



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Extensiveness of Continuous Assessment Practice on Improving Students' Academic Performance in Monduli District Public Secondary Schools, Tanzania

**Seuri T Mesian**

Student, Department of Education, Mwenge, Catholic University, Tanzania

**Evans Ogoti**

Professor, Department of Education, Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania

**Dr. Gadi Koda**

Lecturer, Department of Education, Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania

### **Abstract:**

*This study assesses the extensiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Monduli District, Tanzania. The study employed a convergent design and mixed-methods research approach guided by the Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977). The target population in this study includes 12 public secondary schools, 12 heads of schools, 399 teachers, 1823 students, and 1 DSEO. The study sample size comprised 253 respondents, of which 40 teachers were sampled through the stratified random sampling technique; 208 students were selected using the stratified random technique; 4 heads of schools and 1 DSEO were purposively sampled (total population sampling technique) based on the virtue of their position. A questionnaire, interview guide, and document analysis schedule were used to collect the required information. The validity of quantitative instruments was achieved by two research experts in the area of educational assessment and evaluation from Mwenge Catholic University. The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated by Cronbach Alpha technique of which the output was 0.799 which means the instrument was reliable for data collection. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was ensured by the triangulation of instruments and peer debriefing methods. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Qualitative data were analysed thematically and presented in words by verbatim quotations. The study found that continuous assessment was practised to a high extent to improve students' academic performance in Monduli District. The study concluded that continuous assessment practices have successively achieved their goal of improving students' academic performance in national examinations to a high extent. The study recommended that there should be monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of continuous assessment practices regularly to identify areas for improvement and ensure they continue to be effective in improving student academic performance.*

**Keywords:** Extensiveness, continuous assessment practice, academic performance

### **1. Introduction**

The use of assessment techniques is becoming more widely recognised as a convenient procedure for instilling effective teaching and learning from lower to higher education levels, regardless of disciplines or the types of skills projected by the educational system's objectives (Yan et al., 2021). However, it looks at the students' overall capabilities in the form of regular assignments and provides a more accurate and complete picture of the learner's level and their understanding of what they have learned. Chanda (2022) ascertains that continuous assessment of the learners alludes to a mechanism whereby the final grading of learners in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning systematically takes account of all their performances during a given period of schooling.

Continuous assessment is comprehensive, cumulative, diagnostic, formative, guidance-oriented and systematic in nature, and it is useful in giving directions to the teachers to make decisions on whether to move on with the lesson or revise the previous chapter based on what is being observed from the student's performance in their day-to-day teaching and learning process in the classroom. Wallang and Tambi (2022) reported that the teaching/learning process of the secondary educational sector needs assessment in order to ensure qualitative learning and bring changes to students' performance. Continuous assessment entails the careful and systematic keeping of records of the pupils. It takes into consideration the termly or periodic performances of students in assignments, tests, projects and other educational activities (Amaka, 2020).

The advantage of practising continuous assessment is to ensure that students work consistently. This provides early indicators of their performance, with built-in measures of feedback and support for students to master particular areas of a set topic. Students in the schools who are continuously assessed performed better than those who were not continuously assessed by teachers. Jawour (2020) reported that Kenyan teachers use assessment data to, among others, identify weak learners for individual remediation programs, inform parents of their children's academic progress and for career selection, the instructor's intensive use of data in classrooms to drive meaningful positive change faces pervasive bottlenecks. Odera et al. (2020) indicated that in Kenya, CATs are being integrated into teaching and learning; most teachers were using formative assessment, and other teachers used feedback methods. The teaching and learning process is not complete without assessment. Assessment is very important in the teaching and learning process.

Assessment is either formative or summative (Mkimbili & Kitta, 2019). Formative assessment aims to find out if the students can do what they were unable to do in the learning experience. The formative assessment administered by teachers at secondary schools includes daily exercises, homework, weekly tests, monthly tests and terminal examinations. These are used to monitor learners' progress, adjust instruction to maximise student achievement, provide effective and timely feedback, reveal learners who need remedial care, and provide continuous assessment reports that contribute to the final examination results of Form Four, Form Six, and College students. However, Mkimbili and Kitta (2019) observed that teachers from public secondary schools in Tanzania were inadequately skilled in the use of formative assessment. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of an educational activity feedback that sums up the teaching and learning process at a particular level. It is used to measure students' achievement at the end of unity of study, determine learning priorities for the learners, and predict future success in their courses.

