

The Influence of Economic Teachers Attitude towards the Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Economics in Secondary Schools in the North West Region of Cameroon

Mbong Mary Wallang¹, Dr Agborbechem Peter Tambi²

¹The University of Yaoundé 1, Centre Region, The Republic of Cameroon, Central Africa

²University of Buea, South West Region, The Republic of Cameroon, Central Africa

ABSTRACT

This paper sought to investigate “*The Influence of Economic Teachers attitude towards the Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Economics in Secondary Schools in the North West Region of Cameroon*”. A descriptive survey was considered suitable for this study. 77 economics teachers in the North West region were considered as population for the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to recruit respondents from the seven divisions in the North West region who answered the questionnaire. A Pearson Product moment Correlation coefficient and a regression analysis was the parametric statistical test to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment has an effect on its implementation. The researcher recommended that teachers should act as role models within their respective responsibilities.

Keywords: school environment, implementation, teachers’ attitudes and continuous assessment

How to cite this paper: Mbong Mary Wallang | Dr Agborbechem Peter Tambi “The Influence of Economic Teachers Attitude towards the Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Economics in Secondary Schools in the North West Region of Cameroon” Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-4 | Issue-5, August 2020, pp.26-36, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd31732.pdf



Copyright © 2020 by author(s) and International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development Journal. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>)



INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation for optimal utilization of resources through the development of human capital. To achieve effective educational goals in a country assessment, especially continuous assessment, is necessary. Assessment consists, essentially, of obtaining information of what students do and how they do it as well as making inferences and estimating the worth of their actions. The fundamental role of assessment is to provide authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning, instructional practice and educational options. Continuous assessment can be seen as a means of carrying out an evaluation formally and informally within the classroom, and at the same time make valid judgments about a given student’s progress within a particular subject area.

Continuous assessment occurs on a regular and continuous basis, it is an ongoing formative and summative process, which involves the monitoring of students and is integrated with teaching. Continuous assessment also involves a systematic collection of marks or grades into a final score which may be used to determine the candidates’ final grades and which reflect students’ abilities over a period of time. Continuous assessment as well allows for improvement, the taking care of students’ learning in the

three domains of educational objectives, and is a cumulative process.

Continuous assessment is a factor to assure education quality in colleges and universities. The teaching learning process of the secondary educational sector needs assessment in order to ensure qualitative learning and bring changes on students’ performance. Therefore, continuous assessment needs careful implementation in order to sustain quality of education and mould effective citizens all over the country. The process of continuous assessment is not only examination of student achievement but also is a powerful diagnostic tool that enables students to understand the areas in which they are having difficulty and to concentrate their efforts in those areas and it allows teachers to monitor the impact of their lessons on student understanding and modify their pedagogical strategies

Effective school based continuous assessment can be an answer in eliminating the element of risk associated with a single examination, and providing authentic and meaningful feedback for improving student learning and hence giving a valid indication of student achievement. Of course, assessment in education is a challenge for students

as well as for teachers. Moreover, continuous assessment is a demanding task that requires the use of various assessment tools in order to assure the achievement of curricular objectives by each and every student.

BACKGROUND

Assessment practices in the late 1990s began to experience a new dimension as the results of giving teachers the authority to determine the appropriate time to implement continuous assessment to students were imaginatively believed to be taking a downward turn. According to the power that be, it seemed many charlatans and quack teachers had entered the profession, so the confidence given to the teachers by Higher education authorities was being abused. With such suspicious beliefs, the Higher education authorities had to step in to start programming when assessment should be conducted.

The principals and head teachers were then given the mandate to determine the time during which assessment had to take place for each term. Hence the principal had the duty of summoning a staff meeting each term during which he/she would announce the week in which assessment would take place. In some cases the school authority would at the beginning of each school year, come out with a calendar of activities for his/her school in which the periods for such assessment would be clearly included. During the week of assessment each teacher would have to construct a test and administer to the students during his/her periods. That is, the duration of a test had to equal to, or less than the duration for a normal lesson; 30 to 40 minutes in the secondary school. It is worth noting that different schools do their assessment at different times convenient to them. One of such tests per subject per class could be enough for the term, adding to the end-of-term examination that were to be written.

Assessment in the early 2000, equally experienced, and it is still experiencing another innovation, with the official signing of a text on assessment practices by the Cameroon ministers of both basic and secondary education, introducing what is now commonly referred to as 'Sequences'. In the present dispensation, the teachers' powers to use their initiative and the authority of the school heads to determine when to conduct assessment during the term have totally be submerged by ministerial text. According to the ministerial text,

Article 5, the school year shall comprise of six (6) sequences for the total of thirty-six (36) weeks.

Article 6, the sequences mentioned in article 5 above are broken down as follows;

- 1st sequence from Monday 5th September to Friday 14th September
- 2nd sequence from Monday 17th October to Friday 25th.
- 3rd sequence from Monday 28th November to Friday 13th December
- 4th sequence Monday 23th January to 3th February
- 5th sequence Monday 5th of March to Friday 30th March
- 6th sequence Monday 30th April to 12th of May.
- Article 7, each sequence shall be
- Devoted to teaching, evaluation, marking and remediation classes in all educational establishment.

- The school administration shall during each sequence, ensure the proper conduct of teaching, the organisation of harmonised tests for classes of the same level and the preparation of end of sequence progress reports.
- Assessment shall be organised during sequences and under no circumstances shall they lead to causal holidays for pupils and students.

The text fixes the time for sequence (continuous assessment to be the sixth week following every five weeks of teaching or schooling.

