

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper carried out an appraisal of instructional supervision and quality assurance in schools in Nigeria. It looked at the concepts of instructional supervision and quality assurance in schools, prerequisites, advantages, factors militating against desirable instructional supervisions and quality assurance and strategies for setting effective instructional supervision and quality assurance. The survey of the present standard in schools which was x-rayed showed that the instructional supervision and quality assurance in schools are loosing control despite the effort of the government in setting up the standard. This is due to inadequate funding, poor management of available resources, moral laxity among individuals within the system, inadequate instructional facilities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, indiscipline among students and staff, appointments and promotion of school administrators and teachers not based on merit etc. Despite all the problems, there is hope to bring the standard to globally and nationally desirable state. Based on the problems above, useful recommendations were made especially that the government should increase education funding; that there should be judicious and accountable utilization of available fund and decision should be taken to implement the application of 26% of Nigerian national income to education as recommended by UNESCO.

KEY WORD: Instructional supervision, Quality, Assurance, Nigeria, Schools

INTRODUCTION

The mission of any school is to provide adequate teaching and learning for the students. School administrators perform many professional and administrative functions in order to achieve the goals of the institutions. One of the critical administrative functions of a school administrator is instructional supervision. Instructional supervision is the overseeing and guiding the teaching and learning process in an academic institution. Kochlar (2005), sees instructional supervision as those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils, and that whatever is done to improve on the teachers ability to deliver lessons to improve on pupils' learning. Eya and Chukwu (2012) saw instructional supervision in schools merely as a process for teachers' improvement purposes which include among other things ensuring that teachers perform their assigned functions. The school administrator supervises the teachers in order to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning. The school inspectors from the Ministry of Education are supposed to see that this function of instructional supervision is properly carried out in various schools by various school administrators.

Presently as observed by Ifedili (2013) that jobs have been so much humanized because of the contribution of the Modern Theorists. The gesture seems to be effective depending to a greater extent on the discipline of individuals within the system. An organizational survival depends to a larger extent on the willingness of individuals within the system to sacrifice a degree of individuality and to conform to certain behavioral norms. Ifedili (2010) has shown that Theory Y of McGregor is not applicable in Nigeria. This theory believes that workers are responsible and can perform well without closed supervision. In Nigeria, productivity increases with close supervision because of cultural differences, level of education and standard of living

For school administrators, there is need for proper time utilization and goal setting. According Ifedili (2002), principals or school administrators who utilize their time well and set goals achieve more and are more focused. She also found that both male and female public and private secondary school administrators were rated low in time utilization and goal setting. An educational administrator needs his or her intelligence, skills, aptitude, ideas, energy, creativity and time in setting his or her goals.

The quality of education given to the citizenry to a larger extent depends on the implementation of policy provision and one of these is employment of qualified teachers. The quality of teachers is one of the determinants of quality in educational system. Who is a teacher? According to Odebumi (1982), a teacher is one who is resourceful, has a good sense of humors, possesses sound knowledge of human psychology, communicates effectively and shows interest in the welfare of the students; he guides and motivates and is patient, tolerable, flexible in his ways, fair in his judgments and firm in his discipline. Teachers are vital human resources in the training of the young minds. A teacher is a nation builder. He or she is accountable to the students or pupils, parents, community, employers and to the teaching profession.

A trained teacher is expected to be responsible and initiative. He or she should be able to put in his or her best without having to be pushed around.

Igbo (2002) in his study found that the quality of student learning was directly related to the quality of classroom instruction. Also Kinutai and Zachariah in 2012 carried out a study on the supervision of teachers on the academic performance of students in Kenya. A positive correlation was found between the

instructional supervision and students' academic performance. The quality of classroom delivery will depend on the knowledge, preparation of the lesson and motivation of the teacher which can be influenced positively by the supervisory performance of the school administrator.

The process of instructional supervision has undergone a lot of changes. It moved from autocratic inspection to a more democratic instructional supervision in schools. Instructional supervision allows educators and administrators to improve not only classroom but the school as a whole. Ani (2007) put more insight in the purposes for instructional supervision as contained in the Universal Basic Education as: -

- Ensuring that teachers perform their assigned functions effectively.
- Ensuring that teachers are capable of carrying out their responsibilities.
- Ensuring that new teachers receive training to enable them function effectively on the job.
- Ensuring that teachers are given help whenever there is need.
- Providing professional information to the teachers.
- Guiding teachers to the sources of instructional materials
- Providing technical assistance to the teachers especially in the area of teaching methods and the use of instructional materials
- Ensuring that discipline is maintained during classroom instruction
- Helping or suggesting how to improve on the performance of incompetent teachers.
- Providing an enabling environment to discover teachers with special abilities and qualities

The quality of teachers greatly affects student promotion rate, repetition rate, retention rate, withdrawal rate, and dropout rate. When quality of education is given to the masses, there is hope for the graduation of properly skilled, knowledgeable and productive workforce. Many Nigerian academicians have criticized the quality of education given to Nigerian three levels of education. Many B.Ed graduates according to Aghenta (2001) are now half baked and cannot provide the much needed quality education. He warned that the low quality of education in Nigeria will take a further dive since the poorly trained teachers are very poorly remunerated, motivated and often unceremoniously removed from teaching before they can establish themselves as experienced teachers.

