

## **Effective School Supervision: Challenges and Prospects for Educational Supervision in Secondary Schools**

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### **KEY WORDS**

Educational Supervision,  
Supervision of Instruction,  
Secondary School

### **ABSTRACT**

The process of supervision is complex and it permeates the whole structure of the school system. Effective school supervision provides relevant and continuous support and encouragement to teachers' instructional practices. Effective supervision of instruction is essential because it will enable teachers to be dynamic, knowledgeable and up-to-date in the teaching profession. Based on the aforementioned claims, proper and effective strict supervision in our contemporary secondary schools will foster dynamism and regular exchanges among intellectuals. This paper investigates the purpose of school supervision, challenges associated with educational supervision and prospects for educational supervision in secondary schools. The supervision of instruction is by design a developmental process with the main purpose of improving the instructional programs and to improve teaching and learning. The supervisory responsibility and monitoring teachers' instructional work will promote tremendous influence on school activities and help ensure the benefits of a strong program of instruction for students. It was concluded that efforts must be geared toward overcoming most of the challenges facing instructional supervision and transformative agenda to improve the quality of learning in secondary schools.

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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 restructuring is a stimulated drift towards school independence with the effectiveness of supervision. 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 while supervision may be essential to guide them in

their decision-making and to monitor their use of resources. Effective school supervision provides relevant and continuous support and encouragement to improve teachers' instructional practices. The supervision model is based on the unique qualities of each teacher such as their age, teaching background, working conditions, educational background, professional needs as well as their time constraints, resource availability and relevant learning opportunities. According to Bernard and Goodyear (2008), supervision is an intervention given by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of the same profession. This relationship is one of evaluations that lasts a long time and it serves the dual functions of improving the professional functioning of the junior member(s), keeping an eye on the standard of the professional services provided to clients and acting as a screening mechanism for people seeking to enter the particular profession.

According to Chike-Okoli (2006), supervision is a process whereby a person uses guidance and interest-sparking activities to help improve teaching and learning environments in educational institutions. It goes on to say that supervision involves giving advice, giving instructions and having conversations to ensure that the capital equipment, financial resources and human resources are all set to use to achieve the stated educational objectives. Supervision of instruction involves motivating the teachers to explore new instructional strategies to improve teaching and learning process. To have effective teaching and learning process, the teacher must be informed of educational goals, standards and suitable materials. An effective teacher argues that supervision of instruction is essential because it will enable teachers to be dynamic and knowledgeable. Through supervision teachers will be skilled and up-to-date in the teaching profession and teachers who are supervised regularly and effectively will develop positive relationships with their supervisors and teachers. Based on the aforementioned claims, proper and effective strict supervision in our contemporary secondary schools will foster dynamism and regular exchanges among intellectuals.

### **The Purpose of Educational Supervision**

The purpose of school supervision is the promotion and development of favorable settings or teaching and learning process which eventually leads to the improvement of society. The ultimate aim is to improve the overall efficiency and raise the academic standards of the institutions. Specifically, the purpose of classroom instruction supervision is to help teachers to learn what their problems are and seek the best methods of solving them regardless they are individual or group problems. 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. According to Chike-Okoli

(2006), the goal of supervision may be divided into different categories as: teacher improvement which is focused on ensuring that instructors do their duties efficiently, ensuring that new teachers receive training so they can perform effectively on the job, providing teachers with specialized knowledge, assisting teachers in finding the sources of their lesson plans, offering technical support when needed, ensuring that discipline is upheld, keeping teachers' morale high, offering suggestions for ways to enhance teachers performance, and offering chances to identify teachers with unique skills or traits. The non-teacher improvement purpose is not specifically focused on the teachers but it does direct the supervisors in ensuring that the school is supplied with instructional materials, maintaining the standard of instruction there, giving students the chance to evaluate the moral climate of the school and giving feedback to curriculum planners on the need for curriculum improvements.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of a Supervisor**

