



**CHALLENGES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN NIGERIAN
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND THE WAY FORWARD**

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ABSTRACT

Education is a veritable commodity for any meaningful development in any society or nation that desire to measure up to international standard. For this reason it is pertinent that the process and product of education supposed yield results that can stand the test of time. In order to achieve this, government of most nations through the ministry of education in their educational policies endeavor to put in place machineries to see that qualitative and quantitative education is provided to its citizenry. They do this through supervision of educational activities. This paper is focusing on the concepts of instructional supervision, supervision, basis for supervision, principles of instructional supervision, purpose of instructional supervision, procedures and techniques for instructional supervision, qualities of an instructional supervisor, challenges of supervision, the way forward, recommendations and conclusion. Data for the paper is sourced from secondary data.

KEYWORDS: Principles, Procedures. Instructional Supervision

1.0 Introduction

The importance of supervision at all levels of education cannot be over emphasized. This is because, effective and efficient administration and management of education can only be done through adequate supervision which is the yardstick that checks and balances the management of teaching and learning process as well as quality control in our educational institutions. The issue of supervision has been a frequently discussed matter by the general public in recent times. Worry is expressed by relevant education stake holders especially on the aspect of staff ineffectiveness, poor handling and conduct of examinations, poor maintenance of existing school facilities, indiscipline among staff and students, financial misappropriation etc. The Nigerian educational system consists of the primary school education, junior secondary school education, senior secondary school education, higher education and



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the other formal and informal education forms. Prominent among these educational institutions are the primary school education, secondary school education and the higher institutions. All these educational institutions seem to face similar problems of poor quality of education. World-Bank (2017) observed that the quality of basic education, measured in terms of student learning outcomes, is low in Nigeria. According to international standards, children who have completed grade 3 are expected to be fully literate. In Nigeria only 66 percent of public school students can read at least one of three words and 78 percent can add single digits after completing grade 4 (2015 NEDS). In terms of variation across the States, a test administered to grade 4 pupils as part of the 2013 Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) Survey produced an overall low score of 32 percent, with the two southern states leading the ranking (59 and 54 percent) and the two northern states with significantly lower scores (23 and 20 percent). In addition, pupils in private schools significantly outperformed those in public schools.

At the senior secondary school is a similar challenge of poor standard of education. The academic performance of students at the senior secondary school is poor. World-Bank (2017) reports that poor learning also results in low pass rates at the end of secondary school: 31 and 39 percent of registered students passed the 2014 and 2015 West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), respectively. At the higher institutions, Noun (2011) submits that concern has been raised about the decline in the quality of education in Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. According to Saint, Hartmet and Strassner (2003) the Nigerian university system is performing poorly in the area of teaching and learning in terms of labour market absorption and employers' assessment of graduates while Mohammed and Gbenu (2007) and Obayan (1999) observed that the quality of education offered by higher education institutions in the recent times has deteriorated substantially. Many stakeholders in education agrees that this problem is linked to poor supervision of instruction in the Nigerian educational system. Moja (2000) submits that planning, supervision and monitoring of the entire educational system is weak and ineffective. Based on this submission, this paper will discuss the procedures, principle, purpose problems of instructional supervision in Nigeria and suggest the way forward.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPT OF INSTRUCTION

Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2006) defines instruction as the act of instructing, teaching, or furnishing with information or knowledge. Akudolu in Offorma (2004) defines instruction as the planned interaction between the learners and the learning activities. Instruction means all the activities engaged in by the teacher with the aim of facilitating change in the learners' behaviour. This definition clearly explains that, for instruction to occur someone must engage in several activities to facilitate change in learners' behaviour and the facilitator of the change is called an instructor.

According to Ochai (2012) instruction refers to the interaction between persons, materials, ideas, performances, and objects of the contrived curriculum environment. He further states that instruction is the activities or interactions between the learner and the teacher as part of the school environment, which includes human as well as material variables, so that while the teacher may not be physically present, instruction through materials or other group experiences can go on within or outside the school.



In view of these definitions examined above, one can state that the term “instruction” means an interaction between the teacher, learners and subject matter in a school environment aimed at achieving desired and positive change in learners’ behaviour.

