

Classteachers' Continuous Assessment Input in the Primary Six Leaving Certificate (Pslc) in Akoko South-West Local Government Area in Ondo State Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated classteachers' Continuous Assessment scores input into Primary Six Leaving Certificate in Akoko South-West Local Government Area in Ondo state, Nigeria. Using descriptive survey, an instrument, "Classteachers' Primary Six Leaving Certificate Continuous Assessment Scores Input" and structured interview was used to collect data from 250 respondents and data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that classteachers' CA procedures were systematic but lacked comprehensiveness and cumulateness; and summation of scores sent by classteachers to Ministry Of Education used in processing Primary Six Leaving Certificates issued to pupils by Headteachers was manufactured. It is recommended that classteachers and Headteachers as implementers of CA programme in schools be given continuous orientation and re-orientation on correct practices of CA, and be timely supplied with instruments required to garner data on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of pupils including lockable iron shelves for safe keeping and easy retrieval of data.

Keywords: classteachers; Continuous Assessment; Primary Six Leaving Certificate; Nigeria

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1. Introduction

Assessment is seen as the planned process of organizing test data into interpretable forms on a number of factors (National Teachers' Institute, 2007). Similarly, defined rather broadly, assessment, which takes place either through formal and informal activities, is the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting and using information to increase students' learning and development (Irwin, 1991, as cited in Moye & Adediwura, 2010). Assessment serves as the barometer by which instructional achievement outcome can be gauged, thus enabling the school to achieve an overall objective of having as complete a record of the growth and progress of each pupil as possible so as to make unbiased judgments in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor evaluation on pupils in the classroom (Adebowale & Alao, 2008). Continuous Assessment is therefore a subset of assessment.

According to Nitko (2004) as referenced in Adebowale and Alao (2008), Continuous Assessment (CA) is an ongoing process of gathering and interpreting information about students' learning that is used in making decisions about what to teach and how well students have learned. Similarly, some other authorities have broadly explained CA as a mechanism whereby the final grading of students in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour scientifically, systematically and consistently takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling for the purpose of assessing students' progress or otherwise (Oriola, 2005; Yakubu, 2005; Alonge, 2004; Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (FMEST), 1985; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984). Although, it is given different names in different countries of the world ranging from School Based Assessment, Teacher Assessment, or Internal Assessment, etc., CA has become a universal practice in education; and depending however, on the country and the level of educational system, CA has been used as a major component in certification, or in combination with an externally-based assessment in determining candidates' certification grades (Ojerinde, 2011).

CA as an instructional process began in Nigeria in 1977 with the idea that it would enable educators to be more involved in the overall assessment of learners and allow for diverse instructional methods (Adebowale & Alao, 2008).

However, before the introduction of CA into the Nigerian educational system, primary and secondary schools based their assessment and promotion of learners from one class to the other on the results of a single examination that usually came up at the end of each academic session; hence, while teachers taught learners almost exclusively for the purpose of passing examinations, learners started with cheating of diverse sorts to pass the examinations. This became the genesis of what culminated into a large-scale examination malpractice that characterized the 1970s in the history of Nigerian education (Oriola, 2005). In Oriola's view, it thus appears that the alarming rate of examination leakages and malpractice during the decade compelled the National Council on Education (NCE) to recommend through the National Policy on Education (NPE) that CA should be embarked upon at all levels of Nigerian education.

Evidences abound (Nitko, 2004, as referenced in Adebowale & Alao, 2008; Olaleye, 2005; Oriola, 2005; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984) that the relevance of CA points to the various stakeholders (e.g. pupils, teachers, parents/guardians, school counsellors and psychologists, and the government) in the educational system. To the pupils, it enables them to receive feedback from teachers based on performance which allows them to focus on topics they have not yet mastered, just as it also reduces stress on students who unavoidably missed out in one assessment to be given a parallel test on return to school, thus building up pupils' confidence towards examination and thereby reducing activities that could encourage examination malpractice.

