Educational Evaluation in Nigeria: Relevance, Constraints and Solutions

SOLOMON CHUKWU OHIRI[1], IHENACHO, UCHECHUKWU OSCAR PH.D.[2]

[1] *Directorate of Academic Planning, Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria*
[2] *Department of Business Education, Alvan Ikoku University of Education, Owerri, Nigeria*

Abstract- Educational evaluation is part and parcel of teaching and learning process. It is adevice by which students' instructional achievement outcomes can be measured. Educational evaluation has a lot of functions to perform, be it diagnostic, formative or summative. This paper showcased the issues involved and the areas of concern in the educational evaluation practices in the Nigerian educational system. Solutions to some of the challenges facing evaluation were discussed.

Indexed Terms- Education, Educational Evaluation, Relevance, Constraints, Solutions.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is a purposive, conscious or unconscious, psychological, sociological, scientific and philosophical process, which brings about the development of the individual to the fullest extent and also the maximum development of society in such a way that both enjoy maximum happiness and prosperity (Goutam,2017).According to Nunn cited in Goutam (2017), education deals with the comprehensive development of the individuality of the child so that he can make an original contribution to human life according to the best of his capacity. Education is the all-round and continuous development of all the characteristic powers and abilities of an individual - physical, intellectual and moral. Based on the above definitions, it implies that quality education is crucial to the economic development and social stability of a nation as it helps to develop crucial humanitarian values like equity, tolerance, and peace (Adebowale & Alao, 2008). These values lead to sustainable national development, environmental protection, and improved family health, along with responsible participation in democratic, social, and political processes (Durodola & Olude, 2005). For education and its activities to succeed and

to be sustained, evaluation should be sine qua non. Evaluation is important because it is analogous to quality control of parts used in the assembly of a final manufacturing product. The teaching and learning process according to Alonge (2003) will not be complete unless the students taught are examined, their scripts marked and their result released as and when due.

The aim of every educational programme is to assist learners to acquire a framework of knowledge and concepts that lead to the totality development of the individual learners (Usman, 2018). It is only through the use of evaluation procedures that one can establish the extent to which educational goals have been attained. Evaluation used to establish how much of stated educational objectives have been achieved or areas in which students have learning problems, with an aim to remedying them. The quality of educational evaluation in a country determines to a reasonable degree, the level of development in that country,

II. MEANING OF EVALUATION AND OTHER RELATED CONCEPTS

Evaluation as a concept has been defined by various authors and experts in education and other fields of study. It is a process of making value judgment for the purpose of decision making (Iwuji, 1997). Nkwocha (2019) stated that evaluation is ascribing of quality value or worth to traits or behaviours or attributes of an object or a person using standard guidelines. She further maintained that judgement placed during evaluation is used to decide whether a given attribute is acceptable, worthwhile, pass or fail. Asoegwu (2009) opined that evaluation is a process by which the strength and weakness of curriculum process and implementation are identified. According to Enyi (2002), evaluation is concerned with determining the extent to which educational objectives and desired

behavioural changes in learners have been attained, as well as making value judgments on the worth of the attributes. Evaluation can be seen as a systematic process of determining the extent to which educational objectives are achieved by pupils. This definition implies that the objectives of education have to be identified in advance. Without predetermined objectives, it is not possible to judge the progress, growth and development of students (Akpan & Udo, 2022).An evaluation is methodological, providing information that is credible, reliable, and useful to enable the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making processes of users and funders (Akpan & Udo, 2022).Educational evaluation therefore, is the application of various techniques to determine leaner's behaviour or performance during or at the end of the teaching and learning process or programme. Teaching and learning process cannot be meaningful without evaluation.

Educational evaluation is an important component of any teaching and learning process. It is barometer by which students' instructional achievement outcomes can be gauged. It is an indispensable tool for determining the mastery of delivered instructions, promoting and certification of students' academic achievements. Evaluation in the educational system provides the necessary feedback required in order to maximize the outcomes of educational efforts. It is crucial in forming of value judgment, educational status, or achievement of students.