2.2 SUPERVISION:

Education is a social service that is provided for the general public in all countries of the world not only for the purpose of educating and providing enlightenment for the people but, also for national development. Through education, skills are acquired, and this enables a country to grow, develop and advance. To be able to effectively provide education, there is need to ensure that the educational system is reliable. Reliability in terms of the educational system can only be enhanced through supervision (Peretomode, 1998). The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2006) recognizes that; to supervise means to watch, direct, monitor the performance, activities of a task or the work of a person. The choice of words in this definition suggests that something crucial is at stake and that which is crucial requires to be watched, directed and monitored for improved performance and attainment of the goals and objectives set in the educational system. According to Nwankwo (1984) supervision can be divided into two categories. These are instructional and personnel supervision. He defines instructional supervision as a set of activities which are carried out with the purpose of making teaching and learning better for the learner where as personnel supervision on the other hand, deals with the set of activities which are carried out by the supervisor with the basic aim of sensitizing, mobilizing and motivating staff in the school towards performing their duties optimally in terms of the achievement of the stated aims and objective of the educational system.

Asemah (2010) defines supervision as away of advising, stimulating, guiding, improving, refreshing, encouraging and overseeing their operations in order for the supervisors to be successful in their task of supervision. Adepoju (1999) opines that the term “supervision” is derived from the Latin word “super video” meaning to oversee. Ezeocha (1990) observes that supervision deals mainly with improvement in teachers’ performance since it helps in teaching and learning. It enables teachers to recognize and accept their achievement. Nwaogu (2000) views supervision as playing essential role in deciding the nature and content of curriculum and selecting materials to facilitate teaching. Another brilliant and noteworthy definition of supervision is that given by Abah and Odeh (2012) which defines or sees supervision as an interaction between two persons for the improvement of an activity. It is a combination or integration of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed to advance the work of effectiveness of individuals or groups. It is a process of stimulating and a means of helping teachers to help themselves.

2.3 BASIS FOR SUPERVISION:

Peretomode (1998) highlighted the following six points as the basis for supervision in the educational system.

1. Supervision should be geared towards the improvement of teaching and learning situation for the benefit of both teachers and learners.



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2. Supervision should help in the identification of areas of strength of teachers which should be further developed. Areas of weakness should be identified and the teacher should be in an understanding manner to overcome them
3. Supervision should be democratically conducted so as to give recognition to the teachers and create a cordial working atmosphere based on good relations.
4. Supervision should be tailored towards ensuring that the general guidelines as provided in the curriculum are followed by the teachers.
5. There should be follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified areas of teachers' weaknesses.
6. Supervision should help the teachers in terms of self discovery particularly in the areas of improvisation and the use of modern teaching aids as a basis for improving teaching strategies. Supervisors could help to introduce teachers to a variety of audio and visual materials that help to facilitate good teaching.

Harris (1975) listed ten tasks of supervision which are instruction related as the following;

- a) **Developing Curriculum:** Designing or redesigning what to be taught by whom, when, where and what pattern, developing curriculum guide, establishing standard, planning instruction units and instituting new courses.
- b) **Providing staff:** Assuming the availability of instructional staff members are inadequate and without appropriate competence for facilitating instruction, recruitment, selection and screening can be recommended.
- c) **Providing Facilities:** Designing or redesigning and equipping facilities for instruction, development of space and equipment specification.
- d) **Providing materials:** Selecting and obtaining appropriate material for use in implementing curricular design. Previewing, evaluating, designing and otherwise finding ways to provide appropriate materials.
- e) **Arranging for in-service education:** Planning and implementing learning experience that will improve the performance of the staff instruction related ways. This involves workshop, consolidation, field trips and training sections as well as formal education.
- f) **Orienting staff members:** Proving staff members with basic information necessary to carry out assigned responsibilities. This includes getting new staff members acquainted with facilities and also involves keeping the staff informed of organizational development.
- g) **Relating special pupils' service:** Arranging for careful co-ordination of services to children to ensure optimum support for the teaching process. This involves developing policies, assigning priorities and defining relationship among service personnel to maximize relationship between service offered and instructional goals of the schools.
- h) **Developing pupils' relation:** Providing for a free flow of information on matters of instructions to and from the pupils while securing optimum levels of involvement in the promotion of better instructor.

Evaluating instruction: planning, organizing and implementing procedures for gathering, analyzing, interpretation and decision making for improvement of instruction



2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION:

Instructional supervision is one of the indispensable functions for the effective operation of a good school system. Abama (2002) refers to instructional supervision as “that phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of the appropriate expectations of the educational system”. Alfonso et al (1975) views instructional supervision as behaviour as officially designed by the organization that directly affects teacher behaviour in such a way to facilitate pupils’ learning and achieve the goals of the organization. The position of these authors regarding instructional supervision is that, it is basically concerned with supporting and assisting teachers to improve instruction through changing their behaviour.

