Exploring Tutor's Insight on Using Portfolio as a Continuous Assessment Practice (CAPs) in Higher Learning Institutions in Tanzania: A Case Study among Tutors at Morogoro-Campus, Tanzania

Kija Steven Magembe

Institute of Adult Education, Morogoro-Campus

E-mail:stevenkmagembe2001@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explored the tutor's views on using a portfolio as a continuous assessment practice in higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The study was conducted at Morogoro-Campus in Tanzania. A qualitative approach was employed in this study. A case study research design was used to allow an in-depth exploration of a real-life context. A constructivist learning theory was used in this study. A purposeful sampling technique was used to collect responses from tutors. Eight tutors were selected as participants in this research. The study used semi-structured interviews to gather data from eight (8) tutors. Thematic analysis was conducted to examine the themes emerged to represent tutors views towards portfolio. Findings indicated that tutors were using a portfolio with a positive attitude as this strategy is believed in its capability of assessing in a meaningful way. In addition, tutors believed that if trained properly, a portfolio can assist them to keep learners' records appropriately and they can use these records to monitor their learners' performance. Although these tutors viewed the portfolio positively, they believed that its use in classrooms was costly and was leading to frustration among them as tutors. Most tutors agreed that there needs to be more tutor training to explain portfolios' functions and benefits. Problems teachers foresaw in portfolio use included time-consuming in marking portfolios, excessive workload in limited time and difficulty in evaluating many teaching portfolios.

Keywords: Tutors' perceptions; portfolio; assessment, Tanzania

1. Introduction

In the last decade, there have been numerous innovations in educational theory and practice. Education has moved from being a traditional teacher-centered process to one that is student-centered. Similarly, in the area of assessment, there has been a shift away from assessing knowledge towards a more competency/performance-based assessment. Portfolio-based learning is an increasingly popular option among educationists (Parboosingh, 1996). A portfolio is a collection of written accounts of events and activities experienced by an individual, kept in the form of a journal. The portfolio is defined as a purposeful collection of a learner's works that can be considered as evidence of a learner's efforts, accomplishments, and advancement (Caner,

2010; Farid, 2018; Mhlauli & Kgosidialwa, 2016). The portfolio is used not only as a document of evidence but also as an effective learning tool. Portfolio-based learning is an approach firmly rooted in the principles of experiential learning (Stanton & Grant, 1999) which is a cyclical process of recording, reviewing/reflecting, and learning from events (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). It is therefore important that the portfolio does not become a mere collection of event narratives, but contains reflections on these events and the lessons learned. Essentially, any evidence of learning is collected in the portfolio as evidence that reflective learning has taken place (Royal College of General Practitioners, 1993). The portfolio may also include details of learning objectives, learning resources and strategies, and how that learning might be accomplished and assessed. Portfolio-based learning has several advantages. It enables learners to act and learn autonomously and allows them to assess their strengths and weaknesses. It also helps them to identify and meet their learning needs and build an education plan for the future (Supiano et al., 2002; Wilkinson et al., 2002).

There has been a concern among scholars on the use of portfolios as authentic assessment tools in higher learning institutions (Binh, 2021; Farrell, 2020; Muin, Hafidah, & Daraini, 2021; Tyas, 2020) in contrast to the dominant use of traditional test assessment. Scholars stress that the use of authentic assessment tools such as portfolios may lead to students spending time on tasks which in turn may lead to deep learning, hence competence acquisition (Halimah & Syaddad, 2020; Syamsul Ma'arif, Abdullah, Siti Fatimah & Nurul Hidayati, 2021). Furthermore, a portfolio assessment, which is considered an authentic assessment, is less stressful allowing a friendly learning environment among learners (Martin et al., 2016). It makes learners acquire the competencies in the process of accomplishing the tasks. It is regarded as one of the forms of assessment for learning as it helps learners improve the learning process (Binh, 2021). The concern of scholars on the usefulness of portfolios has led to the use of such tools as assessment tools in most higher learning institutions worldwide.