A supervisor is a person who functions and carries out duties that deal with managing both human and material resources within the school system and how they can be best utilized. The supervisor is expected to assist in the learning environment to maximize the available resources to achieve the set goals. Supervisors typically have two or three distinct duties which typically involve the following:

1. A helpful induction into the profession can be facilitated by mentoring new teachers.
2. Bringing individual teachers up to minimum standards of effective teaching (quality assurance and maintenance functions of supervision).
3. Helping to improve individual teachers' competencies and proficiency.
4. Working with groups of teachers in a collaborative effort to improve students' learning.
5. Working with groups of teachers to adapt the local curriculum to the needs and abilities of diverse groups of students toward national standards.

### **The Basic Principles of Educational Supervision**

The basic principles of educational supervision include the following:

1. **Purposiveness:** the agents involved must decide at the start of the lesson plan what constitutes poor or great behaviour to increase objectivity and output.
2. **Plan:** A manager must understand how, when, what and where to start his efforts.
3. **Diversity:** The supervisor should allow for the diversification of supervision to promote resentment and intelligent innovation.

4. **Dialectical Relation:** Supervision needs to be cyclical to give teachers feedback that is democratic and collaborative which leads to conscious improvement.
5. **Principles of Safe and Healthy Environment:** The school environment should be healthy and conducive to teaching-learning activities for both teachers and students.
6. **Principle of Adequate Information for Employees:** A newly recruited staff needs to know the objectives, roles, schedule of duties, operation and career policies of the organization and have access to the annual report and terms and conditions of service.
7. **Principle of Guidance:** The supervisor has a responsibility to monitor personality development and guide employees.
8. **Principle of Effort Recognition and Reward:** Recognition and reward for good work done when carried out promptly and publicly serve as a morale booster for other staff. According to Opinmi (2011), the following are some ways in which the supervisor could acknowledge the good work of his staff: (a) Prompt acknowledgement and recognition of the job in the presence of others. (b) Follow-up with a formal letter of commendation and make sure that the letter gets into his/her file. (c) Giving a certificate of merit to such staff. (d) Giving a bonus of cash reward. (e) Giving some incremental credits in the salary. (f) Recommendations for promotion to the next level.
9. **Principle of Constructive Criticism:** The main task of the supervisor is to motivate his staff to work to the best of their abilities while constructive criticism should be made in private and excellent work should be honored.
10. **Principle of Liberality:** It is important to give employees the chance to strive for leadership roles. The mindset of subordinates should be that of aspiring superiors to assign duties to ownership and responsibility.
11. **Principle of Encouragement:** The supervisor owes a duty to encourage the staff to thirst for new knowledge and continue to search for new ways of carrying out duties through reading, discussion with senior colleagues, seminars, workshops, training and re-training programs.
12. **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.
13. **Principle of Objectivity:** Both internal and external supervisors should be objective in their sense of judgment and decision-making process to their subordinates.

## **Challenges Associated with Educational Supervision in Secondary Schools**

Instructional supervision within the school system has various forces that affect the effective functioning of the entire system. Various factors that hinder successful educational supervision in Nigeria are:

### **1. Government Issues**

Many authors from Nigeria have opined that government contributes to the problems associated with supervision in following ways:

1. Inadequate funding coming from the government of the day where they pay less attention in terms of full funding of the educational system in Nigeria.
2. Political instability where it dominates all sectors suffering due to some attitudes of the present government's inability to restore and normalize the school calendar to focus on learning activities in the system.
3. Constant change in educational policies due to personal interest and greed by hungry politicians.
4. Lack of adequate training for supervisors in the system led to destruction in teaching and learning because many supervisors are not qualified to perform their duty because they lack basic training and refresher courses.
5. The poor remuneration of all categories of teachers in the Nigerian educational system is due to government attitude, molestation and the section regarded as a dumping ground for those who have no choice.
6. Insufficient staffing of competent and qualified supervisors to do the work of supervision due to the Politicization of the appointment of supervisors and other agencies.

