


**Abstract**

The Study examined the relative effect of feedback of continuous assessment on students' skill achievement motivation in Secretarial Education. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. Three research hypotheses were raised. To gather necessary data for the study, a well structured Test Assessment of 30 items was designed and administered on the sample size of 40 persons from Secretarial Education Department in College of Education, Warri. The data generated were analysed using Z-Test and Chi-Square. Findings revealed that there significance difference between students' skill achievement motivation exposed to feedback from continuous assessment and students' achievement motivation not exposed to feedback from continuous assessment. It also revealed that the mean score of students exposed to feedback from continuous assessment is significantly higher than the mean score of students not exposed to feedback from continuous assessment and that there is significant relationship between competency-based Continuous Assessment and Quality Assurance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that feedback of Continuous Assessment should be placed as an utmost priority in developing students' strength and weaknesses in skill acquisition. Also 70% of the major skills relating to Secretarial Education should be keyed into the Assessment Test.

**Introduction**

Quality Assurance is any systematic process of checking to see whether a product or service being developed is meeting specified requirements (predetermined objective as in NPE 2004). According to Arnold (1995), Quality Assurance refers to all those planned and systematic actions necessary to provide confidence that a system or product will perform satisfactorily in service. To achieve this in academic environment, a commission or a committee is instituted to handle this responsibility. Such commissions are the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Commission for Colleges of Education (N.C.C.E), National Board for Technical Education (N.B.T.E.), Faculty Board, School Board, Academic Board, Teaching Practice Unit, SIWES Unit, Course Advisers, Lecture Monitors, etc. These bodies are assigned the responsibilities separately to ensure that schools deliver quality services to students.
Armed with the National Policy on Education (2004), these commissions set out their individual plans to achieve the aims of NPE, after which they strategize on how to reach out to the various academic schools to ensure compliance to NPE. One of such strategies is the accreditation programmes by NUC, NCCE and NBTE, verification and approval of semester results by Academic Board, Examination Malpractice Committees, compliance with lectures by lecturers by Lecture Monitoring Team, etc. With this, one would acknowledge the effort of these units that have contributed immensely towards the growth and development of academic institutions in Nigeria.

Owing to the growing concern in quality assurance in academic institutions, European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education came out with a blueprint for its members' states in 2009 (Wolff, 2012). It contains ten Indicators which are: Relevance of Quality Assurance System for VET Providers; Investment in Training of Teachers and Trainers; Participation Rate in VET Programmes; Placement Rate in VET Programmes; Utilisation of acquired skills at work place; Unemployment Rate; Prevalence of Vulnerable groups; Mechanisms to identify training needs in the labour market; and Schemes used to promote better access to VET. The indicators are designed in such a manner that members states are to select the Indicator that is applicable to their peculiar circumstance and requirements. Based on the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education blueprint, this work focused on how to promote the utilization of acquired skills at work place that is the fifth indicator (Wolff, 2012). To promote skills utilization in secretarial Education it calls for feedback of competency based continuous assessment to students.

According to Arnold and Holler (1995), quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy given needs. It entails fitness for use, conformance to requirements, a total composite of product or service characteristics of marketing, engineering, manufacturing and maintenance through which the product and service in use will meet the expectations of the customer, conformance to standards that represent the product's or service's basic characteristics that are based on customer needs and expectation. Relative to educational system, customers denote companies or organizations that would make use of the acquired skills and knowledge of graduates. The products are the students, engineering reflects the setting up of standards and control of performance (such as feedback and review of CAs) in students through lecturers, maintenance reflects compliance and continuity of standards and review in curriculum, etc. In other words, required quality of student is based on the contemporary demands and needs of organization who would be the ultimate users of the product. Therefore, if product and service in use should be designed to meet the expectations of the customers (organizations and real world of work) then evaluation process and feedback between the lecturers and Students should be a paramount issue in maintaining standard or meeting the expectations of end-users.

Arnold further stated that quality assurance denotes confidence in quality. And that confidence rest on the positive action expected to control the quality of a product that is, making sure that quality is what it should be. In making sure, he pointed out that quality assurance uses such techniques as internal audits and surveillance to ensure that the organization is accomplishing two goals: following the procedures as they are stated in the quality manual and the procedures when followed are effective and yield the desired results. It involves reviewing qualifications and training of personnel, review of quality-related records, to develop, document and implement quality procedures; schedule, conduct and follow up on quality audit (as in schools CAs feedback) which are internal (carried out by personnel within the School) or external (carried out by personnel outside the school). He further advised that quality is not inspected into a product (student) rather quality is built into a product (the student).

