



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION ON ECONOMICS STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the Impact of Continuous Assessment (CA) on Economics students' academic performance in Kaduna State, Nigeria. It provides a conceptual overview of continuous assessment of Economics students' academic performance within the study area. The instrument for data collection was the Economics Continuous Assessment Performance Test (ECAPT). The study population comprised 125 economics students drawn from intact classes within the study area. A quasi-experimental research design was employed, involving two groups: experimental and control. The objectives of the study were to: (i) examine the difference between pre-test and post-test performance of Economics Students taught with continuous assessment test in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria; and (ii) determine the difference between pre-test and post-test performances of Economics students taught using continuous assessment test and those taught without using continuous assessment test in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. These objectives were aligned with the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Findings revealed that continuous assessment test has potentials to significantly enhance the academic performance of Economics at the senior secondary school level in Kaduna State, Nigeria. Nevertheless, the effective use of continuous assessment tests requires deliberate efforts to address identified challenges and limitations. The study emphasises that while continuous assessment can enrich instructional delivery and foster improved learning outcomes, teachers' evaluation and pedagogical expertise remain indispensable. Continuous assessment tests should therefore be utilised to complement, rather than supplant, the essence of evaluation. Based on these findings, the study recommends, among other measures, the development of training programs to build teachers' capacity for new trends in school continuous assessment as one of the evaluation tools, especially in the use of teacher-made tests, increased investment in instructional materials support to facilitate new trends in continuous assessment evaluation in schools, and strengthened collaboration among educators and their learners' academic performance. Furthermore, the study underscores the need for continuous curriculum review (in the use of teacher-made-test and other forms of tests) and revision to ensure that Economics education remains relevant, foster skills acquisition.

Keywords: Continuous Assessment, Planning, Administration, Academic Performance and Economics.

Introduction

The importance of assessment in the teaching and learning process cannot be overemphasised. Continuous Assessment (CA) is an ongoing process of gathering information about students' learning and using it to improve instruction and adjust teaching strategies (Nitko, 2020). In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (2014) emphasises the use of continuous assessment in schools. However, despite the emphasis on continuous assessment (CA), studies have shown mixed results on its impact on students' academic performance (Kolawole, 2019; Ogunleye, 2021). In Kaduna State, Nigeria, the implementation of continuous assessment (CA) in senior secondary schools has been inconsistent, and its impact on Economics students' academic performance is unclear. The academic performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, has been a concern for educators and policymakers. Despite efforts to improve teaching and learning, students' performance in Economics remains unsatisfactory. One potential factor contributing to this issue is the assessment method used. Continuous Assessment (CA) is a widely used approach, but its impact on students' academic performance in Economics is not well understood. This study aims to investigate the impact of continuous assessment (CA) on Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, to inform strategies for improving student outcomes.

Economics is one of the skill subjects that is offered in senior secondary schools. Agbo (2020) see skill subjects as subjects that require logical and critical reasoning in the teaching and learning process. Both the students and

teachers need to have adequate attention and understanding towards the subject for teaching and learning to be effective. This implies that skill subjects require students' exposure to enough practicals by the teacher to enable them to have a basic understanding of the subject matter. Economics education is seen as an area of study needed to equip the learners with knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for efficient re-allocation of scarce resources to satisfy the unlimited wants. This means that Economics not only study the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services but also the skills and knowledge of Economics education help both the individual and the nation to use minimum input to achieve maximum output. This study aims to investigate the impact of CA on Economics students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, to inform strategies for improving student outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the current practices of continuous assessment in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria;
2. to determine the relationship between continuous assessment and academic performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria; and
3. To investigate the differences in academic performance between Economics students who are continuously assessed and those who are not in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What are the current practices of continuous assessment in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria?
2. Is there a significant relationship between continuous assessment and the academic performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria?
3. are there significant differences in academic performance between Economics students who are continuously assessed and those who are not in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

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

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between continuous assessment and the academic performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in academic performance between Economics students who are continuously assessed and those who are not in Kaduna State, Nigeria, and

H0₃: There is no significant difference between Economics students' academic performance who are continuously assessed and those who are not in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

