



Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Educational Evaluation (EE) provides information for action by offering invaluable knowledge in terms of theoretical and practical capabilities and competencies possessed by man for the improvement of individual and society. This study sought to ascertain whether purpose of EE and the rethinking of EE best practices would help to attain quality educational outcomes (graduands). The study was a descriptive survey research carried out in Federal and State Universities in Anambra State. The sample size was 80 lecturers, 3 research questions and 3 null hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was a 27-item questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated and its reliability was computed to be 0.84. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and z-test statistics in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings, among others, indicated that rethinking of EE best practices would lead to the attainment of quality educational outcomes. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among which was that educational evaluators and lecturers should be motivated and remunerated adequately in order to shun subjective evaluation which they are supposed to be fighting against.

Key words: Education, Educational evaluation, Educational outcome, Quality outcome.

INTRODUCTION

Education is an activity that has interpretation from many perspectives. It is commonly referred to as a means of enlightenment and a process of training

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

and preparation for useful life in the community. On one hand, education serves the function of preservation of knowledge, skills, social values, tradition and cultures of a people. On the other hand, it functions as a change agent, which assists the reconstruction and transformation of a people or society (Oriafo, 2006). Education can be looked at as a system which connotes orderliness, usually among units or parts. The units are invariably operationally harmonized; working independently and also working together toward the achievement of some desired goals or outcomes. As a system, education integrates diverse inputs, which are processed/evaluated and turned out as products, effects, results or outcomes. The outcomes usually manifest, through educational evaluation, as ability or different competencies in individuals whose performances are capable of making useful contributions to the well-being and progress of the individual and community.

According to Bello & Okafor (1999), educational evaluation (EE) may be defined as a process that attempts to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, effectiveness and impact of activities in the light of their objectives. The basic rationale for educational evaluation is that it provides information for action by offering invaluable knowledge in terms of theoretical and practical capabilities and competencies possessed by man for the improvement of life in general. Evaluation could also be seen as the systematic collection of evidence to determine whether in fact certain changes are taking place in the learners as well as to determine the degree of change in individual student. Through educational evaluation (EE), human potentials are delineated. This could be seen in the form of humans' ability and opportunity to explore and exploit their immediate and remote environment from the core of the earth right through to the outer space, for the benefit of the individual and the society at large. Furthermore, EE could be looked at from its primary justification as that which contributes to the rationalization of decision making (Bajah, 1986). Carrying out evaluation is to increase the rationality of decision-making process toward educational outputs/outcomes.

Of course, education can be designed to aid a series of human transformations. Whether it does these or fails to do them, depend on what education is designed to achieve, that is the aims expected to be realized from planned and intensive investment in education. This achievement, positive or negative, is the educational outcome. The point that is being made is that it appears meaningless in the Nigerian circumstance to talk about educational product or school product when attention should be seriously directed to the outcome of education (Okoro, 2006). That is, what emerges from the person who claims to have acquired a level of education? What are the expectations? What can the person do, what can he or she not do? What problem can he or she solve for self, family and community? What problem is beyond the scope of the education the person has acquired? All the above questions might be addressed through educational evaluation that delineates judgment to educational outcomes to determine their quality. Quality educational

outcomes demand, among other things, standard of performance induced or influenced by the level of education one claims to attain (Okoro, 2006).

Going further, education must involve knowledge and understanding and some sort of cognitive perspective that is not inert or covert. By cognitive perspective the person who has acquired education, depending on the level, is expected to acquire knowledge, skills, understanding, attitudes and values that have wide versatility. These are all useless if they are inert and cannot be applied in solving problems.

We should bear in mind that the outcome of education whether positive or negative should be measured and evaluated since outcome implies that there are some defined aims, standards, action and some expectations. It is after serious evaluations that judgment could be passed on whether the educational systems have turned out quality educational outcomes that can perform and fit in into the world of work.

Educational outcomes could be seen in two dimensions namely positive and negative performance that is, ability to perform and inability to perform. This could be measured by educational evaluation. Educational outcome also shows up in the academic world and also world of work. This also could be measured by evaluation. The reality of educational outcome is that, the higher the level and the better the quality, the more humanizing its effects, the more complex its potentialities and the more useful its impact on the individual and society (Oriafo, 2006).