Before we go further into the topic, it is necessary to look at some terms which may be used interchangeably with evaluation. One of the terms is assessment. Assessment is a fact-finding activity that describes conditions that exist at a particular time (Manichander, 2016). Assessment is the use of various methods and various sources to gather and estimate different types of information about a person, group or event in a comprehensive way (Nkwocha, 2019).Evaluation and assessment seem to have much in common, but there is a clear distinction between them. One major distinction between the two is that evaluation is about making judgments and determining the effectiveness of a programme or individual's performance, using standard guidelines. On the other hand, assessment is involves collecting information to understand individual progress and

provide feedback to support learning. Other related concepts are measurement and testing.

Measurement is a systematic assignment of numerals to aspects or attributes of an object according to specified rules, for the purpose of collecting quantitative information about the existence of specific attributes in a given object (Egereonu, 2009).Okoye (2015) was of the opinion that measurement is a systematic quantitative description of attributes of certain persons, objects or events. He further stated that it involves the assignment of numerals to persons, objects or events according to specified rules. Measurement deals with the determination of the attributes and dimensions of an object, skill or knowledge. Measurement stops at ascribing the quantity but not making value judgments. Testing on its own, is a process of ascertaining learning progress and achievement. It involves exposing a person to a set of questions, statements or tasks, with a view to ascertaining how much of a desired quality is possessed by the person (Okoye, 2023).

The terms evaluation, assessment, measurement and testing are used to determine the existence of desired quality or characteristic in a person, object or event, despite the differences that do exist amongst them. In many occasions, they are used interchangeably. In this paper, evaluation covers the concepts of assessment, measurement and testing, without minding the little differences that exist among them.

In order to have a complete and comprehensive evaluation, there should be provisions for students' evaluation, teachers' evaluation, school evaluation, programme evaluation and system evaluation. The above are imperative because they can mutually reinforce each other.

In education, the focus of the instructional process is geared towards bringing positive and desirable change in the behaviours of the students. Therefore, evaluation of students' learning outcomes involves the collection, analysis and interpretation of data indicating the academic progress of students. Different evaluation techniques are used to facilitate the process. The evaluation technique chosen depends on the behaviour the teacher expects the learners to

demonstrate. The teacher is expected to ensure that this covers all aspects of behaviour (cognitive, psychomotor and affective). An important function is to identify those students who fall behind, and also to indicate in which subject areas or skills they experience difficulties (Scheeren, Glas & Thomas, 2003).Evaluation of students' learning outcomes operate at the classroom level of educational systems and go through a cyclical process.

The teacher is always at the centre stage in the implementation of educational programmes. His actions can make or jeopardize the realization of educational set goals. As a result, there is need to continually evaluate the teacher to improve his effectiveness because when there are poor quality teachers, there are likely to be poor quality students.

School evaluation is an internal or external appraisal of the school as a whole, or some units within the school, with the sole aim of school/unit improvement. Programme evaluation has to do with the logical process of gathering and analyzing information on some or all aspects of the programme in order to make judgment or decisions on the programme. It is the type of evaluation used to judge whether a programme which has been implemented succeeded in achieving the objectives for which it was designed (Nkwocha, 2019). Educational programme evaluation is a series of activities carried out on purpose to see the level of success of educational programmes. Experts in the field of education do evaluate the effectiveness of executed educational programmes. This is to ascertain whether the objectives of putting such educational programmes in place have been achieved. Educational evaluation is useful in programme improvement, programme planning, decision making, accountability and school personnel improvement. This is achieved by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the programme so that decisions are made on the aspect that are to be retained, improved or terminated. Evaluation of the educational system in Nigeria has been by commission, that is, experts are usually delegated to carry out evaluation of programmes.

System evaluation examines the process of implementing the programme and determines whether the programme is operating as planned. System evaluation can be done continuously or as a one-time

assessment. Results fromsuch evaluationsare used to improve the programme. This evaluation process may focus on the number and type of participants reached and/or determining how satisfied these individuals are with the programme.

