

THE ROLE OF SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

The problem is that, the importance of education is currently downplayed by both teachers and students alike, owing to lack of proper supervision of instruction. The current practice is to look for short cuts and wait for salaries at the end of the month (for teachers), as well as engaging in "sorting" (giving money to the teachers/lecturers) in order to pass or get good grades (for students). The over-riding issue is "workability" whether good or bad, to the detriment of excellence (doing things well, hard work, and the enhancement of qualitative education). This paper unveiled the important role of supervision of instruction, distinctions between supervision and some related terms like inspection, etc. It underscored the fact that some problems militate against the exercise of the supervision of instruction like corruption, lack of finance, etc., and proffered some solutions to it such as the enthronement of honesty and integrity, proper funding, etc. The paper therefore concluded that for qualitative education to be maintained, there must be thorough supervision of instruction at all levels of education, solutions to those problems obstructing the exercise of supervision of instruction provided, and the "quid pro quo" attitudes (something for something principle) must be eschewed. This will provide a lasting panacea to the myriads of problems which have for years, been rearing their ugly heads in the educational sector due to sheer negligence of supervision of instruction.

Key Words: Supervision, Instruction, Education, Problems, Learning.

Introduction

The availability of the required psychometric properties and the maintenance of homogeneity of essentials in teaching and learning are ascertained through thorough and continuous supervision, especially the supervision of instruction by the concerned bodies or agents. Its necessity is second to none, given the vital position occupied by education in solving societal problems through proper education, and awareness creation. The centrality of supervision of instruction in revamping the near-decay of educational nutrients in teaching and learning today, triggered by laziness, corruption, evil menace, get-rich-quick-mentality, employment of ineptitude and inefficient teachers and instructors, etc., is justified by the fact that it is through proper teaching and learning that good students (citizens) are formed, as the essence of erected edifices in institutions is to house the students and personnel for academic engagements and encounters.

Teaching is commonly known as a "profession." But what does this term actually mean? According to the Australian Council of Professions, a profession is a group of individuals who are bound by ethical standards. They are recognized by the public as possessing specialized knowledge and skills in a well-established field of study, acquired through research, education, and extensive training. These professionals are committed to using their expertise for the benefit of others.

The definition also emphasizes that each profession operates under ethical codes, which go beyond an individual's personal moral obligations. These codes establish and uphold high standards of conduct, particularly in relation to the services provided to the public and interactions with fellow professionals. Typically, these codes are enforced by the profession itself and are acknowledged and accepted by the community.

The pertinent question is, is there anyone who, in his right mode of thinking would be happy to see his/her children in schools being messed up due to poor instruction? Who, as a father would be happy to see his children abandoned, kept as orphans in institutions in their various desires for knowledge? These questions demand deeper answers and reflection.

In the real sense of it, the government (head of school) serves here as a father, looking out for ways to get the students in various educational cadres of society properly taught through various programs like monitoring and supervisions of various kinds. That is why this paper looked into this important role of supervision of instruction in educational administration as its proper use will provide a lasting panacea to the myriads of some problems rearing their ugly heads in the educational system.

The Concept of Supervision of Instruction

According to Isiozor and Nzegebulem (2019), supervision of the school personnel is central to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the school. Some conceptual explorations are therefore essential here for proper comprehension of the main focus of this work.

Supervision

Supervision is etymologically derived from the Latin word "Supervideo". It is a conglomeration of two words, "super" which means "over" and "video" which means "to watch or see". Supervision, therefore, literally means "to oversee". There is a connotation of hierarchy here which indicates a situation where someone is set over another to watch over his or her deeds. According to Onye (2012), supervision is an interaction between two or more persons aimed at improving the value of an activity or a system. She equally states that supervision combines the elements of integrations, procedures, defined processes, and amicable conditions that are carefully designed to improve the productivity of a group of individuals. Supervision could be amended as a leadership process employed by managerial personnel to influence their subordinates to achieve organizational and personal goals.