PURPOSES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION

There are many reasons for instructional supervision in schools. Some of these according to Ogunu (2000) are: -

- To make sure that teachers are performing the duties which they are employed to do.
- Assisting teachers to develop and utilize methods and materials which will improve the progress of a child and improve teachers' professional effectiveness.
- To know the performance of teachers recruited.
- To discover special abilities possessed by the teachers in school.
- To provide opportunities for staff development.
- To know the effectiveness of classroom management by teachers.
- To appraise the performance of the school.
- To identify the needs of the school etc.

In summary, the instructional supervision has the advantages of an increase in teachers' professional growth; creating conducive learning environment; improvement in students' achievement in external examinations, lowering of the dropout rate, increases the teachers' job satisfaction, increases the stakeholders' confidence in the school system etc.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The main purpose of setting up any institution is to provide effective teaching and learning so that the outcome will be of desired standard. This brings one to the desire for quality assurance

Quality assurance is the process of ensuring that the educational outputs (graduating students) are processed with all required personnel and quality programs, facilities and materials to meet the global acceptance. It is a guarantee of confidence and certainty by a program of study given by institution that standard are being maintained and enhanced. It is a continuous process in the quality teaching and learning activities which will be achieved.

The following are the key components of quality assurance instrument in primary and post primary schools according to the Federal Ministry of Education (2009) : - a. Background information about the school b. Achievements and standards attained by the school c. Learners' participation d. Provision for care, guidance and support e. Leadership and management of school f. School-Community relationship g. Learning environment h. Teaching and learning process i. Curriculum and other related activities. Looking at the key components of the quality assurance, one can say that they have a lot to do with instructional supervision.

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION

The present situation of instructional supervision in most of the schools does not promote the much expected teachers' development and students' learning because many principals pay more attention to other routine administrative duties which keep them in their offices during school hours. Many hardly venture into the classroom as it is expected of them to check the content and method of classroom delivery of the teachers. Many principals do not have the much needed knowledge and skill to evaluate and assess the teachers' lesson plans to ensure adherence to curricula objectives as teachers' lesson notes are expected to conform to schemes of work and laid down standards of the government. The appointments and promotion of many principals which should be strictly on merit in order to appoint the best workers, is often sadly neglected in Nigerian educational system. According to Ifedili (2006) Nigerian states are bedeviled with politics of ethnicity in the appointments and promotions of educational administrators and teachers. Many institutions have unwritten laws preventing the appointments and promotions of individuals based on tribalism, nepotism, religion, gender etc. These actions negate the human right laws which insist on equal and fair treatment of all citizens. The actions amount to blatant suppression of excellence and diligence and promotion of mediocrity which sometimes assume frightening dimensions.

Nigerian primary and post primary school administrators have had poor development and management of human resources in recent years because of poor organizational skill. Little attention is given to cooperative efforts of the workers. The teachers are becoming highly demoralized. There is lack of confidence and trust. This hinders proper delegation of duties. There is generally little development of staff. Those who want to develop themselves are being witch-hunted. There is lack of professionalism in the management of affairs due to the present attitude to work ethics, maintenance culture, materialism, lack of integrity, courtesy and refinement, poor time management etc.

Ifedili (2010) observed that out of 62% male and 38% female principals in Nigerian secondary schools, only six states had 50-64% of graduate teachers with teaching qualification; five states had less than 24% graduate teachers with teaching qualification and 31 states had less than 50% graduate teachers with teaching qualification. These statistics are very worrisome. Teaching became professionalized in Nigeria in 1993. Many non-professionals are still in the teaching profession. Many teachers are not qualified to be there. The dignity of the profession should be maintained at all times by insisting on employment of teachers based on merit.

The Nigerian government has set a standard and it is the role of the school administrators to implement it in their various schools. According to Alimi (2012), the ten-year average performance of students in the West African School Certificate (WASC) examination from 2005-2014 was 26% and 13% for National Examinations Council (NECO). Also, within the same period the examination malpractice index rose from 6.9 in 2005 to 7.2 in 2007 (Exam Ethics Project, 2007). The performance of students has continued to deteriorate. In 2014, 68.2% of the students failed WASC (Vanguard, 2014).

