

Challenges of Policy Implementation in Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Primary Schools

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Abstract

The quest for quality assurance in Nigerian primary education has intensified due to the critical role education plays in national development and global competitiveness. Effective teaching and learning depend largely on continuous assessment, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure that pupils acquire the intended knowledge and skills. However, despite policy provisions, the implementation of these practices in Nigerian primary schools faces numerous challenges that undermine educational outcomes. The research examines the relevance of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in teaching and learning at the primary school level and identifies the key challenges hindering their effective policy implementation. A conventional literature review approach was adopted, drawing on 25 peer-reviewed articles purposively selected from databases including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia, and PubMed. The studies were screened for relevance, methodological rigour, and alignment with the research focus. Data were synthesised thematically using social constructivism and project execution theory as guiding frameworks. Findings revealed that continuous assessment, monitoring, and evaluation are essential for enhancing teacher effectiveness, learner achievement, accountability, and transparency in primary education. Nonetheless, their implementation is impeded by challenges such as inadequate teacher training, poor funding, weak record management, negative teacher attitudes, a shortage of qualified evaluators, and a lack of a standardised monitoring framework. It was concluded that addressing these barriers through periodic teacher training, improved funding, professionalisation of monitoring roles, and establishment of logical frameworks can strengthen compliance with policy goals. This contributes to ensuring sustainable quality assurance practices and improved learning outcomes in Nigerian primary schools.

Keywords: Primary Education, Policy Implementation, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation, Quality Assurance, Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Education is universally acknowledged as a key driver of national development and human capital formation. Beyond equipping individuals with knowledge and skills, it plays a transformative role in shaping social values, fostering innovation, and driving economic competitiveness in the 21st century. Nations are increasingly judged by the strength of their educational systems, which not only reflect their developmental priorities but also determine their ability to compete in a knowledge-based global economy. For countries such as Nigeria, where education serves as a major tool for addressing poverty, unemployment, and underdevelopment, the effectiveness of the school system cannot be overemphasised. Quality assurance in education is central to achieving these goals. The delivery of quality education requires mechanisms that monitor teaching practices, evaluate learning outcomes, and ensure accountability at all levels of schooling. Assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AME) constitute the foundation of such mechanisms. They serve multiple purposes: identifying pupil learning achievements, informing instructional improvement, guiding education policy, and ensuring resource efficiency. Without systematic AME practices, education risks becoming directionless, with little evidence of whether policies translate into improved learning outcomes.

Globally, emphasis has been placed on monitoring and improving learning achievements through frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), which advocates for inclusive, equitable, and quality education, and the Incheon Declaration of 2015, which reinforced commitments to measurable learning outcomes. In line with these global commitments, Nigeria has developed policies such as the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Monitoring Learning Achievement (Okeke & Chukwudebelu, 2024). These frameworks aim to institutionalise evidence-based monitoring in schools and ensure that teaching and learning remain aligned with developmental needs. The National Council on Education, as the highest policymaking body, has also mandated the systematic supervision of teaching practices across states, while teacher professional development initiatives have been launched to strengthen instructional capacity (Okebukola, 2019). Despite these laudable efforts, the actual state of assessment and monitoring in Nigerian primary schools remains problematic. Primary education, which caters for children aged 6–11, is expected to lay the foundation for literacy, numeracy, and lifelong learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). However, research shows that assessment practices are inconsistently applied, often poorly documented, and sometimes disregarded altogether (Nwokeocha, 2017; Imasuen & Iyamu, 2021). Teachers, who play a central role in implementing assessment, are frequently ill-prepared for the task, lacking both professional training and the resources needed for accurate evaluation (Kurebwa & Nyaruwata, 2013). UNESCO (2016) further emphasises that without regular and well-structured assessment, education quality suffers, as teachers are unable to adjust their instruction or identify pupils' learning needs effectively.