In all, the quality of educational inputs (human, material: such as equipment, facilities, funds, time and others) determines the quality of educational goals or outcomes which can only be actualized or determined through educational evaluation. Let us at this juncture take a look at the dimensions and indices of quality outcome.

Quality outcomes could be used to mean fitness for purpose in relation to the user and customer needs (Okebukola, 2002). Quality outcomes can also be taken to mean that the product conforms to standards, specifications or requirements. British standards institute (BSI) defined quality outcomes as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. Product in education may be referred to output, that is graduands who are awarded certificates having fulfilled all stipulated requirements (Babalola, Adedeji & Erwat, 2007). Longe in Babalola et al (2007) submitted that quality outcome in education includes the learning environment (process) and students' knowledge, attitudes and skills (graduands). The quality outcome is manifested when graduands are able to get out to the society and prove their worth by their level of performance in the competitive labour market.

The quality outcome of education includes the learning environment and students' outcomes i.e. graduands acquired knowledge, attitudes, values and skills. There are two ways to measuring and evaluating quality. One involves evaluating the outputs from the education systems. The other involves examining the educational process which produce these outputs. These approaches can be used separately or together. This study concerns

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

itself with the evaluation of the outputs/outcomes from education system and examining the educational process with a view to rethinking them in line with EE best practices.

From the input side, quality outcome of education can be gauged/judged through students' capacity and motivation to learn and the curriculum or the subjects to be learned. According to Longe (1999), other ways of inferring quality outcome from the input side are:

- teachers who know how to teach and can actually teach,
- time for learning, and
- the requisite tools for teaching and learning.

In the same vein, the output indicators for measuring and evaluating quality outcome of education would be the qualifications and the levels of competence in performance of the outputs (students) using the knowledge, attitude and skills acquired. Moreso, the effective performance of the outputs in the job competitive market, their impact on moral conduct, and serviceability in the society are also indicators for measuring and evaluating the quality outcome of education. The feedback from the job market and society generally is important to the education system for evaluation of both the educational process and outputs.

In most countries and in Nigeria in particular, measuring of the quality outcome of student is largely based on examination results and decision made on those results. These stem from the fact that the desired effects are achieved. The attainment of quality educational outcomes in higher institutions in Nigeria through the identification of/and implementation of purposes of EE, and best practices for effective educational evaluation in the main thrust of this study. Hindrances to the attainment of educational outcomes were also considered.

In order to attain quality educational outcomes in our higher institutions, educational evolution has to be restructured/repositioned or rethought in line with the purposes of educational evaluation and best practices for effective evaluation. Evaluation. Ajayi (1999) summarized the purposes of educational evaluation to include:

- i. Evaluation allows the teachers to monitor the students' progress
- ii. It helps the teacher to take decision on the lesson he has delivered.
- iii. It helps the teacher to discover difficulties/problems for himself and for his students.
- iv. It helps the teacher to determine students' achievement.
- v. It helps the teacher to explore avenues for improvement on his teaching.
- vi. Evaluation provides useful information about the success or failure of students in the society.

In order to attain all the above and more, expectations are that educational evaluation would explore and exploit best practices for effective evaluation to harness the potentials of quality educational outcomes.

Educational evaluation best practices are the best processes evaluators would explore in order to delineate quality educational outcome/output

(graduands). Best practices with emphasis on the word 'best' refers to super excellence, most satisfactory, suitable and most desirable of all other evaluation approaches. Through EE best practices learners would acquire academic competencies. Learners would also be adequately equipped with knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, practical and psychosocial skills that would enable them live healthy and satisfying lives, derive the benefits of learning and undertake a variety of work roles in a climate of rapid technological change.