Quizzes, assignments, tests, laboratory activities, and examinations are among the common assessment tools included in NECTA (2021). Others are represented by Tests. The validity and reliability of tests are used to assess test quality. While using tests for assessment, teachers must prepare a table of specifications and test items based on the table of specifications, moderate or review test items, administer the test, and score the test. Planning, preparing, administering, scoring, statistically analysing, and reporting the results are all part of the test construction process. Despite regular administration of continuous assessment, continuous assessment is still lacking in theory and practical subjects, which raises many concerns about the impact of these exams on students' final exam performance (Ritah & Nduhura, 2022).

According to Jawour (2020), teachers' effective and consistent use of assessment data in curriculum planning, implementation, and monitoring of teaching improves students' overall academic achievement. To know the understanding of the students, the teacher must follow the subject syllabus, which reflects specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should demonstrate effectively throughout their lives both in and out of school. The success of the implementation of a continuous assessment programme depends on factors such as the provision of materials and equipment to schools. However, due to a shortage of laboratories and chemicals for practicals, a need for sufficient and high-quality textbooks, and a shortage of qualified, competent teachers to teach science subjects. Hence, the careful implementation of continuous assessment may be difficult or unrealistic (Abisay & Chen, 2020). Therefore, this current study investigated the extensiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Monduli District, Tanzania.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

Continuous assessment practices are at the heart of academic issues in the majority of Tanzanian schools. However, the performance of students in national exams is low compared to internal school exams. Mkimbili and Kitta (2019) complain about teachers who appear to be irresponsible when a large number of students fail in the final examinations due to significant differences in student performance across schools, particularly in National examinations. Some of these difficulties are as follows: inadequate skills in conducting continuous assessments among teachers, shortage of laboratories, lack of sufficient and high-quality textbooks, and lack of examination preparation facilities; in many schools, facilities such as computers, which are essential for typing examinations, are not available (Abisay & Chen, 2020). Due to these circumstances, teachers fail to provide effective continuous assessment for their students since they have a lot to be covered within a very short time.

Although the government has made significant efforts to improve the performance of students in secondary schools, including the regular administration of internal examinations, there are many concerns about the impact of these exams on students' final exam performance. Reviewed study by Ozan and Kincal (2018), Ewiss (2021) and Juet et al. (2021) explore to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities, assessed the Egyptian school evaluation system, tests, and student follow-up before and during COVID-19 and examined the effects of formative assessment practices on students' academic achievement, attitudes toward lessons, and self-regulation skills in the fifth-grade social studies class. However, none of the reviewed studies investigated continuous assessment practices for improving students' academic performance. Therefore, the current study investigated the extensiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Monduli District, Tanzania.

### *1.2. Research Question*

To what extent does the continuous assessment practice improve students' academic performance in Monduli District public secondary schools?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This study used social learning theory to explain the effectiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

### 2.1. Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura (1977)

Social learning is a theory of social behavior learning that proposes that new behaviors can be learned by observing and imitating others. Bandura believes that humans learn naturally through observation, that reinforcement and punishment influence (but do not directly cause) learning, that meditational processes determine whether a student follows the behaviors they observe, and that learning can occur without resulting in behavioral change. The theory emphasises a person's ability to influence change in personality traits, behaviors and capabilities, such as skills, through social interactions such as performance feedback and modeling persuasion (Koutroubas & Galanakis, 2022).

#### 2.1.1. Strengths of the Theory

The theory emphasises the importance of the environment and role models in explaining differences in a student's behavior or learning, which means that when the learning environment changes, the students' behavior may change and the ability to apply useful knowledge in real-life situations. According to Zhu and Basdogan (2021), an active learning classroom is perceived as a more flexible environment for movement and communication in small groups than a traditional classroom.