Portfolios are found in all phases of education and professional development for learning, assessment, promotion, and appraisal. Definitions of portfolios emphasize the collection of work which includes a reflective commentary (Baume, 2001). Often in Higher Education, the portfolio is used to demonstrate evidence of achievements for summative purposes (Baume & Yorke, 2002). Portfolios open the scope of the conventional concept to all exhibitions of "writing samples, photos, videos, research projects, observations by mentors and peers, and reflective thinking" (Barrett, 2010, pp. 6-14) to aid the process of accumulating, examining, sharing, and performing of learning outcomes with and to others via means of both offline and online media. With portfolio approaches, students can incorporate their reflections with learning that reaches out of their sector, making for not only lifelong learning but also life-wide learning (Chen, 2009). This practice encourages students to become more active, flexible, and independent in the process of setting goals, choosing materials, practicing different language skills, and self-evaluating their learning outcomes. A portfolio can present a wide perspective of the learning process for students and enable ongoing feedback for them (Zhang, 2009). Besides, a portfolio also enables students to have a self-assessment of their studies and learning (Gavriel, 2013). A portfolio also can provide visual and dynamic proof of students' interests, skills, strong sides, successes, and development in a certain period, portfolio which is the systematic collection of the students' studies helps assess students as a whole (Birgin & Baki, 2009).

Many previous studies have been conducted on portfolio assessment. Zhang (2009) has conducted a study on the use of portfolios in the Chinese context. The study has been done among English teachers. Questionnaires and interviews were used in the process to gather data. Quantitative data revealed that teachers have been using portfolios as an assessment tool widely as they can keep track of their student's learning process, while qualitative data indicate that teachers prefer to use portfolios as they can differentiate students' abilities and it has become students' learning evidence. Ugodulunwa and Wakjissa (2015)aimed to investigate portfolio assessment techniques in teaching geography. The quasi-experimental design study has been conducted in two schools in Jos South, Nigeria. Students were divided into experimental and controlled groups. Findings from this study revealed that portfolio assessment helped in improving students' performance in map sketching and location where the experimental group recorded higher mean gain scores of 33.32 as against 1.65 from the controlled group. A study was done by Samad, Hussin, and Sulaiman (2015) among Malaysian ESL teachers to determine the techniques ESL teachers use in implementing portfolios as an assessment tool. These researchers proposed a model of portfolio assessment since there was no specific model or technique to conduct portfolio assessment in Malaysia. Furthermore, Samad, Hussin, and Sulaiman (2015) have stated that in Malaysia portfolio assessment was heard, but not widely used. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations from nine ESL teachers were utilized to collect data. Findings revealed that the portfolio model developed has provided ESL teachers the opportunity to document individual students' growth. Furthermore, Charvade, Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou (2012) studied 50 students in an EFL classroom. An experimental design study which has been done by dividing the students into experimental and controlled groups revealed that the students in the experimental group outperformed the students in the control group in their reading comprehension ability. Since this research has been done in an EFL classroom, the researchers suggested that portfolio assessment should be applied in some other subjects as it has the potential to develop student's learning process.

Besides, portfolio assessment can give a chance for teachers/tutors to give feedback to students on their learning process and make effective communication with teachers and even their parents. Despite the level of effectiveness, the wide variety in which the tool may be implemented creates gaps and holes within the foundation of the tool if they are not enacted with a clear vision and purpose. A further complication is added to the equation as tutors with various backgrounds, training, and understanding of effective practices become responsible for integration. For this to be effective a high level of professional development is required to ensure the tool is being supported in the manner for which it was intended.

