



INFLUENCE OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of continuous assessment on teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. To achieve the aims of the study, two research questions were asked and two corresponding hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the correlation research design. The population of the study is 94,963 students in 296 public senior secondary schools in Imo State. A sample of 398 students was drawn from 15 selected schools through Taro Yamane using simple random sampling technique. Two researcher-made rating scales titled “Continuous Assessment Scale (CAS)” and “Teaching and Learning Process Scale (TLPS)” were used as instruments for data collection. These instruments were validated by three research specialists. Reliability coefficients of 0.81 for CAS and 0.85 for TLPS were obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) while the hypotheses were tested using t-test of the significance of Pearson “r”. The results revealed that continuous assessment has a high, positive and significant coefficient of relationship with students’ learning outcomes and attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. It was concluded that continuous assessment as a crucial tool for enhancing student learning outcomes and attitudes provides regular feedback that informs instruction and motivates students to learn. Based on these results, it was recommended among others that teachers should prioritize regular, well-designed continuous assessments in order to provide actionable feedback to students and inform teaching practices, helping to boost learning outcomes.

Keywords: Continuous assessment, Secondary education, Students’ attitude, Students’ learning outcome, Teaching and learning process.

Introduction

The fundamental objective of education across both developed and developing economies remains the holistic refinement of humanity and the enhancement of individual productivity. It is commonsensical to state that the true measure of any educational system is the tangible quality of knowledge internalized by the learner rather than the mere completion of a syllabus. Students may spend countless hours in laboratories and libraries, yet this exertion is futile without profitable assimilation that proves that actual learning has occurred. Okoro and Danjuma (2024) argue that even when teachers maintain perfect attendance and utilize modern instructional materials, their efforts are incomplete without verifying the students' cognitive gains. This challenge is particularly evident in Nigerian secondary schools, where pedagogical input does not always equate to successful student output. Bello (2025) emphasizes that the hallmark of the entire educational process is the specific volume of learning that truly takes root within the student's mind. Since educators and administrators lack mystical means to gauge intellectual growth, they must rely on structured, objective tools to determine success. Therefore, effective assessment remains the only reliable mechanism for accurately rating and ascertaining the learning progression of individual student.

Continuous Assessment (CA) involves regularly collecting and recording students' scores or grades throughout a course, which are then combined to determine a final grade. According to Fareo (2020), this process allows teachers to track student progress over time and calculate a cumulative score at the end of the course. According to Oguejiofor et al., (2023), continuous assessment is a comprehensive evaluation process that considers a student's overall performance in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains throughout their schooling period, systematically incorporating these assessments into their final grading. Continuous assessment evaluates students' behaviour in three key domains - cognitive, affective, and psychomotor - to determine their progress after instruction and provide valuable feedback for improving teaching and learning. Mahmud and Adamu (2021) assert that continuous assessment is an educational assessment approach that involves regular and systematic evaluation of student learning, often using a range of assessment tools and techniques. The goal of continuous assessment is to comprehensively evaluate students' behaviour across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. According to Adinna et al., (2021), this is achieved through regular use of diverse assessment tools, such as tests, projects, interviews, and checklists, to gather information about students' behaviour and make informed judgments. Olagunju (2018) posits that continuous assessment is an evaluation approach that measures student achievement across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through diverse assessment tools, including tests, assignments, quizzes, and participation in class and lab activities, to provide effective teaching and learning process.

Teaching and learning process is a multifaceted interaction aimed at the holistic development of the individual and the advancement of national human capital. According to Adewale (2025), this process is not merely the transmission of facts but a structured engagement where the teacher facilitates the internalisation of values and skills. In the contemporary Nigerian classroom, the shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred pedagogy has become essential for fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities that helps to improve students' learning outcome, attitudes and experiences. Okonjo and Bakare (2025) argue that effective learning occurs only when instructional strategies are aligned with the cultural and cognitive realities of the Nigerian student. Furthermore, the integration of locally relevant instructional materials ensures that abstract concepts become tangible and easily assimilated by learners at the secondary level. Bello (2025) emphasizes that the "hallmark" of this entire pedagogical cycle is the measurable change in the learner's behaviour and intellectual capacity. To achieve this, teachers must move beyond mere attendance and focus on the quality of engagement and the profitable assimilation of knowledge. Nwachukwu (2024) observes that the success of the teaching process is heavily dependent on the teacher's ability to utilize diverse assessment tools that provide immediate feedback for the purpose of improving teachers' effectiveness, student engagement, motivation, understanding, adaptive teaching and remedial support. The variables for teaching and learning process considered in this study are students' learning outcome and attitude.

