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Evaluation Processes/Challenges and Prospects of Implementing Civic Education Curriculum in Nigerian Schools

By

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Abstract

This work is designed to study the evaluation processes/challenges and prospects of implementing Civic Education curriculum in Nigerian schools. The study includes concept of evaluation, conditions of evaluation, forms of evaluation, importance of evaluation and most importantly, the concept of curriculum. The paper is of the view that rational and objective guided agencies for useful evaluation exercise have been developed but requires governmental backup for effective performance. Meanwhile, meaningful recommendations were suggested as a panacea to challenges facing evaluation processes in implementing Civic Education Curriculum in Nigerian Schools.

Curriculum and evaluation are veritable properties for national development. As blood is important to life, so is evaluation important to curriculum development. The development of any meaningful educational system is highly dependent on the curriculum adopted by the society. For example, in Nigerian secondary education is in the decline. It is infested with examination malpractice, cultism, immorality, drug abuse, academic incompetence and rebellion (Omoregie, 2006). According to Vizey, Sadgy and Vufun (2006), the hopes of developing countries are hinged on meaningful evaluation exercise to develop human capital for effective functioning of the society. Buttressing this, Abolade (1998) noted that Civic education Curriculum is an invaluable instrument of human, socio, and character molding and civil society development. Evaluation as a veritable tool for effective curriculum has its primary foundation built on implementation at different levels in Nigerian Schools.

Concept of Evaluation

Evaluation means the passing of judgment as to the value of a given entity based on certain criteria. The important question which evaluation seeks to answer is

“how adequate?” “How efficient”?, “How stable?” “How knowledgeable?” (Agbodaji, 2008). Okpala, Onuocha and Oyedeji (1993), saw evaluation as process gathering valid information on attainment of educational objectives, analyzing and fashioning information to aid judgment on the effectiveness of teaching or an educational programme. Rasseleh and Thomas (2001), started their explanation of evaluation by first explaining Curriculum. Curriculum by them means all educational experiences prepared and planned by the school and offered to students in order to modify their behaviour and encourage them to achieve total development growth while evaluation is the procedure followed by specialists to study to what extent the objectives of curriculum have been achieved and to know the obstacle faced during implementation in order to overcome them. On the other hand, curriculum evaluation is a continuous process for collecting information about all the elements and outcomes of the curriculum to help arrive at an understanding of the extent to which they have been achieved and subsequently take decisions to improve their efficiency.

Moreover, evaluation has many definitions from different authors. According to Okpala, Onuocha and Oyedeji (1993), the genesis of evaluation dates back to 1899 and many experts have provided definitions of evaluation such as Amadi (1993) , Afengideh (2009), Mkpa (2005) and Rogers (2012), just to mention but recent authors. However, in all meaning of evaluation, “worth” is the central issue. All agree that evaluation always includes judgment of the unit or programme which is being evaluated. Thus, the judgments which the evaluator makes in the process of evaluation are not the same as the final judgment of the value or merit of an educational programme or product, which the decision maker or project manager alone is competent to make. In the light of the information, which has been provided, he/she decides whether the programme should continue, be terminated, replicated or whether it should be disseminated (Afangideh, 2009).

Evaluation needs to be considered together with the nature of curriculum development or reform process. Curriculum development reform and evaluation are universal. Every country is usually, sometimes with similar aims; other times with different aims. Examples abound in some places like China, North Korea and Singapore. In Singapore, the increase of compulsory education from seven to nine years provides the basis for curriculum reform and is now followed by a joint innovative Programme with UNESCO to improve the quality of teaching. In North Korea, a major project curriculum development underway is to improve the quality of public examination. Poor administration of the examination had brought them into disrepute such that clients no longer trust the results. The aim of the exercise is to establish publicly accountable methods of examination and administration. In the United Arab Emirates, few years after the launch of the National Curriculum a substantial effort was being made to increase the capacity of schools to evaluate their programmes and to introduce means on how to help those that do not perform well. All these examples so far given explain the importance of these two concepts to one another.

Evaluation is also seen as a professional judgment by advanced examiners who from data obtained establish their findings.

