

Teachers' Assessment and Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) Initiative in Benin Metropolis Edo State Nigeria

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Abstract

The researchers investigated the effectiveness of the EdoBEST educational initiatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The focus was to find out whether or not the initiative is achieving its set goals and objectives given the fact that enormous resources have been plunged into it by both Edo State government and other development partners. Teachers in the state schools were the respondents, since they are major payers in the implementation and they were adjudged as being able to provide valid information. The survey research design was adopted and a self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was validated by experts' judgement and a reliability coefficient of .89 was obtained for the instrument using the cronbach alpha statistical technique. Result obtained indicated that there is an increase in pupils/students enrollment in public primary and secondary schools, increase in pupils' academic achievement in Edo State post EdoBEST initiative also the teachers are quite satisfied with the programme. It was recommended among others that there should be a sustained effort to retain the initiative in schools and also to expand the scope of EdoBEST to the privately owned schools in Edo state.

Keywords: Edo State, Education, EdoBEST, Assessment, Evaluation. .

Introduction

Edo state is one of the thirty six states in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It is a state in the South-South geopolitical zone. It was created in 1991 from the defunct Bendel State; the State is bordered by Kogi State to the north, Anambra State to the east, Delta State to the southeast and Ondo State to the west. Edo state has eighteen local government area spread across three senatorial districts. It

has a population of about 4,777,000. Edo State is the 22nd largest State by landmass in Nigeria with Benin City as the capital. The state can also boast of having some notable academic institutions such as; the University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University, Edo State University among others, and the state is considered as one of the educationally advanced states in Nigeria.

Education as enshrined in the National Policy

on Education (NPE) is an instrument per excellence (FRN, 2013) this underscores the importance placed on education in Nigeria and Edo State in particular. It is a popular saying that education is the key to the advancement and development of any nation; this is the philosophical foundation upon which the Edo State Government of Nigeria derived backings for investing and calling for investment in the educational sector of the State.

Schools in Edo State are structured such that there is a basic education sub-sector that comprised primary schools (lower basic {primary 1-3} and middle basic {primary 4-6}) and the junior secondary school (JSS 1-3) the upper basic. Secondary education is comprised partly of basic education JSS 1-3 and the senior secondary school (SSS 1-3). In all there is a nine year basic education: three years in the lower basic, three years in the middle basic and three years in the upper basic. The government of Edo State introduced the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation Programme (EdoBEST 1.0) in 2018.

According to **Obaseki, (2022) the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) programme aims to reverse the decline in basic education within the state. EdoBEST has already transformed learning outcomes for over 370,000 children across 1,029 public primary and 232 junior secondary school, he equally asserted that *between 2018 and 2022, the programme has provided training for over 16,000 primary and junior secondary teachers (both novice and experienced), focusing on technology-driven teaching methods.*** The EdoBEST is a government- led intervention programme designed to revolutionize basic education in the state. The programme is believed to be a progressive template for the implementation

of a basic education reform in Nigeria. According to Edo State Government, (2022); Olamide (2022) in a publication in the punch newspaper quoted Joseph-Raji a world bank Senior Economist as saying “EdoBEST has addressed myriad of challenges that faced the basic education sector in Edo State prior to its launch in 2018. The EdoBEST programme is focused at pupils learning, teachers’ professional development and infrastructural growth within the education sector. The EdoBEST programme according to Obaseki (2022) currently runs in 1,261 state-owned junior secondary and primary schools across Edo State catering to the learning and empowerment needs of over 370,000 pupils in the 18 local government areas of the state.

Before the introduction of the EdoBEST into the junior secondary school (JSS) pupils’ academic achievement was adjudged to be poor and fall short of expectation, for any meaningful growth and development, in a competitive global environment. The situation was described by an education partner of the state, as:

“Before NewGlobe partnered with Edo State to launch the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) program in 2018, the education system faced significant challenges that affected learning outcomes across schools, Learning levels were critically low: nearly 1 in 4 children aged 5-16 were illiterate, and 1 in 5 innumerate. Absenteeism was rampant, with students missing an average of 6.9 days of school per month—equivalent to 44% of school time lost. The primary school completion rates stood at 45%, well below the national average of 68% for Nigeria and drastically lower than the 98% average for OECD countries...” NewGlobe (2023)

In a study conducted by Omenu (2018) he

reported a little more than average (53.3%) overall academic achievement among secondary school students (Senior and Junior Secondary Schools) in Edo State and a differential achievement based of geographical locations of the schools with schools in urban areas reported as scoring 54% while their rural counterparts scored 48%. Mchihi and Rodriguez-Segura (2023) asserted that the average reading achievement scores for the JSS1 pupils was relatively low also there were significant zero-word readers in JSS1 and non-proficient readers in JSS3. They equally asserted that, the pupils have mastered the most foundational numeracy, but, they still struggle with the more advanced grade-appropriate skills. Similarly they equally reported that there was a low reading comprehension among the pupils and that the pupils struggle to translate their knowledge into real life situation additionally they reported that there was substantial variation in academic achievement by school and geographical areas.