Students' learning outcomes represent the essential feedback and behavioural benchmarks expected of students following a specific educational phase, even though some may develop negative attitudes after enduring years of high-pressure study at prestigious institutions. According to Maclean (2022), these outcomes are best defined as the observable changes in a learner's behaviour and knowledge following rigorous and thorough institutional instruction. Implementing continuous assessment fosters a healthy sense of competition as students strive for excellence across various classroom activities ranging from quizzes to special projects. These evaluative tools serve as vital stimuli that encourage students to take ownership of their education, which significantly boosts morale and cultivates a deeper passion for academic rigor. Oluwatobi (2023) asserts that such varied assessments are not merely evaluative hurdles but are fundamental drivers that actively promote and solidify the learning process itself. A study by Agi and Oteyi (2021) investigated the relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcome in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria and revealed that there is a significant relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcome in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly, Ezeka, Bankong and Ayozie-Samuel (2024) examined the effect of continuous assessment on student's academic achievement in economics in public secondary schools in Owerri municipal council of Imo State and found that continuous assessment provides a more valid and reliable assessment and provides a more valid and reliable assessment of the learners' overall ability and performance. It provides a basis for monitoring a child's problems for effective guidance.

A student's attitude toward learning is a complex psychological disposition that encompasses their beliefs, emotions, and overall engagement throughout the process of acquiring new skills. A positive orientation is characterized by a growth mindset and persistence, whereas negative attitudes often manifest as academic apathy or the active avoidance of challenging tasks. Okonjo and Adeyemi (2025) opine that these internal dispositions significantly influence a learner's behaviour and their willingness to seek help during difficult educational transitions. To mitigate these challenges, continuous assessment serves as a strategic intervention that reduces test-related anxiety and creates a more supportive classroom atmosphere. Nwachukwu (2025) observes that breaking down evaluations into smaller, manageable units allows students to view their academic journey with increased enthusiasm rather than fear. This ongoing evaluative approach recontextualizes mistakes as valuable learning experiences, fostering a resilient mindset among the youth. In a related study, Umeji (2025) explored the impact of continuous assessment on primary education students' attitude towards learning in Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State, Nigeria and revealed that CA has a positive impact on students' attitudes by offering regular feedback, fostering self-awareness, and reducing test anxiety. Similarly, Faleye and Adefisoye (2016) investigated the frequency of method of administering Continuous Assessment (CA) by teachers and students' attitudinal behaviour in Osun State secondary schools found that 44.4% of the teachers who participated in the study conducted CA fortnightly which improved 86.7% of the students' positive attitude.

In teaching and learning process, the usefulness of continuous assessment cannot be overemphasized. When students are certain that their teacher will promptly grade and return every assessment task, they develop a heightened sense of accountability and trust in the pedagogical process. The reliability of feedback acts as a practical reinforcement that directly improves the learning experience by validating the effort a student invests in their studies because once learners realize that every quiz, assignment, and class project carries weight in their final evaluation, their attitude toward learning shifts from passive compliance to active engagement. Thus, several studies conducted were centred on continuous assessment guidelines and its usefulness in teaching and learning of secondary schools' subjects (Adinna et al., 2021; Okonjo & Adeyemi, 2025; Nwachukwu, 2025; Oguejiofor et al., 2023; Okoro & Danjuma, 2024) but no study has been conducted to the best knowledge of the researcher on whether there is a relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcome and their attitude. Thus, there is an urgent need to bridge the gap by investigating the influence of continuous assessment on teaching and learning processes in secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching and learning process in Imo State secondary schools is plagued by issues like inadequate infrastructure, poor teacher-student ratios, and ineffective assessment practices, leading to declining learning outcomes and student attitudinal problems. Continuous assessment, meant to enhance learning, is often superficial, lacking timely feedback and failing to inform instruction. These problems have contributed to students' poor academic performance and negative attitudes towards school. Despite efforts like teacher workshops and curriculum revisions, these issues persist. If unaddressed, they will likely lead to further decline in educational quality, limiting students' future opportunities. The persistence of these issues could also undermine the credibility of the education system. Effective continuous assessment can turn this tide by guiding teaching and boosting student motivation. There's a pressing need to revamp assessment practices, support teachers, and prioritize student-centred learning to improve outcomes. This study is therefore put in question form, what is the relationship between continuous assessment and teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Imo State? Providing answer to the question becomes the thrust of this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What is the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?
2. What is the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance;