Also, while it promotes frequent interactions between learners and teachers which acquaint teachers with the strengths and weaknesses of learners to identify which of them need review and remediation, it as well enables teachers to assess their classroom achievement. Similarly, it provides parents/guardians the opportunity to know how much learning, both in the physical, emotional and attitudinal development that has taken place in their children/wards over time as well as giving them the opportunity to regularly interact with teachers over their children/wards' school progress or otherwise.

In addition, just as it provides objective evidences for professionals (like school counsellors and school psychologists) to properly guide students, parents/guardians and significant others on matters revolving around students' academic and vocational aspirations and development, it also provides the government with opportunity to monitor the appropriateness or otherwise of the operational curriculum, etc (Ojerinde, 2011; Nitko, 2004 as referenced in Adebowale & Alao, 2008; Olaleye, 2005; Oriola, 2005; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984)..

The processes as well as the practices of proper records keeping of students' achievement as they are scored and graded are important aspects of CA (Oriola, 2005; Orisadipe, 2005; Ezewu & Okoye, 1981). Thus, record keeping and CA go hand-in-hand as they complement each other such that there cannot be one without the other. Thus, for CA to live up to its name and perform its roles, there is agreement among experts that it must show certain inherent characteristics. For instance, it must be systematic, requiring an operational plan which indicates what measurements are to be made of the pupils' performance, at what intervals, and the nature of the instruments to be used in the measurement; it must be comprehensive in scope as it is expected to make use of diverse approaches and tools like tests, examination, projects, assignments (classwork and takehome), observation, questionnaires and interviews to garner valuable information on learners. Also, CA must be cumulative, so that any decision to be made on the learners at any point in time must take into account all the previously taken decisions on them; this further implies that every bit of scores adds up to the final score to make each grade summative. Doubtless, this requires the keeping of up-to-date records on each learner. Similarly, CA is expected to be guidance oriented, suggesting that scores from all data gathered on the learners will serve as the basis for identifying the pupils' strengths for reinforcement and their weaknesses for remediation such that they can be guided further, especially on their academic and vocational aspirations, growth and development (Ojerinde, 2011; Oriola, 2005; Alonge, 2004; FMEST, 1985; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984; Ipaye, 1982; Ezewu & Okoye, 1981). Thus, it is in consideration of this unique role (i.e. guidance orientation) that CA grades in certificates, cards, or report sheets need to be objective, valid and thus reflect reality.

Although, the practice of CA in Nigeria dated back to 1977 (Adebowale & Alao, 2008) but practically speaking, the different states of the federation commenced the operation/implementation at different times.

However, Ondo state was one of the foremost states in Nigeria to embrace the practice of CA in her schools since 1984 (Orisadipe, 2005), and as indicated by Oriola (2005) and Orisadipe (2005), CA documents in use in Ondo state schools are the class register of attendance, schemes and records of work, Continuous Assessment Dossier (CAD), school annual returns of continuous assessment scores (called PS4 in primary school, JSS4 in Junior Secondary and SSS4 in Senior Secondary School), transcript, continuous assessment class records manual and testimonial, diary, and admission register (Oriola, 2005; Orisadipe, 2005)..

Interestingly, on the issue of Continuous Assessment (CA), the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) in her National Policy on Education (NPE) (1981, revised in 1989 and 2004) made it emphatically clear in section 1 paragraph 9 (g) that "educational assessment and evaluation shall be liberalized by their being based in whole or in part on continuous assessment of the progress of the individual". Similarly, in section 4 paragraph 19 (i) of the same NPE, the FGN mandated that "The Primary School Leaving Certificate shall be based only on continuous assessment and shall be issued locally by the Headteacher of the school" (FGN, 2004 .p.9, 16).

Therefore, in compliance with this directive, since 1992, the issuance of Primary School Leaving Certificate (PSLC) in Ondo state has been based only on continuous assessment, to which the Ondo state Ministry Of Education (MOE) had mandated that the CA scores to be sent from each primary school to its office for the processing of PSLC for the respective pupils be gathered in the following percentage order of aggregate input: primary 3, 10%; primary 4, 20%; primary 5, 30%; and primary 6, 40% (Olaleye, 2005). Although, Headteachers are empowered to issue PSLC to deserving pupils in their respective schools, but the introduction of the practices of CA into Nigerian educational system has placed more responsibility in terms of time and devotion on teachers on whom the onus of gathering data and computing the ensuing grades rests upon, using the approved instruments and the grading system (Adetunde & Adetunde, 2009; Oriola, 2005). With that therefore, the Headteachers only issue the certificates to deserving pupils whenever they arrived their schools from the MOE.