The relevance of continuous assessment in the implementation of the Economics curriculum in Kaduna State, Nigeria, cannot be overstated. Continuous assessment equips teachers with the necessary evaluation strategies/techniques and skills in order to be functional in the delivery of the curriculum in or out of the classroom. Ajema (2023) opined that a continuous assessment is a functional key that significantly influences students' performance. This implies that continuous assessment that are well organised and administered to students stands to meet the modern challenges in the teaching and learning of the digital world today. Effective administration of continuous assessments that are linked to pedagogical content knowledge, classroom management, and student assessment will improve students' academic performance (Agene 2021). However, gaps exist between theoretical knowledge and practical administration of continuous assessment (Odeh, 2021). The relevance of continuous assessment in the implementation of the Economics curriculum in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, cannot be overstated. Continuous assessment equips students with modern skills to enhance their academic performance and prepares them for participation in any form of examinations in a technology-driven global economy. Obeka (2022) continuous assessment provides both teachers and learners with the necessary skills for effective instructional preparation, delivery, and evaluation, which in turn improves overall classroom

participation and performance. Teacher and learner preparedness in the context of examinations and modern educational technology involves deliberate activities designed to build competence in using new trends in teaching and learning to respond to global changes in knowledge and to improve academic performance (Eliagwu, 2024). Therefore, teachers and learners in Nigeria, as elsewhere in the world, should develop ways of administering continuous assessment, instructional materials, creativity, self-confidence, technical proficiency, and innovative pedagogical skills that enhance learning outcomes. Such skills foster the right attitudes, interests, and problem-solving abilities necessary for navigating the demands of an increasingly digital and knowledge-based society. Thus, a series of continuous assessments serves not only as a tool for efficiency but also as a driver of innovation in curriculum delivery. While existing literature emphasises the potential of continuous assessment in teaching and learning to enhance teaching and learning across various disciplines, few empirical studies have specifically examined their integration into the Economics curriculum in Nigerian senior secondary schools. Most studies conducted within the Nigerian context have focused broadly on: continuous assessment, issues on continuous assessment, curriculum implementation challenges, teacher preparation, and the general role of continuous assessment in education (Fatai et al., 2021; Iwodi, 2020). This gap underscores the need for empirical research that not only explores the effectiveness of continuous assessment administration in Economics education but also identifies practical strategies for overcoming barriers to its integration. By addressing this gap, the present study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on curriculum innovation in Nigeria and provides evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders.

Methodology

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research design, specifically the pre-test, post-test non-equivalent control group design. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to examine the impact of continuous assessment on the teaching and learning of Economics while maintaining the natural classroom setting. Two groups of Economics students were used: an experimental group, which was exposed to teaching with continuous assessment, and a control group, which was taught without using the continuous assessment (conventional method). Both groups were administered pre-tests and post-tests to measure the differences in performance attributable to the treatment.

The population of the study comprised 125 senior secondary school students offering Economics in intact classes across selected secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. These students were drawn from schools that shared similar characteristics in terms of curriculum, teacher qualifications, and learning resources to minimise extraneous variations. The study employed purposive sampling to select schools that offer Economics as a subject with functional libraries and Economics teachers, which were prerequisites for effective teaching and learning. From the accessible population, two intact classes were assigned to the experimental group and two to the control group, ensuring a fair representation of male and female students. In total, 75 students constituted the experimental group while 50 students formed the control group, making up the sample size of 125.

The primary instrument for data collection was the Economics Continuous Assessment Performance Test (ECAPT), developed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of 50 multiple-choice items covering selected topics in the senior secondary school Economics curriculum. The items were designed to test knowledge, comprehension, and application skills.

The test and retest method was used for data collection. This is because the study used intact classes in their natural setting. After due consultation with Economics teachers from the two (2) schools in the study area, the following topics from the SS II Economics curriculum were used for the study: (a) Concept of Labour; (b) Types of Labour; (c) Concept of Laws of Diminishing Return and (d) Types of Laws of Diminishing Returns. The researchers developed the test items from past questions of the Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) NECO and the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). The draft instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Economics education, curriculum studies, and educational measurement and evaluation. A pilot test was conducted on a sample of 30 Economics students outside the study population. Using the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20), the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.76, indicating a high level of internal consistency.

Treatment Procedure

Experimental Group: Students in the experimental group were taught selected Economics topics, and the Economics Continuous Assessment Performance Test (ECAPT) was administered. This method provided personalised feedback, adaptive questioning, and interactive problem-solving exercises.

Control Group: Students in the control group were taught the same topics without administering the Economics Continuous Assessment Performance Test (ECAPT).