Ho₁: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Ho₂: The coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State is not significant.

Method

The study adopted the correlation research design. The rationale of adopting this design is to establish the relationship between the variables of this study. The area of the study is the 6 educational zones in Imo State. The population of the study is 94,963 students in 296 public senior secondary schools in Imo State (Source: Imo State Secondary Education Management Board, 2025). A sample of 398 students was drawn from 15 selected schools in the study area using Taro Yamane. This formula was used in order to determine a sample from large population. The sample size was drawn using simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling was used to choose the required respondents according to their strength using balloting without replacement so as to give every student an equal chance of being selected for the study. Two researcher's made rating scales titled "Continuous Assessment Scale (CAS) and Teaching and Learning Process Scale (TLPS) were used as instruments for data collection. The scales contained 15 items for CAS and 20 items for TLPS using the 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD). These instruments were validated by 1 research specialist from Educational Measurement and Evaluation and 2 research specialists from Department of Life Science Education, all in Imo State University, Owerri. Reliability coefficients of 0.81 for CAS and 0.85 for TLPS were obtained using Cronbach Alpha statistics. The researchers with the aid of five research assistants administered 398 copies of the instruments to the sampled respondents on-the-spot which birthed the 100 per cent retrieval rate and this number was found suitable for the analysis. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) while the hypotheses were tested using t-test of the significance of Pearson "r" at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Research Question One: What is the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 1: Pearson “r” statistics used for the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools

V	n	Σ	R	r^2	DR	Remarks
Continuous assessment	398	11084	0.65	42.25%	Positive	High
Students’ learning outcome	398	12302				Positive Relationship

Independent variable (V), Dependent Variable (Y), Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson (r), Proportion of Variance (r^2), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

Data in Table 1 presents the Pearson “r” statistics used for the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools. The Table shows that the calculated coefficient of relationship is 0.65, which indicates that the magnitude of the relationship is high while the direction is positive indicating that approximately 42.25% ($r^2 = 0.4225$) of the variation in students’ learning outcomes can be attributed to continuous assessment. This suggests that while continuous assessment is a significant factor, other variables also play a role in influencing students’ learning outcomes. Therefore, the answer to the above question reveals a high and positive coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Table 2: t-test of significance of Pearson “r” statistics used to test the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools

V	N	Σ	R	α	Df	t _{cal}	t _{tab}	Decision
Continuous assessment	398	11084	0.65	0.05	396	16.570	1.96	Reject Ho ₁
Students’ learning outcome	398	12302						

Independent variable (V), Dependent Variable (Y), Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Pearson ‘r’ statistics between two Variables

Data on Table 2 shows the result for the test of the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools. The calculated t-value of 16.570 exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level of significance, with 396 degrees of freedom stating that the null hypothesis one is rejected. The result therefore concluded that there is a significant coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Research Question Two: What is the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State?

Table 3: Pearson “r” statistics used for the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools

V	n	Σ	R	r^2	DR	Remarks
Continuous assessment	398	7361	0.67	44.89%	Positive	High
Students’ attitude	398	12302				Positive Relationship

Independent variable (V), Dependent Variable (Y), Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson (r), Proportion of Variance (r^2), Direction of Relationship (DR) and Remarks

In Table 3, the data presents the Pearson “r” statistics used for the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools. The Table shows that the calculated coefficient of relationship is 0.67, which indicates that the magnitude of the relationship is high while the direction is positive indicating that approximately 44.89% ($r^2 = 0.4489$) of the variation in students’ attitude can be attributed to continuous assessment. This suggests that while continuous assessment is a significant factor, other variables also play a role in influencing students’ attitude. Therefore, the answer to the above question reveals a high and positive coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: The coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State is not significant.

