



West African Journal Of Education

VOL. XXX 2010

ISSN: 0043-2997

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**The West African
Journal Of Education
(WAJE)**

VOLUME XXX

2010

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WHOLE SCHOOL EVALUATION AS IMPERATIVE FOR TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOL EVALUATION PROGRAMME

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Abstract

The paper examined the imperatives of Total Quality Management (TQM) in school evaluation in Nigerian schools using the Whole School Evaluation (WSE) approach. It observed that evaluation is central to achieving excellence in the education system, which largely depends on the quality measures applied. Quality was presented as an essential ingredient of achieving excellence, efficiency and effectiveness of a nation's education system. TQM, a panacea found in the Asian and Western world to be effective in improving any ailing education system was posited as a veritable tool for driving the existing evaluation framework in the country to accommodate the new concept of Whole School Evaluation. TQM, a comprehensive approach to school management required that all components of an organisation or programme work efficiently according to laid down specification of standards. Four imperatives: moral, environmental, survival and accountability were germane in the application of TQM in the evaluation process in our schools. WSE approach to evaluation holds true the principles of TQM. WSE process, a framework usually backed up by national policy, examined nine functional areas and was executed by the school management team which played an important role of self-evaluation of the school prior to the commencement of the on-site evaluation by accredited external body. The approach had the capacity to incorporate all stakeholders ranging from the school management team, the governing board, parents, students, teachers, community, to ministry officials. The paper contended that WSE be introduced into the education system in view of its numerous benefits and the quest for provision of quality and sustainable education in Nigeria.

Key words: Whole school, Total quality management, Evaluation, Quality, Nigerian schools

Introduction

Education is a veritable tool for effecting economic, political, social, religious and technological changes in the society. The import of education in national development is so enormous that it has led successive and current governments in Nigeria to devote an increasing proportion of their annual budgets to its provision even though these fall short

of UNESCO's requirement. Some stakeholders such as organised labour have contended the adequacy of such budgets when compared to expenditures on education by other countries like England, Germany, Ghana and South Africa, and have demanded for increased funding of education in the country. The effectiveness of an education system does not entirely depend on adequate funding but on a host of other factors such as the adequacy and level of implementation of the operated curriculum, policy, the philosophy and good quality teachers. When these are assessed, they can determine whether the products of the system which have been adjudged to have passed through the prescribed training processes and requirements are certified. Also, it tells us if actually they possess requisite knowledge, competencies and skills they need to function effectively in their chosen careers and thus, be able to contribute positively to the society. The process of passing such valued judgement is known as evaluation.

Evaluation is central to the attainment of excellence in the education system. Without evaluation, human beings would almost lose sight of their goals of pursuit, and educational programmes would drift. That valued decision-making derives from valued judgement of phenomena or situations are like stating the obvious. Valued judgements are usually passed by external or internal evaluators who have evaluated a programme, though outcomes of external evaluations are always preferred in some quarters to internal evaluations, because of their objectivity. It is essential that the two types of evaluation be considered holistically because the complementary benefit of one to the other cannot be overlooked.

Perspectives in Evaluation

Evaluation has been defined from various perspectives and with varying degrees of comprehensiveness. Some evaluation experts such as Yoloye (1971 and 2008) would rather prefer that evaluation is defined to reflect the aspect one is concerned with, as evaluation is a complex activity, a lot more than what could be easily defined. However, two definitions acclaimed to be quite comprehensive served as guide. Scriven (1972) defines evaluation as the process of determining the merit, worth or value of an activity or the product of that process, while Alkin (1970) views evaluation as a process of ascertaining the decision areas of concerns, selecting appropriate information, and collecting and analysing information in order to report summary data useful for decision makers in selecting among alternatives. By this definition, Alkin proposes the decision-oriented approach to evaluation while Scriven (1972) proposed the formative and summative approach to evaluation.

In discussing the rationale for evaluation, Bajah (1982) states that, evaluation provides information for action while its primary justification is to contribute to the rationalisation of decision making. These definitions portray evaluation as an entity that provides systematic, comprehensive, thorough and timely information to ensure appropriate

decision-making on the worth or quality of a programme or system and help gauge the status and direction of a programme or system, with a view to taking the necessary corrective measures.