#### 2.1.2. Weaknesses of the Theory

The theory does not acknowledge or emphasise the role of nature in learning, and it does not account for the changes that occur throughout one's life span. Fakhruddin et al. (2022) argued that when learners were unable to understand what the educators were saying or any words spoken by the educators in the target language, they became fearful and nervous. A strong support system involving language educators is essential for avoiding or improving the fear of foreign language learning.

#### 2.1.3. Application of the Theory

Teachers in public secondary schools can use social learning theory to encourage and teach desirable behaviors in the classroom to influence a favorable learning environment through the use of positive reinforcement and rewards, use technology and applications they enjoy, construct positive learning habits and attitudes, encourage work sharing, and facilitate peer-reviewed work both inside and outside of the school day. One of the most important factors influencing student learning is the school environment. This enables teachers to carry out tasks related to continuous assessment. Therefore, this study adopted social learning theory to assess the effectiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Monduli District.

## 3. Literature Review

Empirical studies cover reviews of research conducted in different parts of the world, including Tanzania, based on themes drawn from the research question.

### 3.1. The Extent to Which Continuous Assessment Practice Improves Students' Academic Performance

The study conducted by Ozan and Kincal (2018) focused on examining the effects of formative assessment practices on students' academic achievement, attitudes toward lessons, and self-regulation skills in a fifth-grade social studies class in Turkey. The research employed a mixed-method approach, utilising semi-structured interviews and observation forms as data collection instruments. The research group comprised 45 students in the fifth grade of a secondary school in Erzurum, along with a teacher who implemented the formative assessment practices. One of the main findings of the study was that the experimental group, where the formative assessment practices were implemented, exhibited significantly higher levels of academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward the class compared to the control group. This suggests that the use of formative assessment had a beneficial impact on students' academic performance and their engagement with the subject matter. The study was conducted in a specific region of Turkey (Erzurum), which might have unique cultural and educational characteristics. These contextual factors could influence the effectiveness of continuous assessment practices and may not be universally applicable to different educational settings or cultural contexts.

Ewiss (2021) assessed the Egyptian school evaluation system, tests, and student follow-up before and during COVID-19. The results showed that schools' evaluation systems suffered from a crisis in the education system at all stages before and during COVID-19. The study found that the country lacks a clear plan to be committed to the development of a school evaluation system. Continuous change in courses and programs from time to time ultimately leads to the postponement of some lessons and contents for subsequent years. Courses are stacked with many tasks, which is a burden on both teacher and student. The teacher finds no solution except in the use of indoctrination, the predominance of quantity over quality, and a severe inability to meet the new knowledge era's requirements. The school has an insufficient suitable environment for school infrastructure. A severe inability to meet the requirements of the new knowledge era suggests a lack of alignment between educational practices and the demands of modern learning. Continuous assessment practices are designed to adapt and support evolving educational needs. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extent to which continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance.

Fareo (2020) investigated the impact of continuous assessment on secondary school students' academic performance in Adamawa State's Hong Local Government Area, Nigeria. A sample size of 200 teachers was drawn using stratified sampling. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The data was analysed using the mean, Pearson moment correlation coefficient, and t-test statistics. Continuous assessments were frequently given in senior secondary schools. There was a significant relationship between continuous assessment scores and academic performance of Biology students. There was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of students' attitudes toward continuous assessment. There was no significant difference between male and female students' continuous assessment scores. It was concluded that continuous assessment had a significant impact on secondary school students' academic performance in Biology. It was suggested that teachers who are knowledgeable about evaluation and assessment techniques be encouraged and their expertise used for this purpose. The use of questionnaires as the sole instrument for data collection compromises the validity of the findings. Therefore, the current study will use multiple data collection instruments. The study conducted by Juet et al. (2021) aimed to assess the effectiveness of Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALA) implemented by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Nyanga, Zimbabwe. The researchers employed an exploratory research approach and utilised a qualitative research design, using questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. A total of 35 questionnaires were distributed to students and teachers from various schools in Nyanga District, with a response rate of 94%. The findings of the study indicated that the decision to introduce continuous assessment activities in secondary schools was considered commendable. However, several controllable factors, such as incompetent teachers and a shortage of facilities, negatively affected the implementation of the initiative. This suggests that despite the noble intentions behind introducing continuous assessment, there were challenges that hindered its effectiveness in improving students' academic performance. The study acknowledges factors like incompetent teachers and a shortage of facilities affecting the implementation. However, it is essential to delve deeper into these factors' specific impact on students' academic performance. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extent to which continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance.