The present high rate of insecurity in the country has also affected the behaviors of many teachers and students. The high rate of indiscipline among the students and teachers negatively affect school's operational climate. The attainment of the lofty aims and objectives of education cannot be realized unless there is in our schools necessary peaceful and orderly environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning (Nwagwu, 2000).

According to Ifedili (2009), the poor funding of the schools has led to many difficulties in having an ideal instructional supervision by the school administrator. This inadequate fund for the implementation of formulated policies has been the major hindrance to the achievement of standard in education. It has led to the provision of inadequate facilities, instructional materials, equipments etc. There is a non-chalant attitude among the teachers who are supposed to implement the standard because their salaries and wages are sometimes even their promotions delayed. The constant strike actions by unions have affected the achievements of the goals of education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended 26% of country's Gross Domestic Products as the standard budget allocation to educational sector. Within the past twenty years, no government in Nigeria has met the allocation requirement for the educational sector. Also some parts of the budgeted sum for some years were never fully released. This means that the meager sum budgeted for education was partially withheld.

Another problem militating against quality assurance in education is the inefficiency in the management of the available fund. The inefficiency comes in forms of using middlemen to purchase equipments, inflation of the contracts' sum, willful wastages, using public facilities for personal purpose, deliberate over payment, planned stealing and payment to ghost workers.

Moral laxities as well as insensitivity towards ethical values affect quality assurance in schools. These are manifested in forms of sexual harassment, cultism, blocking etc. Many school administrators aid and abet in examination malpractices.

The rate at which inspectors visit schools nowadays is becoming very irregular. Ogonu (2001) and Ifedili 2011 in their studies found that the rate of visits by the inspectors was below average. The inspection of schools is facing many problems. Some of these problems are: -inadequate finance, transportation,

inadequate inspectors, poor record keeping, inadequate training, failure of some schools to provide needed information, recommendations made by inspectors who visited schools were never implemented. It was also found by Ifedili (ibid) that many erring principals and vice principals were often posted to the inspectorate division as chief inspectors of schools. Many of these were not professionals and they carried their negative attitude to the inspectorate and ended up not achieving the purpose of their deployment. Ogunu (ibid) found that despite the nations widespread of inspectorate units, reactions from the stakeholders in the nation's education tend to indicate that schools are not regularly and properly inspected and that quality of instruction in the schools has progressively declined as evidenced by the poor performance of students in public examination.

It could be said that the system is faced with poor administrative leadership. The principals have been implicated in teachers' poor disposition and attitude to work as they have failed to give adequate supervision of instruction in schools.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, many researchers have shown that instructional supervision has a lot to do with quality assurance in schools. This is in terms of school administrators carrying out their functions well so that the teachers will do what they are expected to do in imparting the right knowledge to the students and pupils. The situation of the present day instructional supervision which is highly unacceptable is applicable to all schools. Schools are expected to be all round pacesetters because of the philosophy establishing them. The issues mentioned in this paper militating against effective teaching and learning eg - moral laxities as well as insensitivity towards ethical values etc. which have highly affected quality assurance negatively should be addressed. Many people look at the monetary reward of teaching but are ignorant of the unquantifiable non-monetary reward of teaching profession. The academic performance of students and teachers' job performance will improve if there is an ideal instructional supervision by the school administrators. The school administrators should know that the world has become a global village and must do their best to see that their students can comfortably compete with students not only in Nigeria but in any part of the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the discussions above, the following recommendations are made in order to improve instructional supervision in schools: -

- Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized for both the principals and teachers to create better awareness on the importance of instructional supervision.
- Appointments and promotion of school administrators and teachers should be based solely on merit. This will help to recruit the best workforce.
- There is need for proper time utilization and goal setting by the school administrators.
- Only professionally trained personnel should be appointed as school inspectors.
- Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education should make arrangement for the schools to be visited often.

- In-service training should be organized for the school administrators, teachers and inspectors based on the need assessment.
- Teachers' salaries and other entitlements should be paid as and when due. Strikes should be avoided by the management. There is need to treat the workers with respect and give them the sense of belonging in the organization.
- School heads as school business administrators should raise fund to augment on whatever fund that is officially made available to the school and there should be prudence in the management of fund.
- There should be increased funding and judicious and accountable utilization of available fund.
- Nigerian government should strive to budget 26% of her National Income to education as recommended by UNESCO. Also, any budgeted fund for education should be released in full.
- Schools should be furnished with instructional materials and equipments.
- There should be an annual students' rating of their teachers and teachers' rating of their school principals. Those with good ratings should be rewarded.
- Moral and ethical values should be upheld in order not to make teaching profession a child's play.

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