During the week prior to the assessment week, teachers construct their test items and forward to the school administration, and the school administration comes out with a schedule of when the subjects will be written. In the assessment week, the test is administered following the schedule drawn by the school administration. In the next two weeks following the assessment week, the teacher the duty to score the tests and report the performance of students for the sequence. There are six sequences in an academic year, distributed equally to the three terms of school year. The performance of students during the first sequence is reported independently, with report cards being issued. When the second sequence (continuous assessment) are conducted and scored, the scores of the students are combined (50-50) with those of the sequence to determine and report the students' performance for the term. However, economics teachers of secondary schools are allowed to give take-home assignments to students which can be done, corrected and their scores taken to form part of the scores for sequence. Such assignment if considered usually account for 30 to 40% of the term's scores.

However, one of the expected advantages of continuous assessment lies in its being guidance oriented. The importance of continuous assessment is not only pedagogic functions, i.e. 'to provide students with feedback', 'to meet the learning outcomes' and 'to motivate students to study' but also it provide academics with more control over the assessment within the classroom rather than leaving it in the hands of the central system. Continuous assessment has the potential to support student learning through feedback and to increase students' motivation for learning. This could play a vital role in diagnosing and remediating areas of learners' weakness if properly anchored in what occurs in classroom. In order to produce feedback that is relevant and informative and meets students' needs, teachers themselves need good data about how students are progressing.

The disadvantage of continuous assessment is teacher overdependence on measuring students' progress in the cognitive domain in a school-based assessment with total neglect of the affective and psychomotor domains of learning. This problem is more serious in the higher or tertiary institutions where little or no effort is made to assess the students' affective domain of behaviour.

The school environment, which includes the classroom, school location, school facility, school climate and technology etc. is a variable that affects the implementation of continuous assessment. Hence the school environment

remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance proper implementation of continuous assessment in secondary schools in North West region. The extent to which students' learning could be enhanced depends on teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment, classroom environment, the manageability of class size, and the school location/site. It is believed that a well-planned school will gear up expected outcome of education that will facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation, effective teaching learning process and academic performance of the students.

Schools are established for the purpose of teaching and learning. In order to ascertain whether or not learning has taken place, teachers try to evaluate learners. This process of evaluating learners is what is commonly known as assessment. It is the process by which a teacher collects data about the outcomes of his/her teaching and uses the outcomes for further improvement. It is a procedure usually undertaken by a teacher to find out whether students have learnt what they are expected to learn and the extent to which behavioural objectives have been attained.

Hence, continuous assessment has become the mode of evaluating students' learning outcome in schools.

Continuous assessment is a method of evaluating the progress and achievement of learners in educational institutions with the aim of getting the true possible picture of each learner's ability and helping each to develop his/her abilities to the fullest. Okonkwo (2002) defines it "as a method of evaluation in which learners' achievement in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains from the moment they become learners until the end of it, are determined using scores obtained from various instruments and techniques such as test, projects, rating scale, checklist, observation, interviews and other possible techniques". Hence, it is a mechanism whereby the final grading of the learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling.

This is aimed at finding out what a learner has gained from learning activities in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Continuous assessment is opposed to the concept of a 'one-shot' assessment; or an evaluation in the form of an 'end-of-term' examination. It is a series of continuously updated measurements and judgments by a teacher on students' attainments which may be based on weekly tests, homework, projects and other various sources applied during class instruction to obtain the overall score for a given period. From the foregoing, a federal committee (held in Nigeria) headed by Professor Yoyoye on continuous assessment described traditional assessment method as "a type which is usually external or internally administered and which relies very heavily on testing or examining towards the tail end of an educational programme and takes account of mostly knowledge of students" (Odelola, 2005). This implies that this method was generally based on the result of an end of year examination which is used for making decisions on the student. Thus, the need for a new system of assessment and evaluation was strongly advocated. A more valid and reliable method of evaluation was the continuous assessment which was introduced in Nigeria school system in 1985 (Odelola, 2005). Among its numerous advantages

over the traditional one-shot examination, is the fact that it is systematic, comprehensive, cumulative and guidance-oriented in nature.

Continuous assessment (CA) is systematic in the sense that it is planned to suite the age and experience of the children and is introduced at suitable intervals during the school year. Appropriate timing saves learners from being tested to 'death' or becoming bored with too frequent assessments. Comprehensiveness of continuous assessment means that it is not focused on cognition or academic skills alone, but embraces the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains by which a learner is assessed as a total entity using all the psychometric devices such as test and non-test techniques. Cumulative characteristic of continuous assessment implies that all information gathered on the individual has to be taken holistically before a decision can be taken while the guidance-oriented nature of CAs means that information gleaned from learners, could be used for decision making on the child; based on his/her educational, vocational and socio-personal needs. Hence, the provision of feedback to teachers, school administrators, parents and significant others on learner' outcome and change in behaviour. Such feedback provides information that is used for purposes of improving the child's performance or modifying the content, context and methods of teaching, as well as in making a variety of other decisions.

For a teacher to ensure desirable changes in a learners' behaviour by the end of a lesson, school term or year, there has to be a way of ensuring changes at each step of the process that adds up to the observable terminal desirable changes. This is done to take stock of observed progress or non-progress of learners; and determine the next appropriate step to encourage and maximize learning. In this case, learning or changes in behaviour is continuous, progressive and cumulative. Consequently, it does not take place only at the end of a term or year, but during each minute of every lesson (if possible). Thus, for the teaching-learning process to be effective, the collection of data on a cumulative and continuous basis is a 'must-do' for teachers.