There has also been a call for the use of portfolios in Higher learning institutions particularly for assessment that is designed to be practice-oriented (Brown, 2003). Brown (2003, p. 7) argues for a range of small tasks throughout the learning program to ensure that participants are actively engaged in learning activities that can culminate in the final assessment'. However, to use portfolios to support professional development, learning, and teaching requires tutors to

understand some key assessment concepts such as the link between learning objectives and success criteria, the use of rich questioning, and the role of feedback in a pedagogy focused on learning, self- and peer-assessment (Klenowski, 2002a; Black & Wiliam, 2003). Despite the popularity of portfolio-based learning among educators, there remain questions, such as tutors' opinions on the use of portfolios in their assessment practices. The current study seeks to explore tutor's views on the use of portfolios as a continuous assessment practice in an educational context. Examining the perceptions of tutors specifically in the Tanzanian context provided valuable context-specific insights that complemented and enriched the global body of knowledge. By contextualizing the research, this study sought to provide evidence-based recommendations and solutions to problems of implementation, fostering a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with portfolio assessment practices in higher learning institutions. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

  i.   How do tutors perceive the benefits of portfolios as a continuous assessment practice for their students?
  ii. What are the perceived problems encountered by tutors in implementing portfolios as a continuous assessment practice?

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by constructivist learning theory. Constructivist theory suggests that knowledge is individually and socially constructed and co-constructed by learners (Seel, 2012). The theory advocates for teaching and learning that focuses on the success of a learner. This theory views learning as a process that involves a learner in a way that she or he is not a passive receiver but a creator of knowledge. The theory encourages teachers to design and assign learning and assessment tasks that require learners' active participation. This theory creates a constructive alignment between teaching, learning, and evaluating. It includes multiple forms of performance measurement, reflecting the student's acquisition of knowledge, as well as the achievements, motives, and behaviors that are developed during the implementation of the activities (Wuetherick & Dickinson, 2015; Landis, Scott, & Kahn, 2015; Mason, & Williams, 2016). The theory advocates for teaching and learning that focuses on the success of a learner. This theory views learning as a process that involves a learner in a way that she or he is not a passive receiver but a creator of knowledge. The theory encourages teachers to design and assign learning and assessment tasks that require learners' active participation. An extension of the constructivism theory is the multiple intelligences theory which is supported by Gardner and Hatch (1989). The theory suggests that individuals exhibit different profiles of intelligence (multiple intelligences) and as a result, learners have different preferred ways of learning (Davis et al., 2011; Gardner, 1987). These preferred ways of learning, which Kolb (1976) refers to as learning styles, are identified as visual (spatial), aural (auditory), verbal (linguistic), physical (kinaesthetic), logical (mathematical), social (interpersonal), and solitary (intrapersonal). Thus, teaching, learning, and assessment activities should be differentiated to match individuals' learning styles and require a learner to apply what she or he has learned to solve everyday life challenges.

To sum up, portfolio assessment presupposes authentic teaching, followed by the assessment of learning. Students construct their new knowledge on what they have already acquired, based on individual and collective experiences. This results in the promotion of a holistic perception of the world through experiential situations and ensures the student's ability to act, shape, and self-assess (Hendrickson, 2012). Teachers' Perceptions' encompasses educators' beliefs, opinions, and understandings regarding portfolio assessment practices. Importantly, these perceptions influence teachers' attitudes toward portfolio assessment, shaping their overall disposition and approach toward this assessment method.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach and Design

This study utilized a qualitative approach which involved interviews to collect the data. Qualitative approaches involve gathering, analyzing, and interpreting broad descriptions of information to get an understanding of a fact of concern (Creswell et al., 2007). This approach was selected because, through this approach, the tutors' understanding and perspectives of portfolio assessment could be explored. Yin (2015) explained that a qualitative approach allows the exploration of people's understanding of their lives in the real world. Every individual views the world in relevance to their experiences and beliefs.

This study used a case study design. Case study allows information to be collected from a subset or the entire population in an effort to help answer research questions (Olsen & George, 2004). The case research design was chosen as the study focused on exploring tutor's views on using a portfolio as a continuous assessment practice in higher learning institutions in Tanzania whereby, Morogoro-Campus was selected as a case study.