Types of Evaluation

There are two major forms of evaluation: formative and summative. Their forms are related in terms of when the evaluation is done. Afengideh (2009) stated that it is either at the course of the programme or at the end of the programme. Evaluation carried out in the course of a programme so as to determine the extent to which the objectives of the programme are being attained is said to be formative. However, when a teacher pauses and asks questions in the course of a lesson, it is formative because the teacher wants to find out if the students are moving along with him (Mpka, 2006). Again, evaluation done at the end of an instruction is formative in terms of work or the programme. It can also be summative if the consideration is that particular lesson. Thus, formative and summative forms of evaluation are relative terms. It depends on when the evaluation is done and the purpose for which it is carried out.

Summative evaluation then is the assessment carried out at the end of the lesson, unit, a term's work, a year's work or the programmes. It is the evaluation that assesses all that the learner has covered within the specified period (Agbodaji, 2008). Therefore formative and summative forms of evaluation are relative terms. It depends on when and for which it is embarked upon. Rogers, (2012) observed that formative evaluation is used to ascertain what has been achieved and the gaps to be covered. The feedback is used for teaching modification, restructuring, replanning and guidance i.e. helping the learners to solve these problems. Whereas summative evaluation is mainly used for promotion purpose, awarding certificates, diplomas and degrees.

Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum has been defined in different ways by different people. The concept of curriculum originated from a latin word *currere*, meaning "to run" as it was earlier associated with race courses and the running of races. Ogunyemi (2009) refers to curriculum as planned and unplanned experiences which learners receive in the process of their formal or semi – formal education for the purpose of becoming rounded persons who can make meaningful contributions to the betterment of their society. The salient point of this definition is that curriculum involves a dynamic process, as it moves with the changing trends in the society. This explains why evaluation is also a dynamic process, as it aims at bringing positive change in the society.

However, Curriculum is a planned scheme of work. Curriculum as a planned scheme of work is also seen as the set of courses and their content, offered at a school or institution (Wikipedia, 2016). Offorma (2005) sees curriculum as a structured series of learning experiences intended for the education of the learners. It is what goes on in the school under the guidance of the teacher. The guidance needs to be informed, through the components described by Offorma as: programme of studies, programme of

activities and programme of guidance which is in line with teacher preparation programme. Curriculum is also seen as the instrument through which schools seek to translate the hopes of the society in which they function into concrete reality. One way to translate this hope is through the inculcation of the right types of values as contained in civic education curriculum.

Concepts of Civic Education

The concept of “civic” is a Greek word which means citizens of a city or an area. This then means that civic education is a result of careful decision of the government to lead its citizens in different geographical and political communities to acquire some kinds of knowledge, facts, skills, abilities, values, virtues, attitudes and behaviours that are acceptable in society and useful in building a balanced and great nation (Ukegbu, Faskari, Adebayo, Obasi and Anyaoho, 2011). Civic education by way of definition is that form of education which is primarily designed and organized in content and function so as to produce good and useful people who know what events happen within the country and globally. The main aim of civic education is to develop and change young people into effective, responsible, god and well informed people who are active and productive in society. The importance of civic education is to make one a good citizen of one’s country. Alexander, (2012) defined civic education as an important component of education that cultivates citizens to participate in the public life of a government and democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. It is vital to state that a free society must ultimately depend on its citizens, and that the way to infuse the people with the necessary qualities is through civic education. This is why it is also seen as the study of how man could become effective quality citizens in the society as well as how government works and functions.

Importance of Evaluation to Civic Education

The importance of evaluation to curriculum and every other aspect of education generally cannot be neglected. A developing educational environment is an environment ready at all time to put into positive use the findings of its evaluation team into good use (Amaehwale, 2000). He also affirmed the importance of evaluation that would equip the individual with knowledge to be highly functional in the society. Okpala, Onuocha, & Oyedeji (1993) noted that one major importance of civic education is the inculcation in the people, their society’s basic beliefs, values as well as the people’s culture and skills. It equips the youths with what people view as important. It also inculcates in students their rights and privileges as well as their duties as responsible citizens. It makes them to be socially and politically aware, and integrates them into the social life of their society as well as helps them to acquire the skills and competences of their society.

Through evaluation of civic education students are equipped with all the pertinent skills that would enable them contribute meaningfully to their society. It makes one patriotic and enables one to participate actively in formulating progress and development. It also creates social and political awareness in the young people through the spirit of unity and peace. While recognizing our differences, it emphasizes common heritage and why citizens should be patriotic. This makes evaluation very important in every subject not just curriculum.

Functions of Evaluation

The following are seen as functions of evaluation:

Discovery: Evaluation enables the teacher to discover the student's area of weaknesses and strengths. This aspect or function of evaluation brings the teacher or the instructor to the knowledge of the area that requires greater concentration and efforts.

