

DIMENSIONS OF MONITORING AND ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOLS FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The credibility and quality of the results of public examinations in a given country depends to a large extent on the quality of the processes which are put in place before such examinations.

In Nigeria, the National Examinations Council (NECO) is one of the public examination bodies saddled with the responsibility of conducting examinations for the award of Junior and Senior Secondary Schools Certificates. One of the activities involved in the processes is that of monitoring and accreditation of these schools. The essence of monitoring and accreditation of schools for the Council's examination is that of ascertaining the level of facilities, personnel and quality of teaching-learning activities in the participating schools.

This paper tries to present a model as used by the Council for carrying out monitoring and accreditation exercise. The approach is that of using the I.P.O model (i.e. Input, Processes and Outputs). Efforts were made to identify critical elements of inputs (laboratories, classrooms, students' population, teachers population, examination hall etc), processes (level of teacher-student interactions, lesson notes, time-table, class attendance books; and level of management of resources etc) and outputs (continuous assessment records, class work, anecdotes, test scores, projects and assignment records etc).

It is recommended that other examination bodies and allied organizations borrow a leaf from the model being proposed by the paper.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Indeed, the importance of education in any society cannot be over-emphasized. Education constitutes the major engine for sustainable human development as well as the

fulcrum around which every other activity revolves. It is because of this that development experts posit that no society can rise beyond its educational level. Accordingly, nations which have recorded tremendous feats in the world, heavily relied on the instrumentality of education (Daily Champion, 2000).

It is because of the premium placed on education that many nations all over the world established schools, institutes and universities to make sure that people are developed in order to face the challenges in the world. The sole business of schools and other learning institutions is that of ensuring that effective teaching-learning activities take place (Obanya, 1985). It is expected that at the end of every schooling career (and in particular secondary education) there must be an examination which should assess the extent to which an individual(s) has mastered a given level of knowledge, skills and competencies expected in a subject(s). It is on the basis of the result of such examinations(s) (which is normally conducted by public examination bodies) that a certificate is awarded to the deserving candidates(s)

In conducting public examinations, every school is expected to satisfy some basic requirements before candidates in the schools are registered. Such conditions may be the possession of facilities for taking examinations, conducting effective classroom teaching-learning activities and presence of qualified teaching staff etc. From experience, most schools that public certification examinations (like Junior and Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations) do not meet some of these requirements. The absence and perhaps inadequacy of these facilities could be responsible for the upsurge of examination misconducts/malpractices which have adversely affected the credibility and otherwise of public examination results.

The solution to this present problem requires an effective monitoring and accreditation mechanism to be established by public examination bodies. The National

Examinations Council (NECO) in Nigeria has been doing this since its inception ten years ago. This paper seeks to present a model which seeks to identify various dimensions of monitoring and accreditation of schools for public examinations. This forms the real impetus of the paper.

This paper will be presented under the following headings to ease understanding:

- Concepts of Monitoring and Accreditation Defined;
- What is Public Examination?
- Importance of Monitoring and Accreditation of Schools for Public Examination;
- Models for Monitoring and Accreditation of Schools;
- Recommendations and Conclusion.

1.1 **CONCEPTS OF MONITORING AND ACCREDITATION DEFINED**

Literally, monitoring means to check, inspect, observe, police or investigate into an activity, programme or procedure. It's primary aim is to identify the strengths, weaknesses and loop-holes in a programme for the sake of maintaining standards and quality (World Bank, 1990). The whole essence of monitoring is to keep a track record of performance of events, programmes or activities. It helps policy makers and decision makers on programmes to know whether a programme is on-course, succeeding or failing. Monitoring is used across all sphere of life. In Education, inspectors of education visit schools to know whether effective teaching and learning activities are going on or not. This happens at certain periods of time as may be determined by the monitoring agency.

Accreditation simply put is a validation of statements, by persons who are theoretically impartial experts in education, that a given school or department within a school has been thoroughly investigated and found worthy of approval (CIS, 2006). The main aim is to provide an opportunity to improve the quality of the education offered at the school through a rigorous process of self-examination followed by an objective external appraisal.

An authentic accreditation is a pretty good sign that a given school is legitimate. However, it is important to remember that lack of accreditation need not mean that a school is either inferior or illegal because it is based on performance and not on proposed performance.

The primary aim of monitoring and accreditation of schools is that of providing indices for maintaining standards in the educational system.

1.2 WHAT IS PUBLIC EXAMINATION?

Public Examination as distinct from a school or internal examination is one which is not restricted to students (candidates) in a particular school but open to persons who have been exposed to the subject examined in a formal or non-formal arrangement.

The primary purpose of every public examination is to provide equal opportunities to all members of the society irrespective of the type of education they have received. It is mainly concerned with large scale testing programmes which involves a large number of candidates since there is minimal restriction. In Nigeria, public examination is conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), National Teachers Institute (NTI) etc.