Concept of Quality in Education

Quality in education is generally agreed by many educationists as multidimensional (Obanya, 2002 and 2004; Babalola, Adedeji and Erwat, 2007; and Jimoh 2007). It is interpreted by stakeholders from varying perspectives based on set criteria (Babalola, Adedeji and Erwat, 2007). To some educationists, quality connotes “excellence” or attainment of set standard (Ekhaguere, 2005, and Aworh, 2005). To others, as contained in the Universal Basic Education Programme, UBEP, 2002 p. 9), it is a “function of how much value has been added to the abilities of learners irrespective of their background characteristics”. Ololube (2005) ascribes a “functionalist” or “instrumentalist” perspective to quality because of the many metaphors it conjures in education. Citing Zajda, (1995) Ololube (2005) contends that quality conjures many functionalist metaphors such as the curriculum, content, methods of teaching and assessment, evaluation policies and procedures. Babalola *et al* (2007) citing Longe (1999), contend that the quality of education comprises the process and output dimensions, process is exemplified by the learning environment and output by students learning outcomes. These various views of quality would seem rather narrow, not all encompassing, and do not take a comprehensive stance. There are scholars who think that quality in education should be comprehensive, touching on all the relevant aspects of education, and holistically-related. This is the view of Obanya (2002 and 2004). He argues that quality in education should pervade all the dimensions of a system: the input, process and output. He contends that the quality of the output should be taken seriously because the amount of quality of the input and process factors impact directly on it.

The comprehensive model advanced by Obanya (2002 and 2004) called the tripartite model of quality education consists of clusters of variables. In the input dimension, you have variables as the society, policy, management framework, curriculum, teachers, infrastructure, materials and fund. Since quality in education should pervade every area of education, it should not be limited to output alone (that is, number of students who achieve), but the degree of excellence should be examined. Input, in the tripartite model, would mean what students bring into the learning context in terms of their background characteristics, the provision of materials and resources (human and financial). Quality should also, reflect in the way the policy framework is drawn up and even the curriculum; and so on. These inputs should be adequate and made readily available to schools. The process dimension takes care of the appropriate methods of managing each input with a view to achieving the right output. The output dimension is a cluster of dynamic variables that cover cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, valuable to any society, and can be invested on which include improved and motivated teachers.

In the view of Obanya (2004), generating comprehensive evaluation data that would aid decision-making on quality education in Nigeria would require paying attention not only to any of the single cluster of variables or limited to a number of variable within a single cluster but to the totality of quality-related variables. Therefore, making valued judgement of the educational system is a function of the quality of preparation put into the training process of the recipients. The perspectives of Obanya (2002 and 2004) on quality in education would seem to be in consonant with the current day view of and clamour for the introduction of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education. It is for this reason the paper propose the adoption of the relevant principles of TQM into whole school evaluation holistically.

Total Quality Management

Quality in education is senior management - driven though all members of the system are to be involved in the process. Total quality management (TQM) a new management style is a comprehensive approach to school management, born in America as the brainchild of Deming in the 1940s but perfected by Japanese industrialists. It illustrates the wealth of knowledge and managerial efficiency in the industry. According to Umoru-Onuka (2006) making reference to other scholars such as Birnbaum (2001), this style of management looks beyond the boundaries of organisations to extend prominence to the clientele noting that they constitute the major plank of organisational success. It, thus, sees all components of an organisation or programme working efficiently according to laid down specification of standards and it is customer friendly. In the developed countries, TQM is believed to have the ability to cure all ailing education systems. The paper thinks it is about time Nigeria key into the education reform of the present era. In Europe, for instance, quality of education and training is of high political priority. High levels of knowledge, competencies and skills are considered to be the very basic conditions for active citizenship, employment and social cohesion (European Commission Directorate - General for Education and Culture, 2001). This body also sees high quality education as an essential ingredient in the light of labour market policies, and the free movement of workers within the European state. In the view of Ojo (2006) in Onuka (2006), TQM is a management style programme that is quality-centred, customer-focused, facts-based, team-driven and the realisation of organisational goals/objectives.

West-Burham (1992) identified four imperatives for introducing TQM in schools. These are the moral, environmental, survival and accountability imperatives. The moral imperative presupposes that since schools are faced with the burden of preparing the young ones and so morality would not expect anything short of quality educational opportunities that will enable the youths to achieve their full potentials as they garner their educational experiences. The environmental imperative sees a dynamic relationship between school and the society. The imperative presupposes that if the school is to satisfy its three functions of preparing children for the world of work, continuing education and

citizenship, school children should be given the best education that prepares them for the world of work and capabilities for responding to societal issues.