In addition to teacher-related challenges, Nigerian primary schools face systemic obstacles that undermine assessment and monitoring practices. These include large class sizes, dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate teaching materials, weak record management, poor funding, and low teacher morale (Fehintola & Fehintola, 2021; Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019). Political factors further

complicate the situation, with insufficient commitment to enforcing policies and chronic underinvestment in primary education (Opoh et al., 2014; Osiesi et al., 2022). The cumulative effect of these challenges is an implementation gap between policy prescriptions and classroom realities. While policies exist on paper, their translation into practice has been inconsistent, leaving many schools without effective mechanisms for monitoring learning achievements. Another major concern is the perception of monitoring and evaluation as an administrative burden rather than a developmental tool. Many teachers and administrators view AME activities as external impositions rather than integral aspects of the teaching-learning process (Osiesi, 2020). This perception, coupled with inadequate technical know-how in data collection and interpretation, weakens the overall effectiveness of quality assurance frameworks. Consequently, Nigeria continues to struggle with poor learning outcomes at the basic education level, which undermines subsequent levels of education and national human capital development.

The gaps in the literature further highlight the urgency of this issue. While several studies have examined challenges in Nigerian education generally, few have focused specifically on the intersection of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation at the primary school level (Kellaghan & Greaney, 2019; Oloruntoyin, 2011). Existing works often emphasise infrastructural deficiencies or teacher effectiveness but provide limited discussion on how policy implementation affects AME practices. This makes it difficult to develop comprehensive strategies for addressing the systemic challenges facing Nigerian primary schools. Against this backdrop, the present paper seeks to advance the discourse on assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in Nigerian primary education. Specifically, it aims to examine the importance of AME in ensuring quality teaching and learning, identify the major challenges hindering its effective implementation, and explore the implications of these challenges for teachers and policymakers. By drawing insights from literature and aligning them with Nigeria's policy frameworks, the research intends to highlight gaps between policy and practice and propose strategies for bridging them. Ultimately, strengthening assessment and monitoring in primary schools is critical not only for improving immediate learning outcomes but also for building a sustainable education system capable of supporting Nigeria's long-term development goals.

Statement of the Problem

Primary education is globally recognised as the foundation of all subsequent levels of schooling, serving as the platform for literacy, numeracy, and lifelong learning skills. In Nigeria, however, the quality of primary education has remained a subject of concern. Reports indicate that a significant proportion of children in Nigerian primary schools are unable to demonstrate basic literacy and numeracy skills despite several years of schooling (UNICEF, 2021; Uwezo, 2018). This raises critical questions about the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes at this foundational level. Although the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Monitoring Learning Achievement emphasise continuous assessment, supervision, and evaluation as key quality assurance mechanisms, their implementation remains weak (Okafor et al., 2024). Studies have consistently reported deficiencies such as inadequate teacher training in assessment

techniques, poor supervision, ineffective record-keeping, insufficient funding, and lack of standardised monitoring frameworks (Okebukola, 2019; Ajayi, 2011; Fehintola & Fehintola, 2021). These challenges undermine the attainment of policy goals and leave many primary schools without a functional system for ensuring learning accountability.

Furthermore, there appears to be a disconnect between policy provisions and classroom realities. While policies highlight the importance of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation, actual practice is often irregular, inconsistent, and perceived as an administrative burden rather than a developmental tool (Osiesi, 2020). This gap suggests that factors hindering implementation are not fully understood or addressed, leading to persistent poor outcomes in primary education. Therefore, it is imperative to investigate the specific challenges affecting the implementation of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in Nigerian primary schools. Addressing these gaps will not only provide evidence-based insights into the shortcomings of the current system but also inform strategies for strengthening quality assurance practices and improving teaching and learning outcomes at the foundational level.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the research:

1. What is the role of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation in improving teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools?
2. What challenges hinder the effective implementation of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation policies at the primary school level?
3. What strategies can strengthen the implementation of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation to enhance quality assurance in Nigerian primary education?

Literature Review

Educational Policy and Its Implementation

Educational policy refers to government-led frameworks that define the goals, structure, and processes of education systems (Raina, 2020). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013), the National Policy on Education emphasises child-centred, participatory learning approaches and stipulates a teacher–pupil ratio of 1:35 for effective teaching at the primary level. It further mandates continuous assessment and supervision as part of quality assurance. Globally, educational policies are designed not only to provide access but also to ensure equity, accountability, and improved learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2016). However, Müller (2016) a recurring challenge in many developing contexts is the gap between policy formulation and implementation. In Nigeria, although the National Policy on Monitoring Learning Achievement created a framework for systematic tracking of outcomes, actual enforcement has been weak due to underfunding, political interference, and inadequate technical expertise (Okebukola, 2019). Thus, while policy documents are ambitious, their impact at the classroom level remains limited, reflecting the persistent gap between “policy on paper” and “policy in practice” (Manan & Hajar, 2025).

