

Correlation between continuous assessment and students' performance in Islamic studies

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the correlation between continuous assessment scores and Islamic Studies students' performance in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin, Nigeria. The instruments used were the copy of cumulative continuous assessment scores for three consecutive years (2011-2013) in Islamic Studies; (ii) the 2011-2013 Islamic Studies may/June SSCE computerized result sheets sent to each school by WAEC and NECO. The results of students were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) and regression. The findings showed that: (i) Students' performance in Islamic Studies in NECO and WASSCE of the years under study (2011-2013) is fluctuating. (ii). Significant relationship exists between students' continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in SSCE conducted by NECO. (iii). There is a significant relationship between students' continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in WASSCE. (iv). There is a significant correlation among the school type of Students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that there is a need to encourage Islamic Studies teachers in both public and private senior secondary schools to attach importance to the proper and regular conduct of continuous assessments.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education as a process, revolves around transmission of worthwhile knowledge, ideas, skills and values from generations to generations. In this process, efforts are made to enable individual acquire norms and values that would enable him to become a useful member of the society in which he belongs to. However, no matter how lofty educational process is, it would lack focus if it is carried out without evaluation. Perhaps, this is why it is stressed in the National Policy on Education [1] that educational assessment and evaluation shall be based on time to time measurement of the progress of the individual learner. More so, in teaching and learning situation, it is imperative to always ascertain how much learning had taken place in students and always measure learning outcomes. This might be why Ajidagba [2] asserted that assessment in whatever form remains the only known means of determining students' level of academic and non-academic achievement.

In educational context, one of the classes of evaluation as noted by Abiri [3] is student evaluation. This concentrates on such issues as students' abilities, attitudes, behavior, welfare and performance or

achievement as well as their selection process, enrolment figures and graduation [3]. Evaluation is also categorized as internal or external depending on its source that is whether the conducting agency is from within or outside the organization, respectively. An internal evaluation would normally be controlled by the teachers or the institution concerned while an external one would be carried out by government agency and examination body such as WAEC, NABTEB, NBEM, JAMB, NUC, NECO, NTI etc [3]. The place of assessment in teaching and learning process could not be overemphasized. Assessment is a channel through which the progress of academic activities is supplied to students and teachers [4]. Assessment is the process of making judgments about a student's performance on a given task [5].

The concept of continuous assessment has been substantially emphasized but part of the challenges of continuous assessment is lack of understanding in term of implementation and consequently leads to the poor implementation. [6] Globally, in educational practice, continuous assessment has been recognized as an integral part of teaching and learning process and an indispensable instrument of quality assurance [7]. It has been stressed that continuous assessment as a Guidance –Oriented benefits teachers, learners, educators and parents [8].

Continuous assessment is a process of periodic collection of information throughout a course /programme of study with the purpose of determining the progress towards goal attainment. The periodic assessments are used to update teachers' judgment about their pupils based on accumulated information collected [9]. Continuous assessment demands that teacher takes into consideration information obtained from all sources about the child. Continuous assessment is a device for monitoring and improving learning in schools and the general performance of students, since the final evaluation and grading will depend largely on the systematic collection, comprehensive diagnostic data over a specific period.

Continuous assessment has been incorporated into Nigerian educational system right from 1982 when the 6-3-3-4 educational system was launched in the country. The newly introduced 9-3-4 system is not a complete departure from the 6-3-3-4 in terms of the importance and administration of continuous assessment. The difference between the two is that the students will be in school for nine years for basic education which combine former primary and junior secondary level of normal three years [2]. Before the introduction of the new system of education, internal and external forms of assessment took place in educational settings. The internal assessment was in form of examinations conducted to determine students' achievement at the end of terms and at the end of year to determine the students' eligibility for promotion to the next level. The external assessment on the other hand was in form of the examination conducted for the purpose of certification at the end of a post primary level of education [2].

In a related development, the Federal Government of Nigeria introduced another system of assessment in which internal assessment formed an integral part of the external assessment. This is technically referred to as the continuous assessment (CA). This connotes that both internal and external assessments are combined to determine the overall students' academic performance [10].

Islamic Religious Studies is one of the important subjects in the school curriculum at the primary, secondary and higher institutions of learning. Islamic religious studies is one of the subjects that are recognized as core subjects in the upper basic level or classes but elective in senior secondary level Federal Republic of Nigeria [11]. Ajidagba [12] analysed the importance of Islamic religious studies as a discipline that helps to direct man's mind to the right use of scientific discoveries and inventions in modern days. The subject will provide man with a spiritual balm needed for facing difficult challenges of the modern time [12-15].

