THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The effective planning, organisation, implementation and evaluation has got a great influence on the decision making on a programme of activity. The success of any educational programme depends on the degree of involvement of the educational evaluators from the planning to the evaluation state. Several roles of evaluation in the educational development of Nigeria are identified. Suggestions are also made in ensuring a huge success of the nation's educational development.

Introduction

Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise, but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government's complete and dynamic intervention and active participation. The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument per excellence for effective national development. (National Policy on Education, 1977; Revised 1981)

The success of any educational system hinged on proper planning, efficient administration, adequate financing and effective evaluation. The evaluation aspect hinges on proper inspection and supervision of the educational programme right from the planning stage through to the final stage when assessment of the whole process and reasonable decisions will be made.

Educational evaluation started off as a branch of psychology in the late 50s, as a result of curriculum innovations. It was then referred to as Educational Measurement, Measurement and Evaluation or Test and Measurement.

Within the last few decades, educational evaluation has grown into a separate, independent discipline, though with some leanings on the ideas of psychologists, psychometricians and statisticians. In recent years, its development into a complex art and technology had taken place. Efforts of educational evaluators have been directed specifically towards using precision, objectivity and mathematical vigour of psychological measurement in ways directly related to educational institutions, educational processes and purposes.

Some Operational Definitions of Educational Evaluation

Various ideas and definitions of educational evaluation are given by different people/researchers.

Tyler (1950) defined evaluation as "the process of determining the degree to which goals of a programme have been achieved". He sees evaluation as a measure of the success of the outcome of a programme. Crombach (1960) defined evaluation as "the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational programme". Wheeler (1967) defined evaluation as a more general judgement of the outcome of a programme, which involves the use of observations, various tests, questionnaires, interviews, etc. His emphasis was on the processes of educational evaluation.

Alkin (1970), like Wheeler, emphasized the processes of educational evaluation. He defined evaluation as the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern; selecting appropriate information, collecting and analysing information, in order to report a summary of data useful for decision makers in selecting among alternatives. Blooms et al (1971) gave two types of evaluation (formative and summative) and the respective definitions of each. Formative evaluation is defined as a system of quality control in which it may be determined at each step in
the teaching-learning process, whether the process is effective or not, and if not, what changes must be made to ensure its effectiveness; while summative evaluation is defined as an evaluation directed towards a much more general assessment of the degree to which the larger outcomes have been attained over the entire course.

Paul (1976) defined evaluation as both a judgement on the worth or impact of a programme, procedure or individual and the process whereby judgement is made. Yoloye (1981) defined evaluation as the assigning of some values to an entity in relation to some criteria values or objectives. Afolayan (1985) saw curriculum evaluation as subsuming both formative and summative assessment of the adequacy of any educational programme.

Types of Evaluation: Three main types of evaluation are identified:

Diagnostic (Initial) Evaluation - The evaluation is done during the formation of educational objectives. It is used to decide the entry behaviours of the learner in a particular course or programme. It takes place before the commencement of the programme.

Formative Evaluation - Evaluation within or during the development of a course or programme. It is used in improving the performance of both the teacher, the student and curriculum developer. It is used in determining the mastery level of the learner and the remedy to make. It is a quality control evaluation.

Summative (Final) Evaluation - The evaluation is carried out at the end of a course or programme for grading, certification and placement. It is used in making decisions regarding the future of the students teaming or the programme being developed; whether it should be continued or terminated, replicated or disseminated.

Principles of Educational Evaluation

There are important factors to note which can serve as guides to educational evaluators in seeing to the effective planning and implementation of educational programmes, to yield the desired positive results.

The classroom teacher or evaluator should always be perfectly clear in his mind about what he is aiming to achieve i.e. what to evaluate and how to evaluate. Evaluation of educational programmes should be comprehensive i.e. assess pupils' progress in all areas. Educational evaluation, apart from testing knowledge (Memorization), should also bring about pupils' originality and use of ideas, and their ability to think and apply the knowledge and skills already learnt.

All evaluation devices/instruments should be valid and reliable. They are valid when they measure what they aim to measure, and they are reliable when they produce consistent results over time. The teacher as an evaluator should be impartial as much as possible. He should try to avoid personal prejudices.

All evaluation instruments should take into account the practical problems of administering and marking of the responses i.e. the instruments should be convenient to administer and clear to the pupils. The pupils' responses should be easy to mark. Educational evaluation should be well planned in advance and should be carried out continuously, periodically and at least each term.

Innovations Brought About in the Evaluation Technique of the Nigerian Educational System

There are some faults that can be identified in the evaluation techniques used before, which through the efforts of the educational evaluators, have been corrected or perfected. The evaluation technique used before was the one-shot or final, end-of-term or year or session examination. This technique had served as a great 'threat' to the students, resulting in students' cheating, memorizing notes and carrying out premature search for question papers in a bid to pass. Students who passed the end of the year examination through memorization are tagged brilliant while those who failed either as a result of initial problems or due to lack of proper guide
are regarded as being dull.