3.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Structured interviews to collect data from 8 tutors who were purposefully sampled from 19 tutors at Morogoro-Campus, based on convenience relating to the time limitations, easy access to and tutors' willingness to participate in this study were the primary factors that were considered in the selection of the participants and the recruitment of teachers. Purposive sampling allows a selection of participants based on the characteristics desired by a researcher. This method of sampling is suitable when the research aims to explore in-depth the understanding of individuals' experiences and histories as opposed to a more general nomothetic understanding. As rightly noted by (De Carlo, 2018), this sampling method enables the researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Using the purposive sampling method, eight tutors were selected to participate in this research. Purposive sampling involves selecting information-rich cases that can provide valuable insights into the central issues of the inquiry (Patton, 2015, p. 264). The research aimed to capture a wide range of tutors' perspectives on various dimensions of portfolio assessment, benefits to students, and problems encountered by tutors. This method of sampling is suitable when the research aims

to explore in-depth the understanding of individuals' experiences and histories as opposed to a more general nomothetic understanding. As rightly noted by De Carlo (2018), this sampling method enables the researchers to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study.

3.3 Participants

The participants in this study were tutors teaching at Morogoro-Campus as a Tertiary Institution. In total, 8 tutors participated in the study. The sample included tutors with a range of years of experience: 2 participants had less than 3 years' experience; 2 participants had 4-8 years' teaching experience; 1 had 8-11 years' teaching experience; with the remainder (3 participants) with more than 11 years' experience. Tutors were targeted for this study, as they are the key employees in the MoEST who should demonstrate professional development due to their direct impact on students' learning experience. They voluntarily agreed to be involved in the study. Ethical research practices were maintained to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Written consent forms were prepared, and all participants were informed about the study's objectives and assured of their anonymity. For confidentiality reasons, in this research, the tutor identified were given pseudonym names such as T1, T2, T3, and so on. Pseudonyms were used instead of participants' names, and the study only features summary data.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected in October 2024. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on an interview protocol. The interview questions were reviewed by the expert to ensure that the participants understood them and were able to respond. The tutors were interviewed once throughout this research to ensure consistency in their responses. Following each round of the interviews, data were analyzed for recurrent themes based on a priori categories and emergent categories to reflect the tutors' understanding of portfolio assessment.

3.5 Analysis of data

Data were analyzed manually in two phases. In the first phase, the researcher took notes on the main point while data were collected. The second phase analysis was done after the researcher completed the whole data-collecting process. All the main phases were coded and categorized according to the research questions and objectives. Finally, the themes were developed according to the frequency of the phrases.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and content analysis was used to systematically categorize the data (Schreier, 2012). This method allows for valid inferences and helps identify what is relevant to answering the research questions. Following Creswell's (2013) approach, the analysis involved manually transcribing, coding, and progressively refining the data. Transcripts were reviewed multiple times to gain a deep understanding, with key phrases highlighted to generate codes and categories. Coding was guided by the research questions to identify recurring themes, which were then organized into a narrative. The final results were reviewed, explained, and justified for accuracy.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

In every study procedure, ethical issues such as participant rights, respect for authority, confidentiality of data and participant identities, correct data storage, and data distribution must be established (Drolet et al., 2023). As proof, a formal letter was obtained for authorization from the campus manager and tutor participants before the implementation phase. Participation was voluntary, and no favor was received. Participants were free to refuse or cease participation at any time. Their identities were not revealed to anyone, and the data acquired from them were kept strictly confidential for two years on the researcher's laptop. Privacy and confidentiality were always practiced.

