CUMULATIVE AND GUIDANCE-ORIENTED CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND STUDENTS' CAREER CHOICE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

This study sought to determine the influence of the characteristics of continuous assessment on students' career choice in public secondary school in Uyo Local Government. The study focused on two characteristics of continuous assessment- cumulative and guidance-oriented. The major purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which continuous assessment (taking cognizance of its characteristics) influence the career choice of students. Two hypotheses and two research questions were generated by the researchers from the objective of study and tested using simple regression analysis. The ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The population for the study consisted of a sample drawn randomly from ten (10) public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government consisting of thirty (30) students from each school. The "Characteristics of Continuous Assessment and Career Choice Questionnaire" (CCACCQ) an instrument developed by the researchers, was used for the data collection for the study. The result of the analysis showed that the Characteristics of continuous assessment (cumulative and guidance-oriented) significantly influence students' career choice in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government, Akwa Ibom State.

Key Words: Continuous assessment, cumulative, guidance-oriented, career choice.

1   Background
1.1   Continuous Assessment

The repeated mention of continuous assessment in the National Policy of Education emphasizes the importance of continuous assessment in Nigerian schools. Before the introduction of continuous assessment in Nigerian schools, end of term examinations was used as the method of evaluation. This method though was not a comprehensive form of assessment. The most obvious modification

in the type of assessment used in Nigerian schools after the introduction of continuous assessment was to assess the child's work regularly throughout the course of school. On the basis of this, either wholly certify him/her or combine such continuous assessment in a predetermined ratio to the results of a back-up examination. This continuous assessment were recorded and used in guiding the students through their career choices in higher institutions.

Ajuonuma (2006) viewed assessment as the gathering of data and making them interpretable to make decisions. It involves the collection of data with the aim of making value judgment about the quality or value of a person, object, group or event.

Educational assessment cannot be removed from the educational institution as it forms an integral part of education. It is through educational assessment that observing and measuring of expected change in behaviour of students is carried out. Through the National Policy on Education, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN 2004) stated that educational assessment at all levels of education would be liberalized by basing them in whole or in part on continuous assessment.

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (FMEST, 1995) defined continuous assessment as a mechanism that allows the final grading of a student to take account of his/her cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of behaviour. And it involves the use of a great variety of modes of evaluation for the purposes of guiding and improving learning ability, performance and understanding the strength and weakness of a student which will help a student understand where to fit in conveniently while making career choices. This also helps guidance counsellors in guiding the students.

Continuous assessment can be used to predict students' possible success in a career or on a particular job. According to Ughamadu (2009), continuous assessment can be used in identifying students' growth or lack of it, in acquiring desirable knowledge, skill, attitudes and social values. Understanding Ughamadu's view, continuous assessment can be said to make career choice easier for students as it helps a student know with the result of his/her assessment, his/her growth rate in the courses needed for a desired career.

Andrew (2000) viewed continuous assessment as a means of indicating the progress or maturation of the student and also for detecting problems. From Andrew's point of view, it is understood that continuous assessment helps the teacher or guidance counsellors and the student to know the strength and weakness of the student and this should aid in helping the teacher or guidance counsellor in guiding the student rightly. Continuous assessment in a nutshell makes the work of the guidance counsellor easier.

Continuous assessment is not centered on the normal school curriculum, it takes cognizance of the hidden curriculum of the school too which is why continuous assessment is said to be all encompassing as it carries along the three (3) domains of learning; cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

1.2 Career

Career is an important aspect of one's life as it encompasses a larger part of one's living. It is advisable most times that one should make a career choice based on interest and ability. Simseck and Oge (2009) sees career as an instrument of boost to an individual's self-esteem and gives a sense of belonging. Career is therefore an integral part of the life of any living and therefore cannot leave its choice to fate or gamble through choices of career. Saka and Gati (2007) sees career decision-making as one of the difficulties that college student may face.

There are various careers in the world to be chosen from in recent times and there's also the fear of staying top in one's chosen career, it is only advisable for one to choose for himself a career that he can effortlessly grow and become great with. Continuous assessment not only gives a student the knowledge of which career to choose from the subject

combination he excels in, the feedback gotten from continuous assessment also encourages students to do better in subject combination that are relevant to their dream or desired career if they find out they have loopholes in those subjects.