These EE best practices include among others that objectives should be stated in correct action verbs in behavioural terms for easy evaluation. In spite of the fact that for quality educational outcomes to emerge there must be effective educational evaluation, yet unfortunately some evaluators and lecturers of higher institutions make mockery of evaluation. This has made our educational outcomes, which are the ingredients for human capital and human capacity development to be of sub-standard. Research literature by Ajayi (1999) revealed the impediments to effective evaluation for quality educational outcomes as follow:-

Some evaluators introduce sentiments into their evaluation;

Acts of severity (victimization);

Sexual harassment;

Some teachers are so lazy that they neither teach effectively nor evaluate students' achievements; and so on.

The major preoccupation of the researchers is the attainment of quality educational outcomes through effective educational evaluation. This could be done through identification of the purposes and rethinking best practices of educational evaluation. The hindrances to educational evaluation could also be ascertained from lecturers of federal and state universities. The problem of this study posed as a question is: Would the purposes and best practices of educational evaluation contribute to the rethinking of EE for quality educational outcomes?

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of this study is to rethink the purpose and best practices of EE towards the attainment of quality educational outcomes. Specifically the study sought to:

1. discourse purposes of educational evaluation (EE)
2. rethink/reconsider best practices of EE for quality educational outcomes.
3. ascertain hindrances to effective evaluation for quality educational outcome.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the purposes of educational evaluation?

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

2. Which educational evaluation best practices for effective evaluation would produce quality educational outcomes?
3. What are the hindrances to effective educational evaluation?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

1. There is no significant difference between the responses of lecturers from federal and state universities on the purposes of educational evaluation.
2. The mean responses of lecturers from federal and state universities on the best practices for effective evaluation for quality educational outcomes would not differ significantly.
3. The mean responses of lecturers from federal and state universities on the hindrances to effective educational evaluation would not differ significantly.

METHODOLOGY

Design

The study was a descriptive survey research which sought to ascertain the mean responses of lecturers from federal and state universities on whether educational evaluation would produce quality educational outcomes (graduands).

Area of study

This study was done in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, (NAU) Awka and Anambra State University, (ANSU) Uli, all in Anambra State.

Population of the Study

The target population comprised all lecturers in the Faculty of Education in the two universities. In NAU, (federal) there are 78 lecturers while in ANSU (state) there are 47 lecturers.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

All the 125 lecturers – 78 from NAU and 47 from ANSU formed the sample. The population in the two universities was small, hence there was no need for sampling.

Instrument

The instrument for data collection was a 27 – item questionnaire titled “Educational Evaluation for Quality Outcome” (EEQO), developed by the

Ifeakor, Amaechi C. and Anekwe, Josephine U.

researchers. The instrument was structured to elicit information on the items based on outstanding = 5 points, very good = 4 points, good = 3 points, fair = 2 points and poor = 1 point

Validation of Instrument

The instrument was face-validated by two Measurement and Evaluation experts in University of Nigeria, Nsukka. They were given the instrument, purpose of the study and research questions. They were asked to validate the instrument based on ambiguity of statement, comprehensiveness, adequacy and relevance to set objectives of the study. Inputs from the experts led to some modifications.

Reliability of Instrument

The instrument was trial-tested on 10 lecturers in the Faculty of Education of University of Nigeria, Nsukka (Nsugbe Campus). Data collected were used to compute a reliability coefficient of internal consistency of 0.84 using Cronbach Alpha formula.

Procedure for Data Collection

The instrument was administered to the lecturers personally by the researchers. The lecturers took time to respond to the instrument. This resulted that all the copies were correctly filled and collected back on a later date.

Method of Data Analysis

Mean scores and standard deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions. The acceptable level of mean score was 3.00 and above. The null hypotheses were tested using z- test statistics at 0.05 alpha level (Ali, 2006).

RESULTS

Table I showed that lecturers from federal and state universities responded positively to the various purposes of educational evaluation as shown in the mean responses of lecturers from federal university (3.423) and lecturers from State University (3.659). This indicated that the above listed items are various purposes of educational evaluation which bring about quality educational outcome.

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

Table 1: Mean and SD of lecturers from federal and state university on the purposes of EE.