Concept of Assessment in Primary Education

Assessment is widely regarded as the backbone of quality teaching and learning. Mohan (2023) defines assessment as “all those activities undertaken by teachers and students that provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning.” Similarly, UNESCO (2016) stresses that effective assessment systems improve classroom interaction and support equity in learning outcomes. Scholars distinguish between formative assessment (ongoing feedback to enhance learning), summative assessment (end-of-term or standardised tests), and diagnostic assessment (identifying strengths and weaknesses before instruction). In Nigeria, NTI emphasises continuous assessment as a tool for monitoring progress across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Ikenyiri et al., 2022). However, practical challenges undermine effective assessment in Nigerian schools. Studies reveal that many teachers lack adequate training in assessment methods, record-keeping is inconsistent, and large class sizes hinder individualised feedback (Nwokeocha, 2017; Kurebwa & Nyaruwata, 2013). Fehintola and Fehintola (2021) further highlight issues such as insufficient assessment resources and poor teacher morale. This suggests that while assessment is conceptually sound, its classroom implementation often falls short of international best practices.

Concept of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Primary Education

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are complementary processes that ensure education policies and programs are implemented effectively. Monitoring refers to the continuous collection of data to track progress against planned objectives, while evaluation assesses the outcomes and impact of these activities (Osiesi, 2023). In education, Monitoring and Evaluation helps determine whether teaching and learning processes align with national standards and whether learners are achieving intended competencies (Meng, 2023). According to Odinko (2014), effective monitoring requires clarity on data sources, frequency of collection, methodology, and reporting responsibilities. Instruments may include lesson observations, standardised tests, and teacher performance appraisals. In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education (2015) stresses that M&E should provide reliable evidence to policymakers and the public on the performance of the education system. Yet, in practice, monitoring in Nigerian primary schools is irregular and often perceived as punitive rather than developmental (Osiesi, 2020). Problems such as poor record management, inadequate funding, lack of technical expertise, and weak institutional frameworks reduce the effectiveness of M&E efforts (Ajayi, 2011; Okebukola, 2019).

The reviewed concepts show that assessment, monitoring, and evaluation are essential tools for ensuring quality and accountability in education. Educational policies in Nigeria clearly emphasise their importance. However, a wide gap persists between policy ideals and implementation realities. Assessment is undermined by poor teacher preparation, limited resources, and large class sizes, while monitoring and evaluation are constrained by weak institutional support and poor funding. This mismatch highlights the central problem that this research addresses: although Nigeria has robust policy frameworks, their implementation in primary schools remains inconsistent, leaving the foundation of the education system vulnerable.

Bridging this gap requires both institutional reforms and capacity development for teachers and evaluators.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a literature review approach to synthesise existing research on assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AME) of teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools. The review followed a structured process to ensure transparency and rigour. A comprehensive search was conducted using four major databases: Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Academia.edu, and PubMed. Keywords such as “assessment in Nigerian primary schools,” “monitoring and evaluation in education,” “policy implementation in education in Nigeria,” and “quality assurance in basic education” were used in various combinations. Reference lists of relevant studies were also manually screened to identify additional articles. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Studies were included that focused on assessment, monitoring, or evaluation in Nigerian primary education. They were published between 2011 and 2025 to capture contemporary issues and reforms. They were peer-reviewed journal articles, official reports, or doctoral theses with clear methodological grounding. Provided empirical evidence or conceptual analysis relevant to the research questions. Focused solely on secondary or tertiary education. Were opinion pieces, conference abstracts without full text, or duplicated in multiple databases. The initial search yielded 93 studies. After screening titles and abstracts, 48 studies were retained for full-text review. Following the application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, 25 studies met the quality threshold and were included in the final synthesis. The methodological rigour of included studies was assessed using a Quality Assessment Tool (QAT) adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme. The tool examined clarity of objectives, appropriateness of methodology, validity of findings, and relevance to the Nigerian primary education context. Only studies that met a minimum quality benchmark were retained. Key information, such as research objectives, methodology, findings, and limitations, was extracted into a review matrix. A thematic analysis was then conducted, guided by two theoretical lenses: Social Constructivism, which emphasises the interactive nature of teaching and learning, and Successful Project Execution Theory, which highlights accountability in policy implementation. Themes were developed around the significance of AME, challenges to implementation, and possible strategies for improvement. This review was limited to English-language publications and focused on Nigerian primary schools. The inclusion of only 25 studies means that findings provide a broad overview rather than exhaustive coverage. Nonetheless, the structured approach and quality screening enhance the credibility of the results and provide a solid foundation for policy recommendations.