Efforts have greatly been made to see that students’ progress in school which has been neglected before is adequately monitored. The problems of the student in specific intellectual task which are not detected until late before, are now easily detected.

The one shot end-of-term examination technique which has been given undue publicity in schools, leading to tension in the students, have been greatly de-emphasized due to progressive monitoring of students’ achievement, during the term or session and the introduction of continuous assessment method. Great efforts are now been made by evaluators to de-emphasize consideration tor certificate only in job placement but to consider also the skill and interest of individuals in the job.

In the previous evaluation technique used, the students’ assessment is usually not conducted in a systematic way. Assignments given to students are not always marked or graded. Students are given class test to keep them busy when the teacher is not around or when the lesson is not prepared for. The introduction of continuous assessment in all schools have had a tremendous impact in the gradual if not total elimination of these lapses.

The use of diagnostic evaluation in determining the entry level or educational background of the pupils has helped considerably in checking various problems associated with mass admission of students.

Previously, undue emphasis had been given to the cognitive achievement of the students at the expense of the affective and psychomotor domains. Now intensive efforts are in progress to evaluate the students in both. The educational evaluators are making tireless efforts to see to the complete eradication of all problems hi students’ assessment that can lead to examination malpractices.

Rote of Educational Evaluation in National Development

An important question may be asked - “Why Evaluate”? According to Yoloye (1976), the following reasons can be given. Educational evaluation is essential for:

I. Decision making

ii. Identification of appropriate questions

iii. Identifying and analysing relevant data on which decisions can be based,

iv. Monitoring the implementation process to ensure that it is appropriately done, and

v. Identifying objectively the impact or outcomes of decisions.

Evaluation of the educational system in Nigeria has been by commission; i.e. experts are usually delegated to carry out evaluation of programmes. According to Yoloye (1978), the major rote of educational evaluation may be to inform the producers about me worm of what they are producing considering the energy, the time and the money invested. Educational evaluation helps in producing a worthwhile material. It also helps hi the selling of a programme to involve the policy makers to produce or improve the quality of the competing programmes initiated by the ministries.

Obanya (1985) suggested that one of the proposes of educational evaluation is to identify some of the problems that the students may need to overcome in order to progress hi learning. Educational evaluation facilitates the identification of what is left to be learned. It produces feedback on students’ achievement and encourages mem to learn more and progress faster in the instructional programmes.

Educational evaluation provides adequate and effective feed back on students' achievement not only in the cognitive area, but also hi the areas of interest and manipulative skill. It provides feed-back from students to the teacher about the effect of the teacher's teaching method. It also provides feedback from the teachers to the parents about their ward's performance. It provides feed-back from school administrators to the policy makers to determine the success of the programme. Continual educational evaluation provides valuable information about the pupils' progress and comparison with other pupils in the class.

Adequate educational evaluation also acts as an incentive to pupils’ studies. The test,
examination and evaluation devices stimulate pupils' interest and enable them to make, greater efforts. Without the use of evaluation devices, most pupils will not take their learning seriously. The use of such evaluation devices as observational techniques, assignments, continuous assessment and projects prevents one-short examinations which can lead to excessive memorization, cramming, unhealthy competition, and the complete neglect of other non-measurable aims of education.

Educational evaluation provides pupils record of attainment which can be used for selection for further education, for placement into class or job, and for guidance and counselling purposes.

Evaluation of pupils' progress provides a valuable source material for educational research. Data on pupils' achievements can help research workers and teachers to identify important educational problems in schools and provide solutions which will help in the improvement of the quality of education.

Role of Agencies of Evaluation In Educational Development.

Some of the agencies of educational evaluation in Nigeria are: West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Teachers Institute (NTI), National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEM), Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), Colleges of Education, Technical Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities.

The government, through the Nigerian Educational Research Council (NERC) reforms the national educational policy and objectives, with the aim of designing new curricula for the various levels of the educational system.

The West African Examination Council controls all forms of educational development and evaluation of the school certificate or general certificate ordinary and advance levels. WAEC is the curriculum planner, developer and evaluator. The teachers are the implementors. WAEC designs the syllabus for the various subjects offered at various levels of secondary education each year. It is on the syllabus that the teachers based their scheme of work, their specific objectives and their lesson plans.

At the end of duration of the course WAEC organizes assessment examinations for school certificate and general certificate (OIL & A/L). It prepares a general time-table, appoint supervisors for the conduct of the examinations, appoint experienced markers to mark the answer scripts, collate the marks, carry out the analysis of the results to determine the grade to which each student's mark falls,

In Nigeria, the WAEC result is the standard eligibility result, qualifying each candidate for further studies or for job selection and placement.

National Teachers Institute:
Carries out similar functions as WAEC but is concerned with Teachers Grade II certificate only. Recently it has got involved in the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) Sandwich programme.