In terms of conformance to standard, Arnold identified three types of nonconformance which are, critical defect (is a defect that judgement and experience indicate is likely to result in hazardous conditions for individuals), major defect (defect that is likely to result in failure or reduce materially the usability of the unit of product for its intended purpose) and minor defect (a defect that is not likely to reduce materially the usability of the unit of product for its intended purpose, or is a departure from established standards having little bearing on the effective use or operation of the unit).

Secretarial teacher education offers teaching opportunity as an instructor in commercial schools of business studies, vocational or technical schools, colleges of education and polytechnics, Nwadiani (2011). A skillful, competent, proficient, efficient and effective Secretarial Education graduate is productive (2007). Productivity entails doing right things the right way, getting more output with less input or same input. Producing more of better quality graduates is the only route to nation's self-sufficiency and a well the assurance of national greatness (national greatness is not a dream but must be produced) and it is a relationship between input and quantity and quality of output.

Ekwue (2009) further advised that, to achieve the desired quality, there is the need for rationalization that begins with a true conception of education as something designed to develop the individual's 3Hs head, heart and hands. To do this, requires a new conception of vocational education aimed at coordinating the development of the 3Hs in terms of meaningful and practical application; developing in the learner the habit of thinking, analyzing, performing, reflecting on his performance and constantly improving on his practical performance and acquiring general and specific practical skills for use either immediately or at a future date.

Continuous Assessment (CA) should be deeply rooted in specific class task or activity. That is, it should be performed by the students to a certain standard under the strict observation of the Lecturer. It includes competency demonstration, assessment, public disclosure and programme follow-up. (Anaele, 2010). The hallmark of CAs should be the demonstration of exactly what the student can do. Among the objectives of Continuous Assessment of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) is to provide a basis for the effective maintenance of uniformity in scoring and maintenance of expected standards.
(geared towards quality attainment), to provide a more valid assessment of a child’s overall ability and performance, to enable teachers to be more flexible and innovative in their instructions, to provide a basis for teachers to improve on their instructional methods and to provide a basis for more effective guidance of the pupils.

According to Ezegwunwu (2011), the diagnostic nature of CAs is based on the fact that it helps in the continuous monitoring of students’ ability levels, his strengths and weaknesses with regard to contents of course, possible causes of weaknesses in content and their possible remedies. It is prognostic in predicting how well a learner can perform if exposed to similar tasks or events on completely different tasks in future. It comes in two or three phase-test spread over the semester time frame. CAs should be able to measure what a student knows and what he can do with his knowledge (Wolff, 2012).

In carrying out a competency-based assessment, Briggs (2012) proposed some few principles such as: clearly defining the objective of the assessments; identifying the criteria and sharing it with the assessee (student) in a transparent manner, feedback to the assessee on his or her performance; the nature of records made and data collected needs to be shared with the assessee; and if the data is to be used for purpose other than what was defined before the assessment, the assessee needs to be informed regarding same. The objective of the assessment is to further use the data take certain strategic decisions like repositioning teaching-learning strategy, learning situation, etc. Also, to give feedback for reinforced development in learning.

Briggs (2012) stated that feedback provided after assessments help the participants (students) in self-reflection, it appeals to the logic of the students participating in the assessment and help them to get a clear understanding of their development area. In executing a feedback on assessment, Briggs proposed the following consideration such as: pre-empt the expectation of participants or students from the feedback (which act as a compass for the assessor (teacher)); the assessor needs to be specific and stick to the predefined parameters or competencies to make reference; when necessary, cite examples to facilitate better understanding of students; involving the students is important feedback has to be a dialogue and not a monologue which means students should be given the opportunity to discuss their strength and weakness and experience in the assessment and areas of development; students should be allowed to explain the intent behind their response and differing opinions whenever appropriate; assessors should refrain from passing a judgemental statement that is, their statement have to be suggestive rather than as absolute truths, assessors need to be patient and display great listening skills to create the required trust and rapport with the students.

Feedback assessment should aim at making the students to be aware of their strength and areas of development, encourage introspection, help students draw inference and reach conclusions (Briggs). As a result, feedback requires care as it is seen as being a delicate process in teaching-learning process. Briggs observed that in a wrongly positioned feedback, people or students are very good at hiding any feeling of hurt and upset and that beneath the facade lies a demoralized de-motivated individual as the student might start thinking “If that is what I am like, am I really going to get to where I want to be?” Where tactfulness is not applied in feedback, it can become the road to frustration.