Absorption: Evaluation also serves the purpose of employment and recruitment to different ministries and parastatals or organizations. This helps the employer to recruit nothing but the best. Through evaluation students are given admission to Universities and Colleges of education through a process known as Post Universities Matriculation Examination (PUME).

Informative: The findings obtained from the data used during evaluation provide useful information to the examination board or to the agents responsible for conduction the examination. The findings if played back facilitate decision – making regarding the curriculum and its elements.

Change: The outcome of evaluation provides basis for positive development and modification of the curriculum. This change provides database of information regarding pedagogical processes.

Better ways of Learning: Another good function of evaluation is that it provides better ways of learning. It shows students' productive pathway to learning. Hence, it ensures good guidance and counseling of students by the teachers.

Conditions for Effective Evaluation

To carryout curriculum evaluation effectively, certain conditions must be fulfilled and they include the following:

Validity: As validity is important to the selection of content so it is important for effective evaluation. The point is that any means used in evaluation must be relevant to what is evaluated. The procedure must measure the behaviours specified in the objectives. For example, if the behavior to be evaluated in civic is stated in cognitive terms and an effective instrument is employed in evaluation, that evaluation is not valid because it has no bearing with the objectives.

Objectivity: It must be free from bias or subjectivity. The data must be allowed to speak, whatever is being assessed, whosoever is being assessed; evaluation should be objective for the data to be valid and useful.

Continuity: Offorma, (2002) observed that evaluation must be continuous for feedback on curriculum endeavours so that the data can be used to modify or reassess the goals and take decisions about the next action.

Comprehensiveness: This is the extent of coverage of objectives by the evaluation instrument. For evaluation to be comprehensive it must cover the objectives, the ten objectives must reflect all the domains for it to be comprehensive.

Consistency: Consistency in evaluation states that evaluation should be in line with the behaviour stipulated in the goals. For example, if the goals are to develop certain skills or understand some concepts, the evaluation must be geared towards assessing whether the skills are developed or the concepts are understood.

Evaluation Elements

Evaluation is not just done haphazardly; there are areas of importance or concentration. These areas are called evaluation elements and they include:

- ❖ Objectives
- ❖ Contents
- ❖ Methods of teaching
- ❖ Instructional materials
- ❖ Performance

Evaluation instrument

The evaluation instruments are as follows:

Test: This method of evaluation is the most common. It is convenient and easy to control, occurring at a particular time and place. It provides information in a concise manner. Its strength is high reliability given the conditions of implementation.

Examination: This is usually a long and formal test given under standardized conditions. It has greater flexibility than a class test, as long as it is conducted in a good exam atmosphere.

Questionnaire: This is a formal list of questions designed to elicit information from the respondents.

Case Study: This is a complete study and analysis of a particular instance to provide insights into characteristics and reasons for them.

Interviews: This is a one on one or face to face discussion on a particular issue.

Portfolio: it is a collection of function from an individual or group sometimes produced for a particular reason.

Role-play: This can be used to test a student's capacity to react hypothetical but realistic situations.

Practical Test: A realistic situation such as an experiment or practical task performed under test conditions.

Checklist: This is a list of items that enables someone by reminding him/her of the things needed to be done for a particular job or activity.

Curriculum and Evaluation Practicing Bodies in Nigeria

There are a good number of practicing evaluation bodies establishments set up by the government to develop and monitor educational curriculum at different levels. These bodies play very significant functions during curriculum development and evaluation processes.

However, some of these bodies are National University Commission (NUC), National Commission for College of Education (NCCE), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Teachers Institute (NTI) are all set up to accredit courses, set minimum standards through monitoring and evaluation. Others include the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) through its curriculum functions develops new techniques and approaches to curriculum development and evaluation for curricula in use in the school system (Ivowi, 2009). In addition to these are facilities of education in Nigerian Universities and professional associations such as Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN), Social Studies Association of Nigeria (SOSAN) that monitor and critique curriculum development and reforms.

We also have the Federal Inspectorate Service (FIS) responsible for monitoring and evaluating schools both at the state and the local government levels. According to Adeniyi (2013), the FIS in collaboration with relevant bodies such as Universal basic Education (UBE), NCCE, NTI, WAEC and NECO has been carrying out the following responsibilities among others:

- ❖ Determine whether or not schools are achieving the set educational objectives.
- ❖ Production of guidelines on minimum standards for primary school and secondary schools.
- ❖ Determine the educational standards to be expected of the child on completion of his/her stay in school.
- ❖ Determine whether or not the standard of education is falling.

