

## **Supervisory Mechanism And Educational Quality Improvement**

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### **Abstract**

There are gaps or missing link in teacher preparation in Nigeria, such as limited contents of teaching subjects as well as deficiencies in pedagogy and length of practice coupled with poor provision and lack of maintenance of school facilities which affect the quality of instruction in Nigerian schools. There is therefore the need for supervision by experts who should be knowledgeable, committed and tactful enough to sense teachers 'failings, suggest appropriate solutions and evaluate the progress of corrective programmes in order to achieve improved school instruction. This paper presents the historical development of school supervision in Nigeria, nature and scope of supervision, techniques of supervision, its characteristic functions of both the federal and state inspectorate supervisory services coupled with problems of school supervision and the concepts of quality and criteria for quality improvement in our educational sector.

### **Introduction**

Education is gaining more prominence in the affairs of Nigerians more than ever before. It is perceived as a way of answering many questions and solving a myriad of problems. As a result, more funds are being committed to education both by the governments (federal, state and local government) and private citizen therefore there is a greater demand for probity and accountability. The maintenance of standards or quality improvement and assurance are now the concern of all enlightened parents or members of the society hence the need for proper supervision.

### **Meaning and Nature of Supervision**

The word supervision derived its origin from a Latin word "Super-video, meaning "To Oversee". Supervision is an essential part of any organizational set-up. In education, it is that phase of school administration, that sees to the improvement of instruction. Emeterom (2007) sees supervision as a process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with pupils and students. It is a service rendered to teachers which is directed towards controlling the quality of teaching. Supervision tires to control what is taught, who is taught and the impact of what is taught on the learner. Supervisory mechanism is a combination or integration of a number of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed with the sole aim of enhancing the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel involved in the

schooling process, and school personnel remain one of the most significant resources in the schools. (Eneastor and Azubike, 2009).

Supervision has undergone some changes unlike in the past, when supervisors concerned themselves with improvement of the teacher and his work. The activities of supervision then were mainly authoritative and descriptive. It was not until the past few decades that supervision began to be seen as a co-operative activity towards enhancing quality assurance in schools. However, quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and review of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality outputs (students) that meet set standard and expectations of the society.

Raouf, (2008) opines that quality assurance in education is the process of ensuring continuous improvement in all aspects of education business in an institution of learning, in order to satisfy the needs and expectations of the institution's customers (the society). This approach is built around the premise that every step of the process of a service and of an operation has room for improvement. This was corroborated by Demings cycle of continuous improvement which is normally based upon plan, do, check and act cycle (PDCA). This process enables the supervisor or school administrator to regularly monitor, assess and evaluate the resources inputs by identifying the Key elements that need improvement and way of addressing these elements, implementing plan, analyzing the result to ensure that significant agreement exists between the original goals and what is actually achieved by conducting further work through feedback and review with those concerned (Temponi 2005).

A critical look at the definition shows that quality assurance in education encompasses systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedures adopted to measure the performance of school administrators (principals) teachers and students against educational objectives to ensure best practices in resource inputs, utilization and curriculum management by the principals in order to produce students that achieve the set educational goals in our institutions of learning.

**Historical Development of School Supervision in Nigeria:** The significance of historical knowledge in discussing contemporary issues cannot be over-emphasized. Supervision as a field of educational practice with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities did not fall from the space rather it emerged slowly as a distinct practice, always in relation to the institutional, academic, cultural and professional dynamics that have historically generated the complex agenda of schooling. In colonial era, history has it that schools followed the establishment of mission outpost in Nigeria. These schools were under the full control of the funding missions, but when the government took over schools from the missionaries, the attempt at monitoring school programmes in West Africa was first noticeable with the promulgation of Education Ordinances in 1882. The ordinances then covered grants-in-Aid to schools for building structures, providing Advisory Board on Education and an inspectorate to serve the colonies.