Mokibelo (2018) investigated practices in academic progress record keeping at Botswana Junior Secondary Schools in the Setswana language program. Using a qualitative approach, it was discovered that students' academic progress at Junior Secondary Schools was recorded in scheme books with marks written at the back, either after an exercise or after writing monthly tests, with no evidence produced when conferencing was required. To collect data from the participants, a questionnaire with open-ended questions and interviews were used. Thematic statements that emerged from key research questions were used to analyse data using grounded theory. The findings indicated that the measures used for academic records by teachers were not systematic and effective. The study recommends portfolio assessment as a strategy for developing a systematic way of keeping students' academic records and monitoring their academic growth and development progress rather than as a means to an end. The use of portfolio assessment allows teachers to get to know their students' learners and make changes in continuous assessment practice while keeping students' academic performance constant. Despite the fact that students' progress varies, teachers' continuous practice is necessary to improve students' academic performance. The study focuses on Botswana Junior Secondary Schools in the Setswana language program, which might limit the generalizability of its findings to other educational settings. Therefore, the current study will investigate the extent to which continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance. Myombe and Mushi (2022) aimed to find out whether there is a correlation between continuous assessment (CA) scores and national form four final examination results in Tanzania 2021/2022 in Morogoro Municipality. The study used an Ex-post-facto research design because it groups the qualities that already exist and compares them to some dependent variables. The study used a purposive sampling technique to select the two government secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality as well as five subjects which were taken as a sample, these are Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, Mathematics and English language, following the low performance of most of the candidates to the mentioned subjects above. The data were collected by using documentary instruments. The findings are from five subjects: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and English language. There was a positive correlation between CA scores and NECTA results 2021/2022. This indicated that there was a positive correlation between CA scores and national form four final examination results. The findings focused on the final results attributed to the CA scores without providing information on the extent to which continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance. The use of documentary instruments for data collection might provide quantitative data on CA scores and examination results but could lack qualitative insights that could deepen the understanding of how continuous assessment practices specifically contribute to academic performance improvement.

#### **4. Summary of Literature Review and Demonstration of Knowledge Gap**

In the review of related studies, several gaps were identified whereby the same empirical studies vary in terms of context, methodology, sample and sampling procedures, and findings. From the reviewed literature conducted in and outside Tanzania concerning students' academic performance, some of the studies used only one instrument in data collection. Moreover, none of the reviewed studies specifically addressed the extensiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance. The current study, through a mixed methods research approach, covered the gaps by investigating the extensiveness of continuous assessment practices in improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Monduli District, Tanzania.

#### **5. Research Methodology**

The study employed a convergent research design under a mixed research approach. The target population in this study includes 12 public secondary schools, 12 heads of schools, 399 teachers, 1823 students and 1 DSEO. The study

sample size comprised 253 respondents, of which 40 teachers were sampled through the stratified random sampling technique; 208 students were selected using the stratified random technique; 4 heads of schools and 1 DSEO were purposively sampled (total population sampling technique) based on the virtue of their positions. Questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis schedules were used to collect the required information. The validity of quantitative instruments was achieved by two research experts in the area of educational assessment and evaluation from Mwenge Catholic University. The reliability of the questionnaires was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha technique, with a coefficient of 0.799 for the questionnaire for teachers. The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was ensured by the triangulation of instruments and peer debriefing methods. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in words by verbatim quotations.