Data collected by teachers during assessment is obtained from a wide range of sources; weekly, fortnightly and termly, are drawn from the three main domains of learning cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Marcus, 2008). Although, this alternative to the traditional one-shot assessment is highly encouraged by the government with all enthusiasm; however, its implementation has been a bane of challenge among teachers and significant others in schools. Observation has shown that teachers, who are the implementers of the curriculum at the classroom level, seem to have little or no knowledge about what continuous assessment as a: systematic (periodic), progressive (comprehensive), cumulative and guidance-oriented system.

One of the factors that influence the effective implementation of continuous assessment is location/site of the school. This is so because in a situation whereby the school is sited in a noisy area like airport or in the heart of a city like Douala and Yaoundé, where activities disrupt the teaching/learning of the students, for example in Yaoundé when any head of state is visiting or leaving Cameroon, students are order to go and welcome or see off the head of state. What if continuous assessment was planned for that

day? One will not expect students in these areas to perform well and the teachers are discouraged to administer the continuous assessment because the environment is not conducive. Onukwo (2004/2005) agrees that a conducive environment enhances a child's growth and development. Children feel happy in a peaceful and friendly environment where as schools sited in noisy urban streets are associated with deficits in mental concentration leading to student's poor performance. Noise is anything that interferes with teaching/learning process. Noise produces influence on children's information processing strategies, feelings of personal control as well as their level of arousal

According to Akande (1995), learning can occur through one's interaction with one's environment. Environment here, also refers to classroom environment facilities that are available to facilitate students learning outcome. These includes books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology; also sitting position and arrangement, availability of tables, chairs, chalkboards, shelves on which instruments for practical are arranged (Farrant, 1991 and Farombi, 1998). Tsavga (2011) maintains that the learning environment plays a vital role for the classroom form a very crucial part of the school environment, as no meaningful learning can take place where no classrooms exist. Class arrangement affects the effective implementation of assessment in the ability for students to focus without distractions, if desks are in rows or close to each other, any movement or noise can cause a student to lose focus. It is difficult to concentrate or get any work done if we are too hot or too cold, same is true for students in secondary school classroom particularly during assessment, because testing environment require students to remain in the position for long periods of time. Distraction during assessment, students cannot keep their minds on the materials because of some typical daily noises like bells, children selling things around the halls, other students passing through the corridors, invigilators making announcement, in and out movement the room, this can throw the examinees off track. It is the hub of every learning interaction between the teacher and students. According to (Oriere, 2007), the teaching learning process takes place mostly in the classrooms. Classroom lighting plays a particularly critical role in student performance (Philips, 1997). Obviously, students cannot study unless lighting is adequate, and there have been many studies reporting optimal lighting levels. Tanner (2009) cites results of seventeen studies from the mid-1930s to 1997. The consensus of these studies is that appropriate lighting improves test scores, reduces off-task behaviour, and plays a significant role in students' achievement. Recently there has been renewed interest in increasing natural daylight in school buildings. Until the 1950s, natural light was the predominant means of illuminating most school spaces, but as electric power costs declined, so too did the amount of day lighting used in schools.

By extension, (OYESOLA, 2007) opined that the number of classrooms required in the school should be a reflection of the population of the students and staff, among other factors. Aigboje (2005), the school is one of the basic learning facilities that promote learning. Because of the complexity of working out a uniform ratio for secondary schools, the Education policy does not include a single prescription, subsequently laid down that secondary school class size

should not exceed 35 students (UNESCO, 2000). The education policy of Cameroon advocates for not more than 45 students in a classroom, but in some schools in the North West Region one finds more than 100 students per class. This is also observed by (Aluede, Okhiku, Esamah, & Ojiemhenkele, 2010), classrooms have now become human poultry, where more than 80 students are canned in one classroom which is at variance with the expected. Subsequently, Afolabi (2010), observed that in a majority of secondary schools, the classroom accommodation is grossly inadequate.

As a result of the large enrolment in these schools, the classrooms designed for only thirty or forty students in most cases as well as the chairs and desks are not enough as students were found sharing chairs, standing up, or sitting on windows or broken desks. When students are overcrowded like this, there is a stalling of the teaching learning process and a disruption of the children's mental activity, a situation that generally militate against effective teaching and intellectual development of the children. In many of these schools, classrooms, libraries and laboratories are nothing to write home about, all leading to ineffective implementation of continuous assessment.

The inculcation of skills, attitudes, knowledge and values which will be of positive value and enable the learner to contribute positively to the society in which they live is done through education. To achieve this primary aim of education, students have to be evaluated and different assessment techniques are used in measuring the quality and quantity of learning that has taken place during the teaching – learning process.

The implementation of continuous assessment lies in the hands of the classroom teachers as it places teachers at the centre of all performance- assessment activities. It encourages more participation in the overall grading of students. Adedibu (1988) in concurrence to this stressed that continuous assessment of his students: be more flexible and innovative in their instruction: reduce the threat factor in examination and promote punctuality in attendance to school. Ipaya (1984) also maintained that continuous assessment will enable the teacher to carry out imaginative teaching knowing that his assessment of the students' performance within the context of changes he initiates in the syllabus and his teaching will form part of the final assessment

In order to make the assessment of students more comprehensive, the national guideline on the implementation of continuous assessment stipulations for the subject teachers are as follows:

- Three tests in each term
- One project in each term
- Three class-home assignment and
- One class exercise per week

The process requires a teacher to pre-test items before administering them to his students as part of continuous assessment, which is to make the scores of the students more valid and reliable. The teacher also needs to develop skills of good observation and bring them to full use in his teaching and learning process. The continuous assessment for the term's work is fixed at forty percent (40%) while the

ministry of education final exams takes sixty percent (60%). All the scores or raw scores of 1st, 2nd and 3rd term for each subject or student are standardized on tests scores, and the decision of selection and promotion is based on the overall result computed.

