

## **Rethinking Strategies and Supervision of Secondary Schools: Issues, Challenges and Way Out**

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### **Abstract**

*It is important in educational administration to ascertain that educational activities are carried out in accordance with the laid down educational goals and objectives. Hence, supervision, whether it is internal or external should be seen as a conscious effort directed towards finding ways of improving the outcome of each school or educational programme. The paper, therefore, focused on the concept of supervision, the purpose of supervision, task areas of supervision among others. It also highlighted the challenges of supervision in secondary schools such as teachers resisting supervision, funding, low teacher's morale and inadequate supervisory staff. Lastly, the paper suggested that Government should ensure adequate financing of supervisory and inspectorate division, employment of qualified supervisory staff, prompt payment of teacher's salary among others.*

**Keywords:** Rethinking Strategies, Supervision, Secondary School Challenges, and Techniques.

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## **Introduction**

Many countries across the globe have attempted to restructure their school supervision Services to enhance educational quality. This desire for restructure is stimulated and/or inspired by disappointment probably with the effectiveness of supervision and by the recent drift towards more school independence. Indeed, the ability of schools to use their greater autonomy effectively will depend, to a large extent, on the support services on which they can rely. Supervision may be essential and effective to guide them in their decision-making and to monitor their use of resources. The judicious use of resources is a fundamental principle that promotes quality in education. While these restructuring have been met with diverse success, their overall analysis would allow us to gain deep insight into what can be achieved in a specific context (UNESCO, 2013).

According to Tucker and Pounder (2010) cited in Kalule and Bauchamina (2013). Maintaining and nurturing quality instruction represent a major trend in today's educational organizations and thus calls for economic support and knowledge regarding the teaching and learning processes and effective teachers. According to Nwaogu (1980) cited in Chike-Okoli (2006) is a process whereby an individual by means of advising and stimulating interest in teachers and students, helps to improve teaching and learning situations in educational institutions. The definition goes further to describe the term supervision as “involving advice, direction and discussion which help to see the available resources-manpower, finance and capital equipment utilized for the achievement of the set educational objectives.

According to Zepeda (2006) cited in Tucker and Pounder (2013), to develop professionally and successfully too, teachers need many learning opportunities including reflection, dialogue and collaboration, particularly among their peers and with their internal supervisors. Effective school supervision provides relevant and continuous supports and encouragement in order to improve teachers' instructional practices. This could be achieved through the use of a differentiated supervision model. And the differentiated supervision model is based on individual teacher characteristics such as age, teaching experience, working conditions, educational qualification and individual teacher needs as well as available time, resources and related learning opportunities.

That is why Bernard and Goodyear (2008: 1) said “supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of

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that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see(s), and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession". McCann and Gail (2012) noted that to improve student learning outcome, teachers must improve their instructional practices, reinforcing and improving their capabilities enable them to reflect on their own practice and knowledge level and strive to develop greater competency.

Instructional supervision does not only improve decision-making skills but ultimately student learning outcomes. Teacher professional development through regular supervision implies that they not only learn but also learn what to be learnt and transform their knowledge into practice for the betterment of their student learning outcomes. Continuous teacher professional development through supervision generally portrays teacher quality and this is germane and key component of major reform programmes in education Eregie and Ogiamen (2007) defined educational 'supervision' as the systematic application of principles of supervision in solving educational problems in order to get to a sustainable level of achievement. On the other hand, school supervision according to Eregie and Ogiamen (2007) is defined as a whole mechanism systematically designed to accomplish the end of public education so that internal structure of the school is determined by the functions which are carried on towards those ends. This cuts across supervision of personnel, structures, equipment, laboratories, library, records and other school facilities to ascertain problems and defects and then recommend a satisfactory result for the school system.

Based on the importance attached to school supervision and improvement in teaching learning activities, the Federal Government of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2013) states that:

1. Government will continue to run good and well staffed inspectorate services for all levels of education
2. State ministries of education in collaboration with the Federal inspectorate will be responsible for the inspection of all secondary schools under their jurisdiction.
3. Regular courses will continue to be run to acquaint inspectors with their new roles as advisers, guides, catalysts and sources of new ideas.
4. Introduction and orientation courses will continue to be organized for newly appointed inspectors of secondary schools.