Figure 1 shows the PRISMA-style flow diagram of the research selection process, highlighting the number of records identified, screened, excluded, and included in the final review.

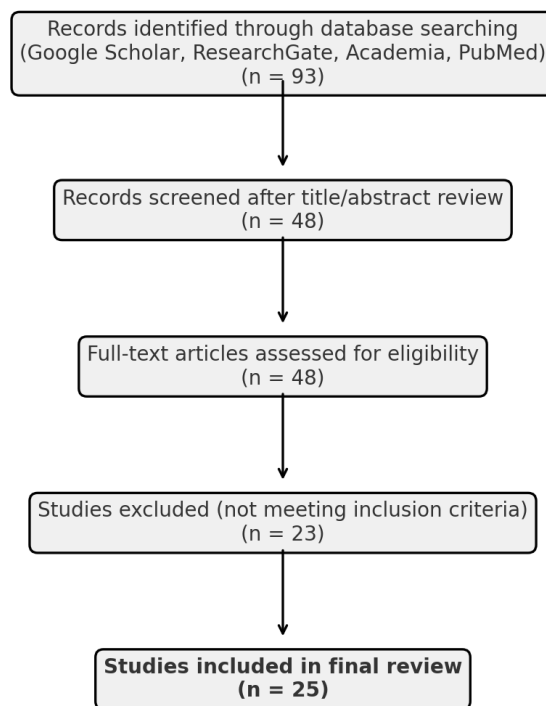


Figure 1. Shows the PRISMA-Style

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review synthesised findings from twenty-five (25) peer-reviewed studies on the implementation of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (AME) of teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools. The results are presented thematically to reflect the main issues that emerged from the literature.

Importance of Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME) in Primary Education

Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME) form the backbone of quality assurance and accountability in educational systems. Within the context of Nigerian primary education, AME serves as a strategic mechanism for improving teaching effectiveness, promoting learner achievement, and ensuring the alignment of classroom practices with national education policy goals. Effective assessment provides timely feedback to both teachers and learners, enabling the identification of learning gaps, modification of instructional strategies, and the reinforcement of desired competencies. As Mohan (2023) explains, assessment is not merely a measurement tool but a formative process that informs decision-making and instructional planning. When properly implemented, assessment supports differentiated learning and enhances pupils' motivation by making learning objectives more transparent (UNESCO, 2016). In primary schools, this function is particularly vital, as it builds the foundation for literacy, numeracy, and lifelong learning skills.

Monitoring and evaluation, on the other hand, provide a systematic framework for tracking progress and ensuring that teaching and learning activities conform to expected standards. Monitoring focuses on the continuous collection and analysis of data to determine whether educational inputs and processes are being effectively implemented. Evaluation, in contrast, examines the outcomes and impacts of these processes, determining their relevance, efficiency, and sustainability (Osiesi, 2023; Odinko, 2014). Together, monitoring and evaluation promote evidence-based decision-making, helping policymakers and administrators identify what works, what needs improvement, and where resources should be directed (Ndungu et al., 2015). From the perspective of Social Constructivism, AME contributes to the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and learners through continuous interaction and feedback. Teachers do not simply transmit information; rather, they guide learners in constructing meaning through assessment-driven reflection. In this sense, assessment and monitoring become learning processes in themselves, promoting self-evaluation, collaboration, and metacognition among pupils. Similarly, Project Execution Theory underscores the role of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring accountability, progress tracking, and the achievement of defined educational outcomes. Without structured monitoring mechanisms, the translation of education policies into classroom practices remains uncertain and inconsistent.