The question of survival according to this source is a great imperative if schools are to continue to exist, be viable and relevant. There is need for schools to meet the needs, expectations and satisfaction of stakeholders such as parents and ministry officials. It is of paramount importance for schools that want to survive to continuously have high enrolment drive and be responsive to the needs of the community. The imperative of accountability ensures that issues that border on inspection, reporting and supervision are internally formed, focused and are of intrinsic worth of school management personnel. These activities should not be seen as external otherwise, they will be poorly received by stakeholders. The Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO) (2009) and UNESCO (2004) observe that there is greater demand for increased accountability now than ever before. TQM according to West-Burham (1992) is an integrated response to management which has the potential to meet the demands of these imperatives in a manner consistent with the special nature of schools as an organisation.

The Principles of TQM

The principles of TQM offer a holistic approach; an integrated view which incorporates structure, processes and relationships. Its basic principles are:

- i. teamwork;
- ii. continuous growth and improvement;
- iii. concerns for products and process; and
- iv. responsibility with all workers.

It also involves:

- v. suppliers and customers;
- vi. creativity;
- vii. zero tolerance for defects;
- viii. celebration;
- ix. recognition;
- x. quality of personal relationships; and
- xi. pragmatically meeting the changing environment schools operate in.

Whole School Evaluation (WSE): What it is, Its Level of Acceptance and Relation to TQM

Whole school evaluation (WSE) according to the South African Department of Education (2002) is an interactive process of assessing the quality of education provided by schools. It is a national policy aimed at reinstating the supervision and monitoring mechanisms at school level. It is measured against agreed national criteria with a view to improving the

quality and effectiveness of education so that very good schools are recognised and under-performing schools are supported. WSE links school self-evaluation with an external evaluation conducted by trained and accredited supervisors to ensure standards. WSE is designed to help schools measure the extent to which they are fulfilling their responsibilities and improving their performance. At the same time, it provides an external evaluation of the schools' work. The outcome of the procedures serve as feedback for schools, supported by local/ministry support services as they seek to improve the quality of education provision in the schools; thereby raising the standard of achievement of their learners. Reports written by supervisors are published and they provide valuable information for the community and the ministry.

In South Africa, the general lack of national evaluation of schools' performance, comprehensive data on quality of teaching and learning or achievement of standard in education led their Department of Education in 1994 to introduce WSE. As a result, many South African provinces now practice WSE. When the initiative was introduced in South Africa, Nigeria was one of the countries that sent delegates to the conference. Yet, there has not been any government policy or intention to adopt in part or whole the WSE policy. In Europe, whole school approach is extended not only to evaluation but to the education system as a whole. This is implemented under the Policy of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Hargreaves (2008: p.1) explains that the initiative advocates a holistic and integrated approach to the implementation and practice of ESD in the formal education system. According to her, the approach in practice allows schools to incorporate teaching and learning for sustainable development not only through aspects of the curriculum, but also through sustainable school operatives, such as integrated governance, stakeholder and community involvement, long-term planning, and sustainability monitoring and evaluation.

According to Hargreaves (2008), there is a widespread support for the implementation of the whole-school approach of ESD implementation by European nations, and these have expressed this through various documents and declarations issued at international, regional and national levels. However, not many of the nations have applied it in a systemic change, she declared. Hargreaves (op. cit) further notes that except for Finland where the approach has gained a more systematic implementation, others have adopted the pilot approach to whole school. United Kingdom and Australia are some of the countries that have adopted the pilot approach. Other countries like in Ireland, where the whole-school approach was introduced in a pilot phase, have after one year embedded it into the education system. Before this, Ireland's Education Congress instituted a committee to conduct a formative evaluation of the approach, an activity which lasted three years. The government of Ireland promotes WSE as an evaluation of the school as a whole and it is seen as a partnership exercise between the school and inspectorate. According to the Irish Education Act (1998) Section (2) (b), it is designed to monitor and

assess the quality, economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the education system provided by the state by recognised schools and centres for education. As a matter of routine, schools are expected to engage in self-evaluation (appraisal).

Educators worldwide perceive external evaluation negatively. When evaluation is conducted, the evaluand usually tend to resist the process and the use of the outcome of such process. Teachers and head teachers especially and at times parents show resentment when some schools and their management, staff and teachers in contrast to others are given cash remuneration on account of improved students' results. Such actions according to Risimati (2007) citing Feamside (2003:3) who described them as "high-stakes" strategies, are used in the United States of America to evaluate school performance. In other extreme cases, head teachers and teachers of schools who are unable to make appreciable improvement in school and student achievement are fired and replaced by the authority. WSE process is therefore system friendly and eliminates resistance to evaluation since school personnel are carried along all through the process.