5. Government will expand and strengthen the Federal inspectorate service to supplement state inspectorate services.

### **The Roles of Supervisor in Educational System**

Supervision is an indispensable variable in the teaching learning process as well as overall school and educational objectives. According to Kruger (2003), the elements of supervisory roles of principals are defining the school mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching monitoring learner progress and promoting. Boissiere (2004), viewed that quality has been at the core of the motivating forces for reforms in education. Achieving quality in education has increasingly become crucial in strategic improvement plans of developing countries. Similarly, Kochhar (2005), views that supervision includes those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils.

A supervisor could be the principal of a school, or a senior member of staff of a school (Ani, 2007). However, supervision in a school system implies the process of ensuring that policies, principles, rules, regulation and methods prescribed for purposes of implementing and achieving the objectives for education are effectively carried out. Ajayi (2002), viewed that supervision involves the use of expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning in schools. Ani (2007), supervision is the process of helping, guarding, advising and stimulating growth in subordinate in order to improve on the quality of his work. Nwaogu (2006), supervision involves the stimulation of professional and the development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and method of teaching and evaluation of instruction.

### **The Purpose of Secondary School Supervision**

The purpose of school supervision is the promotion and development of favourable setting for teaching and learning which eventually lead to the improvement of the society. However, the primary responsibility of school inspectors is to see that high standards are maintained and that schools are run in accordance with laid down rules and regulations. The ultimate aim is to improve the overall efficiency and raise the academic standards of the institutions. Specifically, the purpose of classroom

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instruction supervision is to help teachers to learn what their problems are and to seek the best methods of solving them be they individual or group problems.

Chike- Okoli (2004) cited in Chike-Okoli (2006) suggested that teachers should be guided to improve teaching methods and techniques, utilize newly discovered principles of group dynamics, provide for individual differences, locate and utilize community resources and evaluate their teaching competence. The purpose of supervision according to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes manual (2002) cited in Chike-Okoli (2006) can be classified into Teacher improvement purposes which are geared towards:

1. Ensuring that teachers do their work affectively
2. Ensuring that new teachers receive training to enable them function effectively on the job
3. Providing professional information to teachers
4. Guiding teachers to the sources of instructional materials
5. Providing technical assistance to teachers when required

### **The Basic Principles of Secondary School Supervision**

According to Adu, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) the basic principles of secondary school supervision include the following:

1. **Purposiveness:** The need for a set purpose makes it mandatory for the agents concerned with the exercise to determine at the beginning of a teaching programme what is to be considered “poor” or “excellent”. This will enhance objectivity and productivity.
2. **Plan:** Supervision of instruction must be planned. The supervisor should know how, when, what and where to launch his activities.
3. **Diversity:** Supervisor should give room for the diversification of supervision. He / she should allow for intelligent creativity since too much control or coercion could lead to formalism and resentment and may create confusion.
4. **Dialectical Relation:** Supervision should be cyclic in nature. It should provide a feedback both to the teachers as well as to the supervisor. The democratic and cooperative nature of supervision should be geared towards making the teacher become cognizant of the need for improvement.
5. **Code of Conduct:** Supervisor should ensure that he/she appears decent, responsible and respectable that he is punctual to school arriving in time, take part in the morning assembly, that he/she introduces himself/ herself to the