For the National Policy on Education (2014), it is the efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to teachers and other school workers in the development of institutions through the stimulation of professional growth of teachers, selection, and revision of educational objectives, methods, materials, and evaluation of instruction. Iroegbu (2012) sees it as that which is all about encouraging, advising, stimulating, improving, and overseeing teachers, students, and their activities to achieve school goals. Iroegbu's definition is in line with the modern aim of supervision which is very far from witch haunting anyone, but about advising and stimulating the teachers and students to achieve educational goals. It is neither meant

to frighten nor expel anyone, unless in extreme cases of insubordination or where the person(s) in question is (are) working contrary to the achievement of the said goals.

Instruction

The word "instruction" (noun) has its roots in the Latin word "structus," which means "built," and it is etymologically connected to the word "structure." Its modern usage originated in the early 15th century from Old French. Presently, it pertains to the act or practice of teaching and the profession of a teacher. Instruction involves providing guidance and organization. It encompasses the process of conveying knowledge, teaching, and educating individuals.

According to İşman, instruction can be defined as a planned process of teaching and learning that involves organizing learning and motivating students to engage in the learning process. It is a systematic approach that requires the collaboration of teachers, students, materials, and the learning environment in order to achieve successful learning outcomes. The primary focus of instruction is on teaching and learning activities that enable students to acquire knowledge and transfer it from short-term to long-term memory. To accomplish this, students need to learn strategies such as rehearsal, encoding, processing, and providing feedback on new knowledge to facilitate recall when necessary.

It is important to clarify the distinction between the terms "Teaching" and "Instruction," as they are often used interchangeably by educators. While teachers are often referred to as instructors, implying that their role is to provide knowledge or instructions, there is a subtle difference between the two.

Teaching is a more multifaceted process that involves various aspects such as techniques, strategies, and approaches aimed at facilitating learning. Teachers need to develop diverse instructional materials and employ appropriate strategies to effectively deliver their lessons.

Moreover, teaching is an ongoing and continuous process that starts when individuals begin their education and continues throughout their academic journey until graduation and beyond, as they gain work experience. Learning does not solely occur through teachers; individuals also learn from their surroundings. This aspect of teaching makes it both formal and informal. Learning is formal when it takes place within the classroom, while it becomes informal when knowledge is acquired outside the school environment. For instance, learning to read and write in school with the guidance of teachers is a formal educational process, whereas parents teaching their children about life principles, values, and living well at home is an example of informal education.

On the other hand, instruction is not as intricate as teaching. It simply involves providing directions or guidance. Instructions specify what needs to be done and how to do it, similar to equipment manuals for furniture, toys, or model rocket kits. In a school setting, teachers may give instructions on how to answer a test or conduct an experiment, after which students are expected to carry out the task independently.

The Difference between Teaching and Instruction

In strict terms, teaching and instruction can be considered as separate entities. However, they are often intertwined, especially in the field of education, and both

play a crucial role in facilitating learning and personal growth. Here are some distinctions between the two:

1. Teaching focuses on the holistic development of the student, whereas instruction primarily targets skill development.
2. Teaching typically stimulates critical thinking skills, whereas instruction tends to stimulate functional thinking skills.
3. Teaching aims to create new and unique outcomes, while instruction aims to produce replicas or exact copies of a desired outcome.
4. Teaching involves explaining how something is done, while instruction involves stating how something should be done.
5. When teaching, a person transmits various elements such as concepts, ideas, theories, and historical knowledge. In contrast, when someone is instructed, they receive a specific set of tools, methods, or tasks to perform.
6. In teaching, a teacher presents ideas that can be challenged or questioned, while in instruction, an instructor establishes rules that the learner is expected to follow.
7. As teaching provokes thought or ideas the instruction prescribes ideas or thoughts.
8. While teaching leads to liberation through the imparting of knowledge, instruction is somehow regimentation.

The Difference Between Inspection and Supervision

These two words "Supervision" and "Inspection" are interchangeably used, especially by the commoners in the society, and not by educationists. The simple question is, are the two words the same in meaning and function? The answer is no, though they are closely related owing to their overseeing function.

