



# Teacher Concerns Regarding the Adoption of Continuous Assessment: The Case of Kwekwe District Secondary Schools, Zimbabwe

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**Abstract:** *The study sought to interrogate the views of secondary school teachers as implanters of the Continuous Assessment (CA) practice, a reform initiative adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). Some 10 secondary school teachers were selected on the basis of convenience from five departments in one of the schools used by MoPSE for administration of education in the Kwekwe district of Zimbabwe. As this was a small scale qualitative investigation, focus group discussions and interviews were used to collect data from informants. The findings were categorised according to different Stages of Concern (SoC) and then analysed. The findings revealed that the success of CA largely depends on ongoing training of teachers in addition to, administrative support and provision of adequate resources. Recommendations for effective implementation included guiding teachers through change process of implementing CA by offering ongoing professional development, procurement of resources of all kinds, effective monitoring and evaluation of CA. Above all concerted effort is needed to address the teachers' concerns as this will motivate them to effectively implement CA.*

**Keywords:** Teacher concerns, Secondary school, Adoption, Continuous assessment

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## 1. Introduction

The focus of the study was on interrogating the specific concerns of secondary school teachers regarding the adoption and subsequent implementation of continuous assessment (CA) at secondary school level. Zimbabwe adopted the New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CFPSE) 2015-2022 as one of her very best policy direction towards producing learners with relevant skills, applied knowledge, values, attitudes and dispositions that are key to national development (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2021). The new curriculum framework has multidimensional facets; chief among them is the deliberate emphasis on continuous assessment (CA) in the curriculum disciplines across the board. As MoPSE

(2021) puts it, CA has been adopted as the kind of assessment model which moves away from a singular final examination to a system of assessment where multiple forms of assessment become an integral part of the teaching learning process, placement and certification. The practice is performed in the school environment and epitomised by daily teaching, projects, quizzes, tests, interviews and observations (MoPSE, 2021). Indeed, CA's major strength lies in its coverage of a much wider range of skills that empowers learners with the cutting-edge skills that should see them participate actively in both local and global economies (USAID AED, 2009). Most importantly, CA allows teachers as implanters to assess the skills that cannot be measured in a written examination by engaging a repertoire of styles including, but not limited to projects, essays, oral tests, practical tests, portfolios, assignments,

interviews questionnaires and teacher observation (Kouwenhoven 2013; Tilya, 2010; Makunja, 2015). Essentially, effective teachers use continuous assessment to check for students' understanding throughout the lesson and then adjust their teaching based on the lesson feedback (Marzano, 2012). Research evidence has revealed that CA provides learners who do not perform well under examination conditions to demonstrate their true ability in a more relaxed atmosphere (MoPSE, 2021; Stronge, 2018). The major purpose of continuous assessment in Stronge (2018)'s view is to integrate curriculum pedagogy and assessment in order to provide insights into areas that are in need of improvement during the daily teaching. Basically, the teachers' skills in assessing their learners' progress depends on how deeply they know the content and how well they understand and interpret student talk and written work hence the need for skilling and re-skilling them prior to the onset of the implementation phase (Stronge, 2018). Accordingly, Stronge (2018) notes that nothing can fully compensate for the weakness of a teacher who lacks the knowledge and skill needed to help learners master the curriculum.

Previous research studies document several success stories on the implementation of CA in many countries across the globe. For instance, CA was perceived desirable upon the realisation that it embraces holistic approaches to assessing learner competencies in a continuum, thus, reducing stress, school phobia and demotivation that lead to underachievement and failure on the part of learners (MoPSE, 2021; Kouwenhoven 2013; Tilya, 2010; Makunja, 2015). For Walde (2016) the CA approach witnessed considerable success in most European countries since secondary schools were producing work-place ready school graduates having embraced the practice. Walde (2016) accounts for the adoption of CA by some countries such as Zimbabwe as owing to several complaints from different stakeholders in industry and commerce about the inability of the school graduates to perform their duties according to their levels of education and the grades that they possess. In some instances, secondary school graduates have good examination grades but they lack the competencies required in the world of work.