For school assessment to be effective and valuable to individuals and organizations, it must be carried out in a manner that is valid and reliable, such that what is said to be assessed is actually what is being assessed; and conversely, if an assessment lacks validity and reliability, any decision taken on the basis of such faulty assessment will be equally defective, which may result in putting square pegs in round holes (Anderson, Ball & Murphy, 1975, as referenced in Moye & Adediwura, 2010). It is therefore germane to expect that the quality of grading obtained by pupils in their PSLC reflect their true ability and weakness such that the guidance services expected to be offered to pupils, their parents, teachers, etc., based on the value of the certificate will not be misleading and misleading. Relatedly, Adetunde and Adetunde (2009) had argued that the competence of specialists, engineers, scientists, bankers, technologists, and technicians who acquire their skills formally or informally are firmly connected and rated by their primary school education foundation and training, in so much the primary education remains the foundation for subsequent education and training, academic and vocational and even for some people, preparation for modern economic effort.

In Nigeria, the primary school education is offered in institutions for children who are aged between 6 and 11 years plus. The Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledges the foundational nature of primary education by noting that “since the rest of the education system is built upon it, the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system”. Thus, among the goals of primary education are the inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy as well as the ability to communicate effectively; the laying of a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; molding of character and development of sound attitude and morals in the children; providing children with the basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the environment; among others (FGN, 2004. p. 14).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

An important aspect of CA is the process and the practice of keeping records of students' achievement as they are scored and graded (Oriola, 2005; Orisadipe, 2005).

However, Adebowale and Osuji (2008) found that the relevance of record keeping in terms of utilizing its interface (i.e. interconnectivity) with CA were not popular among primary school teachers; yet, the teachers are responsible for preparing the pupils' CA scores in their respective classes/ schools before being sent to the MOE who process these scores into corresponding grades and produce Primary Six Leaving Certificates (PSLC), which are brought to the school Headteachers for issuance to their pupils. Therefore, do primary school teachers actually practice CA in their classes/schools? Do they follow any laid-down rules in data gathering for their CA? Do teachers' CA procedures show any inherent attributes expected of CA to be so named? Are teachers' CA procedures uniform across the schools? Are teachers knowledgeable about the percentage of primaries 3, 4, 5, and 6 scores that should go into Primary Six Leaving Certificate? The need to provide answers to these questions motivated this study.

1.2. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, four research questions were generated to be answered; these are:

1. Are the classteachers' CA procedures systematic?
2. Is the classteachers' CA comprehensive procedurally?
3. Is classteachers' data gathering technique cumulative?
4. What is the classteachers' knowledge of the percentage aggregate scores of primaries 3, 4, 5 and 6 CA scores to input into PSLC as mandated by Ministry Of Education (MOE)?

1.3. Research Instruments

An instrument titled "Classteachers' Primary Six Leaving Certificate Continuous Assessment Scores Input" was purposely developed by the researchers and validated by two Senior Lecturers, one each from Guidance and Counselling and Tests and Measurement. The instrument has 4 independent variables: sex, class taught, teaching experience, and highest educational qualification in section A (respondents' personal characteristics) while section B (the body of the instrument) has subtitles like: systematicism, comprehensiveness, and cumulateness (three of the features of Continuous Assessment).

The instrument has a total of 16 items, spread across systematicism, comprehensiveness, cumulateness and knowledge of percentage aggregate scores of primary 3, 4, 5, and 6 CA scores to input into PSLC. While some of the items in the instrument was structured along "yes"/"no" response pattern, others provided many options from which the respondents picked their choices. Similarly, a structured interview was used to obtain data from some respondents and Headteachers in the schools selected on some of the challenges facing the implementation of CA practice in their respective schools.

