

Perceived Influence of Utilization of Evidence from Educational Research and Evaluation on National Transformation

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Abstract

The study employed a survey research design and was guided by two research questions. Population of the study was made up of male and female staff of one federal university secondary school and one state owned university secondary school. A sample of four hundred (400) respondents was drawn using Taro Yamene approach. The researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire titled Educational Research and Evaluation for National Transformation Questionnaire (ERENTQ) for data gathering. The instrument was validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. The reliability of the instrument was 0.81 determined by test-retest method. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The findings indicated that educational research and evaluation are perceived as having influence on national transformation. It was recommended that the government should increase the funding of this sector by devoting a minimum of 30% of its annual budget on the training and professional development of researchers through in-service training, seminars, conferences, workshops on ICT programmes and provisions of infrastructural facilities.

Keywords: education, research, evaluation, utilization, evidence

Introduction

Educational research and evaluation is crucial in any nation that wants to grow, education being a major investment in human capital development plays a crucial role in long term productivity and growth at both micro and macro levels. This explains why the state of educational research in Nigeria continues to be an issue for national discourse (Nwana, 1981). Consequently, the implication of the declining quality of educational research at all levels has far reaching negative impact on a nation's moral, civic, cultural and economic sustainability. At this point, it is important to realize that discussion on educational research and its reform to make it contribute meaningfully to national development should gradually and systematically move away from a politicized to a more analytical approach that appreciates the complexities inherent in protecting genuine and workable solution for revamping the education system.

In the Nigerian context, for the sector to contribute meaningfully to national development, there should be proper funding by the three tiers of government. If this is done in a proper

way, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) will not have any need to embark on industrial actions as there will be improved infrastructure in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, there will be no more brain-drain, research activities will be effectively carried out, examination malpractice will be eradicated or reduced and the sector will contribute meaningfully to national development. Somalia and Murtala (2010) stated that something urgent has to be done in educational research since not so learned people are leading Nigerians. But the problem with Nigeria is that there is no difference between an educated president and the not so enlightened one in terms of their leadership. Irrespective of the above observation, however, the focus remains, the contributions of educational research in relation to national development.

According to Barry (2012), education is a process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, values from one generation to another. In the view of Suleiman (2015), educational research is a systematic collection and analysis of data related to the field of education. Research may be focused on a variety of areas in education including students' learning, teaching methods, teachers' training and classroom dynamics, among others.

Educational researchers generally agree that research should be rigorous and systematic. However, there is less agreement about specified standards, criteria and research procedures. Educational researchers may delve into varieties of disciplines. There includes psychology, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. Methods may be drawn from a range of disciplines. Conclusion drawn from an individual research study may be united by the characteristics of participants who were studied and the conditions under which the study was conducted (Furlong & Oancea, 2008).

Educational research is often carried out in naturalistic setting that may carry threat to the validity of the study such as loss of subjects, selection bias, historical events or maturation (Bordage & Dawson, 2013). Educational research therefore differs from other types of research, such as clinical or laboratory research. Educational research draws on different research and theoretical paradigm from scientific research, which has traditionally been grounded in a positive dimension. Educational research draws largely from the social sciences, in its approach, research methods and interpretation of results, and may involve a shift in perspective from the seeking of irrefutable facts and universal truths to offering new insight acknowledging the subjectivity of researchers, the impact of the research process itself on subjects and outcome, and the agency of subject of the research. In national development/transformation, research plays a crucial role in creation and dissemination of knowledge to make for a significant and sustainable development.

Some purposes of educational research are:

- To build new knowledge regarding methodology, pedagogy or other core subject areas
- Adding to the existing stock of knowledge related to educational field

- To solve problems related to classroom, institution, administration and policy implications
 - Invention of new teaching methods and curriculum strategies
 - Evaluate the effects of new teaching methodologies
 - Identifying the exact challenges of educational sector
 - Identify and assess the ICT enabled classroom and teaching
 - To understand the teacher's knowledge on the latest evaluation techniques

The above items go a long way to significantly contribute to the nation's sustainable development. Suleiman (2015) avers that transformation actually means a complete change from one situation to another; a total departure from the old order to a new one. Transformation does not come accidentally, but requires deliberate efforts. To change from a failure to a successful person calls for performance of some activities that will facilitate the actualization of some dreams. Transformation calls for practical actions and goes beyond mere expression or verbal pronouncement but requires a number of tasks to be performed. So it is logical to say it takes a performer to be a transformer.