Moreover, the public examination bodies that conduct senior school certificate (SSCE) examination in Islamic Studies are West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), National Board for Arabic and Islamic Studies (NBAIS) and National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB). WAEC was established in 1952 following the acceptance of the Jeffery report by the then Colonial Government in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, Sierra-Leone and the Gambia; who passed appropriate ordinances in their Legislative Assemblies in 1951. WAEC's vision is to be a world – class examining body, adding value to educational goals of its numerous stakeholders. The Council conducts several international and national examinations in all members of countries except Nigeria where it has shed all but one of its examinations, the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) for the school candidates in May/June and private candidates in November/December [16]. WAEC had long been the only examining body conducting Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) [17].

National Examination Council (NECO) was established in 1999. By its mandate, it was to take over the responsibilities of the National Board for Educational Measurement (NBEM). Since 2001, NECO, which is the National Examinations Outfit established in 1999 by the Federal Government to conduct examinations in parallel with West African Examinations Council (WAEC) has been providing in service training for teachers to participate in its Senior School Assessment/Certification Programme during which NECO share

with the participating teachers the very concept and philosophy of the CA, the problems facing the CA implementation and the how best it could be implemented [18].

Assessment is a means by which the learners' academic achievements are ascertained by the teacher. It is a mechanism that is usually adopted in educational setting to ascertain how beneficial is the instructional processes as well as the impact of academic activities on learners. Through assessment, the stakeholders involved in education are provided with the feedback data [14]. It helps in determining the kind of decision and action to embark upon in teaching- learning situation. Assessment has been viewed to be quantitative in the sense that assessors usually arrive at an index of the behaviour, skill, or ability assessed. The index itself must necessarily vary from learner to learners and as much retains the quality of comparability. In addition, assessment assists in determining individual differences and proffer solutions to problems encountered by each learner [19].

Another variable that is of the interest in this research is the school type. School type constitutes one of the factors that have been described as having influence on students' performance in school subjects. Khan and Rodrigues found that students from the private schools showed a slightly high degree of confidence in learning mathematics as compared to students from the government schools. They also, found that private school students had more positive attitude than public school students [20].

Statement of the Problem: Educational assessment constitutes a vital part of a solid educational system. Through assessment, important educational conclusions are drawn and decisions are made [21]. Continuous assessment has been major aspect in the evaluation of learners recently. It is intended to make up the final grading of a learner at the end of a learning period.

Thus, various studies have been conducted on the importance of continuous assessment vis-à-vis students' academic performance and achievement. For instance, O'kwu and Orum investigated how students' scores in continuous assessment has influenced their scores in the final examination in the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level Mathematics [9 above]. Adesoji and Kenni did investigation on Continuous Assessment, Mock Results and Gender as Predictors of Academic Performance of Chemistry Students in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ekiti State [21]. Also, Daniel studied comparison of Continuous Assessment (CA) and Examination scores in an English Speech Work Class [22].

In addition, Kolawole and Ala investigated predictive validity of Continuous Assessment scores on students' performance in Mathematics in some selected states in the South-West Nigeria [23]. In all of the previous studies that are available to the researcher at present, no study has been carried out with respect to Kwara State on relationship between continuous assessment and students' performance in the final SSCE examination in Islamic Studies. This study however intended to study relationship between continuous assessment scores and students' academic performance in WASCE and NECO Examinations. This is the gap which the study aimed at filling.

Purpose of the Study: the general purpose of this study was to investigate correlation between continuous assessment scores and Islamic Studies students' performance in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated: (i). The general performance of students in Islamic Studies in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin (2011-2013). (ii). The extent to which the continuous assessment scores of Students correlate with their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE. (iii). The extent to which the continuous assessment scores of Students correlate with their performance in Islamic Studies in WASSCE. (iv). Relationship among the school type of students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE and WASSCE.

Research Questions: in this study, the following questions were raised and answered: (i). What is the general performance of students in Islamic Studies in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin (2011-2013)? (ii). To what extent do the continuous assessment scores of Students correlate with their performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Islamic Studies? (iii). To what extent do the continuous assessment scores of Students correlate with their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE? (iv). Is there any relationship among the school type of students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE and WASSCE?