## 6. Study Findings and Discussion

The researcher wanted to find out the extent to which continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance in Monduli District public secondary schools. The responses of teachers used a five-level Likert scale, where the values 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 represent "Very Low Extent" (VLE), "Low Extent" (LE), "Moderate" (M), "High Extent" (HE), and "Very High Extent" (VHE), respectively. The frequencies (F) and percentages (%) were presented for each level of response. To interpret the percentages, the following rate classification was used:  $\leq 20$  as "extremely minority," 21-49 as "minority," 50-59 as "moderate," 60-69 as "majority," 71-89 as "very high majority," 90-99 as "extreme majority," and 100 as "overwhelming majority" (Taherdoost, 2019). In the context of this study, a mean score greater than 3 for an item indicates that the practices have improved the specific aspect. Conversely, a mean score of less than 3 suggests that the practices have not improved the specific aspect. A mean score exactly equal to 3 implies that the practices have neither improved nor worsened the specific aspect (Chyung & Hutchinson, 2023). The responses of teachers are summarised in table 1.

S/N	Statement	VLE		LE		ME		HE		VHE		Mean
		F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	Continuous assessment develops the student's entire mind, which improves performance in final national examinations	24	7.9	11	3.6	25	8.3	101	33.4	141	46.7	4.07
2	Continuous assessment enhances the teaching and learning process, resulting in improved academic performance for students	13	4.3	22	7.3	18	6.0	104	34.4	145	48.0	4.15
3	Continuous assessments assist students in identifying specific errors in order to achieve good results in final national examinations	19	6.3	20	6.6	33	10.9	75	24.8	155	51.3	4.08
4	Some students outperform in continuous assessment but underperform in final national examinations	70	23.2	55	18.2	67	22.2	54	17.9	56	18.5	2.90
5	Some students perform poorly in continuous assessment tests but improve in final national exams	65	21.5	39	12.9	47	15.6	77	25.5	74	24.5	3.19
6	I am more knowledgeable about question techniques in continuous assessment tests than in final national examinations	52	17.2	34	11.3	73	24.2	78	25.8	65	21.5	3.23
7	I place a high value on continuous assessment preparation and slowdown in final national examinations	85	28.1	66	21.9	45	14.9	53	17.5	53	17.5	2.75
8	Students who participate in continuous assessment perform better in final national examinations.	9	3.0	15	5.0	29	9.6	60	19.9	189	62.6	4.34
9	The more continuous assessment activities students participate in, the better their performance in final national examinations	11	3.6	16	5.3	16	5.3	84	27.8	175	57.9	4.31
10	The knowledge I have on preparing continuous assessments is enough to make me a good evaluator of students' academic performance	0	.0	0	.0	5	1.7	117	38.7	180	59.6	4.58
Grand Mean												3.76

Table 1: Responses of Teachers on the Extent of Continuous Assessment Practice Improve Students' Academic Performance  
Source: Field Data, (2023)

Key: 1 – "Very Low Extent" (VLE), 2 – "Low Extent" (LE), 3 – "Moderate" (M), 4 – "High Extent" (HE), and 5 – "Very High Extent" (VHE), respectively, frequencies (F) and percentages (%)

Data in table 1 shows that a very high majority (80.1%) of teachers rated to a high extent and very high extent that continuous assessment develops the student's entire mind, which improves performance in final national examinations, while an extreme minority (11.5%) of teachers rated to a very low extent on the statement. The mean score was 4.07. This implies that continuous assessment has a positive impact on students' performance in final national examinations. Teachers' belief in its efficacy suggests that they consider it a valuable approach for preparing students and ensuring better outcomes in the end-of-term or end-of-year assessments. During a face-to-face interview with the head of the school, A had this to say:

*These internal exams helped students to develop their abilities in different subjects. The knowledge they acquired in the classroom prepared them to answer the national examination in their respective classes (Personal communication with head of school in school B 17, July 2023).*

In relation to that, the head teacher from school A had this to say: *Teachers develop students' ability through internal exams, which finally helps them to perform well in their final exams (face-to-face interview with the head of school in school A 18, July 2023).*

This implies that the internal exams were effective tools for helping students develop their understanding and mastery of various subjects. By testing students' knowledge and understanding of the material covered in class, the exams provided them with valuable feedback on their strengths and weaknesses and helped them identify areas where they needed to improve. The findings from the study are in line with those by Veerasamy et al. (2021), who affirmed that ongoing assessment is related to student engagement and subsequent final programming exam performance and that it is possible to identify students at risk of failing the final exam.