The major characteristics of Public Examination in a given country according to Okpala et.al (1993) are as follows:

- Public examination lays emphasis on certification as an end in itself and not a means to an end;
- A prescribed syllabus is used by the candidates;
- Teachers' participation is minimal except in conducting examinations and marking scripts;
- Results are not directly feedback to improve teaching and learning.
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1.3 **IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING AND ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOLS FOR PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS**

The results of any effective monitoring and accreditation of schools exercise are very vital in the conduct of public examination for the following reasons.

- It provides information that assists in guiding against examination malpractice. Such information like presence of school fence, examination hall, chairs, seats etc. are very vital for such purpose.
- It provides useful information for discussing the problem of standard and quality of education using results obtained in public examinations as indices. For instance, an examination of facilities and level of teaching-learning activities going on in a school system will help in assessing the standard and quality of the students' performance in public examinations, all things being equal.
- Information derived from results of well conducted monitoring and accreditation of schools' programmes are very important in improving the quality of performance of a school. A school that is found below par in terms of some academic activities may be advised to improve upon their conditions for better result. Such information is only derivable from meaningful and realistic monitoring and accreditation visits to schools. This could be described as the Diagnostic function/purpose of monitoring and accreditation of schools (Onwuakpa, 1998).
- Information derived from a good monitoring and accreditation of schools will provide statistics for public examination bodies in planning adequately for the smooth conduct of their examinations. Information such as number of examination halls or usable classrooms, enrolment of candidates for examination, location of schools and number of functional laboratories and equipments are very vital in planning for logistics in public examinations.

➤ Every public examination results should not be void of credibility and acceptability world-wide. In this era, some countries of the world (especially the Francophones) had adopted the use of Continuous Assessment scores as a component of the final grade that candidates obtains in school-based public examinations. Part of the criteria adopted by the National Examinations Council (NECO) in Nigeria in monitoring and accreditation of schools programmes is to assess the quality of continuous Assessment Scores. This is mostly done by looking at the manner in which the teachers derive their Continuous Assessment Scores before they are sent to the examination body for use. This measure when religiously applied by other public examination bodies in every country will enhance the quality of Continuous Assessment Scores sent to the examination bodies in determining the final grade of candidates in their certification examinations.

1.4 MODELS FOR MONITORING AND ACCREDITATION OF SCHOOLS

For the purpose of clarity, monitoring and accreditation programmes are forms of evaluation activities. In this vein, the model for monitoring and accreditation of schools is also derived from the evaluation model or framework. An evaluation model or framework must evolve a systematic strategy which is meant to provide a sense of direction and magnitude to the evaluation design and implementation. There are some basic models/framework for monitoring and accreditation of schools vis-a-vis evaluation of schools.

1.4.1 TYLER'S MODEL (1950)

This model evaluates how the education objectives and learning experiences in the school have helped in ascertaining the achievement of desired outcomes. It has three components or dimensions: educational objectives, learning experiences and assessment of achievement. This model is presented in figure 1 as shown below.

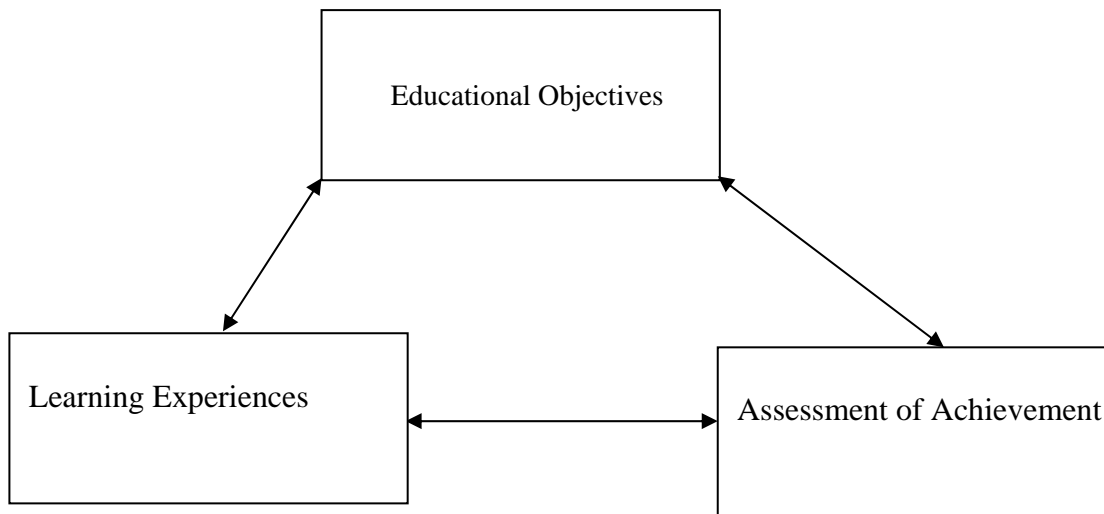


FIG I: Tyler's Model of Educational Evaluation (Source: Okpala, P. N. Et.al 1993).