1.4. Participants

Participants for the study were 250 primary school teachers who were purposively sampled from 25 primary schools randomly selected from among the 51 primary schools in Akoko South-West Local Government Area of Ondo state. Teachers in primaries 3, 4, 5, and 6 who had spent at least two academic sessions in their present classes were purposively selected because they were in charge of the classes mandated by MOE to send CA scores to input into PSLC in each year, and there was the need also to ascertain that they have spent at least two sessions in their present classes/schools to have participated in inputting scores into PSLC and as such, to have been accustomed to the CA practice both in their classes and their schools.

1.5. Data Collection

The researchers employed and trained three paid research assistants (primary school librarians) to facilitate data collection process because of the geographical spread of the schools. Thus, the method used in collecting data from the participants was by personal visitation as the participants were visited in their classes where the administration was done with the respondents face-to-face. This afforded the researchers and the trained research assistants the opportunity to explain to the respondents the modality for responding appropriately to some items in the instrument where skipping was involved, as well as to collect the instrument back on the spot. However, some of the participants who could not respond to the instrument on the spot exhorted the researchers to come back for collection the second day.

Some of the classteachers as well as Headteachers were interviewed by the researchers to find out some of the challenges facing the implementation of CA practice in their schools. In all, four weeks were used to collect the data for the study.

2. Data Analyses

The data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics to answer the four research questions generated for the study.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by their Personal Characteristics

Variable		f	%
Sex	Female	131	52.4
	Male	118	47.2
	No response	1	0.4
	Total	250	100
Class taught	Primary 3	62	24.8
	Primary 4	59	23.6
	Primary 5	63	25.2
	Primary 6	66	26.4
	Total	250	100
Teaching experience	1-10 years	40	16
	11-20 years	77	30.8
	21-30 years	108	43.2
	31 & above	23	9.2
	Total	250	100
Highest educational qualification	Grade II Teachers' Certificate (TCII)	5	2
	Associateship Certificate in Education (ACE)	15	6
	Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE)	181	72.4
	Bachelor Degree in Education (B.ED)	49	19.6
	Masters Degree in Education (M.ED)	—	—
	Total	250	100

Displayed on table 1 above are respondents' responses to the four independent variables. In it, there are 131 (52.4%) females and 118 (47.2%) males, with 1 (0.4%) respondent who failed to indicate his/her sex.

It also consisted of 62 (24.8%) primary 3 teachers, 59 (23.6%) primary 4 teachers, 63 (25.2%) primary 5 teachers and 66 (26.4%) primary 6 teachers. With regards to teaching experience, it consisted of 40 (16%) teachers with between 1-10 years, 77 (30.8%) with between 11-20 years, 108 (43.2%) within the range of 21-30 years and 23 (9.2%) with over 31 years teaching experience, respectively. And in terms of educational qualification, there are 5 (2%), 15 (6%), 181 (72.4%) and 49 (19.6%) TCII, ACE, NCE and B.ED teachers with the respective educational qualifications.

2.1. Results

Research Question 1: Are classteachers' CA procedures systematic?

In order to answer the above research question, items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 were posed and analyzed. The results are as shown below:

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Systematicism of Classteachers' CA Procedures

Item	Systematicism	Response	f	%
1.	Do you practice CA in your school?	Yes	250	100
		No	—	—
		Total	250	100
2.	Do you use CA scores to grade pupils before sending their scores to Ministry Of Education (MOE) for the production of Primary Six Leaving Certificate (PSLC)?	Yes	213	85.2
		No	30	12
		No response	7	2.8
		Total	250	100
3.	Do you have any standing rules in this school on when teachers should conduct CA?	Yes	201	80.4
		No	39	15.6
		No response	10	4
		Total	250	100
4.	As a rule, how frequently do you conduct CA in the school?	Once weekly	5	2
		2 times per term	15	6
		3 times per term	220	88
		4 times per term	10	4
		Total	250	100
5.	Specifically what week/s is your CA written?	Any week	19	7.6
		—	—	—
		1 st ,4 th & 8 th week	—	—
		2 nd ,3 rd ,9 th & 12 th week	24	9.6
		3 rd ,6 th , & 9 th week	200	80
		No response	7	2.8
Total	250	100		
6.	At the agreed interval for CA, what is the mode of the CA?	Written test	32	12.8
		Oral test	—	—
		Objective test	191	76.4
		Theory test	27	10.8
		All the above	—	—
		Total	250	100

It is revealed on table 2 above that all the respondents 250 (100%) indicated that they practiced CA in their schools. Also, majority of the respondents agreed that they do use CA scores in grading pupils for PSLC, and that there was standing rules on when to conduct their CA as well as its frequency; they also indicated the mode of the CA.