Moreover, AME enhances transparency, accountability, and quality assurance within the education system. It ensures that teachers' performance is continually appraised, instructional quality is maintained, and schools remain answerable to both government and community stakeholders (Ajibade & Ajibade, 2020; Osiesi, 2020). Regular monitoring also improves teacher professionalism by reinforcing ethical standards and motivating teachers to adopt innovative pedagogical methods. When properly institutionalised, AME helps build trust among stakeholders—teachers, parents, pupils, and policymakers—thereby strengthening public confidence in the education system. Importantly, the reviewed literature emphasises that AME is not an administrative formality but a developmental instrument that sustains educational improvement. It provides data that guide curriculum review, teacher training, and policy reforms. For example, the Federal Ministry of Education (2015) identifies AME as a feedback mechanism linking classroom realities to national policy objectives. This relationship ensures that policies are continuously refined in response to empirical evidence from schools, thereby closing the gap between “policy intent” and “practice on the ground.” In Nigerian primary education, their effective application represents a critical pathway to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education) and ensuring that every child attains the foundational competencies necessary for lifelong learning and national development.

Key Challenges Hindering Effective AME Implementation

Although Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME) are recognised as vital instruments for achieving quality assurance in education, their effective implementation in Nigerian primary schools remains severely constrained by multiple interrelated challenges. A thematic analysis of the reviewed literature revealed four dominant categories of barriers: teacher-

related, institutional and structural, policy and governance, and technological and methodological challenges. These factors collectively contribute to the persistent implementation gap between educational policy and classroom practice.

1. Teacher-Related Challenges

Teachers occupy a central role in the execution of assessment, monitoring, and evaluation processes. However, most of the reviewed studies revealed that Nigerian primary school teachers often lack adequate knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for effective AME implementation (Fehintola & Fehintola, 2021; Kurebwa & Nyaruwata, 2013). First, insufficient professional training limits teachers' capacity to design valid assessment instruments, interpret test results, or use feedback to improve instruction. Continuous assessment, though mandated by national policy, is frequently implemented as a routine record-keeping exercise rather than a diagnostic learning tool (Nwokeocha, 2017). Second, teachers' attitudes toward monitoring and evaluation further hinder progress. Many perceive external supervision as punitive or fault-finding rather than developmental, leading to low enthusiasm and poor compliance with evaluation guidelines (Osiesi, 2020). Finally, large class sizes and heavy workloads exacerbate these challenges. Teachers often manage classrooms far exceeding the recommended 1:35 ratio (FRN, 2013), making individualised assessment and feedback practically impossible. The cumulative effect is a weak assessment culture that undermines both accountability and instructional improvement.

2. Institutional and Structural Challenges

The successful implementation of AME requires a supportive institutional environment. Unfortunately, Nigerian primary schools face severe structural limitations that weaken the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation practices. A recurring issue is inadequate funding. Studies consistently report that government budgetary allocations for primary education are insufficient to sustain monitoring activities, procure assessment tools, or organise training programmes (Okebukola, 2019; Opoh et al., 2014). Schools lack basic facilities such as data management systems, transportation for supervisors, and standardised instruments for classroom observation. Furthermore, weak record management systems compromise the reliability and continuity of monitoring data. Assessment reports are often poorly documented, misplaced, or inconsistently stored, preventing longitudinal tracking of learner progress (Ajayi, 2011). Another major concern is the absence of standardised monitoring frameworks across states. Without uniform guidelines or national benchmarks, schools interpret monitoring and evaluation requirements differently, resulting in fragmented practices and non-comparable data (Osiesi, 2020). From a Project Execution Theory standpoint, these institutional weaknesses reflect a failure of coordination, oversight, and resource alignment — all of which are essential for achieving project outcomes in education.

3. Policy and Governance Challenges

The reviewed studies further identified policy inconsistency and weak governance structures as major impediments to AME effectiveness. Although Nigeria has well-articulated policies — such as the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Monitoring Learning Achievement — their implementation is often undermined by bureaucratic bottlenecks, poor inter-agency collaboration, and limited political commitment (Okafor et al., 2024; Osiesi et al., 2022). Many monitoring exercises are conducted irregularly, without follow-up mechanisms to ensure that evaluation findings inform policy reform or instructional improvement. The absence of a professional regulatory body dedicated to evaluation practice further exacerbates this problem. In many cases, monitoring and evaluation tasks are assigned to personnel without specialised training, resulting in superficial or inconsistent assessments (Ajibade & Ajibade, 2020). Additionally, fragmentation among federal, state, and local education authorities leads to duplication of functions and conflicting reporting structures. This weakens accountability, as responsibilities for monitoring are dispersed and poorly coordinated. Collectively, these governance issues produce what several scholars describe as an “implementation deficit”—where policies exist on paper but fail to translate into tangible improvements in teaching and learning outcomes (Okebukola, 2019; Oloruntoyin, 2011).