S/NO	Items on purposes of evaluation that lead to attainment of quality educational outcome.	Federal		State	
		X	SD	X	SD
Evaluation is vital for the following reasons:					
1	It allows the teacher to monitor students' progress through feedback.	3.64	0.66	3.75	0.81
2	It helps the teacher to modify the attitudes he/she adopts when he/she is with the learner.	3.35	0.81	3.97	0.77
3	It helps the teacher to take decision on the lesson he/she has delivered.	3.15	0.75	3.67	0.89
4	It helps the teacher to discover difficulties both for himself and for his/her students.	3.58	0.72	3.80	0.61
5	Evaluation helps the teachers to determine students' achievement in knowledge, attitude and skills.	3.60	0.77	3.51	0.76
6	Evaluation helps the teacher to explore avenues for improvement on his teaching.	3.44	0.55	3.11	0.71
7	It helps each student to obtain information on his/her performance and compare with other members of the class.	3.36	0.63	3.74	0.69
8	Evaluation helps the teacher to modify the way he/she accepts the response learners give to questions.	3.24	0.71	3.44	0.66
9	Evaluation helps the teacher to apportion some amount of attention to individual learners.	3.39	0.91	3.81	0.85
10.	Evaluation helps the teacher to select appropriate students (graduands) for the world of work in this global age	3.39	0.91	3.81	0.85
Total		3.423	0.739	3.659	0.733

Table 2: Mean and SD of lecturers of federal and state universities on the best practices of educational evaluation.

S/NO	Best Practices of Educational Evaluation (EE) Teachers should apply the following best practices to achieve quality educational outcomes.	Federal		State	
		X	SD	X	SD
11	Objectives should be stated in correct action verbs in behavioural terms for easy evaluation	4.10	0.54	3.98	0.73
12	Effective teaching using available resources to communicate ideas to students.	4.10	0.66	3.99	0.65
13	Coverage of evaluation in the three domains of education-cognitive, affective and psychomotor.	4.25	0.79	4.00	0.88
14	Formative evaluation to examine progress made so far on teaching and learning.	4.47	0.91	4.18	0.71
15	Measurement of students' progress to observe students keenly and record their progress.	4.80	0.56	4.27	0.59
16	Effective information gathering strategies should be applied eg. Tests, projects, observations etc.	4.61	0.61	4.19	0.71
17	Objectivity in evaluation should be used in order to be fair to all.	4.11	0.82	4.00	0.73
18	Feedback on the outcome of evaluation to discuss the performance of students.	4.71	0.90	4.25	0.49
19	Flexibility in readiness to adjust and learn from students and from situations.	4.83	0.71	4.11	0.65
20	Creation of good atmosphere of rapport for motivation and stimulation of students' interest and its sustenance.	4.91	0.83	3.88	0.78
Total		4.489	0.733	4.055	0.679

Table 2 indicated that all the items from 11-20 scored up to 3.00 and above showing the acceptance mean level. This is an indication that all the listed EE best practices were accepted by the respondents to be explored for quality educational outcomes.

Table 3: Mean and SD on the hindrances to effective evaluation.

S/NO	The following are hindrances to affective evaluation	Federal		State	
		X	SD	X	SD
21	Introduction of sentiments into evaluation e.g. subjective evaluation.	3.23	1.10	3.10	0.98
22	Acts of victimization ie failing students in examinations for one offence or the other.	3.66	0.99	3.24	0.79
23	Sexual harassment which results to subjective evaluation.	3.75	0.61	3.12	0.55
24	Laziness on the part of teachers failing to teach or evaluate students' outcome appropriately.	3.34	0.75	3.12	0.61
25	Adequate evaluation is relegated to the back ground in want for greener pastures.	3.57	0.61	3.41	0.66
26	Love of money has increased so much that question papers and marks are sold to students.	3.94	0.78	3.71	0.59
27	Lack of competencies in skills of evaluation still erode effective evaluation.	3.88	0.61	3.49	0.41
	Total	3.624	0.778	3.325	0.655

In table 3, all the respondents' means in items 21-27 scored up to 3.00 and above thus indicated that all the listed hindrances affect effective evaluation.

Table 4: Z-test statistics on the mean responses of lecturers of federal and state universities on the purpose of EE.