In the same vein Lawal (2022) asserted that the state government led by Governor Godwin Obaseki has lunched the EdoBEST 2.0 in September 2022 to address the issues in senior secondary and technical education. During the lunch the governor stated that the programme will focus on quality and relevance of what is taught students, access, school governance as well as financing secondary and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). All these are laudable objectives, howbeit, there is need to ascertain the justification for a push up of the EdoBEST programme by knowing how well the initial programme is doing and accepted by the frontline players the teachers.

A programme of this nature was envisioned to attract more pupils into enrollment in the schools

and also to have contributed or translated to learning gains. In a publication, Oviawe et.al (2019) asserted that greater opportunity to learn has already yielded gains on pupil performance in mathematics and English literacy. The implementers of the programme the teachers the frontliners, can they attest to this assertion? Are they ready to advance the implementation and asserted success of the programme? The teachers are the focus of this present study, how do they evaluate the programme based on their own personal assessment as insiders and major payers in the transformation agenda with reference to the stated objectives of the initiative.

According to the World Bank, (2020) The EdoBEST Objectives are to:

1. Enhance the quality of Basic Education provision anchored on new technologies and the developmental objectives of Edo State and Nigeria.
2. Ensure all children of basic school age in Edo State are enrolled in school, actively participating and achieving set learning benchmarks and outcomes.
3. Revamp basic education management and delivery to make Edo State children highly knowledgeable, competent, skillful, morally sound and globally competitive.

The Edo State government, working with other education stakeholders in the state believed that with the EdoBEST programme:

“The EdoBEST model equips every teacher with sequenced, national curriculum-aligned lesson plans delivered via digital tablets. The lesson plans are developed using cutting-edge research in the science of learning, while digital tablets enable high-quality instruction across all schools, regardless of

resource disparities. Through regular coaching and professional development, teachers receive tailored support that empowers them to implement reforms effectively. This comprehensive approach not only ensures that uniform and high-quality content is taught across all classrooms, but also ensures that the content is delivered well by teachers who are equipped to address the diverse learning needs of their students” NewGlobe (2023)

Educational Programme Assessment and Evaluation

The term program evaluation only came into wide use in the mid-1960s, when efforts at systematically assessing programs multiplied (Educational Testing Service, 2017). Educational programmes assessment entails the gathering of information about a programme or initiative, with the intent of making valuable decision about the attainment of the objectives of the programme or initiative with the hope of continuing, modifying or rejection of the programme or initiative.

Programme evaluation is technically, judgmental. It is making a judgmental statement after an assessment of the components parts, by looking at the parameters, needs, components, and outcomes of programme design with an eye towards improving student learning, it entails the process of systematically collecting, analyzing, and using data to review the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes (Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, 2021).

The purpose or educational programme evaluation is to provide information to decision makers who have responsibility for existing or proposed educational programmes (Educational Testing Service, 2017). The approach to educational

programme assessment and evaluation sometimes differ due to the intended use and players involved in the process as well as stakeholders interest and biases. Assessment and evaluation of educational programme can be formative or summative. Formative assessment and evaluation are done when a program or educational initiative is ongoing; it is intended to find out how best to develop a programme and whether or not to modify aspects or components of the programme while summative assessment and evaluation is majorly to determine whether or not to continue an existing programme. The study is formative in nature, since the programme is ongoing, as finding may suggest areas of that may need attention and modification for optimal achievement of programme objectives and possible areas that should be sustained.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are established that pupils might learn and acquire knowledge and skill for the betterment of themselves and the growth and development of the society. These underscore stakeholders’ investment in education. Investment is expected to yield returns that would translate to satisfaction for the investors. Edo state government and other stakeholders and development partners have over the years invested funds into the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) programme. From the economic perspective these investment are expected to yield returns in the form of achieving the desired objective for which these monies were invested. The teachers are the frontline players in the basic education sector and as such are in a better position to telling or providing useful insight and answers to key questions that may be agitating the minds of these basic sector educational investors as to the returns on their investment.

In this study the researcher deem it necessary to providing answers to some of the questions that are needed to be answered that may help in the push for further funding and pursue of the EdoBEST programme and agenda.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Providing answers to the following question are germane for the continuing funding and pursue of the EdoBEST programme agenda of the Edo State Government.

How effective is the EdoBEST programme in improving pupils' enrollment in schools in Benin metropolis?

How effective is the EdoBEST programme in improving learning achievement in schools in Benin metropolis?