Inspection is mainly concerned with finding out what the teachers are getting right or wrong, ascertaining the proper situation of everything, and compliance with laid down rules by the teachers and principals. Here there is proper monitoring of the school for the maintenance of standards and quality.

Supervision deals with the improvement of performance for proper development to be accelerated. The central concern and emphasis here are the provision of the required guidance and help to the teachers to make them competent enough and have the room for self-introspection and analysis for self-criticism and correction for optimum performance. The difference is better articulated by Anyaogu (2021) by stating thus:

Inspection focuses on monitoring and evaluating performance. It seeks to answer the question: how well is the school performing relative to standards? The result of Inspection is thus a normative statement about how well the school or the individual is doing. Supervision on the other hand focuses on improving performance to accelerate development. It seeks to answer the question: what are the school's or teacher's strength and weaknesses and how can the latter be improved? The two concepts are similar in that they aim firstly at improving academic performance in schools, and secondly, ensuring the achievement of the academic goals of the schools through structural activities.

They are similar, but have their differences, though the aim of this work is not to dwell mainly on treating such. One of their differences is that Inspection is more formal whereas supervision is less formal. Then, while Inspection centres on monitoring and evaluation of performance, supervision is concerned with maintaining and improving standards. And as Inspection is normally executed by external agents, (such as the inspection departments), supervision is normally performed by internal agents (such as the head teacher and head of the subject).

The Supervision of Instruction

Supervision of instruction is very important in the administration of education and was aptly articulated by Anyaogu (2021), as a process of aiding teachers to grow professionally through the improvement of instruction. It is concerned with the process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to help themselves. It is a process of guiding, directing, and helping the teacher in the improvement of the instructional process.

The Skills Needed in Supervision of Instruction

Izuagba (2018) noted that supervision is a constant, regular, and continuous process of personal guidance and advice/counsel to teachers for encouragement to improve. The supervisor oversees, guides, and ensures that expected standards are achieved. Based on these very facts, the supervisor needs some skills to do it creditably. Quoting Olowole (1989), she listed some of them such as:

Pedagogical Skills

This skill entails having proper knowledge of the subject matter, the teaching methods, improvisation of teaching learners' materials, proper presentation of the teaching content, lesson notes, plans, and units.

Evaluation Skills

This has to do with the skills of questioning, continuous assessment, and examination.

Disciplinary Skills

Here class control, punishment, use of rules as well as regulations, and maintenance of order are involved.

Motivational Skills

The use of rewards and reinforcements etc. are the skills required here.

Reportorial Skills

From the name "Reportorial", report documentation, knowing how to handle class registers and log books, etc., are the components.

Managerial Skills

This involves knowing how to manage things and issues such as time management, proper use of teaching aids, and handling of situations as well as problems.

Interactive Skills

Because the supervisor will always be in constant contact with people, he/she needs Interactive skills to do the job well such as knowing how to create rapport with people, being friendly, and cooperating well with them.

Analytical Skills

He/she should have the ability to interpret data well by having that statistical ability for such. He/she can critically analyze important issues.

These skills and more will be of great help to the supervisor to help the government/school authority to achieve the educationally set objectives and should not be joked with.

The Role of Supervision of Instruction in the Administration of Education

This section is the main focus of this paper, as supervision of instruction plays a vital role in education which leads to positive changes in society for the good of all as indicated below:

Enhancing Quality of Instruction

This is the major objective of the supervision of instruction in schools. This is so because it is through this avenue that one can ascertain whether what the teachers are teaching align with the stipulated standards and if the students are learning. It serves as a barometer for measuring up the quality of the teaching and learning activities going on in an institution.

Checking of Curriculum Content and Learning Materials

When classroom instruction is performed with strict adherence to the curriculum content and the use of appropriate learning or instructional materials, the learning outcome is always successful. There is no better way of making this discovery except through the supervision of instruction in schools. Through this exercise, those in charge can easily know whether the teaching and learning that are supposed to be taken seriously are poor for corrective measures to be taken.

Evaluation of School Staff

Through the exercise of supervision of instruction, the staff quality is known. It helps in the replacement or demotion of teachers owing to ineptitude and inefficiency, as they would bring down the standard of the expected educational objectives which will be detrimental to society. But where the best teaching and learning are going on, it will boost the morale and energy of the administration to continue to give in their best in the institution.