Evaluation is a systematic process of passing value judgment on the worth, effectiveness, utility appropriateness or adequacy of a thing, event, object or programme. It quantitatively describes the worth of a thing based on measurement data. Within the school setting, evaluation is the systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are achieved by learners. This is in consonance with the definition by Bloom et al. (1981). It should be noted that evaluation is the systematic collection of evidence to determine whether certain changes have taken place in the learners as well as the amount or degree of change in individual learners (Asuru, 2015). Evaluation seeks to determine the congruence between results and objectives based on certain criteria. Measurement and assessment are prerequisites for evaluation.

Some importance of evaluation include:

1. It is used for value judgment, certification, grading, counselling placement and streaming
2. It makes for appraisal of relative educational effectiveness of different teaching methods, setting, curriculum and instructional materials
3. It clarifies instructional objectives and makes it easier to determine whether they are achieved or not

Education and research control the development of any nation because no nation can rise above the products of its educational system. The solution to the products of its educational system as well as the solutions to the diverse problem facing a nation lies in not only in solving problems facing a nations, teaching and learning but in national development. It is in the realization of this that research councils have been established all over the world (Ezewu, & Ukwuije, 1994).

As a proof that utilization of the purpose of educational research and evaluation is pivotal to national development, the federal government has stepped up the funding of the universal basic education thereby making it free and compulsory to facilitate eradication of mass illiteracy; the government has established many schools including that of early childhood/pre-primary education at both primary and secondary school levels to encourage free and smooth transition from home to school, develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit and prepare the children for useful living within the society and higher education.

Part of the reforms for national transformation is the adaptation of the national policy on HIV/AIDS for the education sector which the Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) has developed a curriculum for and train some personnel for sensitization of students on this issue; the association has also launched the national policy on gender basic education and the introduction of information and communication technology (ICT) in schools for knowledge and skills necessary for effective functioning in the modern internet era. Some university research is relevant to a nation's developmental goal; universities are encouraged to disseminate their research results to both government, industries and also publish them on the internet or other media (Ukwuije, 2012). The government provides special education training to people with special needs to give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing education opportunities for all the children, their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disability notwithstanding. This is achieved by designing a diversified and appropriate curriculum for all the beneficiaries through the help and collaboration of relevant ministries and non-governmental organization and international agencies.

Quality education strives for excellence over mediocrity and promotes the patriotic spirit in places of blind sycophancy. Quality education places high premium on truth, justice, individuals and social morality, as well as peace making. Quality education is education in leadership, the type that would throw up a good leader, mentor, inspirer and visionary. Quality educational research and evaluation emphasize civic political awareness, training in human dignity and fundamental human rights and citizens' responsibilities. Quality education should encompass training in the democratic culture and in popular participation in governance. Based on the above, this study is set to investigate the utilization of evidence from educational research and evaluation for national transformation in Nigeria.

Objectives of study

The objective of the study is to examine how utilizing evidence from educational research and evaluation relates with national transformation. Specifically, it sought to find out:

1. The perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational research on national transformation.
2. The perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational evaluation on national transformation.

Research questions

The following research questions were posed to give direction to study:

1. What is the perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational research on national transformation?
2. What is the perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational evaluation on national transformation?

Methodology

The research design use in the study is survey research design. The study uses questionnaire to investigate the variables which have already occurred before the study; with the aim of generalizing the findings to the entire population from the sample studied (Ukwuije & Obowu-Adutchay, 2012).