TQM is related to WSE because the principles in the former are in tune with those of the latter. In the view of Abugbe in Ojo (2008) a functional educational system comes only from disciplined and committed minds, which operate within an enabling work organisational culture, a culture pervaded by quality consciousness. Both initiatives involve the collaboration of all stakeholders in the quest to achieving quality organisational objectives through set standards.

Basically, WSE focuses on the following areas and ensures that performance in these areas is measured on a five-point scale of outstanding, good, acceptable, needs improvement, and needs urgent support.

- i. Basic functionality of the school.
- ii. Leadership, management and communication.
- iii. Governance and relationships.
- iv. Quality of teaching and learning, and educator development.
- v. Curriculum provision and resources.
- vi. Learner achievement.
- vii. School safety, security and discipline.
- viii. School infrastructure.
- ix. Parents and the community.

The WSE Process

The process includes six phases as follows:

- (i) *Pre-evaluation*: This has to be pre-arranged with the schools and the necessary data needed discussed. It involves:

- that the team of evaluators make initial visits;
 - arrives at the date and modality of the pre-evaluation outlined;
 - arranges what school documents to be collected, and when post evaluation feedback will be made; and
 - completes a pre-evaluation analysis of documents in preparation for formal on-site evaluation.
- (ii) *School Self-evaluation:* The school plays an important role by being honest with information provision
- This is the responsibility of the school's management team, the school head and other stakeholders in the community.
 - The school completes a self-evaluation document.
 - Supervisors have access to appropriate documents and collect a copy of the self-evaluation.
- (iii) *On-site Evaluation:* The first two processes are prerequisite for the on-site evaluation. Here, supervisors use three techniques to gather data, for example, scrutiny of school documents, discussion with appropriate school personnel and observation of school teaching.
- This is carried out by the accredited external body recognised by government. Armed with the school—self-evaluation, the team prepares hypothesised statements about the quality and effectiveness of the school in meeting its stated aims and objectives and of the educational system.
 - On-site evaluation is conducted to verify the internal evaluation of the school. The school is usually informed in advance on the agreed date of visit and the documents and information that will be needed.
 - On-site evaluation enables information to be gathered through scrutiny of relevant school documents, all records including development plan and appraisal system.
 - Interviews are conducted with appropriate personnel who are linked with the school. For example, parents, LGEA officers and other stakeholders in the community.
 - Classroom observation is carried out to ascertain the quality of teaching.
- (iv) *Post-evaluation (Reporting):*
- This consists of giving oral feedback of the evaluation to respective teachers and the school head, followed by a written report within a period of two weeks. The essentials here are:
- Both reports will include recommendations on ways to ensure further improvement in the educational practice.
 - Individual subject teachers are given oral report on the quality of their work.
 - The subject heads (heads of department) are also briefed.

(v) *Post-evaluation (Support)*

This is an essential part of WSE and it is the job of the lead supervisor.

- The lead supervisor should write a summary report on the observations and recommendation of the evaluation which should inform the school development plan and strategies for improvement.
- Areas that need improvement are to be stated and the time frame for attainment specified; and
- Such summaries should lead to local, state and national improvement plans as well as inform the professional growth plans and reports.

Instruments for Data Collection for WSE

These are varied and are six in number. They include:

- (i) *Classroom Observation Form*: This is used to collect information on the quality of teaching measured against pre-conceived indicators such as planning, knowledge of subject matter, strategies/resource materials used, assessment and evaluation among others, students learning outcomes are assessed to cover knowledge and skills gained, understanding, attitudes and behaviour exhibited and achievement.
- (ii) *The School Information Questionnaires*: Generate data on the school and it covers several indicators such as funding, quality and quantity of staff including their physical ability, type and location of school, school population and attendance level.
- (iii) *Area for Evaluation Form*: This instrument captures the school's performance on the several areas of emphasis. It provides state-of-the-art information on the school with respect to its perception, condition, purpose and effectiveness. The strengths and weaknesses of the school in each area are stressed.
- (iv) *School Rating Form*: This summarises the rating of the school using several indicators such as the characteristics of the school, the extent to which the school is performing and the rating on the criteria areas of concern.
- (v) *Summary of Main Findings*: This provides the areas of the school's strength and areas that need improvement where support would be provided.
- (vi) *Main Recommendation Form*: This provides the main recommendations of the on-site evaluation.