4. Technological and Methodological Challenges

In an era where education systems increasingly depend on data-driven decision-making, Nigerian primary schools still rely heavily on manual assessment and record-keeping methods. The reviewed studies highlight limited integration of technology in AME processes, with most teachers lacking access to digital tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting (Osiesi, 2023). Moreover, many teachers and administrators possess low data literacy — that is, the ability to analyse and interpret educational statistics to inform practice. This limitation leads to underutilization of available information, making monitoring activities less evidence-based (Ogunode et al., 2020). The absence of electronic databases and reliable internet connectivity further constrains real-time reporting and feedback loops, especially in rural areas. These technological gaps not only slow down the monitoring process but also reduce the credibility and timeliness of education data.

5. Socio-Cultural and Attitudinal Factors (Emerging Theme)

An emerging concern in the literature relates to the socio-cultural perception of monitoring and evaluation within Nigerian school communities. In many contexts, AME is viewed as an external imposition rather than an intrinsic part of professional teaching practice (van Lankveld et al., 2021). This perception is reinforced by a hierarchical school culture that discourages peer review or open feedback. Consequently, the developmental intent of AME is often lost, replaced by compliance-oriented behaviour aimed merely at satisfying inspectors. From the Social Constructivist perspective, this negative perception represents a missed opportunity for collaborative learning and professional growth among teachers. Constructive engagement and

reflective dialogue — essential for meaningful evaluation — are thus replaced with defensiveness and minimal participation.

The findings demonstrate that the barriers to effective AME in Nigerian primary schools are systemic and multidimensional. They extend beyond teacher competence to include deeper institutional, policy, and socio-cultural weaknesses. Inadequate resources, weak institutional coordination, and low professional capacity have collectively created a fragile quality assurance system that struggles to meet the demands of contemporary education. Addressing these deficiencies requires a holistic approach — one that integrates teacher professional development, policy coherence, technological investment, and cultural reorientation toward reflective and collaborative evaluation practices.

Emerging Trends and Positive Practices

Despite the numerous challenges confronting the implementation of Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME) in Nigerian primary schools, recent literature indicates a gradual shift toward more structured, evidence-based, and participatory approaches. Several emerging trends and positive practices demonstrate that progress—although uneven—is being made at different levels of the education system. These developments reflect growing awareness among policymakers, educators, and international partners that effective AME is indispensable to achieving sustainable educational improvement and meeting global commitments such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4).

1. Strengthening Institutional and Policy Frameworks

One notable trend is the renewed institutional attention to quality assurance mechanisms within Nigeria's basic education sector. The Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and state education boards, has begun to revise and harmonise monitoring frameworks to ensure consistency across regions (Federal Ministry of Education, 2015). Efforts are being made to embed AME practices directly within the school improvement planning cycle, allowing schools to set measurable targets, monitor their performance, and report progress periodically. These policy reforms mark a gradual transition from episodic supervision to continuous and developmental monitoring that prioritises learning outcomes over administrative compliance.

2. Teacher Capacity Building and Professional Development

In response to persistent deficits in teacher competence and assessment literacy, several initiatives have emerged to enhance professional capacity in AME. The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) has introduced retraining programmes that equip teachers with skills in formative assessment, data interpretation, and classroom evaluation techniques (Osiesi, 2020). Similarly, professional development workshops organised by state ministries of education and teacher councils have focused on improving teachers' ability to integrate feedback into lesson planning and learner support. These programmes align with Social Constructivist principles, emphasising reflective practice, peer learning, and the co-construction of assessment strategies between

teachers and learners. Over time, such efforts are expected to foster a stronger assessment culture and professional accountability within primary schools.

3. Institutionalisation of School-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Committees

Another promising development is the emergence of school-based monitoring and evaluation committees. Studies such as Chukwu et al. (2019) highlight how schools that establish internal AME teams—comprising head teachers, senior staff, and community representatives—tend to demonstrate improved accountability, data documentation, and teacher commitment. These committees facilitate localised ownership of monitoring activities, reduce dependency on external inspectors, and enable real-time feedback for instructional improvement. The approach resonates with the Project Execution Theory, which advocates decentralised accountability systems that allow project implementers (in this case, schools) to take responsibility for performance outcomes.