How satisfied are the teachers with the EdoBEST programme in schools in Benin metropolis?

What is the difference in the effectiveness of EdoBEST programme in terms of pupils'/students enrollment, learning achievement and teachers' satisfaction for primary and secondary schools?

Research question four is hypothesized to ascertain whether or not there is a difference in these outcomes for both the primary and secondary school level of public education in the state.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness in terms of pupils'/students enrollment, learning achievement and teachers' satisfaction for primary and secondary schools

Methodology

The Survey Research Design was adopted in

the study; the population comprised all teachers in government owned primary and junior secondary schools in Benin Metropolis. A sample of 100 teachers were selected, five teachers from each school visited using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire that has three sections: A, B and C. developed by the researchers to elicit responses. "Section A" elicited responses on demographic variables "Section B" was on enrollments and learning gains while "Section C" was on teachers' satisfaction with the EdoBEST initiatives. The questionnaire is a four point Likert scale format of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaires were administered by a research assistant who visited the randomly selected public primary and junior secondary schools in the metropolis. Data obtained were coded as SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2 and SD = 1. The data was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviations; a criterion mean of 2.5 was set for each item while 12.5 for each of the composite measures. Mean greater than the criterion mean were assessed as an indication of an affirmative otherwise not. While the hypotheses were tested using the independent sample t-test at 5% alpha level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Question 1: How effective is the EdoBEST programme in improving pupils' enrollment in schools in Benin metropolis?

Table 1: Description of the Effective is the EdoBEST Programme in Improving Pupils' Enrollment in Schools

S/N	Statement of Outcomes	Mean	Std.Dev.	Remarks
1	There is a steady increase in pupils/students enrolment in my school	3.24	.76	Agreed
2	The number of pupils/students in my class have increased	3.24	.75	Agreed
3	More girls are being enrolled into the school were I teach	2.71	.79	Agreed
4	The classes are getting filled up unlike before.	3.00	.81	Agreed
5	Parents are now enrolling their children in public school where I teach	3.26	.66	Agreed
	Composite	15.46	2.99	Agreed

Criterion mean: Item = 2.5; Composite 2.5 x 5 items = 12.5

Data in Table 1 contains items raised to obtain information on the level of enrollment in public school since the introduction of the EdoBEST programme. From the table, the data shows that on the average the teachers' respondent to all the items in the affirmative – the means are greater than 2.5 and also the combined items yielded a mean of 15.46 and a standard deviation of 2.99 which is also greater than 12.5. This implies that there has being increase in pupil/students enrollments in public primary and secondary schools in Benin City metropolis since the introduction of the EdoBEST programme.

Question 2: How effective is the EdoBEST programme in improving learning achievement in schools in Benin metropolis?

Table 2: Description of the Effective of EdoBEST Programme in Improving Pupil/ Students Learning Achievement

S/N	Statement of Outcomes	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	An increasing number of pupils/students in my school can now read or read better than it used to be before EdoBEST	2.71	.63	Agreed
2	There is great improvement in the pupils/students reading fluency level	2.87	.59	Agreed
3	An increasing number of pupils/students can now perform better in arithmetic and numeracy.	2.93	.58	Agreed
4	There is a general improvement in the academic abilities of the pupils/students in my school	3.03	.63	Agreed

5	The last general examination, performance of pupils/ students in my school was better than what it used to be before EdoBEST.	2.86	.69	Agreed
	Composite	14.39	2.44	Agreed

Criterion mean: Item = 2.5; Composite 2.5 x 5 items = 12.5

Data in Table 2 contains items raised to obtain information on the level of pupils/students level of academic achievement in public school since the introduction of the EdoBEST programme. From the table, the data shows that on the average the teachers' respondent to all the items in the affirmative – the means are greater than 2.5 and also the combined items yielded a mean of 14.39 and a standard deviation of 2.44 which is also greater than 12.5. This implies that on the average the teachers agreed that there has be increase in pupil/students' academic achievement in public primary and secondary in Benin City metropolis since the introduction of the EdoBEST programme.

Question 3: How satisfied are the teachers with the EdoBEST programme in schools in Benin metropolis

Table 3: Description of Teachers Level of Satisfaction with the EdoBEST Programme in Schools.