- school head explaining the purpose of his visit, and that he concentrates on the particular aspect of the school he/she intends to inspect thus avoiding the tradition to cover too wide ground in a day.
6. **Principles of Safe and Healthy Environment:** The school environment should be conducive for effective teaching-learning activities. The supervisor could do a lot to make the office, school compound a happy place for both teachers and students if he sets the right tone by creating a healthy environment.
  7. **Principle of Adequate Information for Employees:** A newly recruited staff needs to know the history, objectives, roles, operation and career policies of the organization as contained in the organization's handbook. He should have access to the annual report and condition of service. The supervisor should tell the new staff his/her specific schedule of duties, level of authority and his/her immediate supervisor. He or she needs to be adequately informed about when, where and how he gets paid, the resumption and closing hours of work, the break period, annual leave, casual leave etc.
  8. **Principle of Guidance:** The supervisor owes it a duty to guide job incumbents on how, what, where and when to carry out their duties. This is ensured through close monitoring and supervision. Personality improvement is important in an organization because it seems to reflect the image of the organization for which they work.
  9. **Principle of Liberality:** Opportunities should be created for subordinates to aspire to leadership position. In fact, subordinates should see themselves as supervisors- in training. At times, responsibilities should be delegated to ensure sense of responsibilities and belonging on the parts of the subordinates.
  10. **Principle of Encouragement:** The supervisor owes it a duty to encourage the staff to thirst for new knowledge and continue to search for new ways of carrying out their duties. This is because it has a multiplier effect on both the supervisor and the organization. Education is life long to enable the staff solve new problems. This is done through reading, discussion with senior colleagues, seminars, workshops, trainings, re-training programmes etc.
  11. **Principle of Networking:** A good supervisor develops team spirit and networks with other supervisors or senior officers within or outside the organization to tap from their wealth of experience. This will help him/her to perform better.

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12. **Principle of Objectivity:** Both internal and external supervisors should be objective in their sense of judgment and decision making process. Objectivity will endear them to their subordinates.

### **The Types of Secondary School Supervision**

The following are the types of secondary school supervision:

- i. **Full Supervision:** This is an external inspection carried out by a group of inspectors from the Ministry or other bodies to examine subjects taught in a school, scheme of work, lesson notes, classroom management and other physical facilities. This enables supervisors to make observations, corrections and make necessary and professional recommendations for the betterment of the educational system.
  - ii. **Emergency Supervision:** This refers to the kind of inspection carried out as a result of crisis in a school setting. The supervisors are led by senior officers with instruction to find out and investigate the remote and immediate causes of certain problem or crises in a school, for instance, riots, strikes or conflicts.
  - iii. **Sample and Survey Visit:** This is an inspection meant to survey an aspect of educational performance in the schools, for instance student attitude to the teaching of science, social sciences or commercial/ arts related subjects, teacher use of instructional materials etc.
  - iv. **Clinical Supervision:** This is the type of supervision in which supervisors meet with the teaching staff with the aim of developing their professionalism and instructional method.
  - v. **Routine supervision:** This is the periodic visitation of schools by a supervisor or a group of supervisors to a school in order to ascertain progress and achievement or problems and difficulties in given areas and schools.
  - vi. **Investigative Supervision:** This type of visit is usually carried out with the sole purpose of addressing a particular problem in the school. It could be the problem of discipline, fraud or theft of the school property.
  - vii. **Special Visit:** This type of visit deals with special cases which are also specific in nature. The visit may be for the purpose of inspecting some subject areas such as English Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology; or Geography, Economics, Government or Civic Education.
  - viii. **Pre-opening of School Visits:** These visits are made to a location of a newly established school that is seeking for approval to provide educational services. The essence is to ensure that the school satisfies the stipulated guidelines and
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requirements, such as the availability of enough space, classroom sizes, staff strength with appropriate teaching qualifications; infrastructure; washrooms, water supply etc. The visit is necessary for granting approval by the Ministry of Education, particularly a private educational institution.

- ix. **Assessment Visit:** This type of visit lasts longer than a routine visit. This visit involves looking into the various school activities and how these activities are organized and carried out.
- x. **Follow-up Visit:** This takes place after a full inspection would have been carried out in school during the visit. The inspectors keep record of relevant action taken by the school authority with reference to the recommendations that were made or the full scale visit as contained in the inspectors' report. The inspectors assessed the extent to which the action taken by the school had achieved their desired results. Also, suggestions could be made where necessary for the primary purpose of improving the school and student learning outcomes.