### **2. Teachers' Issues**

Teachers contribute to the problem of school supervision in the following ways:

- (1) Unprofessional attitudes work from the teachers because they are not motivated which is why they pay less attention to their duty.
- (2) Lack of interest in work because some see teaching as the last job in modern society and some of them lack basic knowledge or formal training for teaching and learning situations.
- (3) Lack of basic qualifications for teaching in our modern-day schools and no proper supervision to recruit teaching appointments in schools.

### **3. Limited Educational Resources**

The issue of scarce resources is an economic one that attempts to rationalize spending to avoid waste. Effective instructional supervision however would be difficult to carry out if the funds that are supposed to be

available are not there. The non-availability of such resources would affect the supervision exercise.

### **Prospects for Educational Supervision in Secondary Schools**

The primary objective of the supervision process in secondary schools is to offer teachers direct assistance to improve their performance towards the goal of increasing students' learning. To achieve the goals of instructional supervision in secondary schools, efforts must be geared toward overcoming most of the challenges facing instructional supervision. Additionally, if education was one of the tools to realize the goals of the transformation agenda of the present government in Nigeria there would be a need to improve the quality of learning in secondary schools through effective supervision of instruction in the following ways:

- Adequate funding: The government at all levels must strive to make adequate funds available to the education sector to procure the necessary materials that will aid the effective supervision of instruction in secondary schools. This can be done by way of increasing the grant usually allocated to schools on a term basis. Government can also seek public-private partnerships in funding education since it has become clear that government alone can no longer provide the necessary funds that are required in the education sector. The United Nations resolved that 26% of the nation's budget should go to the education sector. Implementing this resolution would equally boost the fund available to the education sector which will afford all agencies and parastatals in education to carry out their educational activities effectively.
- Capacity building among major stakeholders: To ensure adequate and effective supervision of instruction in Kwara state secondary schools, the government needs to embark on capacity building of supervisors, administrators as well as teachers to enable them to perform their duties effectively. This can be done through regular training, induction programs, seminars and workshops to equip them with the necessary skills and keep them abreast of the current trends in the school system. They can equally be given opportunities to participate in international conferences in order to equip themselves with what operates in the school system outside Nigeria.
- Selection of qualified supervisors: One of the ways of ensuring effective supervision of instruction is to select or appoint personnel who have technical skills in education, especially, at the secondary school level. Government should not sacrifice merit and competence only because of political affiliation. Qualified personnel with sufficient and relevant knowledge, skills and experience in the secondary schools should be appointed as

supervisors so that they can professionally perform their responsibilities.

- Employment of supervisors with higher educational qualifications: Supervisors with higher qualifications are more likely to perform better in the field than those with lower qualifications. They can display more confidence in their workplace. Additionally, they are more accessible to quality information and adapt to changing occupational conditions than their counterparts with lower qualifications. Personnel with lower qualifications cannot cope with the modern changes. Thus, higher educational qualifications play a significant role in supervision.

### Conclusion

Supervision requires the leader to oversee, assess, evaluate and direct teachers as well as school administrators to ensure that the institution is meeting its aims and objectives. Supervision promotes a vision to implement change in the school system that brings about quality. The supervision of instruction is by design a developmental process with the main purpose of improving the instructional programs and improving teaching and learning. The supervisory function is best utilized as a continuous process rather than one that responds only to personnel problems. The supervisory responsibility has the opportunity to have a tremendous influence on school activities and helps ensure the benefits of a strong program of instruction for students. The successful supervisor should be knowledgeable about educational leadership and management. To ensure effective supervision of instruction, teachers should be knowledgeable about real-life issues and foster dynamism in realizing educational goals.

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***Citation of this Article:***

ADEOYE, M. A., (2023). Effective School Supervision: Challenges and Prospects for Educational Supervision in Secondary Schools. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research and Evaluation*, 11(1), 110-117.