III. TYPES OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION TO CONSIDER

The main rationale for evaluation is to proffer a valid and reliable judgment for decision making (Akomolafe, 2020). Evaluation often addresses critical questions about effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Various types of evaluation are available depending on the information that needs to be assessed at any point in time. The following are considered in this study:

- Diagnostic evaluation: This can be termed" the initial evaluation". As a result, it is been carried out at the formation of educational objectives. It is used to assess prior knowledge, skills, preconceptions. It is used to ascertain the entry behaviour of the learner in a particular course or programme. It takes place before the commencement of the educational programme. When done at the beginning of a programme, they form the basis for why and how the programme proceeds. In this type of evaluation, the teacher can use the data obtained in adapting to better teaching practices that meet students' needs. It provides school inspectors with information to understand the needs of the schools within their districts or locality, enabling them to provide relevant support to the teaching staff and for their professional development (Akomolafe, 2020).Akomolafe went further to state that the information obtained through this system can also be shared with students' parents with the aim of making them participate in the learning activities of their wards.

- Formative evaluation: This is an evaluation that takes place during a learning activity to assist learners progress using every likely remediation and feedback tactics. This is the type of evaluation that is been carried out before the final acceptability of any educational policy or programme, curriculum, teaching method,

teaching aid or evaluation method. Formative evaluation is used to monitor learning and provide feedback. According to Asoegwu (2009), the purpose of formative evaluation is to produce feedback or evidence on the feasibility and effectiveness of a programme, so that necessary revision or improvement or refinement or modification of the programme can be made before its final adoption. At every stage of teaching and learning, formative evaluation is usually employed in improving the know-how of the student, the teacher, and curriculum developer. Therefore, formative evaluation is a process evaluation or quality control evaluation

- Summative evaluation: As the name implies, summative evaluation is done at the end of a programme and focuses on impacts. This type of evaluation is usually conducted at the end of a course or programme for the purpose of grading, certification and placement. Mpofu in Bondai (2013) says it is the evaluation that is obtained at the end of a course that is used to determine whether students have mastered the course objectives, and the evaluations may be based on tests and other assessment procedures. It is a decision-making exercise regarding the future of the learner's outlook or the programme being developed; whether it should be sustained or terminated, replicated or circulated. It is used in making a pass or fail decision. In this case, the evaluation is conducted in order to ascertain the effectiveness of an already existing educational policy, planning or programme, curriculum, teaching method, teaching aid or evaluation method.

IV. EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AGENCIES IN NIGERIA

They are bodies established and authorized by law to assess and evaluate students' scholastic achievements. They also monitor and evaluate educational systems and institutions of learning. They bring development and innovations in the Nigerian educational industry. According Nkwocha (2019), some are examination bodies established to conduct examinations and issue certificates for different levels of education. These include the West African Examination Council

(WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Examinations Board(NABTEB), State Education Development Centres (S.E.D.C.), National Teachers' Institute (NTI). They conduct examinations (summative evaluation) and issue certificates for different levels of education. Most of these bodies produce standard syllabi for the examinations they conduct. The syllabi are useful guides for teaching, learning and writing of standard textbooks.

Some evaluation agencies are established to conduct diagnostic tests (examinations) used for admission of students at different levels of education. Such a test is used to ascertain the entry behaviour of the learner in a particular course or programme. An example of such agency is the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB). There are also agencies established mainly for evaluation of the effectiveness of specific institutions in achieving the aim for which they are established. These include National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE).They give approval for running of all academic programmes in Nigerian tertiary institutions. They ensure orderly development of a well-coordinated and productive systems that will guarantee quality and relevant education for national development.

V. THE RELEVANCE OF EVALUATION TO TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Evaluation plays very vital roles in education. It is so because there cannot be effective teaching and learning without evaluation. Education is seen as a complex process and there is need for continuous evaluation of its processes and products. Relevance of Evaluation in education can be seen through some of its functions.