Sources of Information for WSE

Sources of information for WSE are varied. For example, information on achievement, knowledge and attitude is obtained from the learners. These could extend to situations where external auditors plan and assist to execute contents using improved methods. Those on administration and management are obtained from the school head or his/her representative, and those that have to do with financial management, long term plan for

school improvement, among others. The quality of teaching is obtained from the teacher and classroom, by observing the teachers teach and interacting with learners and materials. Information on curriculum and records are obtained from documentary analysis. Information on school support is obtained from stakeholders in the community and feedback is regularly communicated to the school and other relevant stakeholders.

Benefits of WSE

These are numerous. They include:

- (i) Comparability of performance indicators at national and international levels.
- (ii) Elimination of threat or tension usually associated with external evaluation.
- (iii) Managers of institutions as internal evaluators have opportunities to determine the status of their institutions by being fully committed to TQM.
- (iv) The process of maximisation of funds eliminates wasteful expenditures/finances occasioned by duplication of efforts at local and state levels.
- (v) Collating reliable data and making available information on school improvement.
- (vi) Ensuring uniform criteria when passing judgement on student achievement/school improvement.
- (vii) Introducing corrective measures where necessary.
- (viii) One measure WSE uses to judge school performance is on the number of in-service training undertaken by the staff of a school and its impact on learning achievement.

Challenges of Implementing WSE in Schools in Nigeria

Implementing WSE using the TQM principles may seem herculean when it is believed that change is difficult. It must be made known that change is the only relative constancy in life and it is always in a state of flux. The following challenges may be experienced:

- i. *Policy Enactment*: WSE should be backed up by government decision, not to recognise it in favour of existing policy may pose a hindrance.
- ii. *Supply of Equipment, Infrastructure and Facilities*: An integral aspect of WSE is the support to be provided schools designated or found not to be performing. Unlike what obtains currently in Nigerian schools it is mandatory under WSE that such schools are given urgent support to overcome their inadequacies, which must be met within a time frame. It is not a matter of lip or eye service. This factor is closely tied to the next which is funding.
- iii. *Funding*: This is essential in making needs met. Needs may be varied, and include financing the external supervisory agencies or unit by making vehicles available, training the supervisors. Besides, proper remuneration and especially in providing support to under-performing schools is essential.
- iv. *Training of Managers, Educators and Supervisors*: Under TQM, these categories

of personnel need to be developed for improved performance and this should be on a continuous basis. TQM has no tolerance for inefficiency and defective products. There is need for a strong relationship to exist among these three, in order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency of the educational system.

- v. *Sustaining the Initiative*: Experience has shown that Nigeria does not lack good innovations but what she lacks is the drive or force to implement such innovations. With WSE there is need to maintain focus and make the process succeed. If WSE can work in other parts of the world like South Africa, Finland and Ireland, Nigeria should be more determined to make it a success.
- vi. *Existing Examination System*: TQM detests the practice of mass examination and the use of standardised achievement tests. Rather it advocates for improved learning experiences, creativity, and innovativeness among others. This is very crucial in helping the nation determine what should be done to the country's overdependence on certification. Continuous assessment was born out of the need to improve assessment practices in schools and to improve students' academic performance but from all indications, not much has been achieved from this process. The percentage of students' performance in external examinations, for example, WAEC over the years compared to those who enrolled are still dismally low. The craze for paper qualification is still on the increase. TQM allows for individual learning styles, with teachers making serious efforts to cater for these while teaching, thereby ensuring that quality control of the individual product is done formatively at the process level. The education system on the long run is better for it. Quality control does not have to wait till the end of production (end of training/external summative examination), before corrective measures are applied. At this latter point, it is no longer possible to remediate the situation. In view of the foregoing, TQM may have grave implications for the existence of external examination bodies in the country, if examinations are completely or partially eliminated from the education system.

Conclusion

Education is a tool for ensuring increased development in any country. In meeting the world-view of quality education for all, especially the MDGs, it is of paramount importance that all aspects of education provision be addressed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the system. As important as the products of the system are, the input and process are equally of greater import since their quality drive the quality of output. The evaluation of any system ensures that data is obtained with respect to the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the system in general; most especially if such evaluation is done systematically. TQM ensures that all persons, "customers" and "suppliers" engage in teamwork, establishes a norm of continuous improvement, creativity, innovation,

experimentation, show concern for process and products such that deficient products are eliminated, and has high quality for personal relationships. These principles fit well into the application of the concept of WSE which is a framework backed up by government policy, driven by all stakeholders under nationally accepted criteria. Since evaluation is central to achieving efficiency and effectiveness of a system, application of procedures of proven initiatives that works would go a long way to ameliorating identified weaknesses in the system, and increasing the confidence of the masses in the products turned out into the world of work.

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