### **Techniques of Supervision**

Opinmi, (2011) identified the following techniques of supervision as:

- i. **Compilation of Information:** Information about the members of staff such as academic qualifications, habits, attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, social life, family backgrounds etc. are to be compiled. Other information could be obtained through discussion with them. Staff members are likely to cooperate and make necessary sacrifice if they are treated with courtesy and respect.
- ii. **Conflict Management:** Conflict is bound to occur in an organization and could emanate from individuals or groups. Supervisor should learn to listen to both sides involved so as to gather relevant information that can help to settle the conflict. In case, the supervisor cannot competently handle the conflict, it should be referred to the immediate boss or to the management for necessary or immediate action. Whatever decision that is taken to resolve a conflict must be seen by all as being fair and impartial.
- iii. **Communication with Staff:** It is important for the supervisor to master ways of communicating effectively with the supervisees in a way that will readily secure subordinate compliance. This is better achieved by reasoning together rather than by giving order. Certainly, there are occasional situations when authority is maintained with a clear directive in which directive actions are necessary.



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- iv. **Concise Decision - Making Process:** The supervisor has a key role to shape the decision as his/her position is the primary position for the management of decision. He/she operates between the staff and the management. When he/she are expected to make decision, it should be done promptly and judiciously as soon as he or she affirms his authority to make such decision.
  - v. **Constructive Criticism of Staff:** Unfair criticism or aggressive tone by supervisor tends to generate resentment in workers. It is better to have a viable option recommended to the workers to correct his mistakes than to have unhealthy and unpalatable criticism.

### **Task Areas of Supervision in Secondary school**

According to Adu, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) the following are the task areas of supervision in Secondary Schools:

- i. **Developing Curriculum:** This has to do with the designing or redesigning of that which is to be taught, by whom, when, where, how and in what pattern. Developing curriculum guides, establishing standards, planning instructional units and instituting a new course and examples of this task area.
  - ii. **Organizing for Instruction:** This is the making of an arrangement whereby student- teacher' space and materials are related, to time and instructional objectives in coordinated and efficient ways. Grouping of students, planning class schedules, assuring spaces, allocating time for instruction, scheduling, planning events and making arrangements for reaching teams are examples of endeavour associated with this task.
  - iii. **Providing Staff:** This has to do with assuring the availability of instructional staff members in adequate numbers and with appropriate competencies for facilitating instruction. Other associated task areas here are recruiting, screening, selecting, assigning and staff transfer.
  - iv. **Providing Facilities:** This deals with the designing or re-designing and equipping facilities for instruction. The space development and equipment specification are included in these task areas.
  - v. **Providing Materials:** This borders on selecting and obtaining appropriate materials for use in implementing curricular design for previewing, evaluating designing and otherwise finding ways to provide appropriate materials are included in this task area.
  - vi. **Arranging for In-service Education:** This involves planning and implementing learning experience that will improve the performance of staff in instruction – related ways. Other sub task areas are workshop,
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- consultations, field trips, training and retraining sessions as well as formal education.
- vii. **Staff Members Orientation:** This is providing staff members with basic information necessary to carry out assigned responsibilities. This includes getting new members acquainted with facilities, staff and community, but it also involves keeping staff informed of organizational development.
  - viii. **Relating Special Students Service:** This means arranging for careful coordination of services to students to ensure optimum support for the teaching-learning process. This involves developing policies, assigning priorities and defining relationship among service personnel to maximize relationships between services offered and instructional goals of the school.
  - ix. **Developing Public Relations:** This means providing for a free flow of information on matters of instruction to and from the public while securing optimum levels of involvement in the promotion of better instruction and learning.
  - x. **Evaluating Instruction:** This means planning, organizing and implementing procedures for data gathering, analysis interpretation and decision making for improvement of instruction.

### **Problems of Supervision in Secondary Schools**

According to Adu, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) the following are the problems of supervision in Secondary Schools:

1. **Teachers Who Resist Supervision:** Three categories of teachers can be identified the experienced, academically and professionally qualified, the non-professional but academically qualified and unqualified. The existence of unqualified teachers who resist supervision in our secondary schools constitutes a hindrance to modern and effective supervision of instruction.
2. **Inadequate Staff:** Many schools in the country suffer defective teaching due to the absence of qualified staff in some subject areas.
3. **Material Resources:** Supervisors are faced with the absence of materials. This is as a major problem which hinders their assignment e.g. charts, maps, projectors, etc.
4. **Poor Human Relations:** This relationship becomes difficult to establish because different kinds of human beings are involved and they also require different supervisory application.