3.7 Trustworthiness measures applied

In qualitative research the important issue is trustworthiness of the research. It is important to establish authenticity, quality, and truthfulness of the findings of the qualitative research (Cypress, 2017, p. 254). Trustworthiness has four dimensions namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as explained by Cypress (2017). The research findings were presented with truth and accuracy in order to demonstrate credibility of the researcher. In demonstrating transferability, the findings need to be applicable to other context and situations. Interview transcripts have been kept demonstrating the degree of neutrality of this study in an effort to demonstrate confirmability. The interview transcript has also been used to demonstrate dependability on the study.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Tutors' views on the benefits of using portfolios as a continuous assessment practice for students

Tutors in this study believed that a portfolio could be used to benefit their learners in many ways, including boosting their participation in learning. When asked how they perceive the benefits of using a portfolio, one tutor commented:

> "...when I give the portfolio to my students they engage in different co-curricular activities as well as practical work like a model, project work, therefore they actively participate and interested to learn more..." [Tutor 4, personal communication, November 2024].

From the narrative of the tutor, using a portfolio is a process that aims to foster creativity and check students' understanding of knowledge. He believes that portfolios should repeatedly evaluate students' skills and comprehension of the subject. Another Tutor was also in favor of using a portfolio. He excerpts,

"Portfolio is something very unique! I have utilized it for many purposes, such as teaching and even to give a grade for students. During my lesson, I provide my students with necessary tasks and I ask them to bring their materials, such as newspaper cuttings, pictures, and sometimes material from the internet. All these things I will use for my teaching and students' learning purposes. At the end of the semester, I will use their portfolio to grade them" [Tutor 1, Individual interview, November 2024].

According to statements commented by Tutor 1, the use of portfolios has to be focused on the process of teaching activities that lead to improved learning. Besides, portfolios helped tutors to identify issues early on and adjust their teaching strategies accordingly. Furthermore, portfolios also helped tutors to identify their students' strengths and weaknesses in the learning process. Using portfolios, they can also set goals and track their progress over time, which assists the learners to be engaged and motivated for learning.

Similarly, another Tutor narrated:

"For me, I like to use a portfolio as a CAP, you know that it is a part of ... or mode of evaluation for the students, to evaluate their learning efficiencies. And, the portfolio is a practical based mode." [Tutor 2, personal communication, November 2024].

Another Tutor stated that:

"Portfolio provides multiple ways of assessing students' learning over time. It provides for a more realistic evaluation of academic content than pencil and paper tests. It allows students, parents, teachers, and staff to evaluate the student's strengths and weaknesses. It provides multiple opportunities for observation and assessment" [Tutor 5, personal communication, November 2024].

Tutors also indicated that a portfolio is useful in encouraging students to learn.

"Students who are using the portfolio properly are consulting more learning materials including those online" (Tutor 3, personal communication, November 2024).

Another tutor stated that:

"...Students get multiple opportunities to show what they have learned..." [Tutor 7, personal communication, November 2024].

So far benefit of portfolio assessment is concerned; tutors have said that portfolio assessment practices have helped learners in multiple ways. When they employ portfolio assessment practices, students actively participate in classroom discussions, and students revise the same contentment multiple times therefore they gain deep knowledge about the topic to increase their achievements and arouse their interest in a better understanding of the concept. Also, tutors said when they provide feedback they can know their strengths and weaknesses. Apart from that students became aware of the pattern of different questions, conscious about examinations, and

development of different qualities like creativity, and social qualities and get the opportunity to learn again. Generally, the overall goal of the preparation of a portfolio is for the learner to demonstrate and provide evidence that he or she has mastered a given set of learning objectives. More than just thick folders containing student work, portfolios are typically personalized, long-term representations of a student's efforts and achievements. Whereas multiple-choice tests are designed to determine what the student doesn't know, portfolio assessments emphasize what the student does know.