1.3 Cumulative Characteristic of Continuous Assessment

One of the aims of continuous assessment data is to give a progressive and cumulative record of the student's performance in a school term, year or the period of a student's study in a school. Continuous assessment data should be able to show a student's growth rate over a period of time that is, one should be able to tell if a child is improving or not in his seen curriculum or hidden curriculum goals. Ndem, Udoh and Joseph (2003) added that cumulative data aids teachers, school administrators, guidance counsellors and the student involved in decision making for a particular student.

Cumulative data helps the guidance counsellor in guiding the student rightly when it comes to career choice. It also helps a student to appreciate his/her strengths and enables the student to also work on the areas of weaknesses. It is this cumulative data of continuous assessment that sometimes awaken students to reality when their admired line of career isn't their area of strength. The strong passion for a desired career either drives them to work harder on the needed subjects or the comfort zone of their strength drives them to choose a career suitable to their area of strength.

1.4 Guidance-Oriented Characteristic of Continuous Assessment

A close study of the cumulative data about the child will help in uncovering undesirable trends in a child simply put, a child who might not be doing well in class can be helped by the guidance counselor through the help of the cumulative data that has been recorded from the continuous assessment, a child who was performing outstandingly but

suddenly began to have poor grades can also be helped through this data. Continuous assessment helps in identifying these trends and corrective measures are put in place to help the student. Continuous assessment results can then be referred to as feedback into the system with the aim of improving the entire educational system and helping with achieving education goals (Ndem, et. al., 2003; Odu and Upula, 2016; Effiong, and Ekpo, 2016).

Information gathered from the results of continuous assessment activities students engage in is used to guide the students to further academic development towards the right career prospect (Effiong, Ekpo and Udoh, 2016). Data gotten from continuous assessment can also help to understand the personality trait of students which is an important factor in choosing a career as pointed out by Creed et al. (2007) in their opinion of developmental theories of career which emphasizes the importance of personal interests, skills, and values when expressing the barriers in decision-making.

Many factors influence career choice; these includes personality trait, family background, peer group influence etc. Most of these factors have been studied to know their extent of influence on career choice, this paper however seek to find out if the cumulative and guidance oriented characteristics of continuous assessment have any significant influence on the career choice of students in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of the cumulative data of continuous assessment on students' career choice
2. To determine the influence of guidance and counselling on students' career choice.

1.5 Statement of Problem

There's an increasing number of people in recent times who do not find fulfilment in their career or struggle through school because

they chose a career path without clearly considering the records of their academic performance. The importance of career which has often times been taken for granted too as some just think it's about the economic satisfaction not taking into consideration the fact that career is a lifelong path. Though continuous assessment records and guidance and counselling unit are available in various schools in Nigeria, they have not been correctly utilized in guiding students through career choice. It is on this basis that this study seeks to find out the influence of cumulative and guidance oriented characteristics of continuous assessment on students' career choice.

1.6 Research Question

This study is aimed at answering the following questions:

1. How does the cumulative data of continuous assessment influence students' career choice?
2. How does guidance and counselling influence students' career choice?

1.7 Research Hypothesis

1. Cumulative data of continuous assessment has no significant influence on students' career choice.
2. Guidance and counselling has no significant influence on students' career choice.

1.8 Research Method

The study adopted the ex-post facto research design which is also known as causal-comparative design and was carried out in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population comprised of all the Senior Secondary School Two (SSS 2) students of all the fourteen (14) public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. Ten (10) public secondary schools were randomly sampled and used for the study. Using stratified random sampling technique, thirty student were randomly selected from each of ten (10) schools, the sample size was therefore made up of three hundred (300) students. An instrument

made by the researchers named "Characteristics of Continuous Assessment and Career Choice Questionnaire" (CCACCQ) was used to obtain information on the independent sub-variables (cumulative data of continuous assessment and guidance and counseling) and the dependent variable (career choice). The instrument was a 4-point likert scale with declarative statements was designed by the researcher to obtain information. The instrument was divided into two sections, section A of the CCACCQ had items on personal data of the respondents regarding the name of students' school, class and gender. Section B of the instrument was structured in a 4-point likert scale to elicit information on the cumulative and guidance oriented characteristics of continuous assessment in their various school which comprised eight (8) items and participants' career choice which comprised six (six) items. The responses were scored as follow: Strongly Agree (SA) - 4 points, Agree (A) - 3 points, Disagree (D) - 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1 point. The research instrument was validated by two (2) lecturers in the educational evaluation unit of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Uyo, Uyo. The reliability of the instrument was done using Cronbach Alpha method of reliability by trial testing the instrument on thirty (30) students who were not part of the sample selected for the study but had the qualities of those selected for the study. The reliability coefficient of 0.67 was obtained. The data gotten was treated using linear regression method of analysis. R-square was used to answer the research questions while F-cal was used to answer the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