Previous research argues that although CA has been successfully implemented in Europe, in Africa, countries such as South Africa, Malawi, Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania that joined the bandwagon, were not able to implement CA as effectively and efficiently as curriculum planners expected (Walde, 2016). Notably, New Guinea with its long-standing commitment to CA since acquiring its national independence in 1975, witnessed negligible success in implementing the assessment practice. Additionally, cynics claim that what compounded the implementation of CA in most countries was largely due to serious lack of capacity, lack of motivation, parental support and teacher resistance to implement innovations (Lubisi & Murphy, 2002; Kapambwes, 2010). This concurs with Ndawi & Maravanyika (2011)'s observation that some curricular changes threaten the role of teachers, in particular, experienced teachers do not do not like changes because

they will render them inexperienced. Ipaye (2012) takes another dimension to argue that despite several factors that impede implementation of innovations, the prime motive of man going into career is to obtain the resources to meet his /her psychological needs and support family among others. The argument is that in order to improve performance, teachers need to be motivated in terms of improved conditions of service and giving them a meaningful salary.

From a different perspective, in Zimbabwe, political and economic challenges overwhelmed the need for a curriculum in which learners' progress is monitored on daily bases. This witnessed the introduction of CA whose implementation was however fait accompli which might have led to its suspension as teachers were not really prepared (Walde, 2016). On account of wide spread complaints from teachers, parents and even learners themselves, the government had to take a stance on the issues of tasks and projects which were introduced as part of CA. Thus, the then minister of education officially says:

*We have totally scrapped the issue of tasks, so we are saying we are not going to have tasks anymore in our schools. These tasks are not part of the syllabus, from my study and even if one would look at our syllabus, it has no tasks. Above all, the tasks were too much a burden to both teachers and learners because if a learner is doing 10 subjects, they are required to do at least one task per subject meaning 10 tasks for the 10 subjects per term or simply 30 tasks per year. We are going to compress the curriculum especially for lower levels because the learning areas are too much (Sunday Times, 4 March 2018).*

According to (Walsh 2016), policymakers had high expectations and prescribed Continuous Assessment Learners' Activities (CALAs) in the context of Zimbabwe. With overly ambitions they then designed projects despite uncertainty or indications that it would fail. Besides, extant literature revealed that African countries that adopted CA experienced an upheaval regarding the best way to implement the practice owing to lack of preparedness (Quyen, 2017). This research article's focus is on investigating the concerns of secondary school teachers regarding the adoption and subsequent implementation of continuous assessment (CA) to identify the exact nature of the problem that is to be addressed by this study.

## **Statement of the Problem**

Continuous assessment is a contemporary reform initiative that many countries have adopted to operate in parallel with the high stakes external examinations. However, evidence from contemporary research seems to suggest that, the processes of introducing reforms such as CA are not always perfect and as such often result in user-resistance and subsequent demise of the

envisaged innovation. It has emerged from research that CA has attracted much debate and controversy since the inception of the New Curriculum. In all cases cited above, it is necessary to investigate the concerns and realities that confront teachers regarding the adoption and implementation of CA to identify the exact nature of the deficiency that is to be addressed by this study.

## 2. Literature Review

This section presents the review of related literature which is critical for understanding of both the conceptual theoretical basis for establishing the concerns that teachers have about the adoption and subsequent implementation of CA.

### 2.1 Conceptual Framework

This paper explored the teacher concerns regarding the implementation of CA, thus the conceptual position adopted was that:

1. implementation of CA may be successful only if the teachers' concerns are identified and addressed,
2. teachers' preparedness to implement CA is generated through ongoing professional development and,
3. MoPSE must provide an institutional framework through strong structures and adequate resources to support effective implementation of CA.