Growth and Improvement of Teaching and Learning

Supervision of instruction plays an important role as it helps in the growth and improvement of teaching and learning in schools. This is so as both teachers and learners try to give in their best especially whenever they are being observed, as people tend to perform maximally when challenged. In the bid to withstand the challenge (the supervision of instruction) which may be frequent, based on how the exercise is being carried out, it may become habitual to them (teachers and learners) and the resultant effect will be a permanent change in behavior for the best in terms of achieving the set educational objectives.

Provision of Reliable Information

Because supervision of instruction is always an eyewitness account, it acts as a source of reliable information for those in need of such, mainly the government and the

administrators of schools, and proprietors, in the case of private schools. Such information is very essential for official purposes.

It aids in Proper Planning

The strengths and weaknesses observed in schools during the supervision of instruction aid the administrators in educational planning to know where to do some reinforcements for better productivity and where to maintain especially in the areas of recorded strengths. If the government plans to exterminate poor quality of education in the country in the year 2040 as the case may be, this is the way to begin the planning through thorough observations of what goes on in the classroom, by panel-beating some areas for the long-expected objectives to be realized.

Success Measurement

Enhancing the success of the learners as well as the teachers is one of the major aims of supervision of instruction. Success is aimed at, whenever any educational activity is established. There is success for the institution, learners, teachers, and even the government when the learners complete their academic programs as scheduled, both in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. That is why the government established supervision in education to achieve the desired goals.

For Smith (2007), success is the completion of a college degree. The implication here is that success is the completion of a school or university program. For Kuh et al, (2006a) it is academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post college performance.

Additionally, Braxton (2006) identifies eight key factors that contribute to the success of college students. These factors include achieving academic goals, gaining a broad education, developing academic proficiency, enhancing cognitive abilities and intellectual traits, achieving career aspirations, preparing for adulthood and responsible citizenship, accomplishing personal objectives, and fostering personal growth. It is worth noting that academic attainment specifically refers to the completion of a degree, while acquiring general education, academic competence, and developing cognitive skills and intellectual traits are typical outcomes that are assessed when awarding degrees to students. Occupational attainment focuses on the goals of both students and institutions that arise from completing a degree. Importantly, while the first set of indicators directly relate to students' experiences in the classroom in certain disciplines, the last two indicators indirectly relate to classroom experiences in those disciplines.

Some Identified Problems

Some problems are inherent in the system, especially in our country Nigeria. They include the following:

Corruption at all levels both among the officials

This is observable among the school administrators, teachers, and supervisors, wherein money or gifts are offered to the supervisors to influence their reports for the sake of writing good reports for the school. This problem militates against the progress of supervision of instruction for use in the administration of education.

Lack of Finance

Lack of finance hampers the idea of conducting training and workshops for the supervisors to gain new knowledge and be effective in their work. It equally prevents them from being frequent to schools as expected and covering many schools within the mapped-out regions within the expected time frame owing to finance involved (transportation costs).

Bad Leadership and Political Interference

Bad leadership both on the part of the government and school authority sometimes leads to the misplacement of priorities. On the part of the government, they may not like to engage in the exercise and divert the money mapped out for it into their pocket. It doesn't matter because their children are not studying here in any institution; what matters is their convenience. On the part of the school authority, they may bribe those in charge not to send the supervision personnel to their schools so that the exercise will not unveil their poor quality of instruction in terms of teaching and learning.

Political interference also causes a blockage in the process. This happens especially when the leaders have a special interest in some institutions where their men or friends are in charge of the school administration. Once the Management settles them, they will wave many things, all aimed at forestalling the issue of fault-finding in the institution's teaching and learning program. They will continue to be rated high in WAEC, NECO, and other major examinations when their teachers are not measuring up in terms of the proper standards for teaching and learning.

Laziness among the Supervision Agents

It has been observed that most of the supervisors are too lazy to execute their work, and some do it half-hazard. And some of them may forge some reports when they didn't supervise any instruction exercise in some schools as the issue of forgery is part of our Nigerian system.