S/N	Statement of Outcomes	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
1	The EdoBEST Programme is a welcome development in schools	3.04	.73	Agreed
2	I feel comfortable with my responsibilities in the context of EdoBEST	3.04	.69	Agreed
3	I derived great benefits from the EdoBEST initiative	3.08	.74	Agreed
4	The EdoBEST initiative will take Edo State schools to greater heights.	2.98	.79	Agreed
5	Lesson guides for teachers via a tablet, and a standardized daily timetable for each grade is a laudable development	3.02	.76	Agreed
	Composite	15.16	3.19	Agreed

Criterion mean: Item = 2.5; Composite 2.5 x 5 items = 12.5

Data in Table 3 contains items raised to obtain information on the level of satisfaction of the teachers with the EdoBEST programme in schools in Benin metropolis. From the table, the data shows that on the average the teachers' expressed satisfaction to the different items and also the combined items yielded a mean of 15.16 and a standard deviation of 3.19. This implies that the teachers expressed satisfaction about the EdoBEST programme introduced by the Edo State Government. Saying that it is a welcome

development (3.04); they are comfortable with it (3.04); they are benefiting from it (3.08); it will take the schools to greater heights (2.98) and that the provisions of lesson guide, tablets etc. is a laudable development (3.02), in general the teachers expressed their satisfaction ($15.16 > 12.5$) with the EdoBEST programme.

The EdoBEST initiative was introduced into both the primary and secondary levels of public education in Edo State, there is also a need to see if the teachers in both level are in agreement about the effectiveness of the programme, this was ascertained by testing the hypothesis below.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the effectiveness in terms of pupils'/students enrollment, learning achievement and teachers' satisfaction for primary and secondary schools

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test of Difference in Effectiveness in Terms of Pupils'/Students Enrollment, Learning Achievement and Teachers' Satisfaction for Primary and Secondary Schools

Variables	Edu. Level	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t-value	p-value Sig. (2-tailed)
Enrollment	Primary	74	15.31	3.03	96	.862	.391
	Secondary	24	15.92	2.86			
Learning Gains	Primary	74	14.41	2.47	96	.053	.958
	Secondary	24	14.38	2.39			
Teachers Satisfaction	Primary	74	15.20	3.31	96	.214	.831
	Secondary	24	15.04	2.84			

$\alpha = .05$, $p < .05$ Significant

Table 4 shows difference in EdoBEST effectiveness based on educational level (Primary/Secondary). From the table the number of respondents (N); 74 teachers were selected from primary schools while 24 were from secondary schools. In terms of pupils/students enrollments t-value is .862 and p-value .391 > .05, for learning achievement t-value is .53 and p-value .958 > .05, while for teachers satisfaction with the programme t-value is .214 and p-value .831 > .05. These show that in the three areas investigated (pupils/students enrollment, learning achievement and teachers satisfaction) there were no significant differences in the responses of the teacher whether they be teachers in primary schools or teachers in secondary schools their mean scores are statistically the same.

Discussion of Findings

The EdoBEST initiative was envisioned to help address unsatisfactory state of affairs in the government owned school in Edo State. The introduction in 2018 has witness huge inflow of financial, human and

material resources from edo state government and other donor agencies and development partners both locally and internationally. The continued expenditure requires that evaluation be done to ascertain the effectiveness of the government led initiative.

Findings from this study revealed that there has been increase in pupils/ students enrollment in public primary and secondary school in Benin metropolis since the introduction of EdoBEST this finding is in agreement with one of the objectives of the initiative according to World Bank (2020). The increase in pupils' enrollment justify to some extent government expenditure in the initiative. Similarly findings from this study revealed that there has be increase in pupils/student academic achievement, this finding is in agreement with Oviawe, et.al. (2019). the empirical validation of this, is a laudable achievement of the government led initiative and also justify the investment made in edo state public schools. Increase in set learning benchmarks and outcomes is a key component of the initiative this study has also give credence to the initiative as achieving its set objectives. The study has equally found that the implementers of the programme the teachers are quite satisfied with the development, human element in any organization are key in achieving organizational goal. Since the teachers are satisfied, it is therefore a pointer to the fact that they will be willing to cooperate and put in their best in ensuring that the program succeeds. The findings from this study also shown that the programme is both effective in the primary and secondary school, since there was no significant difference in the mean responses of the teachers, this finding will further strengthen and continuous push up of the initiative to permeate the entire spectrum of public primary and secondary schools

in Benin city and by extension to the private school for a better and competitive Edo child, this being one of the objective according to world bank (2020) to make edo children highly knowledgeable, competent, skillful, morally sound and globally competitive.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the EdoBEST initiative of the Edo state Government is achieving it set objectives of increasing pupils/students enrollment in schools, improved academic achievement of pupils/students and strengthening institutional arrangement and structure within the Edo state public primary and secondary schools of the basic education sub-sector of the educational system.

Recommendations

Arising from the findings the researchers hence give the following recommendations;

The EdoBEST initiative embarked upon by the Edo State Government should be sustain to foster the back to school campaign and academic gains among the recipients.

There should be more development and motivational incentive for the teachers to attract and sustain their commitment to the success of the initiative.

There should be forward looking plans by the state government to replicate or partner with private school owners in a bid to bring in EdoBEST initiative to private schools for the benefit of the Edo child attending private schools.

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