Apart from the aforementioned conceptual position, there are seven standards articulated by the joint committee of the American Federation of Teachers, National Council Measurement in Education and National Educational Association (1990) lay the conditions through which successful implementation of CA may be ascertained: that is:

1. teachers should be skilled in choosing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions,
2. teachers should be skilled in developing assessment methods appropriate for instructional decisions,
3. teachers should be skilled in administering scoring and interpreting the results of both externally produced and teacher-produced assessment methods,
4. teachers should be skilled in assessing results when making decisions about individual students , planning , teaching, developing curriculum and school improvements and
5. teachers should be skilled in communicating assessment results to students, parents, other audiences and other educators.

However, despite CA seemingly being a visionary and laudable initiative, its implementation has been with constrains that require to be investigated into. This research article therefore seeks to interrogate the specific concerns that secondary school teachers have about the adoption and subsequent implementation of CA.

### 2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings

This research article is underpinned by the CBAM theoretical framework. This is due to the emphasis it places on explaining the teachers' concerns about innovations and why innovations are not always adopted and used extensively as innovators intended (Barrow and Delisle, 2010). The situation informed by CBAM parallels with the one that has been suggested by the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CFPSE) 2015-2022. Thus, in an effort to explore concerns of teachers' regarding the adoption and implementation the CA approach, one of CBAM's three conceptual frameworks namely: Stage of Concern (SoC) is considered.

**Table 1: Expressions of SoC about Innovation (adopted from Hall & Hord, 2006)**

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**Expressions and Phases of Concern about an Innovation**

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	<b>Stages of Concern</b>	<b>Expressions of Concern</b>
IMPACT	Stage 6: Refocusing	I have some ideas about something that would work even better
	Stage 5: Collaboration	I am concerned about relating what I am doing with what my co-workers are doing
	Stage 4: Consequence	How is my use affecting my clients
TASK	Stage 3: management	I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready
	Stage 2: Personal	How will using it affect me?
SELF	Stage 1: Informational	I would like to know more about it
	Stage 0: Awareness	I am not concerned about it

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Apparently, seven levels of SoC presented in Table 1, are based on Hall & Hord's (2006) publication, research and experience with teachers over a period of time. In light of the theoretical framework, the themes for analysing the research findings are generated and grouped under three categories namely, teachers' affective outcomes involving self-related concerns, task-related concerns and impact-related concerns. Basically, the categories address the affective side of change about the teachers' reactions, feelings, perceptions and attitudes towards CA hence the analysis that is going to be performed for this study essentially remains qualitative. In a nutshell, the framework was instrumental in as far as guiding the researcher on the aspects to consider when exploring the teachers' concerns regarding the adoption of CA in their classrooms as well as in determining the progress and the challenges teachers experienced in implementing the practice. To contextualize the framework for readers, it is important to highlight briefly about the seven levels through which the teachers' concerns may be realised as they adopt and collaborate in the implementation of a new innovation.

**Awareness Stage:** This is used for explaining the educator's involvement with CA. Thus, it focuses on the educators' concerns for understanding CA and why it is being proposed for use in primary and secondary education. Sweeny (2003) noted that at this stage, users become conscious of the problem or challenge of implementing an innovation even though there is little direct concern. This stage focuses on the degree of priority the teacher is placing on the innovation (CA) and the relative intensity of concern about the innovation (George et al, 2006). However, according to Hord & Roussin (2013) the innovation is not the only thing the teachers are concerned about and therefore are not in a hurry to put it into practice.

**Informational Stage:** Focus is on the affective side involving the teachers' efforts to gain more information

about the innovation including, the general characteristics, effects, components and requirements for the use of the innovation. The stage involves teachers getting to know the innovation (CA) and reaching an initial decision as to its efficacy (Hall & Hord, 2006). In the current study, the informational stage focuses on how teachers gain information about the CA such as its general characteristics, effects, components and requirements for the innovation use (Hall & Roussin, 2013). More importantly this research uses this stage to reflect upon the teachers' willingness to learn more about CA. It has since been established that usually, teachers with high stage 1 concerns simply want more information but are not concerned about the details; rather they want fundamental information about what the innovation is all about, what it will do, and what its use will involve (Hall & Roussin, 2013). Thus, using the information avenue the teachers' needs, capabilities, concerns, and what they feel about the usage of CA can be established.