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study: HO1: There is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE. HO2: There is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Islamic Studies in WASSCE. HO3: There is no significant correlation among the school type of Students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in NECO SSCE and WASSCE

2. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted correlation research of a survey type. The study also explored ex- post facto in which there was no treatment and manipulation of any variable. But rather, it involved collection of data from records. The locale for the study was Ilorin, Kwara state. The population for the study was all the 674 public and private secondary schools in Kwara state while the target population was the senior secondary schools that registered students for 2011 to 2013 final year Islamic Studies WAEC and NECO examinations in Ilorin Kwara State, Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 60 students from each of the six sampled secondary schools in the area. The instruments used are, (i) the copy of cumulative continuous assessment for three consecutive years (2011-2013) in Islamic Studies; (ii) the 2011-2013 Islamic Studies may/June SSCE computerized result sheets sent to each school by WAEC and NECO. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this study, four research questions were raised and three hypotheses were formulated. Research question one was answered using descriptive statistic while the remaining research questions have corresponding hypotheses. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) was adopted to analyse data for hypotheses 1 and 2 and regression was used for the hypothesis 3.

3.1. Answering research question one

What is the general performance of students in Islamic Studies in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin (2011-2013)?

The Table 1 above reveals that 0.8% Of the candidates that enrolled for the WASSCE across the three years (2011-2013) were absent, 3.9 % got F9, 14.4 % got E8 grade, 13.9 % got D7, 19.7% had C6, 10.6% had C5, 8.9% had C4, 13.1 % got B3, 8.9 % had B2 and 5.8 had A1 grade.

It could be inferred from the above that the students' performance in Islamic Studies in WASSCE of the years under study (2011-2013) in the schools that participated in the study is fairly good. This is because a significant percentage of the candidates pass the examination.

Table 1. Students performance in WASSCE crosstabulation

Year of Examination	Absent	Students Performance in WASSCE									Total
		F9	E8	D7	C6	C5	C4	B3	B2	A1	
2011	2	10	22	20	31	6	4	15	5	5	120
2012	0	1	18	15	18	15	13	17	15	8	120
2013	1	3	12	15	22	17	15	15	12	8	120
Total	3	14	52	50	71	38	32	47	32	21	360

The Table 2 above reveals that 6.4% Of the candidates that enrolled for the NECO across the three years (2011-2013) were absent, 4.7 % got F9, 12.5 % got E8 grade, 19.7 % got D7, 27.2% had C6, 10.6% had C5, 9.4% had C4, 7.5 % got B3, 0.8 % had B2 and 1.1 had A1 grade.

It could be inferred from the above that the students' performance in Islamic Studies in NECO Examination of the years under study (2011-2013) in the schools that participated in the study is somehow good. This is because a significant percentage of the candidates pass the examination.

Table 2. Students performance in NECO SSCE crosstabulation

Year of Examination	Absent	Students Performance in NECO SSCE									Total
		F9	E8	D7	C6	C5	C4	B3	B2	A1	
2011	10	8	28	30	15	4	11	8	3	3	120
2012	9	6	14	29	30	13	12	7	0	0	120
2013	4	3	3	12	53	21	11	12	0	1	120
Total	23	17	45	72	98	38	34	27	3	4	360
Total Percentage	6.4%	4.7%	12.5%	19.7%	27.2%	10.6%	9.4%	7.5%	0.8%	1.1%	100%

The facts taken from Table 1 and Table 2 could however be used to answer the research question 1. Therefore, the general performance of senior secondary schools students in Islamic Studies in the years under study is fair.

3.1. Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

HO1: There is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO.

Correlation Analysis between Students' Performance in NECO and Continuous Assessment as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation analysis between students' performance in NECO and continuous assessment

Variables	No	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Decision
Students Performance in NECO SSCE	360	.288	.000	HO1 Rejected
Continuous Assessment	360			

The Pearson correlation coefficient, r value of .288, shows that there is a positive but low relationship between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO.

The sig (2-tailed) value .000 is lesser than 0.05 which means that there is statistical significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) conducted by NECO in Islamic Studies.

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO is rejected.

HO2: There is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Islamic Studies

Correlation Analysis between Students' Performance in WASSCE and Continuous Assessment as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlation analysis between students' performance in WASSCE and continuous assessment

Variables	No	Pearson correlation	Sig.	Decision
Students performance in WASSCE	360	.932	.000	HO2 Rejected
Continuous assessment	360			

The Pearson correlation coefficient, r value of .932, shows that there is a positive high correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Islamic Studies.

The sig (2-tailed) value .000 is lesser than 0.05 which means that there is statistical significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Islamic Studies.

The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation between the continuous assessment scores of Students and their performance in West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Islamic Studies is rejected.

HO3: There is no significant correlation among the school type of Students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO and WAEC.