Table 4: t-test of significance of Pearson “r” statistics used to test the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools

V	n	Σ	R	α	Df	t_{cal}	t_{tab}	Decision
Continuous assessment	398	7361	0.67	0.05	396	17.349	1.96	Reject Ho ₂
Students’ attitude	398	12302						

Independent variable (V), Dependent Variable (Y), Sample Size (n), Summation (Σ), Pearson (r), Alpha Level (α), Degree of Freedom (df) and t-test of Significance of Pearson “r” statistics between two Variables.

Data on Table 4 shows the result for the test of the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude in public senior secondary schools. The calculated t-value of 17.349 exceeds the critical t-value of 1.96, indicating a statistically significant relationship at the 0.05 level of significance, with 396 degrees of freedom stating that the null hypothesis two is rejected. The result therefore concluded that the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ attitude is significant in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The result revealed that there is a high and positive coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students’ learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The high and positive relationship is a proof that effective assessment practices are linked to better academic performance. As continuous assessment improves, student outcomes tend to increase, indicating a potential causal relationship. This means schools focusing on robust, informative assessments likely see improved student achievement. Effective continuous assessment enhances learning by providing timely feedback and guiding instruction. The result further established that there

is a significant coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcomes in public senior secondary schools in Imo State. The results agree with Agi and Oteyi (2021) who found that there is a significant relationship between continuous assessment and students' learning outcome in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Similarly, Ezeka, Bankong and Ayozie-Samuel (2024) found that continuous assessment provides a more valid and reliable assessment and provides a more valid and reliable assessment of the learners' overall ability and performance. It provides a basis for monitoring a child's problems for effective guidance. The result strengthened the fact that continuous assessment improves students' learning outcomes by providing regular feedback that guides instruction and motivates learning. For example, a math teacher gives weekly quizzes, using the results to identify struggling students and offer targeted support. This helps students address gaps before exams, boosting understanding and grades. Regular assessments also encourage students to keep up with coursework, reducing cramming and stress. Continuous assessment enhances learning and achievement by informing teaching and engaging students.

The result also revealed that there is a high and positive coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' attitude in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The result is a proof that effective continuous assessment practices are associated with improved student attitudes in Imo State public senior secondary schools. As assessment practices improve, students tend to develop more positive attitudes towards learning. This implies assessments are likely engaging students and boosting motivation. Positive attitudes can lead to better engagement and academic performance. The result further buttressed that the coefficient of relationship between continuous assessment and students' attitude is significant in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. In line with the results of this study, Umeji (2025) found that CA has a positive impact on students' attitudes by offering regular feedback, fostering self-awareness, and reducing test anxiety. Similarly, Faleye and Adefisoye (2016) found that 44.4% of the teachers who participated in the study conducted CA fortnightly which improved 86.7% of the students' positive attitude. The result strengthened the fact that continuous assessment improves students' attitudes by making learning more engaging and interactive. For example, a teacher uses regular quizzes and class projects to assess student progress, providing feedback and recognition. This approach motivates students to participate actively in class, boosting their confidence and interest. Regular assessments also help students track their progress, encouraging a growth mindset. Continuous assessment fosters positive attitudes towards school by making learning more dynamic and feedback-driven, continuous assessment fosters positive attitudes towards classroom activities in public senior secondary schools in Imo State.

Conclusion

Continuous assessment is a crucial tool for enhancing student learning outcomes and attitudes. It provides regular feedback that informs instruction and motivates students to learn. Effective assessments help teachers identify areas where students need support. Students benefit from timely feedback that guides their learning. The study shows a strong link between assessment practices and improved students' learning outcomes and a positive attitudinal change towards their classroom activities. Continuous assessment fosters a positive learning environment when implemented effectively. This approach has the potential to transform teaching and learning in Imo State schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;

Teachers should prioritize regular, well-designed continuous assessments in order to provide actionable feedback to students and inform teaching practices, helping to boost learning outcomes.

Teachers should leverage continuous assessment to foster positive student attitudes by making assessments more engaging, feedback-driven, and focused on individual progress in order to promote a growth mindset and love for learning.

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