Teachers' Attitude towards Continuous Assessment

Attitude has been defined by different scholars in a relatively different way never the less, there is no single universally definition of attitude on the other hand all definitions are bound with two integrated elements that come in to one's mind these integrated elements in every definition of attitude are the attitude itself and the attitude object one common definition for example is a relatively enduring tendency to respond to someone or something in a way that reflects a positive evaluation of that person or thing social psychologist as cited by (Alauso, 2003:2) in the same way it is essential to think of the awareness and positive feeling of teachers (attitude) and the (attitude object) that is the program or more specifically continuous assessment that is going to be implemented.

From the above ideas teachers may bear negative attitude toward the continuous assessment because of the absence of adequate orientation and training, lack of skill and knowledge without which they cannot appreciate and implement it which is practiced international with this regards, Isaac (1995), as cited in Elvi (2008), contended teachers until liability in continuous assessment scores is an international problem. The study mentions that gross inflation is usually detachable when continuous assessment scores are compared with examination scores in South Africa. It was also claimed that issues facing 3rd world countries in terms of implementation of continuous assessment are very different from those facing the 1st world countries. This is because, teachers in developing countries are underpaid unrestrained, and over worked and have two shifts of classes, often with too many students per class, so they may be disinclined to spend additional time outside of their normal class in developing paper pencil tests, quizzes, or other approaches to assess their students. Another concern is that when course grades begin to count toward selection decisions, teachers are vulnerable to corruptions (Capper, 1996), and (Elvi, 2008).

As to the viewpoints of educators, proper training of teachers and reduced workload may alleviate the problems. In divisively who receive appropriate training and have time to develop the assessment would be able to develop more creative, pedagogically and technically sound assessment they could develop assessment, which support

- Independent and resourceful learning, higher order thinking and problem solving that are consistent with the principle of learner centred instruction
- That have objective criteria for evaluating student performance
- That involve students in applying knowledge, skill and concepts to solving real life problems in their communities
- And that captivate students' interest and imagination (capper 1996)

Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is a formative mode of assessment that used multiple ways and format. It combines the scores

obtained from paper pencil, assignment projects, discussion and presentations, oral paper penal, observation, etc. this and suit a lot of definition have been given by many scholars /researchers, educators, psychometricians, etc. However, it may not be feasible, need impossible to mention all here, and rather those related to the domain of the study i.e. continuous assessment of learners' overage progress are given emphasis. Continuous assessment is a process of collection and interpretation of information to make decisions about learners based on what they know and can demonstrate as a result of classroom instruction (Copper, 1996). Thus, from the above definitions continuous assessment is a process that is used in collecting information about students' performance with regard to all learning domains made throughout the teaching learning process. From those definitions we can dive out the following main points

- Continuous assessment is a tool to collect information about learners
- It involves interpretation of information to have objective ground to make decisions with regard to learners rearming status

In a dissertation titled "The challenges of implementation of continuous assessment in physical education classes in some selected schools in Addis Ababa" by Azeb Kidane, former Minister of Education, Prof. Kader Asmal. Alausa (2003) ascribed one advantage of continuous assessment to the fact that it places teachers at the centre of all performance-assessment activities and that it encourages more teacher participation in the overall assessment or grading of learners. He further states that this new assessment model is used to determine the learner's achievement during the course of the grade or level, and to provide information that is used to support a learner's development and enable improvements to be made in the learning and teaching process.

Although the change in the assessment policy was intended to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, it also introduced schools to the challenges associated with the implementation of educational change. The argument presented in this study is simply that every change produces new information and concepts which create challenges. The change in assessment policy calls for a realignment of existing values, practices and outcomes (Morrison, 1998:11). Alausa (2003:3) identified some of the problems working against the proper implementation of continuous assessment which calls for the realignment of values, practices and outcomes in schools. Some of the challenges that are associated with educators include a lack of skills in test construction and test administration, attitudes towards continuous assessment, and record keeping.

For continuous assessment implementation to succeed, Alausa (2003:3) argues that teachers need to give more tests and that will result in more marking for the teachers. They are expected to constantly observe learners to see if they are progressing towards the set outcomes. All these could mean more work for the teachers, greater demands on their time, and increased responsibility.

Principles of Continuous Assessment

Continuous assessment is an ongoing process in teaching and learning but not episodic. This process like other

processes is most effective when based on sound operational principles. These principles provide to the tutor a framework within which the process of assessment is practiced. They include:

Determining and clarifying what to be assessed

There is need for a tutor to determine an assessment device after defining the purpose (s) of assessment. Assessment works best when the programmer seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes. As a tutor critically identify the education values you intend to assess on **who** in terms of **what** and **how** alongside **where**.

The assessment techniques, strategies or tools should be selected in terms of the purpose to be served. Each assessment technique tool is appropriate in one instance and inappropriate to another, therefore as a tutor consider the appropriateness of the technique or tool for the intended purpose prior to its selection. Comprehensive assessment requires a variety of assessment techniques for triangulation purposes. No single assessment tool or technique is good or adequate enough for appraising learner progress towards all the important outcomes of instruction.