The treatment lasted for seven (7) weeks, with both groups covering the same curriculum content during this period. Pre-tests were administered to both groups before the commencement of the treatment to establish baseline equivalence in Economics knowledge. At the end of the seventh week of intervention, a post-test (parallel to the pre-test) was administered to measure the learning gains of both groups. Data collected from the pre-test and post-test scores were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics: Means and Standard Deviations were computed to summarise students' performance in both groups. The t-test was employed to test the hypotheses, using pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample Schools and Students of the Study

S/N	Name of Schools	Student	Status
1	GSS Kawo, Kaduna	75	Experimental Group
2	GSS Bomo, Zaria	50	Control Group
	Total	125	

Source: Researcher's Adopted Table (2026).

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of Economics students taught with teacher-made instructional materials in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 2a: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Performance of Economics students taught with CA in Senior Secondary Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.
Pre-test CA	75	8.19	2.54	10.31
Post-test CA	75	18.56	3.87	

Source: (Field Survey, 2026)

The results in Table 2 indicate a marked improvement in students' performance after being taught Economics with continuous assessment (CA). The mean score increased from 8.19 (SD = 2.54) in the pre-test to 18.56 (SD = 3.87) in the post-test, yielding a mean difference of 10.31. This substantial increase suggests that the use of CA had a positive effect on students' understanding and mastery of Economics concepts. The findings, therefore, imply that continuous assessment (CA) administration can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning Economics in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

To address Hypothesis One (H_{01}), which states that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of Economics Students taught with a continuous assessment test in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to compare the pre-test and post-test scores, while a paired-sample *t*-test was conducted to determine whether the observed difference was statistically significant.

Table 2b Mean, Standard Deviation, and *t*-test Results on the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Performance of Economics Students Taught with CA in Senior Secondary Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	t	df	p
Pre-test CA	75	8.19	2.54	10.31	27.65	185	<.05
Post-test CA	75	18.56	3.87				

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The results in Table 2b show that the mean score of Economics students taught with CA administration increased from 8.19 (SD = 2.54) in the pre-test to 18.56 (SD = 3.87) in the post-test, yielding a mean difference of 10.31. The paired-sample *t*-test revealed that this difference was statistically significant, $t(27.65) = 33.95, p < .05$. This implies that instruction supported by CA significantly improved the performance of Economics students in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The findings provide strong evidence that continuous assessment (CA) as a tool of evaluation can enhance students' mastery of Economics concepts compared to their baseline performance.

Research Question 2: What is the difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of Economics students taught with the conventional method in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 3a Mean and Standard Deviation on the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Performance of Economics Students Taught with Conventional Method in Senior Secondary Schools.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.
Pre-test without CA (Conventional)	75	8.19	2.82	7.28
Post-test without CA (Conventional)	75	18.56	3.65	

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Hypothesis Two, which states that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of Economics Students taught with the conventional method in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, was tested using Inferential Statistics- test for the Conventional Group.

Table 3b *t*-test Results of the Difference between Pre-test and Post-test Performance of Economics Students Taught with the Conventional Method

Variable	N	Mean Diff.	t	df.	p
Conventional	50	7.28	2.54	49	< 0.5

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The results presented in Table 3a indicate that students taught Economics with the conventional method had a mean pre-test score of 10.15 (SD = 3.82), which increased to 18.43 (SD = 4.65) in the post-test. This yielded a mean difference of 7.28. Compared to the experimental group taught with continuous assessment (CA), the performance improvement was relatively modest. The inferential analysis in Table 4 further revealed that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was statistically significant, $t(185) = 12.74, p < .05$. An independent sample *t*-test was used for the analysis. This suggests that the conventional teaching method produced measurable learning gains, though the magnitude of improvement was smaller than that observed in the experimental group.

Overall, while traditional methods of instruction remain effective to some extent, the results demonstrate that continuous assessment (CA) produced substantially greater improvements in students' performance. This finding underscores the value of integrating continuous assessment (CA) into Economics instruction to achieve enhanced learning outcomes.

Research Question Three: What is the difference between the post-test performance of Economics students taught with continuous assessment and conventional methods in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria?

Table 4a: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Difference between Post-test Performances of Economics students taught with CA and Conventional Methods in Senior Secondary Schools

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.
Post-test CA	75	24.86	5.37	13.8
Post-test Conventional Method	50	12.56	2.54	

Source: (Field survey, 2025).