Educational evaluation helps in ascertaining the effectiveness of teaching and the quality of students' performance or achievement before, during and at the end of the teaching and learning process. Under it, the measurement and analysis of educational policy, educational planning, educational objectives, activities of educational administrators, teachers and guardians, and students' intelligence, interest, aptitude

and personality, etc. are carried out, and in the end, predictions, suggestions and guidance are provided (Lovely Professional University, 2012).

Educational evaluation can target a number of vital purposes depending on different types of evaluation, particularly in the techniques used. They include:

- Helping in developing and setting educational objectives
- Helping in programmedealings and undertakings as they occur
- It helps to design better educational programmes
- It helps to find out the effectiveness of the curriculum at different levels in the achievement of educational objectives
- It helps in assessing the effectiveness of teaching and learningstrategies, methods and techniques
- Suitable amendments can be carried outin the curriculum by evaluation
- Evaluation is used to give educational and vocational guidance to students.
- Evaluation is a mechanism used in stimulating improvement in the educational industry
- It provides feedback to the teachers about their teaching and the learners about their learning
- It is used to hold educational systems accountable for their functioning and performance and support direct democracy in education
- It makes information available from school administrators to the policy makers to determine the success of a programme.
- It helps to formally regulate desired levels of quality of educational outcomes and provisions
- It helps to certify that a learner has acquired a particular level of performance.

According to Oguniyi (1984), educational evaluation is carried out from time to time for the following reasons:

- *To determine the relative effectiveness of the programme in terms of students' behavioral output*
- *To make reliable decisions about educational planning*
- *To ascertain the worth of time, energy and resources invested in a programme*
- *To identify students' growth or lack of growth in acquiring desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and societal values*

- *To help teachers determine the effectiveness of their teaching techniques and learning materials*
- *To help motivate students who want to learn more as they discover their progress or lack of progress in given tasks*
- *To encourage students to develop a sense of discipline and systematic study habits*
- *To provide educational administrators with adequate information about teachers' effectiveness and school needs*
- *To acquaint parents or guardians with their children's performances*
- *To identify problems that might hinder or prevent the achievement of set goals*
- *To predict the general trend in the development of the teaching-learning process*
- *To ensure an economical and efficient management of scarce resources*
- *To provide an objective basis for determining the promotion of students from one class to another as well as the award of certificates*
- *To provide a just basis for determining at what level of education the possessor of a certificate should enter a career.*

Shinde (2022) saw the relevance of evaluation in learning processfrom the following perspectives:

a. *It helps a student by encouraging good study habits and increasing motivation*
b. *The parents are eager to know about the educational progress of their children and evaluation alone can assess the child's progress from time to time*
c. *It helps a student in developing abilities and skills, in knowing the results of progress and in getting appropriate feedback*
d. *In learning, evaluation contributes to formulation of objectives, designing of learning experiences and determination of learner's performance*
e. *It provides accountability to the society, parents, and to the education system*
f. *It provides feedback to the learners about their learning*
g. *Evaluation mainly manifests itself in a perceived need for regular reporting to parents*
h. *It plays an effective role in questioning or challenging the objectives.*

In his own opinion, Wale (2000) stated that evaluation serves several purposes to all stake holders. He enumerated the following:

1. *It is used to assess the progress of learners by highlighting areas of strengths and weaknesses.*
2. *It is motivational. This is because feedbacks from evaluation spur learners to work harder to improve their performance.*
3. *It helps to ascertain the effectiveness of instruction in the light of attainment of stated learning outcomes.*
4. *Feedback information from evaluation help parents to know the performance of their children and words.*
5. *It helps in the collection of useful data which can be analyzed and used to amend modify, accept or reject aspect of a programme.*

VI. CONSTRAINTS OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

While the evaluations used in school settings have varying degrees of standardization and psycho metric properties, some have more than acceptable levels of reliability and validity. Therefore, when used appropriately with sincerity, evaluations can be expected to provide useable information about students and the effectiveness of instructions in the light of attainment of stated learning outcomes. However, there are a lot of challenges facing educational evaluation in Nigeria. Some of them are:

1. Lack of acquaintance with the programme being evaluated on the part of the evaluators
2. Lack of professional competence. Teachers who lack necessary expertise may not conduct the exercise (evaluation) properly.
3. Insufficient professional evaluating officers in the Federal, State and Local Government Area ministries of education is a factor affecting effective evaluation of educational programme in Nigeria.
4. The investigative skills of those conducting the evaluation beingslim focused.
5. Lack of ability to write and translate evaluation findings for lay men to understand
6. The use of obsolete, outdated and manual methods and strategies of evaluation is a serious problem.
7. Lack of commitment to working with project partners to determine collaborative impacts
8. Failure on the part of the authorities to provide funds for the implementation of educational evaluation
9. Lack of storage facilities and necessary examination materials may hinder the recording of the results as required by the scheme
10. Nonpayment of salaries and allowances to the teachers as and when due. A teacher who is poorly paid and often not paid on time may not be motivated enough to do his job.
11. Evaluation of officers working in the various department and agencies of government are facing the problem of inadequateevaluation tools like computers, projectors, writing materials, etc.
12. Lack of familiarity with both evaluation processes and the subject being evaluated
13. Many tertiary institutions, during accreditation exercise,do pretend to have the acceptable standards in order be accredited.Many occasions, evaluators who are supposed to carry out the accreditation exercise accurately, dance along with such institutions.
14. Insecurity in Nigeria is a very big challenge preventing effective evaluation of educational institutions in the country.According to UNESCO global education monitoring report (GEM), the UN agency, inOgunode, Adah, Wama and Audu (2020),said that 19,000 teachers have been displaced in the Northeastern Nigeria, affecting access to education. Many teachers have also died as a result of insurgence.

VII. SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS

The effectiveness of evaluation relies to a great extent on ensuring that both those who design and undertake evaluation activities as well as those who use their results possess the proper skills and competencies. This is crucial to provide the necessary legitimacy to those responsible for evaluation.

The following recommendations are made towards improving the implementation of educational evaluation in the Nigerian educational system.

1. Educational evaluators with the required qualifications are to recruited to avoidlack of technical know-how. Also, there should be constant capacity development programme for educational evaluators working in the relevant ministries and agencies.

2. Teachers at different levels should always attend conferences,seminars and workshops organized by different associations in the business of evaluation. Such outings will help to improve their knowledge in evaluation strategies.

3. More professional evaluators should be employed and deployed to all the ministries and agencies of education to enhance the effective evaluation of education in the country.

4. Centres ofexpertise where practitioners and evaluation expertswill engage in actual work of curriculum development and evaluation should be established. Such centres can serve as training grounds for professionals.

5. Every evaluator should be willing to disseminate the accurate outcome of evaluation exercises at all times.

6. Development of new strategies and techniques of evaluation should be sacrosanct.

7. There should be an effective and cordial communication system among the evaluation actors. These are the researchers, evaluators, innovators, decision and policy makers

8. Regular and adequate financial provisions from all tiers of government, and community participation are highly needed for the smooth running, andtimely feed-back on the progress of educational programmes.

9. For effective evaluation, the cumulative records of the pupils' achievement should be handled with utmost care with modern storage facilities.

10. Governments should encourage teachers by regular payment of salaries, allowances and increment when due; promotions as and when due and improved conditions of service so that they will be devoted to theirduties and, have time for evaluation of their students

11. Modern equipment, systems, computers with appropriate software and other ICT components should be provided by the government at all levels, to enable evaluators discharge their duties effectively and efficiently.

12. Educational evaluators, as a matter of importance, should always work closely with the curriculum developers in order to develop usable framework.

13. The use all its anti-corruption agencies to monitor our institutions during accreditation exercises should be encouraged.Again, all stakeholders in the educational sector should be ready to make sacrifices andchanges that will help in no small measure in theimprovementof educational evaluation practices in Nigeria.

14. The government of Nigeria, as a matter of urgency, should provide adequate security in the land to ensure that educational institutions are well protected from the men of the underworld.