**Personal Stage:** The stage focuses on how the innovation relates to the individual teacher. An analysis of an innovation at this level focuses mainly on how it impacts on teachers going through change and their concerns for personal skills and adequacy (Barrow & Delisle, 2010). Hord & Roussin (2013) aptly conclude that teachers mostly focus on the impact the innovation will have on them. Preparedness is often impeded because teachers are concerned about how the use of an innovation will affect them at a personal level. For instance, teachers may be concerned about their own time limitations and the sense of loss for having to stop doing something that was comfortable (Hall & Roussin, 2013). Naturally, teachers are most concerned about status, rewards, and what effects the innovation might have on them. A teacher with relatively intense personal concerns according to Hall & Roussin (2013) might in effect block out more substantive concerns about the innovation which is often interpreted as resistance to change.

**Management Stage:** This stage provides information pertaining to the mechanics of implementing or integrating the innovation. Thus, naturally, chances of sustained success are increased as the teachers understand more about how to use external resources in facilitating each school in achieving change success (Hall & Hord, 2006). This is the stage where the concerns begin to concentrate on the preparedness to manage strategies for delivering the innovation within the four walls of the classroom. At this point, time requirements are among the prime management factors which create scepticism on the part of teachers in relation to the adoption of innovation. Various research studies on preparedness indicate that self-management has to do with both behaviour and mind-set necessary for teachers to learn to plan ahead and to focus on their goals and get the most out of their new experiences (Conley, 2008).

**Consequence Stage:** Here the focus is on the effects of or impact of the innovation on learners. Barrow & Delisle (2010) say, at this level users enter another period of change evaluation and over time this establishes patterns of use that are likely to lead to the desired outcomes. Thus, consequences focus on the effects or impacts of the innovation on learners. The teacher's concerns centre on effects on learners, thus, if positive effects are observed, educators are likely to continue to work towards implementation.

**Collaboration Stage:** According to Hall & Hord (2006), the collaboration stage demonstrates the participants' desire to work jointly with other colleagues for achieving a specific change. That is, the collaboration stage makes it easier to understand the teacher's coordinating efforts in using the innovation (CA) with others. The teachers here are interested in relating what they are doing to what their colleagues are doing.

**Refocusing Stage:** The stage emphasises the exploration of other ways to utilise the innovation in a more effective and efficient way. At this stage the teacher's concern is centred on revising, adopting and seeking more effective versions of the innovation. According to Hall & Hord (2006) the teachers evaluate the innovation and make suggestions for continued improvement, or consider alternative ideas that would work even better.

Over and above, SoC can best be used to design, shape the development of learning sessions in the pre-implementation period of preparation as well as during implementation (Hall & Hord, 2006; George, Hall, & Stiegebauer, 2013 and Hord & Roussin, 2013).

Apart from the diagnostic dimensions discussed above, the CBAM theoretical framework identifies certain assumptions that may be useful for examining the teachers' concerns about the adoption and implementation of CA. The first assumption is that change is a process and not an event. Hall and Hord (2006) argue that change is not accomplished by having a one-time announcement by an executive leader or a

two-day training workshop for teachers. Instead, change is a process through which people and organisations move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the new ways. Subsequent research on school change has confirmed that changes in the classroom practice can take anywhere from three to five years to be fully implemented (Kurasha & Chabaya, 2013). Failure to address key aspects of change can either add years to or even prevent successful implementation. In light of the adoption of the CA, the 'event mentality' is visibly demonstrated. Cynics have expressed concern over the manner in which the new curriculum was adopted, citing that its introduction was impromptu without giving educators opportunities to prepare for operationalising it.