Source of Variation	N	X	Sd	df	Z-cal	Z-cal	Decision
Federal university	40	3.423	0.739	78	0.1603	1.96	Not significant
State university							
	40	3.659	0.733				

Table 4 showed that z-calculated is 0.1603 while z-critical is 1.96 at 78 df and 0.05 alpha level. The z-calculated is less than z-critical. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the purpose of EE was not rejected.

Table 5: Z-test statistics on the mean responses of the respondents on the best practices of EE.

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

Source of Variation	N	X	Sd	df	Z-cal	Z-cal	Decision	
Federal university	40	4.489		0.733	78	0.2861	1.96	Not significant
State university	40	4.085	0.679					

The result from table 5 revealed that the z-calculated (0.2861) is less than z-critical (1.96) at 78 df and 0.05 alpha level. This is an indication that all the respondents agreed that there is no significant difference in their responses on the best practices of educational evaluation that would be applied in order to achieve quality educational outcomes.

Table 6: z-test statistics on the mean responses of the respondents on the hindrances of EE.

Source of Variation	N	X	Sd	df	Z-cal	Z-cal	Decision	
Federal university	40	3.624		0.778	78	0.2086	1.96	Not significant
State university	40	3.325	0.655					

The result from table 6 revealed that z-calculated is 0.2086 while z-critical is 1.98 at 78 df and 0.05 level of significance. The z-calculated is less than z-critical. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference on the hindrances to effective evaluation.

DISCUSSION

The findings in table I showed clearly that all the lecturers from federal and state universities were of the consensus that all the listed items are the purposes of educational evaluation which bring about quality educational outcomes. This finding is in line with the views of Ajayi (1999) who observed that evaluation is very vital in order to achieve educational goals and objectives. Furthermore, in the same view, Bello & Okafor (1999) opined that the purpose of evaluation is to determine the amount of degree of change in individual student so that the impact would be felt on the individual society at large. Also hypothesis one result of the respondents indicated no significant difference in their mean ratings on the various purposes of educational evaluation.

The result in table 2 revealed that all the respondents accepted that all the listed items were the best practices of EE. The z-test statistics of the respondents revealed no significant difference in the mean responses of both lecturers from federal and state universities on the best practices of educational evaluation which when applied would determine the quality of educational outcomes. This result is in line with the ideas of Bello & Okafor (1999) who stressed that best practices for effective evaluation should be explored and exploited in order to harness the potentials of quality educational outcomes.

In table 3, the lecturers from federal and state universities agreed that all the items were hindrances to effective evaluation. The z-test statistics of the respondents also revealed no significant difference in mean responses of the respondents on the hindrances to effective evaluation. This finding is in line with the study of Oriafio (2006) who opined that if there are no quality educational inputs, then quality of educational outcomes would be hampered. Corroborating this statement, Ajayi (1999) asserted that some evaluators introduce sentiments in their evaluation thereby introducing subjectivity in evaluation which leads to wrong decision. Wrong decision in EE leads to inefficiency in the selection of quality educational outcomes, which would undermine societal welfare and progress.

CONCLUSION

This paper has x-rayed the purpose of EE which among others, include the evaluation of educational outcomes (graduates) to achieve quality. The authors advocated that for quality educational outcomes to be achieved, EE should be rethought in line with best practices for effective educational evaluation. Best practices of EE would be used to harness the potentials of quality educational outcomes. These quality educational outcomes (graduands) would contribute to their worth by the level of performance in the competitive labour market. Despite the above, there exist some hindrance to effective EE which were also highlighted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Educational evaluators should identify and work towards actualizing the purposes of EE.

Rethinking Educational Evaluation for Quality Educational Outcomes

2. Educational evaluators and lecturers as a whole should rethink towards, EE best practices to implement them for effective educational evaluation.
3. The federal and state government should be committed to the provision of adequate materials, create enabling learning environment where EE should take place to produce quality educational outcomes (graduands).
4. Staff development on EE, through in-service training, workshops and conferences, should be given priority attention to ensure that they are equipped with the competencies/skills for evaluation.
5. Educational evaluators and lecturers should be highly motivated (in form of adequate remuneration) to avoid getting involved into subjective evaluation which they are supposed to be fighting against.

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