In addition, he stated that if the desired level of trust does not exist between the assessor and student, the facilitation of the feedback discussion becomes very difficult and the purpose is defeated. If assessors share the outcomes and feedback with the student without allowing discussion or comment, the feedback session becomes a fiasco; such that, where the students do not share hopes, aspirations or intrinsically committed to their development actions no further progress can take place. Some students may also blatantly refuse to accept the observation and information provided by the assessor and could externalize reasons to validate their behaviours, even questioning the assessment process thereby blocking discussion around their performance being examined.

McClelland (2012) asserted via his experiment that while some people do not possess a strong achievement-based motivation, those who do, display a consistent behaviour in setting goals. In order to develop fitness and or strength the exercise must be sufficiently demanding to increase existing levels, but not so demanding as to cause damage or strain. Achievement motivated individuals set goals which they can influence with their effort and ability, and as such the goal is considered to be achievable. This determined results-driven approach is almost invariably present in the character-make-up of all successful business people (such as secretarial students) and entrepreneurs.

McClelland suggested other characteristics and attitudes of achievement-motivated people such as achievement is more important than material or financial reward; achieving the aim or task gives greater personal satisfaction than receiving praise or recognition; financial reward is regarded as a measurement of success, not an end in itself; feedback is essential, because it enables measurement of success, not for reasons of praise or recognition (the implication here is that feedback must be reliable, quantifiable and factual); achievement-motivated people constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better; and achievement-motivated people will logically favour jobs (skills) and responsibilities that naturally satisfy their needs, that is, offer flexibility and opportunity to set and achieve goals.

McClelland firmly believed that achievement-motivated people are generally the ones who make things happen and get results, and that this extends to getting results through the organisation of other people and resources, although as stated earlier, they often demand too much of others (lecturers and fellow students) because they prioritise achieving the predetermined goal above the many varied interests and needs of their people.

**Statement of the Problem**

Schools are observed to exhibit turnout of graduates who are incapable of fitting into the real world of work. Students while in school tend to exhibit the inability to show sound retention and display of acquired skills and knowledge. Continuous Assessment as a tool in
determining the students’ performance and development so as to reinforce teaching-learning process seems to show little significant in influencing students’ motivation towards competency achievement. Feedback of continuous assessment to students in most cases was observed to be neglected. Students complain of access to continuous assessment result and lecturers review of the assessment. This seems to be responsible for the alleged students’ low quality in skill competency. The concern of the researcher is that if feedback and review is not re-emphasised in schools, competency or quality of graduates would continue to dwindle. To address this issue, research questions and hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Research Questions
1. To what extent can feedback from continuous assessment influence students' positive attitude towards study?
2. To what extent can feedback from continuous assessment aid students' desire for higher achievement in skill courses?

Hypotheses
1) There is no significance difference between students' skill achievement motivation of students exposed to feedback from continuous assessment and students' skill achievement motivation of students not exposed to feedback from continuous assessment.
2) The mean score of students exposed to review of feedback from continuous assessment is significantly higher than the mean score of students not exposed to review of feedback from continuous assessment.
3) There is no significant relationship between competency-based continuous assessment and quality assurance.

Method
The design of the study was quasi-experimental constituting a pre-test post-test design. The two groups Year 2 and Year 3 (Secretarial Education) were taught data processing and filing skills respectively. The control group was the Year 2 students while the experimental group was the Year 3 students of Secretarial Education Students. The Experimental group was exposed to feedback from assessment results. The population of the study comprised 150 students from Secretarial Education Year 2 and Year 3 of College of Education, Warri. A sample size of 40 students was used for the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 20 students from Year 2 and 20 students from Year 3. Selection was done by picking one at an interval of two. The instrument used for the study was a self-developed Continuous Assessment Test by the researcher. An Assessment Test Question of 30 items which embraced the skills taught was design. Each test item was allocated two marks each. The research instrument before it was administered; was tested for both construct, face and content validity by experts in the field of measurement and evaluation and Secretarial Education and found to be valid.

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, it was first administered to a number of 10 respondents who were not part of the sample of the study, using a Test-retest method which involves administering the instrument twice at different times. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical tool was employed to correlate the set of scores. The computation yields a correlation coefficient of 0.7, which revealed that the instrument was reliable. The data were analysed in line with the objectives of the study. The hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square at one degree freedom at 0.05 (Hypothesis 1) and Z-test at 38 degree freedom and collected at 0.05 (5%) (Hypothesis 2 and 3).