Regression Analysis on Relationship Among School Type, Continuous Assessment Scores and Students' Performance in WASSCE and NECO as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression analysis on relationship among school type, continuous assessment scores and students' performance in WASSCE and NECO

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Means Squares	F	Sig.
Regression	7.046	3	2.349	10.080	.000b
Residual	82.954	356	.233		
Total	90.000	359			

a. Dependent Variable: School Type

b. Predictors: (Constant), continuous assessment, students performance in NECO SSCE, students performance in WASSCE

Correlation between continuous assessment and students' performance in Islamic ... (Jamiu Abdur rafiu)

Table 5 revealed that the F. value is 10.080 with significant probability value of .000 which is less than alpha value of 0.05. since the significant value is less than the alpha value ($0.000 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a positive correlation among the school type of students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO and WAEC. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant correlation among the school type of students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO and WAEC is rejected.

3.3. Discussion

The study has investigated the correlations between continuous assessment scores and Islamic Studies students' performance in WASSCE and NECO Examinations in Ilorin. The outcomes of the research established that the general performance of students in Islamic Studies in the senior secondary school certificate (SSCE) conducted by both NECO and WAEC in the years under study (2011-2013) fairly good and also fluctuating. These findings correspond to the findings of Oladosu and Oloyede whose respective findings established existence of fluctuations in the secondary school students' performance in both Arabic and Islamic Studies [24, 25]. Similarly, Abdur – Rafiu asserted that various WAEC chief examiners' reports have recorded that students' performance in WASSCE is not all that attractive [26].

The findings of this research also revealed that significant correlation exists between students' continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC. These results tally with the findings of several studies [9, 10, 21, 23] who have also found that there is a positive and significant relationship in the continuous assessment scores and students' performance in Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) respectively.

The findings of the study also correlate with the submission of Nwaogazie who upholds that students who performed well in internal examinations would also do well in external examination [27]. The findings of this study also showed that there is a significant correlation among the school type of Students, their continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in Senior School Certificate Examination conducted by NECO and WAEC. Students from private schools have better continuous assessment scores and performance in NECO and WAEC than their counterparts from public schools. This finding agrees with the findings of

Muhammed [28] whose findings indicated that private school students perform better than public school students in Islamic Studies. In addition, Muhammed [28] found that what had enhanced the performance in Islamic Studies of students from private schools are as follows:

- a. Private schools possess more competent, committed and qualified teachers than public schools.
- b. Private schools make sure they complete their curriculum of study before any external examination, but public schools hardly complete theirs due to recurring strike actions and nonchalant approach to teaching by most of the teachers because of their level of piety.

4. CONCLUSION

There is a significant relationship between Continuous assessment scores of the students and their performance in Islamic Studies in the SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC. Therefore, students' continuous assessment score could predict their performance in Islamic Studies in SSCE by both NECO and WAEC. In addition, there is relationship among school type, continuous assessment scores and students' performance in Islamic Studies in the SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since, continuous assessment scores could serve as a predictive factor to student' performance in Islamic Studies in SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC, there is a need to encourage Islamic Studies teachers in both public and private senior secondary schools to attach importance to the proper and regular conduct of continuous assessments.

For the fact that continuous assessment scores could predict students' performance in Islamic Studies in SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC, students need to be encouraged to be serious with their studies and not to attempt their tests and assignments (that are used invariably as continuous assessment) with carelessness as their continuous assessment scores could not only predict their final grades at SSCE conducted by both NECO and WAEC but also enhance their academic achievements.

Educational administrators and policy makers should come up with rules guiding the proper and regular conduct of continuous assessments in senior secondary schools. Likewise, the importance of consistency in keeping records of continuous assessment should be emphasized.

Government should employ qualified Islamic Studies teachers to teach in senior secondary school to reduce the incidence of heavy work load thereby giving them opportunity of being consistent in the conduct of continuous assessment.

Seminars and workshops should be organized on regular basis to intimate practicing Islamic Studies teachers as well as newly employed teachers on the practice of continuous assessment in senior secondary schools

Islamic Studies teachers at both public and private senior secondary schools should be encouraged and motivated to be dutiful and ensure that they cover stipulated syllabus/curriculum content with scintillating methods so as to boost the morale and enhance performances of their students in SSCE conducted by WAEC and NECO.

Since we are now in the era of information and communication technological advancement, fund should be made available for the procurement of equipment and materials needed for the practice of continuous assessment. This include computer and relevant electronic media for preparation of continuous assessment and keeping records relating to continuous assessment

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