Also in the list are the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) responsible for organizing final examinations for secondary schools and University Matriculation examination respectively.

Challenges of Evaluation Processes in Nigeria

Evaluations have suffered so much challenges in and constraints in executing their functions. These include:

Lack of funds: Fund is a pre-requisite for all activities and success of evaluation. Lack of money has prevented standardization and given way for compromise. Besides, the attitudes of evaluators have affected the wise utilization of the funds available for evaluation. Most of the funds provided for useful evaluation end up in the bank accounts of few people, neglecting the project for which the money is meant for.

Ogbonnaya (2002) pointed out that funds are crucial in the implementation of quality evaluation exercises.

Inadequate Infrastructure and Materials: Lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, office equipment, and evaluation materials such as question papers are inadequate. In most cases, students are asked to share one question paper. This is most pronounced especially in state-owned colleges (Ngada, 2001). Even in federal institutions the ratio of students to the materials available is grossly inadequate. This is more among students offering science and technical education. A case of a school with a student population of 800 or more using 30 – 40 computers. A classroom capacity of not more than 40 students will be jammed up with over 130 students. This constitutes serious challenges to evaluation processes especially in implementing civil education curriculum in Nigerian schools.

Poor Implementation of Educational Policies: Nigeria has very good educational policies but the problem lies in the fact that these policies are not well implemented. Ogbonnaya (2003) noted that the manner of implementation of education policies is a serious problem to education practices in Nigerian schools.

Inadequate Human Resources: There is an obvious inadequate supply of human resources in Nigerian schools. This very problem reflects on implementation of curriculum in the classroom and finally during evaluation, due to inadequate staff to man invigilation halls.

Inadequate Support from the Government: Unfortunately, for many years, most of these establishments were quite inactive as a result of lack of necessary support from the governments (federal, state and local) that set them up. The FIS became a dumping ground for staff nearing retirement or on punishment for one reason or the other. All these put together constitute a serious challenge to evaluation at all levels.

Summary

Curriculum and evaluation are not synonymous to each other but they work hand in hand to achieve the same goal. Evaluation is a curriculum process aimed at collecting data for making value judgment. Doing this requires a close observation of evaluation elements such as objectives, contents and methods. In addition these were functions of evaluation, features, explanation of basic terms and tools for curriculum evaluation. Also discussed were the prevailing conditions promoting and challenging evaluation processes in Nigeria.

However, there are numerous challenges facing curriculum and evaluation processes at all levels of education in Nigerian schools. But with the effective and efficient working conditions of evaluation agents or bodies, these problems will be a thing of the past. Making it a thing of the past requires government's support and provisions of facilities for adequate evaluation such as funds, materials for evaluation and human resources.

Recommendations

Evaluation problem is the biggest challenge facing our educational system and if not checked threatens not only our environment but also our survival, as a growing nation. The following recommendations are thus made:

- ❖ Adequate funds should be made available to all evaluation bodies and agencies for the upgrading of equipment and other materials needed for effective evaluation.
- ❖ Government should also provide adequate infrastructures such as classrooms, examination halls etc.
- ❖ Policies made should be well implemented to encourage continuity in the education sector.
- ❖ Education should not function in isolation from the present realities, therefore obsolete and outdated evaluation tools dating back many years must be questioned and not used exclusively as measures for evaluation.
- ❖ The inspectorate services in federal and state ministries of education should be provided the necessary human and material resources to enable them carryout their duties effectively.
- ❖ Schools should have examination committee that moderate and ensure effective management and organization of school examinations and continuous assessment practices.
- ❖ The different bodies and agencies set up to monitor, accredit, set minimum standards, conduct examinations should be supported to function properly by meeting at least the maximum requirements which they need to do their jobs.
- ❖ Admission of students should be in the same proportion with the number of staff available to enable teachers have firm management of the class.
- ❖ Evaluators should be taught through seminars, workshops, conferences, etc. on how to make good and maximum use of modern evaluation tools to enable them elicit information correct information from the students.
- ❖ Evaluation should be carried out only by professionals in teaching profession and not just anybody who has the opportunity.
- ❖ Above all, evaluators should learn to be objective and shun any negative form of compromise detrimental to the primary objective of evaluation.

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