Research Question 2: Is the classteachers' CA comprehensive procedurally?

To be able to provide germane answer to the above research question, item 7 was posed and analyzed to see the extent of classteachers' adherence to the principle of comprehensiveness as an attribute of CA. The results are as shown below:

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Comprehensiveness of Classteachers' CA Procedures

Item	Comprehensiveness	Response	f	%
7.	Which of these instruments do you use in gathering marks for pupils' CA?	Classwork assignment	8	3.2
		Homework assignment	—	—
		Test	39	15.6
		Examination	203	81.2
		Oral drills	—	—
		Practical work (e.g. craft)	—	—
		Projects	—	—
		Observations	—	—
		Questionnaire	—	—
		Interviews	—	—
		Total	250	100

As shown on table 3 above, only three instruments viz, examination 203 (81.2%), test 39 (15.6%) and classwork 8 (3.2%) (that could only serve to collect data from the cognitive domains only) are reported to be employed to garner scores for pupils' CA; other instruments (that could help to collect data on pupils' affective and psychomotor domains) were not used Research Question 3: Is the classteachers' CA data gathering technique cumulative?

In an attempt to provide apposite answer to the above research question, items 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 were posed and the responses accordingly analyzed to see the extent of classteachers' possession of cumulateness as an attribute of CA. The results are as shown below:

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Cumulateness of Classteachers' CA Procedures

Item	Cumulateness	Response	f	%
8. For pry 3,4,5 teachers only	As the classteacher in primary 3/4/5, do you send any primary 3/4/5 scores to primary 6 while compiling their data to be sent to MOE for production of PSLC?	Yes	—	—
		No	123	66.8
		No response	61	33.2
		Total	184	100
9. For pry 6 teachers only	As the classteacher in primary six, do you use any brought-forward primary 3 data while compiling primary scores sent to MOE for production of PSLC?	Yes	—	—
		No	59	89.4
		No response	7	10.6
		Total	66	100
10. For pry 6 teachers only	As the classteacher in primary six, do you use any brought-forward primary 4 data while compiling primary scores sent to MOE for production of PSLC?	Yes	—	—
		No	57	86.4
		No response	9	13.6
		Total	66	100
11. For pry 6 teachers only	As the classteacher in primary six, do you use any brought-forward primary 5 data while compiling primary scores sent to MOE for production of PSLC?	Yes	—	—
		No	61	92.4
		No response	5	7.6
		Total	66	100
12. For pry 6 teachers only	If your answers to items 9, 10, and 11 are yeses, how then do you award marks for pupils sent to MOE to be used in the production of PSLC?	Based on my knowledge of their academic ability	23	35
		Based on Headteachers' advice to pass the pupils	29	44
		Based on the use of the two methods above	14	21
		Total	66	100

On table 4 above, majority of the primaries 3, 4, and 5 teachers showed they were not sending any data on their pupils who had moved to primary six while inputting their scores for CA in primary six.

Also primary 6 teachers responded that they do not use any previous class scores while inputting CA scores to be sent to the MOE for the processing of PSLC; they also showed how they make up for the absent, previous classes brought forward scores while inputting CA scores for pupils' PSLC. Research Question 4: What is the classteachers' knowledge of the percentage aggregate scores of primaries 3, 4, 5, and 6 CA scores to input into PSLC as mandated by MOE?