4.2 Tutors' views on perceived challenges encountered by tutors for implementing portfolio as a continuous assessment practices

Besides advantages, some of the tutors also found some problems in assessing students by using a portfolio. According to the result of the interview, the researcher found several problems. Some of them admitted some disadvantages and difficulties in using portfolios. For instance, time-consuming to evaluate, excessive workload in limited time for the tutors, and there lack of training for tutors on implementing portfolios. Themes are generated based on the narratives shared by the study participants. After rigorous analysis and interpretation of their interview narratives, the researcher presented the following themes:

Theme 1: Excessive workload in limited time for the tutors

Tutors often articulated the workload for the tutors in limited time as a challenge for implementing portfolios as a continuous assessment practice. Implementing a portfolio requires additional tasks such as designing assessment criteria, developing assessment tools, grading assessments, and analyzing data based on their performance in the portfolio. Portfolio increases the demands on teachers' time, making it more challenging to complete all their responsibilities within a limited time. Tutors shared similar challenges of workload for them in implementing portfolios. One Tutor echoed,

> "Portfolio is very time-consuming for tutors to score students' works and assess students' performance over time in the crowded classroom" (Tutor 6, personal communication, November 2024).

Another Tutor also had a similar experience,

> "One of the problems of using a portfolio is to store, handle, and control the portfolios in the crowded classroom. Also, asking students to bring their portfolio materials to each class can be burdensome" (Tutor 2, personal communication, November 2024).

Another Tutor, also had a similar experience as he narrated:

> "There are some indiscipline students. They tend to submit out of due date or even did not submit the task at all. This will take time and effort to fix so the students will follow the procedure correctly". This tutor goes on to question, "What score does

one assign a "mixed bag" such as a portfolio? Similarly, portfolios due to their extensive nature, take a significant amount of time to organize, explore, and assess (Tutor 7, personal communication, November 2024)

From the narratives, tutors shared the challenges they face when implementing portfolios in the teaching and learning process. The excessive workload and limited time constraints are other major challenges of implementing a portfolio. The participants articulated that most tutors are scheduled with at least four teaching periods a day. This leaves them with no time to practice portfolios in their classes as portfolio and their tools demand excessive time besides their regular teaching schedule.

Theme 2: Lack of training for tutors on implementing portfolio as continuous assessment practices

This is derived from two narratives of my participants concerning the challenges of implementing portfolios as a continuous assessment practice in classrooms. The tutors identified the lack of training on using portfolios as a significant obstacle to the effective use of portfolios in the learning process. Tutors emphasized that without training and skill development workshops or seminars, a portfolio as a CAP in their classroom is challenging. One Tutor reiterated this challenge in her narrative:

> "I would like to share something that I just have been exercising for the past many years till now. So, what complications that I have faced are that this portfolio is too effective a method. It helps to increase the learning efficiency. , however, there is a problem, the main issue is that tutors do not know how to keep the continuous assessment of the students, how to record the continuous assessment what tools they have to use, what techniques they have to lead, how can they introduce more and more innovative techniques, they are lacking skills and training" [Tutor 5, personal communication, November 2024].

Based on the narratives of the participants, when implementing portfolios in classrooms, the tutors face significant obstacles due to a lack of training on how the portfolio is handled. A limited understanding and lack of skills in using portfolios are one of the most significant obstacles tutors confront. Tutors do not comprehend the fundamental principles, purpose, and benefits of continuous assessment in the absence of appropriate training. This lack of comprehension hinders their ability to implement the system effectively and design assessments that align with its goals. Furthermore, another Tutor argued:

Excerpts from the interview supported the findings above:

> "Portfolio assessments provide students with a direct view of how students organize knowledge into overarching concepts. As such, portfolios are inappropriate for measuring students' levels of factual knowledge or for drill-and-skill activities and accordingly should be used in concert with more conventional forms of assessment. Similarly, student work completed beyond the context of the classroom is occasionally subject to issues of academic dishonesty, for me this is a limitation" [Tutor 3, personal communication, November 2024].

5. Discussions

5.1 Tutors' perceptions of the benefits of using portfolios as a continuous assessment practice for their students

In this section, the tutors described their perception of the benefits of portfolios as a continuous assessment practice for their students, tutors' attitudes towards portfolios, and the perceived problems encountered by tutors for implementing portfolios as a continuous assessment practice.