Be that as it may, the history of supervision as a formal activity exercised by educational administration within a system of schools did not begin until the formation of common school in late 1890s. Based on that, an educational department was established

in 1906 and a Directorship of Education along with sub-ordinance post were created in 1930s. This is the precursor of the present Ministries of Education and invariably inspectorate services. It is also pertinent to mention or outline the five stages in the evolutions of the styles employed in the supervision of school personnel in words of Adiele, (1997) as follows: Administrative Inspection, Scientific Inspection, Democratic Supervision or Human Relations Supervision, Neo-Scientific Supervision Era and Human Resources Supervision Era.

**Administrative Inspection:** This era covers 18th, 19th and early part of the 20th century. The focus of inspection was on the personality of the teacher and the effectiveness of classroom management and maintenance of the school plant.

**Scientific Supervision (1910-1930):** This coincided with the scientific management and industrial revolution in Europe and America. The concern of the industrialists was the maximization of profit. The view held was that workers are passive and that increase in their pay will boost efficiency and enhance production in organization. Fredrick Taylor and other exponents of scientific management were behind this movement and confirmed that monetary incentives will attract workers. This approach, however, impinged on the school system and inspection became autocratic and “snoopervisory”. There was no consideration for the teacher and their welfare were neglected. Teachers had no contribution whatsoever into supervision and curriculum development.

**Democratic Supervision or Human Relation Supervision (1930-1950):** In the school system teachers were well recognized and were given co-operation and assistance as required. This era, introduced such ideas as group dynamics, policy making by consultation, diffusion of authority, vertical and horizontal communication and delegation into educational supervision.

**The Neo-Scientific Supervision Era (1960-1970):** The major criticism of the human relation era was that it was too soft on the personnel at the detriment of the school goals and objectives. The focus was on the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. Various forms of supervisory approach came into play such as Management by Objectives (MBO) Performance Objectives Systems Analysis, Cost Benefit Analysis and accountability became the watchword.

**Human Resources Supervision Era (1970-Date):** The motivation of teachers towards enhanced productivity is the concern of this era. All efforts to improve teachers’ welfare and job satisfaction are seen as means of improving their performance in the school system, A number of capacity building initiatives are being taken and school base professional support is being encouraged. Having discussed the historical development of supervision, it is also important to know the techniques involved in supervision.

## TECHNIQUES OF SUPERVISION/MODELS

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Techniques are ways or models of executing or doing things. Techniques of supervision are important for improving teaching and learning situation in schools. One of the major techniques is the-

**Clinical Classroom Supervision:** This model in words of Oraemesi (1997) aims at improving the teacher activity in the classroom. It is called clinical in the sense that it utilizes both the counseling and the “skill training” models as well as taking into account teacher behaviour and feelings in a supportive, analytical and non-evaluative context. Clinical supervision has five stages.

**Pre-observation conference:** Here the supervisor and the teacher establish contact and reach agreement about the reasons for supervision and how it will be carried out. Agreement is also reached on set objectives in the lesson, against which the teaching will be evaluated.

**Actual Classroom Observation:** The supervisor observes and carefully records the classroom interaction possibly verbatim. Generally according to professional ethics, the teacher is never interrupted or corrected before his students except in extra ordinary circumstances.

**Analysis of Data:** Data here means all information, that is, notes and tapes made by the supervisor during the classroom interaction. After observation, the supervisor analyses the data collected and looks for patterns of teaching behaviour, generates hypotheses to explain what was observed and decides what aspects should be discussed. To facilitate teachers’ feedback, it is advisable to group the feedback into positive and negative after analysis.

**Post-Observation Conference:** A conference with the teacher is then arranged by the supervisor who gives the teacher guidance and feedback on his performance. The supervisor here starts with the positive feedback, then the negative.