In the efforts to provide requisite answer to the above research question, items 13, 14, 15, and 16 were posed and the responses accordingly analyzed. The results are as displayed below:

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of Classteachers' Knowledge of Percentage Aggregate Scores of Primaries 3, 4, 5, and 6 CA Scores to Input into PSLC

Item	Class Percentage Input into PSLC	Response	f	%
13.	What percent of primary 3 aggregate CA scores is mandated by MOE to go into PSLC?	10%	7	2.8
		20%	30	12
		30%	23	9.2
		40%	21	8.4
		No response	169	67.6
		Total	250	100
14.	What percent of primary 4 aggregate CA scores is mandated by MOE to go into PSLC?	10%	17	6.8
		20%	9	3.6
		30%	39	15.6
		40%	24	9.6
		No response	161	64.4
		Total	250	100
15.	What percent of primary 5 aggregate CA scores is mandated by MOE to go into PSLC?	10%	21	8.4
		20%	17	6.8
		30%	11	4.4
		40%	30	12
		No response	171	68.4
		Total	250	100
16.	What percent of primary 6 aggregate CA scores is mandated by MOE to go into PSLC?	10%	19	7.6
		20%	23	9.2
		30%	33	13.2
		40%	17	6.8
		No response	158	63.2
		Total	250	100

Table 5 clearly shows the level of the respondents' knowledge of percentage aggregate scores of primaries 3, 4, 5 and 6 CA scores to input into PSLC as mandated by MOE.

3. Discussion

Research question 1 sought to find out if classteachers' CA procedures were systematic, that is being guided by known operational plan. The finding of the study showed the affirmative, as all the respondents not only responded that they practiced CA in their classes/schools but overwhelming majority responded that their CAs was conducted under a standing rule, including the CA's frequency as well as the designated intervals. However, the disparity displayed in the respondents' responses across the items seems to show that rather than either state-wide or Local Government Area-based, the guiding rules are schools-based. This is consistent with research showing that schools in Ondo state operated a non-uniform strategy for implementing CA policy provisions (Adebowale & Alao, 2008).

For any assessment and indeed CA scores on learners to have comprehensiveness as an attribute, the assessor must have made use of diverse instruments to cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learners (Ojerinde, 2011; NTI, 2007; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984; Ipaye, 1982; Ezewu & Okoye, 1981). The finding of this study however showed teachers' CA procedures to be devoid of comprehensiveness; for, out of a list of ten instruments presented, only three namely: examination, tests and classwork assignments, which could fairly cover the cognitive domains of learners, leaving out other instruments that could have covered the affective and psychomotor domains-were employed by the respondents to garner data into pupils' CA. This finding replicates what has been found that teachers in Nigeria rely only on organized examination and tests results for component of pupils' CA scores (Oriola, 2005), while neglecting the affective or attitudinal learning products (Yakubu, 2005), as well as the psychomotor domains.

Cumulativeness as a feature of CA implies the summation of learners' past with the present performance scores, making it grow with them over a period of time in all ramifications and to form the basis of their certification in known ratio (Ojerinde, 2011; Olaleye, 2005; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984; Ipaye, 1982; Ezewu & Okoye, 1981).

This feature, however, is lacking in the CAs of the primary school teachers studied. Although, the practice in Nigerian schools is for teachers to use only organized tests and examinations results to form the component for generating CA result for the term and year (Oriola, 2005), which practice erodes the cumulative attribute of CA. Worse still, the finding under cumulativeness of teachers' PSLC CA technique in this study revealed that teachers manufactured their scores, thus not based on any single or multiple organized tests or examinations. This finding is consistent with that of Odongo (2001), including that of Salehe and Alute (2001) who revealed that classteachers, handicapped by large class size and inadequate facilities produce unreliable scores which they returned to examination bodies as CA scores, to which these examination have expressed doubts about the reliability of these scores..

The MOE in Ondo state expects that pupils' CA class ratio into PSLC be in Primary 3 (10%), 4 (20%), 5 (30%) and 6 (40%) ratio respectively (Olaleye, 2005); this agrees with the submissions of some authorities that generation of CA scores must be in known ratio (e. g., Ojerinde, 2011; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984). However, it was found in this study that teachers do not know this rule; as only a very small percentage of the respondents: 2.8%, 3.6%, 4.4%, and 6.8% correctly responded to the primary 3 (10%), 4 (20%), 5 (30%) and 6 (40%) pupils' CA ratio input into PSLC. This finding may be attributed to absence of proper orientation and lack of relevant information made available to the teachers to acquaint them with mandatory class-based ratio of scores to input into PSLC. For, Okere (2006) has submitted that people need adequate, timely, appropriate and useable information to guide them in decision-making.