5. **Administrative Problems:** Administration fails to specify the scope of responsibilities and results in structural supervision is expected to bring about in the school.
6. **Financial Constraint:** Inadequate funding either on the part of government, concerned ministry and individual proprietors affect supervision and administration of schools. This inadequacy is reflected in non-provision of school's statutory material and physical plants.
7. **Poor Communication:** Many supervisors including the school head and departmental heads do not know how to communicate with their staff. Teachers are sometimes demoralized due to poor communication.
8. **Inconsistent Educational System:** The instability caused due to frequent changes in government policies affect education of students. Frequent changes in school curriculum and school system by the ministries and schools also affect the overall performance educational system.
9. **Political Instability:** Frequent change in government cannot have an organized administrative pattern in its education
10. **Low Teacher Morale:** The seeming shabby treatment the teacher receives from their employers and the apparent frustration resulting from this is another hindrance for effective supervision.
11. **Payment of Teachers:** Payment of teachers 'salaries is seldom regular and promotions are delayed without justification. In a situation where teachers are frustrated and fail to show interest in supervision, the job of a supervisor is made more difficult for the achievement of the objectives of instructional supervision.

## **Conclusion**

Supervision is seen as one of the important formal leadership roles performed by one with supervisory skills and whose performance is geared towards the optimum achievement of stated educational goals. So, the role of the government at the different levels cannot be overlooked, neither can the contributions of parents, teachers, supervisors, school heads and voluntary agencies be ignored. Effective result in the instructional and administrative supervision of schools in the country deserves a joint effort and cooperation of all. Needless to emphasize that organizational supervision must be holistic, scientific and be done very effectively taking into consideration the four crucial elements of the inspector, the school, the government and the public that are involved.

## **Suggestion**

The following Suggestion are hereby made:

1. Supervisors should ensure that they build and maintain the right image in the eyes of the teachers, students and public. Supervisors should aim at assessing the state of learning and teaching. In doing this, supervisors will need to examine every aspect of the school environment including physical facilities, administration, and organization of the school, students' books, teachers' scheme, records of work and lesson notes.
2. The supervisors should behave and function as teachers' friends, adviser, guide and consultant. A relationship that teachers look forward to and are happy at should be developed.
3. All state ministries of education and other relevant agencies should have printed inspection guidelines spelling out the duties of the supervisors at all levels.
4. To solve the manpower problems, every state ministry of education should recruit more inspectors to meet the state UNESCO recommendation of 1: 75 in post-primary schools, while in primary schools, UNESCO recommendation is 1: 100-150 teachers.
5. Recruitment of Inspectors: State ministries of education should take every possible step to ensure promotion, prospect for inspectors to attract both assistant inspectors and inspector at post-primary level into the inspectorate service.
6. Organizational Structure of Inspectorate Service: Most inspectorate services provided for only chief inspectors, the assistant chief inspector, four principal inspectors, etc. This will need to be generously increased in order to create vacancies for a large number of inspectors and for regular promotion.
7. Honorary Inspectors: As a temporary measure, the use of experienced headmasters and principals as honorary inspectors could be considered by state and local government areas. Returned head teachers could also be re-engaged as part time inspectors with reasonable allowances.
8. The control and management of education should be a joint responsibility of the federal, state and local governments; communities, voluntary agencies acting in partnership with parents, teachers, private school owners, and ministries of education.
9. The operations of primary and secondary schools should conform with the national policy on education.

10. Government should provide adequate funds, facilities, equipment and human resources for school inspection and ensures that all schools, both public and registered private schools are supervised regularly and effectively.
11. Recruitment of teachers by the ministries of education and their agencies should be based purely on academic qualification and professionalism.
12. Inspectors of education, supervisors and school heads should be empowered with human resources, funds and resources to help them deliver as resources personnel and partners in progress.

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