185, while the calculated level of significant (e) value 0.01 is less or equal to 01 level of tolerance: hence the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. Therefore strong relationship exist between students' negative attitude and their academic performance in Nasarawa State Public Senior Secondary Schools.

## Discussion

The study investigated students' negative attitude towards continuous assessment as correlate of their academic performance, the result of the analysed data in Table 1 revealed that students' have high negative attitude towards CA. the findings also confirmed that students perceived CA as too demanding, boring, monotonous, tasking, uninteresting, tasking and tedious because it overburden them with extra academic work. This is in line with the finding of Zakhe (2007) which indicated that CA overburden learners with extra academic work. As such they don't like having CA and teachers who conduct it regularly, they answer CA questions without curiosity and preparedness. The study also revealed that this kind of students lacked commitment and dedication regarding CA and often missed it or even absent themselves from the school without cogent reason about CA.

The result presented in Table 2 of the study showed that the extent of relationship between students' negative attitude towards CA and academic performance was high as its overall mean stood at 3.08 which is above the criterion of 2.50. As such the findings confirmed that missing or irregular writing of CA, inadequate CA preparation and lack of interest in CA, among student reduced their academic performance in school. The findings also confirmed that students' perception of CA as being extra academic work, boring, burdensome and too demanding reduced their chances of having good academic performance in school. The result of the findings further indicated that lack of commitment and dedication by answering CA questions any how without curiosity and preparedness led to poor academic performance of students in school.

## Conclusion

This study investigated students' negative attitude towards CA as correlate of academic performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools. The result of the study has provided empirical proof that students had some negative attitudes towards CA. it is also evident based on the findings that strong relationship exist between students' negative attitude towards CA and academic performance. Therefore frantic efforts must be done to curb the negative attitude regarding CA among students because of its adverse effect on academic performance.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in order to curb students' negative attitude towards CA and ensuring improved academic performance in school.

- i. Teachers should keep CA records properly to identify low performance, find it causes and solution through interaction with students.
- ii. Teachers should also check students CA records regularly to find out truant students and punish them.
- iii. Teachers should always find out why students' miss CA or dislike it and endeavour to give make up CA as well.
- iv. Teachers should help students' develop the habit of taking CA seriously by giving CA regularly, mark scripts promptly and give immediate feedback to students'.
- v. Principals should liaise with teachers to curb the negative attitude towards CA among students by organizing orientation programmes for them to emphasize its importance in improving learning and hence academic performance.
- vi. School authorities should play a supervisory role over the activities of teachers to ensure that CA records are properly documented and kept.
- vii. Parents/Guardians should also check regularly their children CA books at home or visit them in school to find out their performance in CA and take appropriate actions where necessary.

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