National Business and Technical Examination Board (NABTEM)
The board conducts, assesses and controls all forms of examinations involving technical colleges and institutes of education throughout the nation. It has its headquarters in Benin. The function of the board is similar to that of WAEC. In addition to basic sciences, they also examine all subjects in technical education, social studies and English language. The result obtained here can be used for further studies or job placements.

Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB)
It represents the transitional agency from the secondary to the tertiary institutions such as the colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities. Its role is to set common entrance examination questions in all subjects, for all candidates seeking admission into higher institutions. Candidates with good passes in advance level papers or NCE are offered direct admission to the Universities of their choice.

The Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Universities are the policy makers of their
own educational programmes based on the national objectives. Through the National University Commission (NUC) or National Council for Colleges of Education (NCCE) or National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), they decide, plan and develop their own curricula. They are also the implementors and evaluators. They carry out all forms of evaluation. Each university is autonomous in carrying out the assessment of its students. The assessment of the final year students of the NCE are being moderated by the NCCE.

Conclusion and Recommendations

So far a look has been made at the role of educational evaluation in educational development. Judging from the various roles of evaluators in the educational development of a country, it is the writer's belief that not much has been done in the recognition of these roles by the policy makers in Nigeria. There had been series of conflicts between the evaluators and the government in terms of suggestions given by the evaluators for successful implementation of programmes, and the decisions taken by the government. For example, the evaluation of educational programmes in Nigeria (e.g. 6-3-3-4 system of education) have always been by commissions, with the suggestions given by evaluators not strictly followed by government during implementation.

Since we all owe it a duty to ensure the educational development of this country, the writer is suggesting that:

a) More centres of expertise where practitioners are engaged in actual work of curriculum development and evaluation should be identified. The training of professionals should start from such centres. An example is the International Centre for Educational Evaluation (ICEE) at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

b) Due to the difference in the skills required at different levels, everybody involved in the educational industry should be trained as an evaluator. Evaluation of educational attainments and intellectual abilities requires skilled, experienced, trained teachers if it is to yield meaningful results.

c) All evaluators must be able or be ready to tell the truth at all times i.e. be able to tell the story as it really is, provide empirical information with the facts got, not minding what the reaction of the policy makers will be.

d) New strategies and techniques of evaluation should be developed i.e. rather than base our judgement on evaluation of outcomes of a programme alone, it must include evaluation of antecedents, transactions and unplanned outcomes. Interest must be heightened in observational technique, specification of objectives (behavioural, affective, cognitive) and so on.

e) Effective communication system should exist between the evaluators and the decision makers. There must be cordial relationship and interaction between the researchers, evaluators, innovators and the decision and policy makers.

f) For evaluation to be worthwhile, it would involve a lot more than the traditional administration of achievement tests to experimental and control groups. A new technique of evaluation would have to be developed. A considerable team work should be called for in evaluating a programme, because of many facets of evaluation "involved"; and the extensive geographical area over which the programme is going to operate.

g) More emphasis should be placed on the objective evaluation of the students' affective domain i.e. pupils' character, interest, physical and mental courage, kindness, truthfulness, loyalty, respect for others, honesty, attitude, appreciation, etc. The assessment here could be easily done through the use of observation technique, formal and informal questioning technique, play-way method, discussion method, etc.

h) The development and use of cumulative records provides very useful information for evaluation. Evaluators and indeed all teachers involved in the implementation of the nation's educational programmes should be made to realize the importance of adequate record-keeping of the pupils' achievement. For effective decision making the cumulative record of
the pupils’ achievement should be supplemented by information gathered from the pupils’ homes.

i) The activities of NERC, WAEC, NTI, JAMB and NBATEB in the discharge of the above responsibilities and providing standard education in Nigeria should be under the surveillance of educational evaluators.

j) The school system and consequently its management and day-to-day administration should grow out of the life of schools and that of the community which they serve, i.e. there should be adequate and effective lines of communication between the community and the school at local, state and federal levels for policy formulation and implementation. This explains the need for qualified evaluators in our institutions.

k) Education is seen as an expensive social service and requires adequate financial provisions from all tiers of government, and community participation for its successful implementation. Adequate feedback on the progress of educational programmes will enhance the regular financial support given for such programmes, hence the need for the services of qualified evaluators.

l) An evaluator should also work closely with the curriculum developer in order to evolve usable description. Where the innovator does not know what to do, the evaluator may have to wait and see what the innovator does before he helps in clarifying his ideas.

To be able to carry out the above tasks successfully, it is pertinent for any would-be evaluator to start evaluating right from the decision making stage of a programme, until the programme is completed. As such, it is necessary to carry out the initial or diagnostic evaluation, the formative evaluation, the summative evaluation, to make the summative evaluation of the programme a success.

Whatever our judgement is about educational evaluation, it is an important and integral part of the total educational process. A well-thought-out evaluation programme will certainly contribute to the improvement of educational quality and standard of efficiency, if it is effectively implemented, and adequately and efficiently monitored by qualified evaluators.

REFERENCES