The analysis of results in Table 4a highlights the difference in the post-test performance of Economics students taught using CA and those taught with the conventional method in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria. The findings revealed post-test mean scores of 24.86 for the CA group and 12.84 for the conventional group, resulting in a mean difference of 13.8. This substantial difference indicates that students exposed to continuous assessment (CA) of instruction demonstrated significantly higher academic performance than their counterparts taught through traditional methods. The result underscores the pedagogical effectiveness of continuous assessment (CA) in enhancing students' understanding of Economics concepts and suggests that the integration of continuous assessment (CA) in classroom instruction offers superior learning outcomes compared to conventional approaches.

The null hypothesis 3, which states that there is no significant difference in the post-test performance of Economics students taught with continuous assessment (CA) and those taught with the conventional method in Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria, was tested using the T-test statistic.

Table 4b: Comparison of Post-test Performance of Economics Students Taught with CA and those taught using the Conventional Method.

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Diff.	t	df	p
CA	75	24.86	2.54	13.80	16.27	188	0.00
Conventional Method	50	3.56	3.87				

Source: Field Survey (2026) $p < .05$

The analysis presented in Table 4b reveals a statistically significant difference in the post-test performance of Economics students taught using continuous assessment (CA) compared to those taught with the conventional method. Students exposed to continuous assessment (CA) achieved a mean score of 24.86 (SD = 4.92), whereas those taught through the conventional method recorded a lower mean score of 12.84 (SD = 3.85). The independent samples *t*-test yielded $t(188) = 16.27$, $p < .05$, indicating that the observed difference of 13.80 in mean performance is significant. This finding underscores the effectiveness of CA in enhancing students' comprehension and mastery of Economics concepts in senior secondary schools in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

Two major findings emerged from this study based on the research questions and hypotheses formulated.

First, the study revealed that students taught using continuous assessment (CA) tools performed significantly better than those taught with the conventional method. This difference was particularly evident in students' ability to explore, interact with, and apply continuous assessment (CA), which enhances the learning process. This finding aligns with the assertion of Ibrahim (2019), who emphasised that both teachers and learners should maximise the use of continuous assessment (CA) in classroom instruction, as collaborative learning engagement enriches the teaching and learning experience.

Second, the study demonstrated that continuous assessment (CA) has transformative potential in Economics instruction, suggesting that it may be more effective than conventional methods. However, this finding contrasts with the argument of Audu (2020), who cautioned against perceiving continuous assessment (CA) as the sole driver of improved teaching outcomes. According to Audu, conventional teaching methods still address certain learning challenges that continuous assessment (CA) cannot fully resolve. He argued that while continuous assessment (CA) serves as an important enhancer of student performance, it should complement rather than completely replace traditional pedagogies. The findings of this study therefore reinforce the need for a balanced, integrative approach that leverages the strengths of both continuous assessment (CA) and conventional teaching methods.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that students with access to continuous assessment (CA) demonstrated superior performance in Economics compared to their counterparts taught through conventional methods. It can therefore be concluded that the integration of continuous assessment (CA) enhances the teaching and learning of Economics by fostering deeper engagement, improving comprehension, and supporting individualised learning. However, the study also highlights structural (new trends in continuous assessment evaluation) limitations that hinder effective

continuous assessment (CA) integration. These include inadequate knowledge and skills among teachers and students, as well as limited access to the new trends in continuous assessment evaluation tools in many schools due to time, financial and infrastructural constraints. Consequently, while continuous assessment (CA) holds significant promise for transforming Economics education, its effectiveness is contingent on creating equitable access, building teacher capacity, and ensuring sustained infrastructural support. Importantly, the study concludes that continuous assessment (CA) should not be viewed as a replacement for terminal school examinations but rather as a complementary tool. Human decision-making, creativity, and mentorship remain indispensable in Economics education, and continuous assessment (CA) should serve to augment the essential impact of examinations and teachers' roles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Capacity Building: Training programmes should be developed to enhance the competencies of students and teachers in the integration and effective utilisation of continuous assessment (CA) in teaching and learning processes and evaluation strategies.
2. Infrastructure Investment: Federal, State, and Local Governments, in collaboration with private stakeholders, should invest in the provision of continuous assessment (CA) facilities and reliable infrastructure to support continuous assessment (CA) adoption in secondary schools.
3. Stakeholder Collaboration: Strong partnerships should be fostered between educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to design and implement continuous assessment (CA) solutions tailored to the Nigerian educational context.

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