The second assumption is that successful change starts and ends at the individual level. Teachers need sustained help along the way if they are to fully implement a new idea, and they will require different kinds of help as their needs change. The argument pushed forward is that, the main concern of teachers in the process of change is that of getting the new curriculum framework "right" and then marketing it before it is operationalised (Stenhouse, 1995). Ndawi & Maravanyika (2011) however, observed that some teachers do not do not like changes because they threaten their role and will render them inexperienced.

Thirdly, the model assumes that the school is the key organisational unit for making change successful, implying that the school staff and administration will make or break any change effort regardless of whether the change is initiated from inside or outside. As an intervention measure, the school must do a lot by itself and has to move in concert with and be in support by the other components of the system for effective implementation of CA.

The fourth assumption regards change as a highly personal experience. That is, as teachers engage in change, many feelings and perceptions are expressed and many more are only whispered or left unspoken (Hord & Roussin, 2006). It is assumed that, no matter how promising and wonderful the innovation and no matter how strong the support teachers will have, they have moments of self doubt about whether they can succeed with the new ways and whether they even want to change. Indeed, change is about people and so their feelings, concerns, perceptions, frustrations all play a critical role in determining the success of or failure of an innovation.

The fifth assumption is that change entails growth in feelings and skills. Feelings and perceptions about the innovation and the change process can be sorted and classified into what is called concerns. Concerns describe feelings; thoughts and reactions individuals develop in regard to new programme or innovation that is relevant to their daily job (Hall & Hord, 2006). Concerns, according to Barrow & Delisle (2010), exert a powerful influence on the affective outcomes resulting from successful implementation of a reform initiative

that determine the type of assistance teachers may need in the adoption process.

Taken together, the assessment of teachers' concerns and level of Use of an innovation will determine the necessary interventions that can be made by the change facilitator to support the change process. Hall & Hord (2001) contend that interventions to facilitate change need to be aligned with the concerns of those who are engaged with the change. Ornstein & Hunkins (2004) endorse that all change originate with individuals and individuals change when their concerns are made known.

### 3. Methodology

This article adopted a case study research methodology and different techniques were used to collect qualitative information and these included 10 in-depth key informant interviews and a focus group discussion. The 10 teachers were selected, two from each department (Arts, Sciences, Commercial, Practical and Humanities) at one of the secondary schools used by MoPSE for administering its education. The deliberate selection of the sample arose from the small sizes of the departments, financial constraints and the Covid-19 restrictions on movement. Above all, the sample is a reasonable size to elicit useful results for a qualitative inquiry. Creswell (2012) maintained that a qualitative research requires only a limited number of participants given the vast amount of data that emerges even from one interview. According to Creswell (2003) such a sample size allows for more in-depth data unlike an excessive sample that diminishes the authenticity of the responses. To investigate the problem, the framework of the Concerns-Based-Adoption Model (CBAM) was adopted and CA was defined as an innovation. However, the research article concentrates on the concerns of the educators about the adoption of CA and further diagnoses their challenges and progress in implementing the innovation. An interview protocol was organised and categorised according to different Stages of Concern (SoC) of the CBAM for analysis.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The researcher decided to present the results and to immediately discuss them in order to avoid unnecessary repetition that usually results when presentation of results and their discussion are separated (Mouton, 2008). In the presentation, the researcher kept on using thick descriptions and the informants' own words taking it that the analysis should remain qualitative. The study revealed several affective outcomes that remained contentious in the implementation of CA practice. Throughout the interviews and focus group discussions, the answers given by the informants reflected their various stages of concern ranging from self-related through task-related to impact-related concerns. In soliciting for participation in this study, an undertaking to informants that the researcher was not going to use actual names in the research thesis was made. Instead pseudonyms were used to conceal their identity. The

informants were therefore, called: A B C D E F G H I and J. What follows are the findings drawn from the interviews and focus group discussions with teachers who participated in the study.