The population of this study consists of male and female staff of one federal university secondary school and one state owned university secondary school. Sample size of the study was four hundred (400), made up of male and female university secondary school teachers drawn from the population. Stratified random sampling technique was employed in the study to compose the sample. The researcher developed a structured questionnaire titled Educational Research and Evaluation for National Transformation Questionnaire (ERENTQ). The instrument was made up of two sections, A and B. Section A dealt with personal data of the respondents while section B had a total of ten (10) items. The items were divided into two (2) subsections, Part I and II. Part I with five (5) items sought information on perceived influence of educational research on national transformation while Part II also with five 5 items dealt with information on perceived influence of evaluation on national transformation. The instrument used modified Likert scale including Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) =3, Disagree (D) =2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The validity of the instrument is to ascertain the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure. To ensure validity of the instrument, the researcher sent the instrument to three (3) experts in the area of Measurement and Evaluation, who vetted the items to ensure face and content validity, before the final draft of the instrument. In checking the internal consistency of the instrument, test-re-test reliability method was employed using thirty (30) respondents who were not part of the original respondents. The two portions of the administration were later subjected to Pearson product moment correlation method. The reliability yielded a coefficient of 0.81 indicating that the instrument was reliable for use in the study. The instruments were delivered face to face to the respondents and thereafter were retrieved shortly after responding. In analyzing the data, mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions.

Presentation of results

Research question 1: What is the perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational research on national transformation?

Table1: Perception on the influence of educational research on national transformation

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Remark
1	Educational research helps in unveiling new frontiers	400	3.45	4.55	2.50	Agree
2	Education research stirs up research quest for prospective researchers that want to excel	400	3.20	4.60	2.50	Agree
3	The research findings have made my school come to limelight	400	3.80	4.70	2.50	Agree
4	Hard work in research can lead to national transformation	400	3.60	4.80	2.50	Agree
5	Exposure in good ethics can lead to national transformation	400	3.54	4.15	2.50	Agree

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents on the influence of educational research on national transformation. In the five items, all the respondents agreed with the propositions of the items on the instrument with mean scores of 3.45, 3.20, 3.80, 3.60 and 3.54. This implies that educational research is perceived to have influence on national transformation. This means that good research outcomes will eventually result to national transformation.

Research question 2: What is the perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational evaluation on national transformation?

Table 2: The perceived influence of utilization of evidence from educational evaluation on national transformation

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Remark
1	It is better to do a thorough evaluation as this will lead to transformation nationally	400	3.63	645	2.50	Agree
2	A good educational evaluation can transform national integration	400	3.54	4.15	2.50	Agree
3	Unrealistic educational evaluation may lead to national transformation	400	2.10	3.16	2.50	Disagree

4	Educational evaluation will result to dual national transformation could lead to a glorious end	400	3.70	4.60	2.50	Agree
5	Educational research and Evaluation may lead to national transformation	400	3.45	3.18	2.50	Agree

The table 2 shows that educational evaluation and national transformation fared well implying that education evaluation is a tool of national transformation. The responses of the respondents to the five items indicate that they perceive education evaluation as having influence on national transformation.

Discussion of the findings

The study revealed that educational research has influence on national transformation. This agrees with Edward (2010) who averred that there is no significant difference in his studies effecting national development through culture and mass media. This implies that when educational research is being well carried out, it will help in the transformation agenda of any country. This finding is not surprising because the best way to improve national transformation is through research.

From the analysis of research question two, it was shown that educational evaluation has influence on national transformation. This result is in line with Suleiman (2015) who described education evaluation as a panacea for successful transformation of Nigeria. The study affirmed that when there is proper evaluation of education, it will help a great deal in national transformation.

Conclusion

This paper has established that the utilization of evidence of educational research and evaluation will influence national transformation in Nigeria. There is no doubt that there is need for much improvement and repositioning of the present day educational research and evaluation in Nigeria, considering their influences on national transformation.

Recommendations

From the foregoing findings on educational research evaluation and national transformation, the following recommendations are made.

1. In view of the invaluable role of educational research in the life of any nation, the government should increase the funding of educational research and evaluation sector by devoting a minimum of 30% of its annual budget on the training and professional development of researchers through in service training, seminars, conferences, workshops on ICT programmes and provision of infrastructural facilities.

2. Government needs to be more committed to the welfare of educational researchers through regular salaries and allowances, improved conditions for service, regular

promotion and recognition of researchers in decision making process on matters affecting their profession

3. Researchers themselves should guide against unhealthy rivalry and disunity among its members.

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