Assessment requires attention to outcomes but also equally to experiences that lead to those outcomes therefore assessment is most effective when it reflects on understanding of learning as multi-dimensional, integrated and revealed in performance over time Proper use of assessment techniques, tools requires awareness of their limitations strengths and appropriateness. All measuring instruments tools are subject to one or more types of errors as tutors you need to use proper and accurate assessment results aware of such instrument errors; use the most appropriate tool for a specific learning outcome. Assessment is a means to an end but not an end in itself.

The use of assessment techniques, tools means that some useful purpose will be served and the tutor will be clearly aware of the purpose. The type of decisions made should be identified before assessment procedures are selected. Good assessment practices promote ethical academic conduct. Ethical academic conduct is both a staff and students' responsibility. Good assessment design can both educate students about appropriate academic conduct and minimize academic misconduct. Assessment practice allows students to receive timely feedback on their learning.

High quality feedback is clear and constructive, an enables students to make sensible judgments about modifying aspects of their academic performance in order to meet the objectives of the course. Such feedback should enable students to understand their level of development of the required skills, their mastery of understanding embedded in the assessment activity and how their performance in each domain could be improved in subsequent learning activities. Assessment methods should be valid reliable and consistent Tutors should make effort to ensure that assessment methods are valid and reliable, recognizing that professional judgment is a significant and reasonable element in the indicators of achievement.

It is also reasonable that such judgment is regularly subjected to peer review and discussion. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the

educational community are involved. Teacher trainee learning is a campus wide responsibility, and assessment is a way of enacting that responsibility. As a tutor you should involve individuals from beyond the campus whose experience can enrich the sense of appropriate aims and standards for learning. Therefore treat assessment as a collaborative activity by all parties with a stake in its improvement.

Purpose of Continuous Assessment

Understanding the purpose of continuous assessment has its own importance this is because such a knowledge with help those who are going to implements this technique of assessment to give due consideration and increase their effort towards its proper implementation.

From the perspectives of measurement expertise, continuous assessment is purposely designed to improve teaching and learning for all students, not for filter students out of educational opportunities (pop an, 1981) continuous assessment is a dues purpose diagnostic instrument that is useful for both the students and teachers. It enables students to understand the areas in which they are having difficulties and to concentrate their effort in those areas meanwhile it allows teachers to monitor the impact of the lesson on the students understanding (Desalegne, 2004). This idea is strongly supported "Teachers can modify their pedagogical strategies to include the construction of remediation activities for students who are not working at the expected grade level and the creation of enrichment activities for students who are at or above the excepted grade levels Hence, continuous assessment supports a cycle of self-evaluation and student specific activities by both students and teachers."

The other important purpose of continuous assessment to be considered is that it is intended to assess the curriculum as implemented in the class room. It allows teachers to evaluate that effectiveness of their teaching strategies relative to the curriculum and to change those strategies as dictated by the need of their students (Desalegn 2004)

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of continuous assessment lies heavily on the teacher. In fact, the success or failure of any assessment technique depends on the extent to which the teachers implement the policy because they (teachers) are the coordinators of classroom activities and the ones who translate theories into actions and educational plans and policies into practices. Therefore, teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment, devotion, quality and effectiveness are of utmost importance in the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in secondary schools in the North-West Region.

Obviously, the economics teachers may encounter some difficulties in a bid to successfully implement continuous assessment such as the poorly equipped classrooms with inadequate or no lighting system, more students than the number of desks available, distraction by too much cold or heat thus causing the students to lose concentration.

If these problems go on unabated, and continuous assessment conducted in like manner that would yield a valid and reliable result, people may tend to lose confidence

in it as was the case with the earlier one shot final examination and the objective for which continuous assessment was set up in educational policy of Cameroon may come to nullity. In light of these and other related problems which the researcher carried out the study on the influence of school environmental factors on the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in secondary schools in the North West Region of Cameroon.

Objective of the study

To find out how teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment affects the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in schools in the North west region

Research Question

What is the influence of teachers’ attitude towards the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in secondary schools in the North West Region Cameroon?

Hypothesis

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

Ha1 : There is a significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation.

H01 : There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the survey research design. The study necessitated collecting the opinions of teachers, in relation to the variable under consideration by the used of questionnaire in order to describe some aspects such as perception, attitudes and opinion of the population of which that group is a part. The survey method allowed collection of data from a large sample population and generated findings to the representation of the whole population at a lower cost.

This study was carried out in secondary schools in all the seven (7) divisions of the North West Region of Cameroon. The Northwest Region (known before 2008 as the Northwest Province) is the third most populated Region in Cameroon. It has one major metropolitan city, Bamenda, with several other smaller towns such as Wum, Kumbo, Mbengwi, Ndop, Nkambé, Batibo, Bambui and Oshie. The region saw an increase in its population from approximately 1.2 million in 1987 to an estimated 1.8 million in 2010. The population density of 99.12 people per square kilometer is higher than the national average of 22.6. The Regional urban growth rate is 7.95%, higher than the national average of 5.6%, while the rural growth rate, at 1.16%, is equal to the national rate. In 2001, according to the Statistical regional Services of the North-West Region, the population of the Region is young, with over 62% of its residents being less than 20 years old. Therefore, the dependency rate in the region is high, particularly in the rural areas.