Based on the interview results, tutors indicated that portfolio assessment practices have helped the learners in multiple ways. When they employ f portfolio assessment practices, students actively participate in classroom discussions, students revise the same contentment multiple times therefore they gain deep knowledge about the topic to increase their achievements and arouse their interest in a better understanding of the concept. As Carnell, Klenowsik, and Sue (2006) contend learning is not just a collection of works but is a way of understanding to monitor progress in learning. In the portfolio, students have to make judgments of their learning (Julius, 2000) and plan how to progress. Thus, IAE needs to encourage more tutors to use portfolios as a continuous assessment practice. Portfolio use in education keeps students busy studying. Therefore Portfolio is better than other types of assessment as argued by Gipps (1994) and Shepard (2001) to observe and encourage short-term learning.

5.2 Perceived Problems Encountered by Teachers for Implementing Portfolio as a Continuous Assessment Practice

Several research studies point out that tutors have challenges in implementing portfolios. The issue of time was also a concern to many tutors in this study. Almost all of them indicated that implementing a portfolio in a classroom was time-consuming. Time wasted on working with the portfolio is further worsened when learners do not timeously bring the resources needed for some tasks, which is often the case in their situation. These concerns observed by the tutors have also been reported by Goctu (2016) and Elangoet al. (2005), who pointed out that a portfolio requires considerable time and resources.

The criteria for assessing portfolios as claimed by the majority of participants are not well framed in this study. The development of clear and transparent criteria for assessing and evaluating portfolios is a major prerequisite for the successful implementation of an institutionally embedded teaching portfolio scheme (Baume & Yorke 2002). A significant difficulty in evaluating many teaching portfolios arises because of the richness and uniqueness of their contents (Tigelaar et al. 2005), which often necessitates interpretation and the consideration of the individual context of each submission. Moss (1994) has drawn attention to the potential unreliability of portfolios as forms of 'assessment', with serious problems identified in terms of consistency, objectivity, and comparability, particularly where scores or ratings are generated. Knapper and Wright (2001) express concern about trying 'to force portfolios into a quantitative paradigm when one of their strengths is providing rich qualitative data that will be different from person to person' (p. 27). Rana et al. (2016) concluded that the teachers are not well prepared to

adopt and utilize the practices of portfolios in the classroom. According to him, the teachers perceive that keeping a frequent record of each student is tedious**.**

6. Conclusion

Much as these tutors acknowledge the benefits of using a portfolio in the classroom, they also observe the challenges that hinder the successful implementation of this strategy. Based on the findings of this research study, it was concluded that tutors were using a portfolio with a positive attitude as this strategy is believed in its capability to make teaching and learning meaningful. In addition to boosting learners' motivation, tutors believed, if trained properly, a portfolio can assist them to keep learners' records appropriately and they can use these records to monitor their learners' performance. Although these tutors viewed the portfolio positively, they believed that its use in classrooms was challenging for example the issue of time-consuming was a concern to many tutors in this study.

7. Recommendations

In light of the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made to improve the use of portfolios as a continuous assessment practice:

a)   For the effective use of portfolios as continuous assessment practices, a comprehensive training for tutors is required.
b)   A comprehensive portfolio scheme should embrace all academic staff regardless of their interests while ensuring that the overall quality of teaching and learning is raised.
c)   Regular feedback from both lecturers/tutors and students should be sought and incorporated to enhance the effectiveness and relevance of portfolio assessment practices over time.
d)   Portfolio assessment is better implemented in small classes because it will be easier to manage the class.

7.1 Recommendations to further research

Future studies should be conducted to investigate the implementation of portfolios from students' perspectives. Since this study has been done from tutors' perspective, there is also a need to get students' understanding of this portfolio as a continuous assessment practice.

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