

Constraints on Effective Educational Supervision of Instruction in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria like all other developing nations is faced with challenges in its educational system. Therefore, the paper examined some of the problems or constraints to the supervision of education in secondary schools in Nigeria which include poor communication, unqualified and untrained supervisors, lack of materials resource, inadequate supply of personnel, financial constrains, poor human relation, administrative problems, political instability, low teachers morale, indifferent attitude of ministry of education officials to the supervision of instruction among others. The paper also itemizes some of the remedies to constraints on effective supervision of instruction such as the supervisors should behave and function as teachers' friends, advisers, guides and consultants. A relationship that teachers look forward to and are happy at should be developed, All state ministries of education and other relevant agencies should have printed inspection guidelines spelling out the duties of the supervisors at all levels among others.

Keywords: Constraints, Effective, Supervision, Education, Secondary, Schools

Introduction

The supervision of schools in present day Nigeria could be traced to the 1882 Education Ordinance. It was the first attempt by the colonial administration to establish any form of control over the development and growth of schools. The Ordinance provided for the establishment of a general board of education which was to appoint an inspector of schools in West Africa. This appointment marked the beginning of the recognition of the need for a form of inspectional service in the educational system (Emmanuel, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014).

The school like any organisation has problems; and the variety of problems which the school present can be identified through the processes by which its functions are performed. Instructional supervision is one of the processes by which school administration attempts to achieve acceptable standards of performance and the results. It's the tool of quality control in the school system. The quantity and the quality of resources available to the school administration and the process adopted

or followed by it, often create problems and challenges to the instructional supervisor.

But what are these resources and processes which are the sources of the problems to instructional supervision?. The National policy on Education (2013) makes it clear that one of the cardinal objectives of administration in education is to ensure quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instruction and other educational services. Anukam (2009) opined that the nation is finding ways of improving supervision of schools in the wake of assumed falling standard of learning, increased school enrolment, and increased recruitment of unqualified teachers. The author emphasized the importance of supervised instruction in schools as a correlation of students 'positive' academic performance.

The Problem of the study arose from the background information that the concept of supervised instruction has been duly neglected for one reason or another in the midst of modern complications of the Secondary School. Adesina (1981) was of the opinion that schools have not been regularly visited by inspectors of the Ministry of Education and when inspection is done, it is far from being thorough. Inspection reports are hardly made available and there are no follow-up that would ensure that the weaknesses identified have been corrected.

Conceptual framework

For the avoidance of ambiguity in understanding the special terms used in the paper, an attempt is made to define the following terms:

Supervision: Kamindo (2006) defined supervision as leadership for the improvement of instruction and ultimately student learning. These definitions suggest that the role of supervision is to improve teaching and learning through a deliberate emphasis on ways and means of instilling excellence in the quality instruction. Supervision is a process which strives to stimulate others towards greater effectiveness or productivity.

Instructional supervision: Refers to the process of working with head teachers, teachers and pupils to bring about improvement in instruction. According to Kimosop (2002), instructional supervision is an expert technical service primarily concerned with studying and improving learning and pupils' growth. Instructional supervision can also be defined as the set of activities designed to improve the teaching-learning process. In Nigeria, there has been a critical analysis on what instructional supervision should be. Spears (2007) saw instructional supervision as an internal process (micro-inspection). He opined that micro inspection concerns

itself with regular resources utilization and processes in a school and the maintenance of lines of action that promote productivity. The principal as the school administrator should, therefore, perform the within-school supervisory role in instructional improvement and in evaluation of education. School principal should therefore, assist teachers in determining the right methods, teaching facilities, physical settings, classroom attributes that are most likely to promote effective learning in schools.

Supervisor: Refers to the personnel who are assigned the responsibility of overseeing curriculum implementation and improving instruction in schools. (Emmanuel, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014).

Constraints on Effective Supervision of Instruction in Secondary Schools

The following are the problems of supervision in secondary schools:

Teachers Who Resist Supervision: Three categories of teachers are the experienced, the academic and the professional. The non- professional but academically qualified are unqualified. The existence of unqualified teachers who resist supervision in our secondary schools constitutes a hindrance to modern and effective supervision of instruction (Emmanuel, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014).