Data in table 1 indicates that a very high majority (82.5%) of teachers rated to a high extent and very high extent that students who participate in continuous assessment perform better in final national examinations, while an extreme minority (8%) of teachers rated to a very low extent on the statement. The mean score was 4.34. This implies that a majority of teachers believe that students who participate in continuous assessment perform better in final national examinations. This indicates that most teachers view continuous assessment as an effective tool for improving student performance in exams. The fact that only a very small percentage suggests that there is a general consensus among teachers that continuous assessment is a valuable practice for improving student outcomes in final national exams. The mean score also supports this interpretation, as it is significantly higher than the midpoint of 3, indicating that the majority of teachers rated the statement positively. During the interview with District Secondary Education Officer had this to say:

*Based on my experience, schools that normally do enough internal exams in our district are likely to do better in their national examinations compared to those that are not doing so. This is an indicator that continuous assessment improves students' performance in the national exams (Personal communication with DSEO 19, July 2023).*

In relation to students who participate in continuous assessment perform better in final national examinations, the head teacher of school A had this to say:

*It is obvious in our school that students who perform well in internal exams normally perform well in the national exams. However, it sometimes occurs that those who perform well do not do better in the final exams. Such situations occur on very few occasions (face-to-face interview with head of school in school A 18, July 2023).*

This implies that continuous assessment is an effective tool for improving student learning and performance and that schools that prioritise continuous assessment are likely to see better outcomes in their students' performance in national exams. It also suggests that the knowledge and skills that students acquire through continuous assessment are transferable to other contexts, such as national exams, allowing them to perform better in these exams. The findings from the study are in line with those by Rana and Zubair (2019), who affirmed that continuous assessment not only provides more confidence to students and prepares them but also helps them perform better in their final examinations.

Data in table 1 shows that the very high majority (82.4%) of teachers rated to a high extent and very high extent that continuous assessment enhances the teaching and learning process, resulting in improved academic performance for students, while an extreme minority (11.6%) of teachers rated to a very low extent on the statement. The mean score was 4.15. This inferred that a significant majority of teachers believe that continuous assessment enhances the teaching and learning process, resulting in improved academic performance for students. This indicates that most teachers view continuous assessment as an effective tool for improving student outcomes. The findings are in line with those by Hidayat and Irdiyansyah (2023), who affirmed that a learning process that includes comprehensive formative assessment significantly affects students' academic achievement.

Data in table 1 shows that an extreme majority (98.3%) of teachers rated to a high extent and very high extent that the more continuous assessment activities students participate in, the better their performance in final national examinations, while an extreme minority (8.9%) of teachers rated to a very low extent on the statement. The mean score was 4.31. This implies that an overwhelming majority of teachers believe that the more continuous assessment activities students participate in, the better their performance in final national examinations. This indicates that most teachers view continuous assessment as a valuable tool for improving student performance in exams. The fact that only a very small percentage of teachers rated the statement to a very low extent suggests that there is a strong consensus among teachers that continuous assessment is an effective way to help students improve their performance in final national exams. The

mean score also supports this interpretation, as it is significantly higher than the midpoint of 3, indicating that the vast majority of teachers rated the statement positively. During a face-to-face interview with the head of school A, he said:

*Yes, it is true. In recent years, our school has practised that technique, and we have witnessed positive results compared to the previous years. Surely, the continuous assessment activities students participate in, the better their performance in final national examinations (face-to-face interview with the head of school in school A 18, July 2023)*

In addition to that, District Secondary Education Officer had this to say:

*The exams which our office set and distributed to all secondary schools helped in one way or another to stimulate the sense of teaching as well as learning for students. Whereby students practised different assessment practices, which in return helped them to perform well in their final exams (Personal communication with DSEO 19, July 2023).*

This implies that continuous assessment is an effective tool for improving student learning and performance and that the school's implementation of this practice has led to improved outcomes for students. It also suggests that the school's approach to continuous assessment is aligned with the national curriculum and standards and that it is effectively preparing students for the challenges they face in national examinations. The findings from the study are in line with those by Molina-Soria et al. (2020), who affirmed that the Formative and Shared Assessment influenced their academic performance, and the students who opted for the continuous assessment pathway obtained better academic performance.