Result
This section of the study is geared towards the analysis of the Research Questions and Hypotheses in line with the objectives formulated for the study.

Let \( x \) represent Year Two Students’ responses

\[
x_1 \quad \text{Year Three} \quad \text{“} \quad \text{“}
\]

Research Question 1: To what extent could feedback from continuous assessment influence students' positive attitude toward study?

Table 1: Feedback from CAs and Students’ Attitude to Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>( x )</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( fx )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High Extent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Accept, Very High Extent

Total 10 20 60 20 61

\( \mu_1 = 3.0, \quad \mu_2 = 3.05 \) Expected mean = 2.5 Average mean3.03

Decision: The computed average mean score (3.03) > the expected mean (2.5). This implies that feedback from CAs have very great influence on students' positive attitude to study.

Research Question 2: To what extent could feedback from continuous assessment aid students' desire for higher achievement in skill courses?

Table 2: Feedback from CAs and Students’ desire for skill Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>( x )</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( fx )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the calculated $z$-cal ($6.77$) is greater than $z$-critical value ($1.70$) we accept and uphold the alternative hypothesis. Thus, the mean score of students exposed to feedback from continuous assessment is significantly higher than the mean score of students not exposed to feedback from continuous assessment.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between competency-based Continuous Assessment and Quality Assurance

**Table 5:** Competency-based Assessment and Quality Assurance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$X^2$ Tabulated Values</th>
<th>$X^2$ Calculated Values</th>
<th>Significant Level</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency based Cas and Quality Assurance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.841</td>
<td>8.54</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Decision Criterion:**
Reject Ho if computed $X^2 >$ critical $X^2$
Accept Ho if computed $X^2 <$ critical $X^2$

The computed $X^2$ ($8.54$) $> $ critical $X^2$ ($3.841$) which indicates a rejection of $H_0$. Thus it could be inferred from the above findings that we are $95\%$ confident that there is significant relationship between competency-based Continuous Assessment and Quality Assurance.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings from Research Question one revealed that feedback from CAs have very great influence on students’ positive attitude to study. This confirms the view of Briggs (2012) that feedback provided after assessments help the participants (students) in self-reflection, it appeals to the logic of the students participating in the assessment and help them to get a clear understanding of their development area. Also Research Question two revealed that feedback from CAs aid students’ desire for higher achievement in skill courses to a great high extent. This confirms to the view of McClelland (2012) that achievement-motivated people are generally the ones who make things happen and get results, and that this extends to getting results through the organisation of other people and resources.

The hypothesis revealed that, there is significance difference between students’ skill achievement motivation exposed to feedback from continuous assessment and students’ skill achievement motivation not exposed to feedback from continuous assessment. This confirms the view of McClelland (2012) that achieving the aim or task gives greater personal satisfaction than receiving recognition; feedback is essential, because it enables measurement of success, not for reasons of praise and that achievement-motivated people constantly seek improvements and ways of doing things better; and achievement-motivated people will logically favour skills and responsibilities that naturally satisfy their needs and that achievement-motivated people are generally the ones who make things happen and get quality work.
This further confirms the view of Briggs (2012) that feedback provided after assessments help the participants (students) in self-reflection. It enables students to be aware of their strength and areas of development, encourage introspection, help students draw inference and reach conclusions. Finally, the findings also revealed that there is significant relationship between competency-based Continuous Assessment and Quality Assurance which confirms the view of Wolff (2012) that CAs should be able to measure what a student knows and what he can do with his knowledge.

Conclusions
Knowing fully well that students are the final product of any academic institution; competency assessment and its feedback process calls for greater concern if institutions wish to continuously and confidently confirm the quality of the output of their product (graduates). Feedback from continuous assessment to students is an aspect of students' assessment and development that should be given considerable concern by lecturers. In respective of the time and difficulties that might be experienced, students' exposure to results from assessment is crucial to motivating students towards better performance.

Recommendations
Based on the findings the study thus recommends the following:
1. That feedback of Continuous Assessment which indicates the performance of students should be placed as an utmost priority in developing students' strength and weaknesses in skill acquisition.
2. That at least 70% of the test items in Continuous Assessment should be based on display and competency of Secretarial skills such as data processing, record management, time management and communication skills.
3. That review of the feedback from Continuous Assessment should be made open to students to discuss their reasons and response to the questions and as well forward their critics as this would help to reposition the teaching-learning process.
4. Lecturers should be open-minded to suggestions from students. Also develop innovative approach to that which would help overcome students' weaknesses in the affected skills.

Reference