Inadequate Supply of Personnel: Many schools in the country suffer defective teaching due to the absence of qualified staff in some subject areas. Also insufficient and unqualified supervisors in the educational system in most cases many schools visited are not thoroughly assessed because the inspectors/supervisors are not enough for the subject areas. Another fact is that most the inspectors are not specialist in important areas like science and technical subjects. According to Anuna (2004), many of the personnel utilized for supervision of instruction did not have the prerequisite qualification and experience. Some states in Nigeria still employ and utilize graduate-teachers without professional teacher qualification as supervisors of the schools. Also most of the time the supervisors and inspectors supervised subjects they do not have the academic competence. Furthermore, personnel without the experience of teaching in schools were deployed to supervise teachers. This practice hinders quality control, and consequently, resulting in poor quality output while maintenance standards of the students are affected (Ogunu, 2001).

Material Resources: Supervisors are faced with an obstacle of insufficient materials. This is as a serious problem which hinders their assignment. The job of supervision is done through the use of material resources. What materials to use, how many are available to the instructional supervisor may depend on the type of

supervision envisaged. The types of materials or equipment needed may also depend on whether the instructional supervisor is an internal or external personnel (Ani, 2007)

Poor Human Relations: Good relationship is difficult to establish because of different Kinds of human beings involved and they also require different supervisory application. Maintaining cordial relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is not always an easy task. Individual differences can taint the relationship. Principal's hostility is another form of poor human relation that affects the supervision of instruction. Peretomode (2009) aptly outlined that: "unfriendly attitude comes from teachers and their heads but the principals are said to be worse for it". This is because seniority in civil service is measured in terms of salary Grade Level (GL) rather than academic qualification. Some old principals with many years of experience do not open up to change especially when it is initiated by younger person. It is 'You want to teach me my job' syndrome. An inspector of school observed that majority of them are not easily brought to order and they are very uncooperative because they believe that a lower level officer is also lower in wisdom and skills. They always assume mastery of subjects and expect the teachers to be subservient. According to Ogunu (2001), supervisors assume supervisor knowledge and regard the teachers as inferior workers who should take instruction without questioning. This always breeds disdain and contempt.

Administrative Problems: Administration fails to specify the scope of responsibilities and results in structural supervision is expected to bring about in the school. Administrative inadequacies emerge when planning fails to specify the scope of the responsibilities and results that instructional supervision is expected to bring about in school. Another administrative problem confronting instructional supervision is the capacity to organize the resources required for its implementation (Packard, 1988).

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. Operational funds or impress are not available, thus there is no provision for stationary, even old equipment are not maintained and there are no conducive office accommodations (Peretomode, 2009). Also Anuna (2004) has the view as inadequate funds has been the bane of the supervision and has almost destroyed inspection of schools in Nigeria. The money made available to the inspectorate unit is not sufficient for the enormous task entrusted to them. Lack of funds entails no touring advance and allowances

for the inspectors and inability to service and repair the vehicles needed for the supervision (Packard, 1988).

Poor Communication: Many supervisors including the school head and departmental heads do not have effective means communicate with their staff. This is due to the inadequate communication skills. Teachers are sometimes demoralized due to poor communication. Also Peretemode (2009) aptly that communication is the most essential tool in supervisory relationship. It is very important that the supervisor should be versatile in the act of communicating to avoid a situation where the message can be misinterpreted.

Inconsistent Educational System: The instability caused due to frequent changes in government polices affect education of students. Frequent changes in school curriculum and school system by the ministries and schools also affect the overall performance educational system (Ani, 2007)

Political Instability: Frequent change in government cannot have an organized administrative pattern in its education. Peretomode (2009) expresses that education in this country has always remained the scarification lamb of the country's polity. This is due mainly to its structure and programmes.

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. 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. Peretomode (2009) has the opinion that there is no single vehicle (bus) for field operations, any toilet facilities, fans and typewriters. The travelling allowances are so poor that to board a taxi during or after assignment is a luxury to inspection Lagos.

Preoccupation of Principals with Administrative Task and Duties: Principals are performing administrative duties that they hardly have time to offer academic leadership. They are preoccupied with obtaining information from the ministry of education, board, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, parents, and maintaining of school-community relations to detriment of internal supervision of instruction which is their fundamental task (Anuna, 2004).

Indifferent Attitude of Ministry of Education Officials to the Supervision of Instruction: Previously during the colonial and post colonial era the funding of schools was based on the report submitted by the inspectors about the

development of the school. Financing schools in contemporary times do not depend on the performance of the school in examinations. Report of the supervisor has become an obsolete means of allocating funds to the schools. Hence because of the Trend inspector's reports do not have the desired result as in the past (Anuna, 2004).