Sampling Frame for Teachers

Table 1 Target population for economics teachers in the North West

REGION	TRAINED						UNTRAINED						Total
	Old		Average		Beginner		Old		Average		Beginner		
Northwest	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
	52	76	36	61	13	5	10	5	7	7	9	7	288

Like other regions in Cameroon, the North-West Region is made up of administrative divisions. The province was created in 1972 with five divisions or departments: Bui, Donga-Mantung, Menchum, Mezam, and Momo. Today, it has seven divisions, the additions being Boyo, which was carved out of the Menchum division, and Ngo-Ketunjia or Ngoketunjia, split off from the Mezam division. Each division is further subdivided, with thirty-one total subdivisions in the Northwest Region. The basic unit of local government is the council, and there are thirty-two councils in the region.

The North West Region has many ethnic groups, including immigrants from other regions and countries. Nigeria is well represented, as it borders the region to both the north and the northwest. The native population comprises a variety of ethnic and linguistic groups. The main ethnic groups are of the Tikarorigin: Tikari, Widikum, Fulani, and Moghamo. The most widely spoken languages in the province include Mungaka, Limbum spoken by the Wimbun people of Donga Mantung Division; Yamba, spoken by the Yamba people also of the Donga Mantung Division; Bafmen, Oku, Lamnso, Ngemba, Pidgin English, Balikumbat, Papiakum, Moghamo, and Nkom. During the colonial period, administrative boundaries were created which cut across ethnic groups and cultures. As a result, parts of some ethnic groups now lie in different divisions and regions, which is believed to have led to several land conflicts.

In the regions, the social organization recognizes a chief as its head, also called the ‘Fon’. The Fons, who in their tribal area may be more influential than the official administrative authorities, are considered the living representative of the tribal ancestors. In 2008, the President of the Republic of Cameroon, Paul Biya, signed decrees abolishing "Provinces" and replacing them with "Regions". The North West Province subsequently became the North West Region.

The North West Region has unique attractions, including the second highest mountain in West Africa. It is home to many rare birds such as the distinctive red crested Bannerman’s turaco, which is unique to this region. There are also many crater lakes such as Lake Oku, Lake Awing, and Lake Nyos. The largest remaining mountain forest in the North-West Region is the Kilum-Ijim Forest. Menchum Falls, and Abbi Falls in the Mbengwi Division, are also located here.

The principal public hospital for the region is the Bamenda regional Hospital. The Shisong Hospital, as well as other private and mission hospitals, have helped to resolve the health needs of the region.

The target population of this study includes all the secondary schools in the North West region in both rural and urban areas. The sample of this study is made up of eighty (80) economics teachers from four different schools. Two from rural area and two from urban area.

Table 2 Accessible population

Division	Trained						Untrained						Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
BOYO	6	8	4	5	3	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	37
Bui	9	13	6	5	6	4	4	2	2	2	2	1	56
Donga Mantung	10	4	6	1	3	-	2	-	1	1	-	4	32
Menchum	4	5	2	3	-	2	1	-	1	1	-	-	19
Mezam	14	18	6	9	6	8	6	8	5	2	1	2	85
Momo	4	5	3	5	3	2	2	2	3	1	-	-	30
Ngoketunjia	5	6	2	3	1	4	2	1	2	1	1	1	29
Total	52	59	29	31	22	22	19	15	15	10	5	9	288

This research made used of probability sampling technique. Simple random sampling by conducting with the use of slip of paper and lucky dip were suitable.

Anderson, (1999:45) observes that “a good sample is a representative of the parent population and method of its selection often affects the validity of the research work or results. Studies which cannot be generalized are wasteful studies which may be due to poor sampling procedure” Consideration was given Economics teachers in completing of the questionnaire because they are in better position to give more current and objective view about their work load and experience in the assessment of students. Of which eighty (80) teachers were drawn from the four selected schools. This was done by simple random sampling.

Table 3 Sample Population

Subdivision	Trained						Untrained						Total
	Old		Average		Beginner		Old		Average		beginner		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Bamenda 11	10	15	4	5	2	3	6	8	2	1	1	1	57
Batibo	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	12
Ndop	3	2	2	1	1	1	-	1	2	-	1	1	15
Wum	1	2	-	1	1	2	11	-	-	1	-	-	9

For the purpose of deriving data for this study, the questionnaire method was used to obtain information from students and teachers charged with the implementation and administration of continuous assessment in the secondary schools. Items with options as responses were provided to elicit significant information. Close-ended type of questionnaire was also used to generate valid data. A “four point Likert” type rating scale was used for some items and was scored as follows: 4 points was awarded to strongly agree, 3 to agree response, while 2 was awarded to disagree and 1 to the strongly disagree response. Another instrument used in this research was a checklist.

The direct delivery technique was used to administered the instrument to all the respondents. This technique was preferred because the researcher wanted to personally meet respondents. This researcher visited the accessible schools, met the principals and presented covering letter. In collaboration with these school authorities, the questionnaire was distributed to all the eighty (80) economics teachers that were selected. They were told to read the instructions on the first page which was properly explained to them by the researcher and were allowed to proceed with responding to the items. The exercise was done under the supervision and direction of the researcher and the school authorities.

At the end, the copies of the questionnaire were immediately by the researcher. In all, the questionnaire was administered to 77 economics teachers although the sample size eighty (80) teachers in four accessible subdivisions. All copies were collected corresponding to 100% return rate and 0% instrument mortality.

The statistical analysis used for data analysis used for data analysis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the regression.

$$r = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

where x= independent variable, and y= dependent variable.

FINDINGS

The results and findings of the statistical analyses of data gathered for this study are presented below. The presentation of the data was done following the trends of the five hypotheses directing the study.