Data in table 1 indicates that a very high majority (76.1%) of teachers rated to a high extent and very high extent that continuous assessments assist students in identifying specific errors to achieve good results in final national examinations, while an extreme minority (12.9%) of teachers rated to a very low extent on the statement. The mean score was 4.08. This inferred that a significant majority of teachers believe that continuous assessments assist students in identifying specific errors to achieve good results in final national examinations. This indicates that most teachers view continuous assessment as a valuable tool for helping students improve their performance in exams. The mean score also supports this interpretation, as it is higher than the midpoint of 3, indicating that the majority of teachers rated the statement positively. The findings are in line with those by Saleem et al. (2022), who affirmed that continuous assessment improves students' learning skills and has positive effects on learners.

Generally, other items in table 1 show that item 4 on Some students outperform in continuous assessment but underperform in final national examinations, had a mean score of 2.90, item 5 on students perform poorly in continuous assessment tests but improve in final national exams had a mean score of 3.19, item 6 on the statement I am more knowledgeable about question techniques in continuous assessment tests than in final national examinations had a mean score of 3.32, item 7 on the statement I place a high value on continuous assessment preparation and slowdown in final national examinations and item 10 on the statement The knowledge I have on preparing continuous assessments is enough to make me a good evaluator of students' academic performance. Furthermore, the general mean score of all ten statements was 3.76. The general mean score implies that continuous assessment practice improves students' academic performance to a high extent.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that continuous assessment practices have effectively achieved their goal of improving students' academic performance in national examinations to a high extent. This follows the general mean score of 3.76, which is significantly higher than the midpoint of 3, indicating that the majority of teachers rated the statement positively.

## 8. Recommendation

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendation was made:

There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of continuous assessment practices to identify areas for improvement to ensure they continue to be effective in improving student academic performance.

## 9. References

- i. Abisay, A., & Chen, M. (2020). Understand The Factors Affecting Student's Academic Performance in Science Subjects in Public Secondary Schools in Tanzania. *North American Academic Research*, 3(10), 154–160.
- ii. Barbarics, M. (2019). Secondary School Teachers' Lifelong Learning of Assessment: Autonomy in Developing Alternative Assessment Methods. *Journal of Adult Learning, Knowledge and Innovation*, 3(2), 61–72.
- iii. Chanda, P. (2022). Teachers' Level of Use of Continuous Assessment Practice in Kwekwe District Secondary Schools, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implication in Education*, 6(2), 326–335.
- iv. Chyung, S. Y., & Hutchinson, D. (2023). Evidence-Based Survey Design: Adding "Moderately" or "Somewhat" To Likert Scale Options Agree and Disagree to Get Interval-Like Data. *Performance Improvement*, 62(1), 17–24.
- v. Ewiss, M. (2021). Assessment of School's Evaluation Systems in Egypt Before and During COVID-19. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(3), 7–22.
- vi. Ghaicha, A., & Oufela, Y. (2021). Moroccan EFL Secondary School Teachers' Current Practices and Challenges of Formative Assessment. *Canadian Journal of Sociology / Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, 17(1), 1–15.
- vii. Hidayat, N., & Irdiyansyah, I. (2023). Optimising Academic Achievement through Comprehensive Integration of Formative Assessment into Teaching. *European Journal of Educational Research*. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eurjer.12.1.71>.