4. Integration of Technology and Data-Driven Practices

Although still in its infancy, there is a growing trend toward the digitalisation of assessment and data management in Nigerian basic education. Some pilot projects supported by UNESCO, UNICEF, and local NGOs have introduced electronic record systems, mobile-based data collection, and e-assessment platforms, particularly in urban and semi-urban schools (UNESCO, 2016). These initiatives enhance efficiency, minimise data loss, and improve the timeliness of reporting. They also encourage data-driven decision-making, allowing school leaders and policymakers to analyse trends in learner performance more accurately. The gradual adoption of digital tools signifies an important step toward building a knowledge-based education management system.

5. Enhanced Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Participation

Recent practices increasingly recognise that effective AME requires the collective effort of multiple stakeholders—teachers, parents, administrators, and community members. The involvement of Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) and local education authorities in school monitoring activities has improved transparency and accountability at the grassroots level (Fehintola & Fehintola, 2021). Community participation promotes shared responsibility for educational outcomes and reinforces the developmental—not punitive—purpose of monitoring and evaluation. Such participatory practices reflect the constructivist emphasis on collaboration and dialogue as drivers of learning and institutional growth.

6. Emerging Research and Knowledge Sharing

A subtle yet significant trend is the increase in scholarly and policy-oriented research on AME practices in Nigerian primary education. Universities, quality assurance agencies, and development partners are producing evidence-based studies and policy briefs that inform reforms in teacher training, curriculum design, and evaluation systems (Adeyemo, 2023; Osiesi et al.,

2022). This growing body of knowledge provides empirical foundations for scaling up successful models, aligning with the global movement toward evidence-informed education policy. When coupled with continuous professional dialogue, these research efforts can drive sustained improvement and innovation in AME practices.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this research reveal that while Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME) are universally acknowledged as indispensable to quality assurance in primary education, their effective implementation in Nigerian primary schools remains weak and inconsistent. The discussion that follows interprets these findings through the lenses of Social Constructivism and Project Execution Theory, linking them with existing empirical evidence and policy realities in Nigeria. One of the major findings of this review is the disconnect between policy and practice in the implementation of AME. Although the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Monitoring Learning Achievement provide clear frameworks for continuous assessment and supervision, the translation of these policies into classroom practice remains problematic. This echoes prior observations by Okebukola (2019) and Osiesi et al. (2022), who noted that while Nigeria has well-articulated policies, implementation is often hampered by inadequate institutional capacity and weak accountability mechanisms. From the perspective of Project Execution Theory, this reflects a systemic failure in project design and follow-through — policies are initiated but not supported by the necessary structures, resources, and feedback loops required for sustainability. Consequently, teachers and administrators often operate in isolation, with minimal guidance or evaluation support, leading to fragmented monitoring practices that lack standardisation and continuity. Another dominant finding is that teacher-related challenges—including limited professional training, poor assessment literacy, and negative attitudes toward monitoring—remain the most immediate obstacles to effective AME. This is consistent with the work of Fehintola and Fehintola (2021), who reported that many Nigerian primary school teachers lack the skills to design valid assessments or use data for instructional improvement. From a Social Constructivist standpoint, this finding highlights a critical gap in the collaborative and reflective dimensions of assessment. AME is intended to be an interactive learning process that engages teachers and learners in continuous feedback. However, when teachers view assessment and monitoring as punitive or bureaucratic, the constructivist potential of AME—to support reflection and professional learning—is lost. This indicates that teacher development programs must go beyond procedural training to foster positive mindsets, reflective practice, and professional ownership of the assessment process. The review also found pervasive institutional and structural deficiencies, including inadequate funding, poor record management, and the absence of standardised monitoring frameworks. These issues have long been documented in Nigerian education (Ajayi, 2011; Oloruntoyin, 2011) and continue to undermine accountability and transparency.