Hypothesis

- Ha1** There is a significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation.
- H01** There is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment, while the dependent variable is the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in the North West Region of Cameroon. The scores of the independent variable were got from the responses recorded from the seven questionnaire items that measured teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment. The scores of the dependent variable were got from the scores recorded from the responses got from the thirteen questionnaire items that measured the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in the North West Region of Cameroon. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis.

The formula using deviation from the mean method is:

$$\Gamma_{xy} = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Where x is the independent variable, y is the dependent variable and Γ_{xy} is the correlation coefficient for x and y

The result of the analysis is presented in the following table (Table 5):
 Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the teachers' attitude towards continuous assessment and the implementation of continuous assessment in economics in the North West Region of Cameroon (N=77)

Table 4: Analysis of teachers' attitude

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	Γ_{xy}
Teachers' Attitude (X)	1607	33975	36248	0.838
Implementation of Continuous Assessment (Y)	1736	40376		

$p^* < 0.05$; $df=75$; critical $\Gamma_{xy} = 0.224$

$$\Gamma_{xy} = \frac{\text{Cov}(x,y)}{\sqrt{\text{Var}(x)}\sqrt{\text{Var}(y)}}$$

$$= \frac{\frac{1}{n} \sum xy - \bar{x} \bar{y}}{\sqrt{\text{Var}(x)}\sqrt{\text{Var}(y)}}$$

$$\sum x = 1607, \sum x^2 = 33975 \quad \sum xy = 36248$$

$$\sum y = 1737, \sum y^2 = 40376$$

$$\Gamma_{xy} = \frac{\frac{1}{77} (36248) - (20.87)(22.55)}{\sqrt{\frac{1}{77} (33975) - (20.87)^2} \sqrt{\frac{1}{77} (40376) - (22.55)^2}}$$

$$= \frac{470.75 - 470.62}{\sqrt{441.23 - 435.56} \sqrt{524.36 - 508.50}}$$

$$= \frac{0.1300}{(2.3812)(3.9825)} = \frac{0.1300}{(2.38)(3.98)}$$

$$= 0.0137$$

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated Γ_{xy} -value of 0.838 is higher than the critical Γ_{xy} -value of 0.224 at .05 level of significance with 75 degrees of freedom. With the result of the analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation.

Since teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment affects the implementation in economics in secondary schools in the North West Region a further exploration of the impact showed that the calculated Γ_{xy} = 0.838 was positive. This indicates that the better the teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment the higher the implementation in the teaching of economics in secondary schools in the North West Region. The mean score teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment is 20.87 on 28. This score is high and therefore indicates that the implementation in the teaching of economics in secondary schools in the North West Region is highly affected by the teachers’ attitude.

Table 5: Analysis of predictor and criterion variable

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers’ attitude	20.87	2.40

The final regression analysis results showing the contribution of the predictor variable to the criterion variable is shown in Table above.

Regression analysis results of predictor variable on the criterion variable

Table 6: Results of regression analysis

Multiple R	0.262 ^a			
R ²	0.069			
Adjusted R ²	0.017			
Standard error	3.99			
Sources of variation	SS	df	Mean Square	F
Regression	85.192	4	21.298	1.331
Residual	1151.899	72	15.999	
Total	1237.091	76		
Variable	B	SEB	Beta	t
Constant (A)	17.384	5.696	-	3.052
Attitude	0.062	0.198	0.037	0.314

Critical $F_{4,72}$ = 1.331; Critical t-value = 1.99

The calculated F-value of 1.331 is lower than the critical F-value of 2.50 at 4 and 72 degrees of freedom. This indicates that the selected predictor variable: teachers’ attitude toward continuous assessment (X_1), significantly predict the implementation of continuous assessment in the teaching of economics in secondary schools in the North West Region of Cameroon (Y). There are therefore some other significant factors that contribute to this performance represented by the constant (A).

From this table the constant (A) has the unstandardized B value of 17.384 and for the predictor variable (X_1), is 0.062.

The result of the analysis showed that, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis retained.

This result therefore means that there is a significant relationship between teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment and its implementation. teachers may include inadequate professional skills, poor subject matter, unfair evaluation and lack of interest in their profession, punctuality, and respect for students. These may result in developing negative attitude, and it becomes difficult to make student-centred method practical. Positive teachers’ attitude exists when teachers have confidence in their ability to teach, and committed to teaching and cooperate with each other. Teachers are committed to teaching learning and care about their students, when they set high standard of work and behavior and model themselves. Teachers are co-operative when they plan school activities and teach collaboratively and when they share ideas with each other

and when teachers and administrators work together on whole school issues (Argali, ZMW, 2001).

The teacher is the pivot upon which the implementation of educational prescription rotates. Therefore he/she examines the prescriptions of the educational policy makers, and uses his/ her expertise and the working tools (curriculum, syllabuses, and schemes of work) at his /her disposal to develop and implement continuous assessment based on the regularity prescribed in the policies

Since teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment affects the implementation in economics in secondary schools in the North West Region. This indicates that the better the teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment the higher the implementation in the teaching of economics in secondary schools in the North West Region. The mean score teachers’ attitude towards continuous assessment is 20.87 on 28. This score is high and therefore indicates that the implementation continuous assessment in the teaching of economics in secondary schools in the North West Region is highly affected by the teachers’ attitude. This result is in line with the view of Ipaye (1985) who states that the success and quality of continuous assessment depends to a large extend on the capabilities of the teacher and the support from the school system and the cooperation from the students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings made in this study it is recommended that:

- Teachers status should be improved. Various means must be employed to enhance teachers social and economic status in the society. This will enable the teacher to put in his best and readiness of the teacher to acquire more of the skills when need be.
- Teachers should use varieties of assessment practices in order to elicit information on the various attributes possessed by an individual, this can only be possible if the government of Cameroon recruit more teachers to reduce heavy course load
- Teachers should avoid assessment without direct involvement of the learners and practice giving regular feedback for the learners based on every continuous assessment.
- Teachers should develop their professional values to reflect their daily operational in the classroom

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1] Addebawalo, O. F. and Alao, K. A. (2008). CA policy implementation in selected local government areas of (Nigeria) implication
- [2] Afemikhe, O. A. (2014). Educational measurement and evaluation. Published by Amfitop Nigeria limited Ibadan, Lagos, kaduna.
- [3] Alausa, Y. A.(2003). CA in our schools: Advantages and problems retrived from [http: www needed na /publications/](http://www.neededna.com/publications/) journal accessed on January 26, 2
- [4] Amin, M. A. (2005).Social science research methodology and conception, methodology and analysis. Makerere University Kampala
- [5] Argali, M. W.(2001). Ideology and the curriculum. New York Rutledge
- [6] Artel and spondel, V. (1991) using portfolios of student work in instruction and assessment, Portland; North WestPublishers
- [7] Ayalew S. (2009) Assessment of Science education quality Indicators in Addis Ababa o Best, J.W (2004), Teacher assessment of student performance in selected schools of Arsi zone with emphasis on continuous assessment, unpublished mater. Thesis. Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa
- [8] Birhanu, M. (2004), teacher assessment of student performance in selected schools of Arsi zone with emphasis on continuums assessment, unpublished Master thesis. Addis Ababa University Addis Ababa
- [9] Black and brood foot. (1982) Assessment in the class room, keeping track of teaching published by Routledge and ReganPoul Ltd
- [10] Brooks, V. (2002) Assessment in secondary schools: the new educator's guide to monitoring assessment, recording, reporting and accountability. Bucking sham: Open University press.
- [11] Brown D. (1998) educational policy and the choice of language in linguistically complex South African schools. Purban University of Natal (MED distertation)
- [12] Capper.J. (1996) testing to learn, learn to test washing an academic for education development
- [13] Desalegn chalcisa (2004) continuous assessment in lower cycle primary school. Unpublished master thesis Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa
- [14] DECP (1995) Diploma in Education. Senior primary Guide III premarital urisa
- [15] DoE (Department of education) (1997) Intermediate phase (Graode 4-6): policy document paregoric Department of education
- [16] Elvis(2008) assessment in primary school Melbourne
- [17] Freeburg J.H.(1996) Universal teaching strategies London: Allyn and Bacon
- [18] Hohen, W. (1994). Enhancing quality in assessment. London poul chap may
- [19] Howkins JM 1998. The South African oxford school dictionary Cape Town: University press
- [20] Hampambwe, W.M. and Mulenfa, M. G. (2008)the implementation of School Based Assessment (CA) in Zambia. The 2008 IAEA Conference
- [21] Isaac, D. M. (1996). Research in educational assessment, New York
- [22] Kotharis C. R. (2004) Quantitative techniques (3rd ed) New Delhi: Vikas Publishing house Pvt.Ltd.
- [23] Kul, L. (2006) Methodology of educational research (3rded) London and network: Vikos Publishing house
- [24] Larraine, K. (1996) Making sure that assessment improves performance educational leadership
- [25] Le grange and Reddy C.(1992) Continuous assessment: an in production and guide lines to implementation. Cape Town: Juta
- [26] Manno V.(1995) the new school wars: bottles over outcomes based education Ph. Delta Kappon
- [27] MoE (1994) the new education and training policy Addis Ababa EMPDA
- [28] Morrison, K. (1998) Management theories for educational change, London: Poulchapmars
- [29] Mitko, A. J. (2004) CA and performance assessment [http://www Moec. Gov.](http://www.Moec.Gov) (accessed on Feb 2012)
- [30] Nworgu B. G. Educational Research; Basic Issues and Methodology. University Trust Publisher, Nsukka
- [31] Parker, M.(1998) Effective classroom learning. New York BrasilBlackwell
- [32] Rink, H. (2006) guidelines to implement assessment, Cape Town
- [33] Terrance, H. (1995) Evaluating authentic assessment Buckingham: Open University press
- [34] Vanden horst H and MacDonaldR. (1997)Outcomes-based education: a teacher's manual. Performa kagisa
- [35] Vogel s 1997 assessment on primary level student
- [36] Wolfj 1995. The ABC of teaching Melbourne: Longman
- [37] Woolnough E.B (1994) Developing science and technology education effective science teaching Open University press
- [38] West and Lombardo. (1994) curriculum and instruction the secondary schools physical education Experience St. Louis Missouri
- [39] [www.iaea.info.document](http://www.iaea.info/document). Teacher assessment practice, perceptions and needs in south Africa. Pdf. Retrieving date 10/09/2017
- [40] www.iaea>documentConceptualization and implementation of continuous assessment Tanzania. Retrieving date 06/11/2017
- [41] citeseerx.ist.psu.edu>viewdoc>download. Examining attitude towards the implementation continuous assessment. Retrieving date 10/ 8/17
- [42] www, doublegist.com Factors inhibiting the implementation of continuous assessment in secondary schools British Journal of Education Vol.4, No.13 pp.23-29, December 2016 Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org)