2 Results of Data Analysis

Research Question 1

Table 1: How does the cumulative data of continuous assessment influence students'

career choice? The result in Table 1 shows the extent of influence cumulative data of continuous assessment has on students' career choice in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The values of the regression index (R)= .698 and the coefficient of determination (R-Square)= .487 indicates that cumulative data of continuous assessment has 49% influence on the variations of students' career choice in public secondary schools of Uyo Local Government, Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Summary of Regression Coefficients of responses on the influence of Cumulative Data of Continuous Assessment on Student's Career Choice

Measures	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Cumulative data of continuous assessment VS Students' Career Choice	.698	.487	.486	1.32532

Hypothesis 1
Cumulative data of continuous assessment has no significant influence on students' career choice

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of Cumulative data of Continuous Assessment and Career Choice

measures		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean squares	f-cal	F-critical	Decision
Cumulative Data of Continuous Assessment Vs.	Regression	497.652	1	497.652	3.89	1.756	
Students' Career Choice	Residual	283.325	298	23.428			
	Total	1021.080	299				Sig.

R = .698   R² = .487   SE = 1.32532

The result in Table 2 showed that the calculated F-value of 283.325 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value, the null hypothesis which states that cumulative data of continuous assessment has no significant influence on students' career choice in public secondary school in Uyo Local Government Area is rejected.

The result in Table 3 shows the extent of influence guidance and counselling has on students' career choice in public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. The values of the regression index (R)= .218 and the coefficient of determination (R-Square)= .048 indicates that guidance and counselling has 5% influence on the variation of the career choice of students in public secondary schools of Uyo Local Government, Akwa Ibom State.

Research Question 2
Table 3: Summary of Regression Coefficients of responses on the influence of guidance and counselling on students' career choice in public secondary schools in Uyo.

Measures	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Guidance and Counselling Vs. Students' Career Choice	.218	.048	.045	2.88105

Hypothesis 2
Guidance and counselling has no significant influence on students' career choice

Table 4: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of Guidance and Counselling and Career Choice

Measures		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F- cal.	F-crit.	Decision
Guidance and counselling VS.	Regression	123.954	1	123.954			
Students' Career choice	Residual	2473.526	298	8.300	14.933	3.89	Sig.

R = .218　　　　R^2 = .048　　　　SE = 2.88105

The result in Table 4 showed that the calculated F-value of 14.933 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. Since the calculated F-value is greater than the critical F-value, the null hypothesis which states that guidance and counselling has no significant influence on students' career choice in public secondary school in Uyo Local Government Area is rejected.

3　　　Discussion of Findings
　　　The result of the data analysed in Table 2 above, it shows that cumulative data of continuous assessment has a positive significant influence on students' study habit because the calculated F-value of 283.325 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 when tested at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that cumulative data of continuous assessment that shows the trend of a student's performance in different subjects significantly influence the career choice of the student concerned. This finding agrees with Ughamadu (2009) who viewed continuous assessment as a tool in identifying students' growth or lack of it, in acquiring desirable knowledge, skill, attitudes and social values because of its cumulative characteristic which aids the teacher, school administration and the student concerned in decision-making.

　　　The result of the data analysed in Table 4 above, it shows that guidance and counselling has a positive significant influence on students'

study habit because that the calculated F-value of 14.933 is greater than the critical F-value of 3.89 at 0.05 level of significance This implies that guidance and counselling correctly imbibed in public secondary schools can guide students while making career choices. Students' continuous assessment records kept with guidance and counselling unit helps the counsellor in advising the students on career prospects and choice of course of study. Feedback of continuous assessment records also helps the students to know which career best suits his/her academic strengths.

Conclusion

Conclusively, difficulty in choosing a career for students in secondary can be avoided through the good use of continuous assessment that is, by taking seriously the cumulative and guidance oriented characteristics of continuous assessment. Students will follow better career path if they put to good use the cumulative record of their continuous assessment and the guidance and counselling unit of the school.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made following the findings:
1. Schools should be equipped with professional guidance counsellors and should encourage students to visit them.
2. Career programs should be organized in schools to help students understand the importance of getting it right in career.
3. Students assessment feedback should be given to them promptly to enable them understand their strengths and weaknesses so that they can ask for help.
4. Guidance and counselling units should have proper records of students continuous assessment data to enable them guide students properly.

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