- viii. Jawuor, G. (2020). Teachers' Use of Assessment Data in Secondary Schools in Kenya: Opportunities and Threats. *Global Journal of Educational Studies*, 6(1), 26.
- ix. Juet, J., Admire, M., Shingirai, S., Obert, S., & Faitira, M. (2021). Effectiveness of...
- x. King, S. (2020). Education as a Pillar for Sustainable Development in Tanzania. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 12(07), 52–58.
- xi. Mkimbili, S., & Kitta, S. (2022). The Rationale of Continuous Assessment for Development of Competencies in Tanzania Secondary Schools. *Advanced Journal of Social Science*, 6(1), 64–70.
- xii. Mokibelo, E. (2018). Using Portfolio Assessment at Lower Secondary Education in Setswana Language Lessons. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9(5), 1059–1066.
- xiii. Molina-Soria, M., Pascual-Arias, C., & López-Pastor, V. (2020). El rendimiento académico y la evaluación formativa y compartida en formación del profesorado, 15, 204–215. <https://doi.org/10.17163/alt.v15n2.2020.05>.
- xiv. Myombe, G., & Mushi, P. (2022). The Correlation between Continuous Assessment Scores and National Form Four Examination Results in Tanzania: A Case Study of Morogoro Municipality. *East Africa Journal of Education Studies*, 5(2), 455–465.
- xv. Obi, Z., & Ezemba, C. (2019). Managerial Strategies for Ensuring Effective Continuous Assessment of Secondary School Students in Anambra State, Nigeria. *AI & SOCIETY*, 4(1), 225–232.
- xvi. Odera, F., Odundo, Otiop A., & Oyiengo, Karen A. (2020). Integration of Continuous Assessment Tests in Teaching and Learning of English Language in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. (Unpublished) M.A Dissertation Rongo University.
- xvii. Ozan, C., & Kincal, R. Y. (2018). The Effects of Formative Assessment on Academic Achievement, Attitudes toward the Lesson, And Self-Regulation Skills. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, 18, 85–118.
- xviii. Rana, S., & Zubair, R. (2019). The Reality of Continuous Assessment Strategies on Saudi Students' Performance at University Level. *English Language Teaching*, 12, 132–142. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n12p132>.
- xix. Refu, A., & Asmamaw, A. (2018). Challenges in Assessment Methods and Practices across Departments by Secondary School Teachers in the South West Shoa Zone, Ethiopia. *ER/JSSH*, 5(1), 68–86.
- xx. Ritah, N., & Nduhura, T. (2022). Continuous Assessment and Pupil Academic Performance at Primary Leaving Examinations in Government-Aided Schools in Mukono District, Uganda. *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research*, 6(5), 44–52.
- xxi. Saleem, A., Deeba, D., Raza, D., & Shaheen, I. (2022). An Analysis of Teachers' Insight on Continuous Assessment Practices. *International Journal of Social Science & Entrepreneurship*. <https://doi.org/10.58661/ijssse.v2i2.55>.
- xxii. Shafii, R. (2019). Exploring the Practices of Assessment for Learning in the Classroom: A Case Study of Five Secondary Schools in Rungwe District Mbeya, Tanzania. (Unpublished) M.A Dissertation Aga Khan University.
- xxiii. Taherdoost, H. (2019). What is the best response scale for survey and questionnaire design? Review the different lengths of the rating scale, attitude scale, and Likert scale by Hamed Taherdoost: Ssrn. [https://Papers.Ssrn.Com/Sol3/Papers.Cfm?Abstract\\_Id=3588604](https://Papers.Ssrn.Com/Sol3/Papers.Cfm?Abstract_Id=3588604).
- xxiv. Ternenge, T. S., & Agipu, O. L. (2019). Availability and Utilisation of School Library Resources in Selected Secondary Schools in Markudi Metropolis. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 2542 <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2542>.
- xxv. Ubi, I., & Udemba, E. (2021). Age differentials in calibrated items of WAEC English Language Objective test taken by students in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 20(1).
- xxvi. Ubulom, W., & Ikechukwu, I. (2020). Evaluation of Continuous Assessment and Accounting Students' Academic Achievement in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Entrepreneurship*, 6(4), 14–22.
- xxvii. Veerasamy, A., Laakso, M., & D'Souza, D. (2021). Formative assessment tasks as indicators of student engagement for predicting at-risk students in programming courses. *Informatics in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.15388/infedu.2022.15>.
- xxviii. Wallang, M., & Tambi, A. (2022). The Influence of Economic Teachers Attitude towards the Implementation of Continuous Assessment in Economics in Secondary Schools in the North West Region of Cameroon. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 4(5), 26–36.
- xxix. Zakka, K., & Waba, W. (2021). Investigation into the Uses and Practices of Continuous Assessment among Secondary School Teachers in Biu Educational Zone of Borno State. *Kashere Journal of Education*, 2(2), 50–58.