1.4.2. A.T.O MODEL

This model has three components or dimensions: Antecedents (what exists in the school system), Transactions (activities, processes that take place in a school) and Outcomes (what the learners have acquired at the end of a school period).

1.4.3. C.I.P.P MODEL

This was propounded by Stufflebeam et.al (1971) and has four components or dimensions: Context (objectives and goals of the school), Input (facilities, equipments, materials, funds), Process (activities, procedures, methods, strategies) and Products (outcomes or end result of a teaching-learning process such as skills, values, attitudes and abilities).

1.4.4. I. P. O. MODEL

This has three components or dimensions: Inputs, Processes and Outcomes.

In all the afore-mentioned models, it is very important to propose one for use in monitoring and accreditation of schools for public examination bodies/agencies. Since we are interested in accreditation of schools, and the school system has been described as an industry having inputs, processes and outputs, it is therefore very appropriate for us to use the I. P. O model.

This is the actual model being used by NECO for which we propose to be adopted in any meaningful monitoring and accreditation of schools.

1.4.5. The I.P.O Monitoring and Accreditation Model

Education has been described by development experts as an industry having three basic components/dimension: Inputs, Processes and Outcomes. It is against this background and premise that in monitoring and accreditation of schools, it is advocated that the I.P.O model be adopted for use.

In this paper, it is expedient that we identify the various indicators, components and dimensions in the I.P.O model so that Monitoring and Accreditation officers will have an update of what and what to inspect or observe.

The I.P.O model is therefore presented in the table as shown below:

DIMENSIONS/INDICATORS/VARIABLES IN I.P.O. MODEL

S/N	INPUTS	S/N	PROCESSES	S/N	OUTCOMES
1.	Educational policies and objectives/goals	1.	Student-teacher classroom interactions (as observed in class lessons)		Learning outcomes:
2.	Manpower (quality and quantity of teachers, auxiliary staff, non-teaching staff, sex, age, experience and other predisposition of teachers).	2.	Students’/learning activities (as observed from lesson notebooks, assignment books, projects).	1.	Cognitive outcomes (abilities, skills, knowledge and competencies.
3.	Pupils’/students’ characteristics (sex, age, potential capabilities, socio-economic background, possession of notebooks, writing materials (biros, pencils) and attendance to class lessons)	3.	Teachers’ Activities (as observed from their lesson plans, lesson notes, mark books, Table of Specification, evidence of past class/examination test items).	2.	Affective outcomes (attitudes, interests character etc).
4.	Learning Environment (administrative and cultural setting, social needs, preferences, instructional goals and objectives, facilities of the school, books,	4.	Records of school work (as observed in diaries, registers, teachers attendance books, pupils/students’ attendance	3.	Psychomotor outcomes (motor skills, creative skills)

5.	libraries, laboratories, audio-visual materials etc). External support (PTA, SBMC, Old Boys Associations, Subventions, grants, loans, donations).	5.	book, Cumulative Record Folder (CRF), pupils/students' report cards, school logbooks, visitors note books, minutes of staff meetings) Record of school Administration and management (as observed in staff disciplinary book, finance book, students' disciplinary book, school time-table, teachers work schedule and school annual programme)		
6.	Class size (number of pupils/students in a class) Pupil/student-teacher ratio, pupil/student – classroom ratio school enrolment, number of classrooms, toilets etc				

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The I. P. O. Model has been proposed in this paper as the best model or framework for monitoring and accreditation of schools since the school system is considered as an industry waving inputs, processes and outputs. It is therefore necessary to recommend the basic instruments that should be used for monitoring the Input, Process and Outcome dimensions or indicators as follows:

- The Input indicators are assessed using checklists, inventories, Questionnaires and records of schools.
- The Process indicators could be assessed using observation techniques anecdotal records, record of works and interviews.
- The outcome indicators are derived using records of achievement tests (in continuous assessment), student/pupil's report cards, cumulative record folder (CRF) and checklists.

In the light of the above, we conclude that:

- Monitoring and accreditation of schools be done at periodical length of time say four or five years.
- Public examination bodies should design their own instruments for their various examinations. At the National Examinations Council (NECO) in Nigeria, there are various instruments for Junior School Certificate Examination (JSCE) and Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE).
- Public examination bodies should make sure that the various dimensions or indicators are captured in their instruments.
- The instruments should be validated from time to time as educational policies and programmes change.
- Results of every monitoring and accreditation of schools programmes be given to School Heads/Principals for the purposes of improvement and guidance.

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