Project Execution Theory helps explain this persistence: without systematic planning, resource alignment, and feedback, even well-intentioned policies fail to yield measurable outcomes. Monitoring and evaluation are management tools that require clear performance

indicators, data systems, and coordination among stakeholders — all of which remain weak in Nigeria's basic education sector. This institutional fragility also limits the capacity of policymakers to make data-driven decisions, resulting in repetitive policy cycles without meaningful progress at the classroom level. Despite these challenges, the research identified emerging positive practices — such as the introduction of digital data collection tools, the establishment of school-based monitoring committees, and teacher retraining initiatives led by the National Teachers' Institute (NTI). These developments align with the global trend toward evidence-based education governance (UNESCO, 2016). Integrating technology into AME enhances efficiency and transparency, while internal monitoring structures promote ownership and accountability within schools. From the constructivist viewpoint, such innovations also encourage professional collaboration and continuous learning. However, these practices remain unevenly distributed, with urban schools more likely to benefit than rural ones. Sustained investment and policy support are therefore essential to scale these innovations nationwide. The research further revealed that socio-cultural perceptions of monitoring and evaluation remain a subtle yet powerful barrier. Many teachers still regard supervision as a fault-finding exercise rather than a developmental opportunity. This culture of defensiveness limits openness to feedback and weakens the developmental intent of AME (van Lankveld et al., 2021).

A paradigm shift is therefore necessary—from external inspection to collaborative professional reflection. This requires reorienting teachers, administrators, and policymakers to view AME as a shared learning process rather than an audit. Such a shift aligns closely with Social Constructivism, which emphasises dialogue, reflection, and shared meaning-making as foundations for sustainable learning and improvement. Synthesising the findings through both theoretical lenses suggests that effective AME depends on the integration of human and systemic dimensions. Social Constructivism highlights the importance of human interaction, feedback, and professional learning, while Project Execution Theory emphasises planning, coordination, and accountability. The evidence from the reviewed literature shows that failure in either dimension compromises AME effectiveness. Teachers may be trained, but will struggle to apply their knowledge if institutional structures are weak. Likewise, strong policies will fail without motivated and reflective implementers. Sustainable AME, therefore, requires a dual approach — building institutional systems while nurturing professional and cultural transformation among educators. The implications of these findings are far-reaching. First, policymakers must prioritise capacity building and institutional reform over mere policy formulation. Without strong systems of monitoring, data management, and accountability, quality assurance will remain superficial. Second, teacher education and retraining programs should incorporate reflective assessment literacy, promoting teachers' ability to interpret, apply, and learn from data. Third, government agencies should integrate AME into all stages of education project planning and allocate specific funding for monitoring and evaluation activities. Finally, promoting collaborative school cultures that embrace feedback and shared learning will help redefine AME as a developmental tool rather than an administrative burden.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the challenges of policy implementation in monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in Nigerian primary schools, focusing on the relevance, barriers, and emerging practices associated with Assessment, Monitoring, and Evaluation (AME). Drawing from twenty-five peer-reviewed studies, the findings reveal that although AME remains a critical mechanism for ensuring accountability, quality assurance, and instructional improvement, its implementation in Nigerian primary education is characterised by systemic weaknesses and uneven practice. While Nigeria's education policies provide comprehensive frameworks for assessment and supervision, implementation gaps persist due to inadequate teacher capacity, weak institutional structures, poor funding, and negative perceptions of monitoring and evaluation. Teachers often lack the necessary professional skills and motivation to conduct continuous assessment effectively, while monitoring mechanisms are hindered by fragmented data systems and a lack of standardised frameworks. From the theoretical standpoint, Social Constructivism highlights that AME thrives when teachers and learners engage collaboratively in reflective feedback processes, transforming assessment into a learning tool. Conversely, Project Execution Theory emphasises that effective implementation depends on structured planning, accountability mechanisms, and consistent monitoring. The findings suggest that the weakness of AME in Nigeria results from the failure to integrate these two dimensions—the human (constructivist) and the systemic (execution). Nevertheless, emerging trends—such as school-based monitoring committees, digital record systems, and continuous teacher retraining—signal progress toward more participatory and evidence-based approaches. Strengthening these innovations can help institutionalise AME as a developmental and transformative practice, rather than an administrative obligation. The research concludes that achieving sustainable improvement in Nigerian primary education requires a holistic reform of AME systems, combining human capacity development, technological advancement, and institutional accountability. AME should evolve into a collaborative framework where teachers, administrators, and policymakers work jointly to promote transparency, equity, and continuous learning in schools.

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