Bureaucratic Bottlenecks: Most of the inspectors complain that their reports are hardly put into use in decision making. In effect, their reports are jeopardized or frustrated. Some decisions are delayed since reports submitted are swept under the carpet. The whole exercise remains formality rather than a criterion for evaluation, even when there is evidence that a principal is not managing his school well he or she still get promoted. Another bottleneck is that reports have to go through the minister, to the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM), then back to the inspectorate for confirmation. A whole year would have rolled by and filtrations would have been effected by the time this process is completed. This makes the inspectors toothless bulldogs (Peretomode, 2009).

The constraints and the problems confronting supervision of instruction have aptly been summarized by the UNESCO report (1998) as

Use or employment of unqualified and untrained person for quality control, thus leading to poor quality out-put-teachers, inspectors and supervisors of education come under this category;

Use of officers/persons in discipline or tasks outside their competence;

Inadequate tools and materials, books and equipment, transportation for inspectors/supervisors and stationary for use in institutions;

Lack of basic training, retaining or orientation, and lack of exposure/attachment to experienced officer;

Absence or inadequate of minimum funds and the resources for inspection;

Inadequate implementation of inspection reports and recommendation thus derogation from their critical importance for quality, and a fall in the quality of such reports;

Gross over-enrolment in schools and classes, creating over-sized institution which is impossible for effective management, sound teaching and learning; among others.

Some of the suggestions to the Constraints on Effective Supervision of Instruction in secondary schools

The following remedies are hereby made:

The teachers who resist supervision should be removed from the academic arena and those who can comply with the rule of supervision in schools are those to be employed in our secondary schools for effective teaching and learning process.

Adequate and competent supervisors should be provided and supply to our secondary schools. Most of the states of the federation suffer from this problem and therefore, the government should employ and train large number of supervisors.

Adequate instructional materials should be provided to the schools as at when required by the teachers and students. Most of the times, the problem of materials in the system serve more damage to the system, coupled with staff training problem.

Good relationship between the staff, students and the management at the large is very influential to the system. This is because, poor relationship between the parties concerned could result to communication gap in the system which in the end lead to poor performance

Management is the key to the success of any organization as it is often said that when any congregational prayer goes wrong it is the imam leading it that spoils it. Good management results to the good system. This is because the policies of the management could make or mar the system. So it is required of the management to be visionary, focused and consistent in its policies.

Finance is another key factor in any organisation. The authorities concerned should budget adequately for the educational sector. This should include all the logics, materials and necessary infrastructural needs of the schools.

Communication is necessary in this modern world of ours. Various departments and personnel must respond to their principals accordingly. There are various means of communication nowadays, which are all advantage of the people concerned.

Educational policies should make visionary and viable but should not be subjected to the frequent changes. This is because consistency is necessary for the success of anything. The educational authorities and government need to play with caution when formulating educational policies. This does not however, mean that update is not needed but should not a thing to toy with.

Political stability is something the educational authorities have control of, but the leaders and the elites of the society concerned should ensure that their country

maintains stable political atmosphere as it is the basis of any meaningful development.

Teachers are like soldier in the battle field as much their morale must be kept high and viable. There a number of ways to raise the morale of teachers. These include welfare packages, recognition of individual teachers efforts and of cash kind rewards for any good that is done by the teachers.

Principals are should not be occupied too much by the administrative duties to the detriment of their academic assignment. Several principals tend to behave as administrative officers rather than principals. This does not mean however, that there should not be little administrative tasks that principals carry out, but should not be too much.

Officials of the ministry of education should be indifferent to the conduct of the supervision in schools. This is because supervision is the only precautionary measure to checkmate school activities.

All reports and recommendations made by the supervisors and various committees in the ministry of education should count in the decision making of the education. Failure to implement reports and recommendations is the key reason why many mistakes reoccur.

Conclusion

In conclusion, from what has been said, the catalogue of the problems present challenges for the instructional supervisor. The problem of inadequate professional preparation and the provision of teaching personnel should raise the level of awareness of the magnitude of the problem to be overcome by supervisors in the school system. It is expected that supervisors will be spurred rather than be discouraged to develop alternative strategies to enhance their supervisory practices. They should be steadfast in their commitment to the enhancement of instruction. Resources, though limited should be provided and utilized efficiently for the improvement of the practice of instructional supervision.

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