#### 4.1 Results Based on Self Related Concerns

The responses given by the informants in focus group discussions reflected self-related concerns about the adoption of CA in the secondary school sector. Though there was consensus among them that CA is a worthwhile practice, it was the common position of all the participants that more information and clarification in some areas of CA were in need. On this issue, participant B had the following to say:

*We always needed information but it was hard to come by. The way we were introduced to CA was frustrating as it seemed like the entire process of assessing learners was going to change. To make it even worse, those that were supposed to be guiding us were not conversant with the new approach of assessing learners.*

According to the informants, CA was brought in without consultation and sufficient guidelines. It emerged from the interviews that the way CALAs were introduced in 2017 involved a lot of noise from stakeholders and there was a lot of confusion on who was to take the charge of CA among MoPSE and the Zimbabwe Examination Council (ZIMSEC). The informants agreed that there was lack of information on Continuous Assessment Learning Activities (CALA guides) for both teachers and learners.

From focus group discussions, it emerged that some teachers perceived CA as giving a series of paper and pencil tests that are given regularly by teachers. In my view, this does not sound true for CA as by definition, CA describes an ongoing system of monitoring and assessing learners' progress through the daily teaching, projects, quizzes, tests, interviews and observations (MoPSE, 2021). During the focus group discussions informant J indicated that teachers give monthly tests to learners as a way of assessing them continually. Thus, the informant remarked:

*There is nothing very new as far as CA is concerned. We have been doing this practice even before CA was officially introduced and made compulsory in schools. We have been keeping progress records for each learner and a child study record which is just similar to the profiling we are asked to do in CA. It is only the name that has changed but the concept remains the same. Perhaps the other difference is that the marks recorded in the teachers' record books were not considered for external assessment.*

Responses such as the one given by informant J indicates that more information about CA, such as its general characteristics, its components and requirements for its use is generally lacking. This information can only be obtained from training or staff development workshops.

## 4.2 Results Based on Task Related Concerns

From the discussions, most of the informants seemed they were generally not impressed by the way CA was introduced. In their varied responses, they expressed high levels of feelings of uncertainty regarding the time needed for implementing CALAs an indication that they were not ready for CA. Participants also indicated that they had difficulties in accessing resources, lacked training and proper guidance that compounded the implementation of CA. Additionally; some of the concerns that were raised by the informants were that the CA took a lot of time and as such they feared not being able to complete the syllabus with CA if they follow the approach. This was clearly articulated by informant H who said:

*I have three Form 4 classes that I am teaching. With the demands of the CA I find it, very difficult to do a comprehensive CALA projects considering that these have to be done before learners sit for their ZIMSEC final examinations at the end of this term. I foresee challenges in administering these CALAs to the students because I am not very much conversant with what exactly is required of a good CALA. It will be difficult to cover the syllabus and other aspects of the CALA when at the same time the learners have to be prepared for the examination. Actually I don't see us getting anywhere with the CALAs that have been dictated on us.*

The participants echoed similar sentiments during the focus group discussions, for instance informant A stated that CA is an additional responsibility for teachers and as such special incentives should be introduced so as to motivate them. Participants also concurred in their views that, CA is a lot of work and for it to be successful it needs a motivated teacher. This is consistent with Ipaye (2012) who argue that the prime motive of man going into career is to obtain the resources to meet his /her psychological needs and support family among others. It is however unfortunate that Zimbabwean teachers' monthly take home salaries and allowances are very poor and unsustainable; a scenario I also agree causes stress in teachers and subsequently reduces student quality output.