CONCLUSION

In the educational industry, evaluation plays significant roles. Effective evaluation procedures are essential for a successful teaching and learning. Educational evaluation is an indispensable tool in propelling the teaching and learning process towards the actualization of educational objectives. Evaluation should not be an afterthought. It is a quintessential component of educational programmes and should be carefully incorporated into educational activities from the very beginning.

REFERENCES

[1] Adebowale, O. F. & Alao, K. A. (2008). Continuous assessment policy implementation in selected Local Government Areas of Ondo State (Nigeria): Implications for a successful implementation of the UBE program. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 5*(1), 3-18.

[2] Akomolafe, O. D. (2020). Assessment and evaluation strategies for boosting teaching and learning in Nigeria secondary schools. *International Journal on Integrated Education, 3*(11), 103 - 107.

[3] Akpan, S. M. & Udo, E. E. (2022). Adoption of measurement and evaluation in teaching science subjects in school in Akwa Ibom State: *Empirical study of the prospects and effects. International Journal of Eminent Scholars, 8*(2), 1-14.

[4] Alonge, M.F. (2003). *Assessment and examination: The pathway to educational development.* University of Ado-Ekiti, 9th Inaugural Lecture.

[5] Amesi, J.(2016). Issues in evaluation and assessment: implication for effective teaching and learning in business education in the Niger

Delta.*Nigerian Journal of Business Education (NIGJBED), 3*(2), 260 – 271.

[6] Asoegwu, A. O. (2009). *Curriculum studies: Concepts, processes, planning, implementation and evaluation*. Abuja: Cape Publishers Int'l Ltd.

[7] Bondai, B. (2013) Towards a comparative analysis of formative and summative evaluation in education. In Chemhuru, O. H. (Ed).*Issues and foundations in education*(141-146). Gweru: Booklove Publishers.

[8] Durodola, S. L. & Olude, A. O. (2005). *The use of assessment result in Nigerian schools: An appraisal*. Paper Presented at the 31st Annual Conference of the IAEA, Abuja, Nigeria.

[9] Egereonu, A. C. (2009). *Measurement and evaluation in psychology*. Owerri: Career Publishers.

[10] Enyi, G. S. (2002). *Introduction to measurement and evaluation for universities, polytechnics and colleges of Education. A Professional approach*. Enugu: Harrison Pal.

[11] Goutam, P. (2017). *Meaning, aims and process of education*. Banipur: Government College of Education.

[12] Iwuji. V. B. G. (1997). *Measurement and evaluation for effective teaching and learning*. Owerri: Joe Mankpa's Prints

[13] Lovely Professional University. (2012). *Educational measurement and evaluation*.New Delhi:Usi Publications.

[14] Manichander, T. (2016).*Evaluation in education*. Solapur: Laxmi Book Publication.

[15] Nkwocha, P. C. (2019). *Basics of education measurement and evaluation (Revised ed.)*. Owerri: Mercy Divine Publishers.

[16] Oguniyi, M.B. (1984).*Educational measurement and evaluation*. Ibadan: Longman Nigeria Plc.

[17] Ogunode, N. J.; Adah, S; Wama, P.& Audu, E. I. (2020). Monitoring and evaluation of education in nigeria: challenges and ways forward. *Middle European Scientific Bulletin, 5,* 63-69.

[18] Okoye, R. O. (2015). *Educational and psychological measurement and evaluation, 2nd Ed.* Awka: Erudition Publishers.

[19] Okoye, R. O. (2023). Issues in educational assessment in Nigeria. *International Journal of Studies in Education, 19*(1), 13 - 24.

[20] Scheeren, J.; Glas, C. & Thomas, S.M. (2003). *Educational evaluation, assessment, and monitoring: A systemic approach*. Lisse:Swets & Zeitlinger Publishers.

[21] Shinde, S. (2022). Importance of evaluation in teaching learning process. *Scholarly Research Journal for Humanity Science & English Language,10*(54), 13520-13529.

[22] Usman, V. I. M. (2018). Evaluation of continuous assessment strategies for effective teaching and learning of Economics in Nasarawa State University, Keffi- Nigeria. *International Journal of Strategic Research in Education, Technology and Humanities, 5*(1),48 -55.