Guidance orientation is one of the attributes of CA (Ojerinde, 2011; Olaleye, 2005; Alonge, 2004; Ojerinde & Falayajo, 1984), thus suggesting that the summary of scores on pupils' certificates, cards, or report sheets would validly display pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that this can be used to guide pupils whenever important decisions are needed to be taken on their future academic and vocational pursuits. Thus, for certificates, cards, or report sheets issued on the basis of CA to validly serve the guidance orientation purpose, it must reflect reality and devoid of rater bias.

According to Anderson, et al (1975) as referenced in Moye and Adediwura, (2010), school assessment needed to be carried out in manner that is valid and reliable, assess what it claimed to assess to be effective and valuable to individuals and organizations needing it; but if it is otherwise invalid and unreliable, any decision taken on the basis of it will be equally defective, which may result in putting square pegs in round holes. Thus, the findings of this study has revealed that the summary of CA scores sent by primary school teachers to MOE who processed these scores and used same in preparing PSLC issued by Headteachers lacks both CA attributes and content validity.

Although it is on records that the nature, process and methods of handling CA have since been included in all teacher preparation programmes leading to the awards of all educational qualifications like TCII, NCE, B.Ed, B.A. Ed, M.Ed, M.A. Ed in Nigeria (Adebowale & Alao, 2008), but it does appear that one-touch class interaction between lecturers and teachers and once-in-a-while training workshop for just few selected teachers on such a weighty educational policy as CA is grossly inadequate to equip the practitioners of CA with all it takes. For instance, on the challenges faced by the respondents at implementing CA practice in their schools, poor orientation of teachers by the government was topmost, as overwhelming majority of those interviewed said they had never attended any workshop in that regard; others are inadequate time on the part of teachers due to the MOE's mandate for them to finish the termly scheme of work, and lack of storage facilities, as some of the respondents expressed regrets that termites often destroy their class records during long vacation holidays.

3.1. Conclusion and Recommendations

It was found in this study that apart from systematicism, primary school teachers' CA procedures lack comprehensiveness and cumulateness. Worse still, the summation of scores they sent to MOE on which the Ministry acts upon to process PSLC which are subsequently issued to deserving pupils by their respective Headteachers was not based on scores generated using CA procedures but on scores manufactured by primary six teachers (the last class the pupils pass through) without any input from the teachers who had taught the pupils in lower classes.

The study therefore concludes that the grades reflected on such issued Primary Six Leaving Certificates (PSLC) do not reflect the true worth of the recipients and subsequently, would not be a valid tool that can be rightly used in their placement, either academically or vocationally. On the basis of the findings of this study, it is recommended as follows:

- i. Government should urgently release a blueprint on a state-wide uniform strategy for implementing CA policy provisions wherein teachers and Headteachers as the implementers of government CA programme be given periodic orientation and re-orientation on the correct practices of CA and its relevance to Nigerian education.
- ii. Each Local Government Universal Basic Education Area should be mandated to have CA committee and each primary school should also have its own CA committee, the former overseeing the functions of the latter.
- iii. Relevant data-gathering instruments that cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of pupils should be designed and made available in schools, as facts have emerged that only documents that could be used to gather data on pupils from the cognitive domain are mostly available.
- iv. More than ever before, the need for Guidance Counsellors in primary schools is becoming imperative as they are better trained to head the CA committee in each primary school and provide guidance on generation of data from the affective and psychomotor domains of pupils.
- v. Rather than wait till pupils are in primary six before sending their CA form to collect primaries 3, 4, 5, and 6 CAs en bloc, such document should be made available to classteachers in these classes to enter their objective data based on 100; these could be stored inside lockable iron shelves that is both fire and insects-proof and later retrieved when pupils are in primary six and recalculated to reflect the class ratio expected by MOE

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