The informants consistently indicated that teachers conceived the idea of CA laudable, but however pointed out that it needs to be carefully planned over a long time

and not to be abruptly introduced. The participants were of the feeling that the introduction of the new curriculum was rushed without adequate consultation with stakeholders. Such a flawed process, participants said usually impedes effective implementation. This is in line with the views expressed by Hall & Hord (2006) whose assume that, change as a process cannot be accomplished by having a one-time announcement by an executive leader or a two-day training workshop for teachers. Instead, change is a process through which people and organisations move as they gradually come to understand and become skilled and competent in the new ways. The participants shared similar sentiments that CALAs were someone's research. They castigated policymakers in Zimbabwe for copying things from somewhere else and then want them implemented hurriedly without adequate training given to the teachers or without a support system in place. 'CALAs appear to be good but the problem is that teachers don't have sufficient knowledge of them', vowed one key informant during focus group discussions.

Generally, most teachers were worried about organising and supervising CALAs without necessary skills. For example, informant C mentioned that:

*Teacher orientation to CALA was poor. The workshop facilitators were not sure of what they were training teachers. We were expecting to get manuals to help and guide us on the proper implementation of the CALAs but we were left to gain skill through trial and error.*

Informant D went on saying:

*When we were being trained at the workshops, we had questions and when we asked them, no satisfactory answers were proffered but the presenters became militant and started threatening. That is where we saw that the CA was bringing trouble to us. We are in desperate need of those who know how to take us by hand and orient us very well without showing tendencies of victimisation; then we can achieve the goals of the CA.*

The responses indicate that teachers did not get adequate help to enable them to perform the new curriculum effectively. The inherent lack of proper guidance and buy-in make implementation difficult. Similar concerns were registered during interviews with teachers. It emerged from the interviews that, the three day workshops organised for teachers were not enough for effective implementation of CA. For instance, facilitators were blamed for spending much of their time on irrelevant issues at the expense of issues that were critical for implementing continuous assessment learning activities (CALA). CALA is any learning activity or assessment that requires learners to perform, demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and

proficiency (MoPSE, 2021). Participants were eager to get assistance on CALA designing, the marking and perhaps CALA moderation.

Most of the participants did not hide their disappointment regarding their lack of resources to help them implement the CALAs for instance, a key informant said:

*Human resource is needed to assist with the modalities needed in the procurement of the resources. The CA requires that learners do research work but unfortunately most of our rural schools lack these essential commodities. Despite inaccessibility to technological resources, most teachers have phobia to use technology.*

The concern over the lack of parental support was also raised during focus group discussions. Teachers indicated that they were not certain as to whether parents had been educated about the CA because they were not cooperating but instead responded by accusing that teachers were demanding too much from them. The participants' views are consistent with Lubisi & Murphy (2002) & Kapambwes (2010) who say that the implementation of CA in most countries was compounded largely among other things, serious lack of parental support and teacher resistance to implement innovations

### **4.3 Results Based on Impact Related Concerns**

On further analysis of responses provided by the informants, the emergent concerns were in the consequence, collaboration and refocusing categories. For instance, the teachers exhibited consequence concerns through indicating that they did not even understand how to go about the CALA projects. They cited a number of challenges they encounter on their way to become competent in implementing the CALAs, chief among them is that teachers find it difficult to perform CALAs as there are no rubrics to provide them accurate feedback on their pedagogical strength and weaknesses. This scenario presents a host of problems for teachers who may end up doing things that are absolutely wrong. Teacher E who teaches practical subjects indicated that learners do not like projects and only do them when they are pressurised. Teachers complained that learners often do not hand in their CALA projects in time and if no follow up is made they simply ignore.

Evidence is available that teachers have now come to value collaborative work with colleagues when designing and supervising, marking and moderation of CALA projects. During focus group discussions informant E said, "We just need support. CALAs are completely new to us as teachers. We are expecting those who understand CALAs to come in and collaborate with us."