Shortage of Qualified Supervision Personnel

The shortage of Supervisors, especially the external ones from the Ministry of Education is a problem, and it is an uphill task for the remaining ones to cover enough schools within the mapped-out areas mainly when the number of schools there is on the increase.

Time Constraints

This problem prevents the supervisors, mainly the Principals from doing their normal jobs of supervising instructions in their schools. This mainly happens when many compelling tasks are pulling them out of school, either to go to the Ministry of Education or WAEC office, etc., even internal work of responding to the demands from the parents of the students, workers, building constructions, etc. Sometimes when a teacher is set apart for it, other problems may prevent him or her from fulfilling the demands of it. Whenever the situation is like this, the supervision of instruction suffers or is neglected.

Lack of transparency and forgery of reports

When a system is fully corrupt, transparency becomes a forgotten issue, and it becomes replaced with dishonesty which manifests itself in varying ways like forgeries, etc. These problems are not lacking in the field of the supervision of

instruction. Here everything becomes manipulated, to the advantage of the supervisor, the teacher, and the school authority.

Embezzlement and mismanagement of supervision funds

Nigerians, being opportunists, make their money from many ends at all levels of leadership. Those in charge mismanage and embezzle the money allocated for the supervision of instructions in schools by the government. Those on the ground (school authorities) finish up the little that happened to reach their office, thereby killing the exercise. And who suffers it the most if not the students and society at large as bad products are handed over to them by the institutions.

The above-written problems are not the only ones. They are many but these point to the fact that some issues appear in the effort to get qualitative education in Nigeria through the supervision of instructions. These problems make it difficult for the supervision of instruction to help the government or those in charge to fully do their part in the administration of education in the country.

Suggestions

In order to curb these problems, some suggestions are proffered here to be followed so as to achieve the aim of supervision of instruction which is good and important in education. They are as follows;

Enthronement of honesty and integrity

Honesty and integrity are very important in our society today for things to move properly. When the two are embraced by the supervision personnel, the proper reports that will stop some lax attitudes and incompetence observed among the instructors in schools will be made available to the appropriate quarters for immediate attention.

Proper funding

This has been a major problem in the execution of many projects, even in educational supervision. It greatly dwarfs efforts of the supervision personnel as well as in the provision of instructional materials for teachers, and as a result, obstructs the students learning process.

Bad leadership

Bad leadership at all levels has been a major problem in Nigeria, and no sector is exempted. This has made the leaders not to pay proper attention to education, ending up in the misplacement of priorities. They have refused to know that the progress of any nation depends to a great extent on qualitative learning. This has made the supervision of instruction, sometimes a forgotten issue as there is no attention paid to it.

Hard work and effectiveness

Most of the time these two issues are lacking both on the part of the supervision personnel and teachers. And when such is the case, how can the expected educational objectives be realizable? This practice of supervision of instruction should be maintained to reinstate quality education in the country.

Provision of more trained personnel

If curriculum according to Unamma, Goring, and Aladeniyi (2021), is a course of studies and the formal and informal experiences pupils (and students) are to have while under the direction of a school, there is the need to have well-trained manpower (personnel) to get it achieved. This will help the attainment of educational objectives.

Conclusion

Supervision of instruction is very important in the administration of education in Nigeria and in the whole world, owing to the centrality of education in every society, as education leads to national growth and progress. It is of great help even in clinical supervision which according to Unamma (2021) refers to the practice whereby experienced teachers coach younger, inexperienced teachers to improve their ability to teach in a classroom setting. This is so because such teachers that need coaching and grooming are mostly discovered during encounters in instructional supervision in the classroom. For the supervision of instruction to therefore be useful in the administration of education, all those enumerated problems should be solved through the acceptance of those suggestions and more not written.

Finally, the Quid pro quo attitudes (something for something principle) should be dropped, which can also be called the "Rojer me syndrome". Teaching needs some discipline and commitment which necessitates proper supervision to checkmate excesses and unscrupulous acts by the workers (teachers) and students alike.

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