**Supervisor’s Self Evaluation:** After the conference the supervisor analyses his own performance as a supervisor. He evaluates his supervisory roles in the classroom interaction. He might pose questions to himself such as have I helped this teacher in his professional growth? What positive assistance did I offer him? Did I help him solve his problem? After this, the supervisor tries to make plans for further supervision where he will then avoid his past mistakes and tries to implement the resolutions taken at self evaluation. This model though time consuming, aims at assisting teachers develop objective ways of looking at their performance.

**Skill Training Model:** Skill training model. This model is by and large diagnostic and prescriptive in nature. Under the method, the supervisor focuses on teacher development through training him on certain skills. The supervisor using this model decides with his teacher those aspects of teaching behaviour that result in effective teaching. He will then

determine the method of data collection of the actual teaching behaviour of the teachers and analysis of data for strengths and weaknesses and lastly suggests remedies to improve the teachers weak areas.

**Group Supervision:** This involves supervising team-teaching, that is a group or a team of teachers teaching one class. Every member of the team taking his or her turn to teach within the time allowed. This approach may arise when a supervisor arranges it principally to promote a learning experience for the teachers.

**The Counseling Model:** In this model, the supervisor interacts with the teacher outside the classroom. He does not directly gather data about the teachers' classroom behaviour rather he is concerned about teacher's awareness. This model is highly sophisticated since it requires training in ego-counseling, psychotherapy, client-centered therapy and sensitivity training. This is exclusively reserved for trained counseling supervisors (Okeke 1997).

**Democratic Type of Supervision:** Democratic supervision like those above are the most modern style educators advocate for supervisors, especially the clinical model.

**Inter-School Visitation Technique:** This is one of the techniques of supervision employed in modern times to assist teachers grow professionally and individually. It has lasting benefits because various categories of teachers in one school are given the opportunity to visit other categories of teachers in other schools in the classroom. This is not a social visit but academic type where there is cross-pollination of ideas to improve teaching and learning process.

### **Characteristics Of Traditional Cum Modern School Supervision**

Traditional inspection was centered around the teacher and classroom and has been based largely upon the philosophy that teachers being undertrained, need careful direction and training. Under this, the teachers face degrees of embarrassment, intimidations and harassment especially when they lack the required and expected goal set.

The traditional inspection, in Nigeria context is not designed to assist teachers improve instruction, rather it was meant to checkmate teachers activities to know whether they conform to the laid down rules and regulations in teaching profession; that is to know whether teachers are doing what they are supposed to be doing. Oraemesi, (1997) asserts that the divisional inspectorate of education in some states are concerned with inspection, that is, maintenance of standards while the managers of school (state education commission) are concerned with supervision. In traditional school supervision, supervisors were hostile and intimidative to teachers particularly in their role disposition which usually occurs in external supervision style. Modern supervision, is characterized by co-operative work and teachers are removed from state of embarrassment, intimidation and fear and they assume true position as a co-operating professional member of the total group concerned. Under modern supervision, supervisors regard teachers as professional colleagues who share ideas on weaknesses and strengths in their

work and adopt the new techniques to improve standards or quality assurance. Supervisors under this style indulge in coping with the observed problems that face the teachers in the classroom, taking into account teachers' psychological, emotional and personal aspects into consideration. The supervisor is seen as providing instructional leadership, helping teachers to teach better and solving their instructional and classroom problems, not just policing the teachers as it was in the traditional inspectorate style. Finally, modern supervision is internal supervision meant for improvement of teaching and learning situations.

### **Functions Of Federal And State Inspectorate Supervisory Services**

Before delving into the functions of federal and state inspectorate supervisory services, it will be pertinent to know the conceptual meaning of school inspection. In the oxford advanced dictionary of current, English, the word. "inspect" means examine carefully or visit officially to see that rules are obeyed, that work is done properly". Beyond this definition the main emphasis of inspection is on the improvement of teaching and learning activities in the school. It tends to critically examine and evaluate the school as a place for teaching and learning enterprise. Inspection focuses on monitoring and evaluation of academic performance and development in schools. It is carried out with the intention of maintaining and improving on the quality of learning as well as improving all factors that affect teaching and learning in our school system.