Responses from most informants indicate high levels of agreement that teachers needed support for their learning areas in terms of designing CALAs, supervising and marking them. Participants also submitted that support from the school administration was vital for the smooth transition of CA at secondary schools they teach. Teacher F from the humanities department said:

*There wasn't much support from administration. It was just a directive, do this or else you get charged. Everything was just imposed on us; there was no platform for us to ask questions. Our headmaster was not ready to respond to our questions but simply told us to figure out what was required by the CA as he was not conversant.*

The other teachers also shared sentiments of their colleagues. They agreed that collaboration among members is not embedded within the culture of the different departments in the secondary school which was used as research site. Informant I remarked:

*We are all in the same state of confusion and therefore we cannot support each other. Otherwise the CA seems good but the problem is that we don't know and those who know are not at our disposal. The manner they want to hand it down to us makes understanding it difficult, but we are generally willing to learn.*

During the discussions refocusing concerns were discernible. These were held by most of the informants who emphasised the need for all teachers to have conceptual understanding of all aspects of this assessment approach. It also emerged from the discussions that the support from the MoPSE to implement the CA was minimal and so could not bring meaningful improvement in the learning of their learners. 'The CA is a way to go but we need time to learn to manage it in our classes. Trying to rush into implementing the CA without enough training may lose the real essence of CA. There is not enough support from the ministry. Support should be on-going', vowed informant D.

However, data generated indicate that most teachers were engaging with the informational stage of the curriculum process given that they have concerns regarding the nature of CA as an innovation as well as the requirements for its implementation (Hord & Roussin, 2013). Participants also expressed their conviction that the paradigm shift had effects on learners when the stage of consequences is subsequently achieved. The study discovered that there was a general lack of dialogue among educational stakeholders MoPSE and ZIMSEC in particular and as such there was a lot of confusion on who was to take the charge of CA.

Over and above, research findings revealed that teachers are not yet able to design and supervise CALAs and need help in that area

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

The teachers had major concerns, mostly in the management and consequence domains. These include:

1. Uncertainty feelings in the implementation of the CA due to lack of specific rubrics to provide them accurate feedback on their pedagogical strength and weaknesses
2. Insufficient time to accommodate CA into institutional frameworks. For instance, informants stated that, spending too much time with CALA and making sure all students get help is a limitation of CA.
3. Inconsistent and inadequate training that prevented teachers from implementing CALAs effectively.
4. Lack of administrative support and motivation to implement CA. Teachers called the Government to listen to their concerns particularly the salary structure.
5. Finally, in as much as the prime motive of man going into career is to obtain the resources to meet his /her psychological needs and support family among others, teachers need a leaving salary in order for them to be motivated to implement the CA. Teachers castigated the current scenario whereby all teachers despite of qualifications and experience have almost the same salary.

Consequently, the results of this study do not suggest high levels of implementation of CA in the secondary school sector. Overall, teachers' concerns were highest on the self and task phases while lowest on the impact phase. Given that teachers' concerns were mainly on self and task phases, it then can be concluded that teachers were interested in and wanted to know about CA but their inability and resistance to progress to more advanced phases of concern indicate that sufficient

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attention has not been directed to training that allows them to incorporate the new CA into institutional frameworks. These results are consistent with findings of Hall & Hord (2006) which revealed that concerns caused teachers to resist innovations and to believe that they had better ideas than those on which the innovation was based.

### 5.2 Recommendations

In light of findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were forwarded to assist in the implementation of CA in secondary schools. These are:

1. The successful outcome of assessment depends upon intensive training of teachers who are end users of the innovation. MoPSE should therefore assist and guide teachers through change process of implementing CA and to give them support and resources they need to increase their comfort and familiarity with the CA innovation.
2. Intensive ongoing training on CALA projects and tasks should be organised in the form of workshops, seminars and in-service programmes to raise the level of use of the new assessment scheme. This is consistent with Walde (2016)'s contention that training of teachers is an investment that will provide them with cutting edge skills they require to implement CA effectively.
3. CALA guides should be prepared on each learning area at district, provincial and national levels. These should embrace different types of assessment techniques that are relevant to assess the competencies and performance of learners in their different learning areas.
4. Finally, the Government should listen to the teachers' concerns, particularly the salary structure. There should be a difference in salaries according to qualifications and experience rather than all teachers getting almost the same salary.

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