In view of the above, inspection is always initiated by agents external to the school. These agents called inspectors usually come from either the federal, state or local government inspectorate services. As mentioned earlier, their focus is on monitoring, evaluating and facilitating the teaching and learning activities in schools. They ensure that appropriate teaching method are used and where deficiencies have been observed, they often recommend the use of remedial action. At the end of the inspection visits, reports are usually written and identified strength and weakness of the school with appropriate recommendation for improvement are made.

Some of the functions performed by either the federal or state inspectorate supervisory services are the following:-To get the government approval of schools especially the new ones, which should be inspected to ascertain their suitability. In such circumstance the schools are expected to meet certain standards in terms of caliber of professional teachers, the school plant (nature and suitability of building), equipment, curriculum etc. Schools found lacking will not be approved or be considered illegal schools. (FRN, 2004).

**Another Function is the Inspection for Operational Improvement:** The purpose of this is to highlight areas of deficiency in the system with a view to ensuring improvement. In this premise, a team of inspectors visit a school and spend 2 to 5 days examining the various aspects of the school system in operation. Records are taken for the staffing students' population and composition, the school finance, the academic programmes (syllabus, scheme of work, written work, students progress records ) the inspectors then holds conference with principal and staff and then return to their base to

write up reports on their findings. Such reports are valid assessments of the school system operation.

**Inspection of School for Programme Recognition:** The reason for this type of inspection is to get examination bodies such as West African Examination Council (WAEC) to recognize and approve the schools academic programmes. In the case of a new school, a team of inspectors will visit the affected school and examine all the subjects in terms of quality, quantity, staffing and equipment in which the school wants to present candidates. The reports of such a visit will then be sent to examination body for approval. In case of an old school that wants to present candidates in a new subject, the inspection will be directed in that new subject with a view to ascertaining the suitability or preparedness of the institution.

**Inspection of School as a Result of Situational Demand:** The situational type of inspection is the type carried out during a period of crises or emergency in a school. For this purpose, a panel is set up by the Ministry of Education to investigate emergent cases such as students protest or riots, school-community conflicts, (staff-verses staff, student-staff or staff-principal) or even cases of financial impropriety or other type of misconduct. During the course of duty of such panel it may wade into other school related issues such as finance, programmes and facilities. The objective of the inspection would centre on the investigation of, and reporting on a specific case or situation rather than on evaluating the school systems production process for setting of standards or for accreditation.

### **Problems Of School Supervision In Nigeria**

Educational supervision is one of the many instruments for the quality control system of the educational enterprise. It is bedeviled with a lot of problems such as:

**Lack of Mobility:** This creates transportation problems to supervisors especially in reaching remote schools in the satellite villages.

**Inadequate Exposure of Supervisor to New Trends in Education:** Change is the only permanent phenomenon in human experiences. It usually occurs particularly in human endeavour that involve several researches as it is to education. Some supervisor may be oblivious of current happenings especially when it has to do with sciences and innovations. For instance, in studying a subject like chemistry, a new formular or nomenclature may be introduced and if the supervisor is not current, he or she may not be aware thereby, discussing obsolete issues at the expense of issues in vogue.

**Ignoring Supervision Reports:** Some principals and teachers may not respond to reports due to some powers behind him or her especially those who have god-fathers in government.

**Dumping People in the Inspectorate Unit As-Punishment:** Inspectors or supervisors might use their position in government to punish those they consider their foes. Another

issue is poor planning or scheduling of supervision. Planning is the pivot that rotates any organization to success. If one fails to plan well he has already planned to fail. It is the parameter that measures success especially in area that is sensitive like supervision which requires subjects specialists.

**The Bully Posture of Supervisors:** In the past supervision was a threat to principals and classroom teachers as they were usually subjected to criticism rather than a guide to achieve a set goal. Despite the present day styles of supervision, where supervisors see teachers as professional colleagues, there are still those who show up authority by intimidating and harassing teachers on their weaknesses.

**Negative Attitude of School Head-Teachers and Members of Staff to Supervisor:**

Observations show that some head teachers and staff do not perform their assigned roles to improve teaching and learning process. It ranges from non-compliance to rules and regulations to higher level of non-challant behaviour or open challenges to supervisors. Some staff do not keep up to date lesson notes and carelessly absent themselves from duty. All these pose problems to supervision of instructions.

### **Concepts Of Quality And The Criteria For Quality Improvement**

Supervision is a means of advising, stimulating, guiding, improving, refreshing, encouraging and overseeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their co-operation to improve quality standard. It is the practice of monitoring the performance of schools, staff, students, noting the merits and demerits of using modern techniques to ameliorate the flaws of teachers thereby improving the standard of the school and achieving educational goals (Ogunsaju 1993).

In line with the above, Odiba citing Bateman in Alaba (2010) stated that some of the benefits associated with consistent quality assurance and continuous quality improvement measure include: -

- The establishment of high standard academic excellence which will go a long way to enhance the school's reputation and image.
- Improvement of communication across the school system
- Improvement of outcome so that the policies and procedures are constantly revisited through analysis of the delivery of teaching and learning.
- Identification of systems strengths and weaknesses
- Determination of programme effectiveness and
- Increase in capacity to secure funding and refinement service delivery

**Concept of Quality:** Quality is perceived differently by various professionals. For instance an accountant sees the quality of his work in terms of cost effectiveness; a customer is likely to judge it on the basis of its reliability. However, quality is something everyone considers good and wants to have (Cole, 1996). Quality has to do with whether something is good or bad, it is about the standard of something when compared with other things. It therefore presupposes that there is a set standard.

Adegbesan (2010) Conceptualizes quality from three perspectives:

- I. Efficiency in the meeting of goals
- II. Relevance to human and environmental conditions and needs.

III. Exploration of new ideas, the pursuit of excellence and encouragement of creativity.

**The Criteria for Quality Improvement:** Quality improvement practices in Nigeria education is based essentially on school inspection or supervision, monitoring and control. To enhance quality improvement, there would be provision and rehabilitation of school facilities to assist in the delivery of quality. For the available facilities, some intervention is needed to plan and utilize such facilities effectively in teaching and learning processes. It is however better and more rewarding and less costly to take steps to prevent failure and wastage before they happen in order to ensure for quality improvement which is preventive rather than corrective.

Furthermore, to enhance quality improvement there should also be in-service education for classroom teachers to up date their knowledge base and render better services in planning and implementing learning experiences. There should also be pre-service training to improve the teaching function which includes holiday university course (sandwich), sponsored staff development course, workshops, conferences, supervision of students teachers and inter-visitation of staff.

These pre-service programmes will go a long way in improving the teaching – learning activities in our schools since supervisors and teachers would have acquired knowledge that will help them improve their teaching and supervisory skills. One of the goals of Nigeria in education system as identified in the national policy on Education (FRN, 2004) is “the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the, individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society” (p.8). With the acquisition of these skills, supervisors and teachers would have acquired diversified knowledge that would improve the quality of our education, reduce incidence of unemployment, produce graduates who can vigorously pursue the goals of Nigeria education.

### **Conclusion**

The desire for quality education is a generally shared feeling in Nigeria as in many other countries of the world, though quality production is the responsibility of all stakeholders, schools in particular play key role in quality process. The traditional practices of quality control through school inspection, auditing and monitoring are retroactive actions taken after possible damages have been done. Total quality control involving both the supervisors and those to be supervised, the provision of instructional materials and school plant are suggested as better alternative for quality improvement because that might prevent wastages. However, the goal of total quality is to develop a culture of total commitment to quality process in the school so that wastage should be prevented before it occurs.

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