Idoko (2005) defines instructional supervision as a process of formerly making provision to change one behaviour to improve learning. He maintains that behaviour can include administrative, counseling, supervisory and students’ behaviour. Nwaogu in Idoko (2005) opines that instructional supervision is a process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with the people who are working with pupils. The perception of Oluwole (2007) regarding instructional supervision is that the whole essence is all about,

- a. Improving the quality of teaching and learning for the benefit of both the learner and the teacher and to ensure that every teacher in the school is performing the duties assigned to him effectively;
- b. Assisting teachers in developing needed competencies and;
- c. Assists in assessing teachers’ effectiveness in classroom management.

The instructional supervisor, as Aderounmu and Ehiamezor (1985) rightly pointed, “does much than inspect”. Instructional supervision is “a service activity that exists to help teachers do their job better” (Wiles, 1975). It is very important to clarify that inspectors, as the name implies, go to schools to inspect (oversee, view, close scrutiny) examine materials and equipment, buildings and grounds, discipline, administration of school, school records, visit to a school to investigate a particular matter as a result of reports reaching the ministry of education. This explains why Peretomode (1998) agrees with Aderounmu and Ehiamezor (1985) that inspectors “are more like the watch dogs of teachers and schools, and do not directly enhance teachers’ instructional effectiveness or improvement” as instructional supervisors do.

2.5 PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION:

Principles of instructional supervision are statements of fundamental truth that serve as guide to activities which are designed by designated officials to improve instruction and consequently to facilitate the teaching and learning process at all levels of the school system. There are a number of guiding principles which govern the operation of instructional supervision. These principles can be gleaned from the works of Burton (1938), Burton and Brueckner (1985), Wiles (1975), Harris (1975) and Nwaogu (1984). They include the following:

1. Supervision of instruction is directed towards both maintaining and improving the teaching and learning process of the school. Supervision is highly instruction related.
2. The instructional supervisor’s role is that of supporting, assisting and sharing, rather than directing.



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3. Good instructional supervision is based on philosophy and science. This implies that supervision has to (a) be sensitive to the ultimate aims and values, to policies, with special reference to their adequacy in education, and (b) should be permeated with the experimental attitude, and engage constantly in re-evaluation of aims and values of policies, materials and methods.
4. Good instructional supervision is based upon the democratic philosophy. This entails:
 - a. Respect for personality and individual differences between personalities and seeking to provide opportunities for the best expression of such unique personality
 - b. Basing supervision upon the assumption that teachers are capable of growth and accepting idiosyncrasies, reluctance to corporate, and antagonism as human characteristics, just as it accepts reasonableness, cooperation and energetic activity.
 - c. Providing full opportunity for the cooperative formulation of policies and plans.
 - d. Stimulating initiative, self-reliance and individual responsibility on the part of all persons in the discharge of their duties.
 - e. Cooperatively, determining functional groupings of the staff with flexible regrouping as necessary and inviting specialists when advisable.
5. Good instructional supervision will employ scientific methods, attitudes, utilize and adapt to specific situations, scientific findings concerning the learner, the learning process, the nature and development of personality.
6. Good instructional supervision, either by scientific method or through orderly thought processes will constantly derive and use data and conclusions which are more objective, more precise, more sufficient, more impartial, more expertly secured, and more systematically organized than are the data and conclusions of uncontrolled opinion.
7. Good instructional supervision will be creative and not prescriptive.
8. Good instructional supervision is judged by the result it secures.
9. Good instructional supervision will enlist the co-operation of all staff members in serving their own needs and those of the situation; will provide ample, natural opportunities for growth by all concerned in the correction and prevention of teaching difficulties, and growth in the assumption of new responsibilities
10. Supervision is flexible. This principle demands that instructional supervision should be flexible and adaptive and adopt and eclectic rather than adhering to a single technique in the supervision of instruction.
11. Good instructional supervision strives to enhance the job the job satisfaction of teachers and also improve their morale.
12. Good instructional supervision proceeds by means of an orderly, cooperatively planned and executed series of activities.

2.6 PURPOSE OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION:

The purposes of instructional supervision include:

- I. To directly influence the behaviour of teachers and the teaching processes employed to promote pupils' learning.



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- II. To ensure that each individual teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for which he was scheduled.
- III. To cooperatively develop favourable climate for effective teaching and learning. Others that have been identified by Ogunsaju (1988) are:
 - IV. To know the performance of the teachers recruited to teach in the school system.
 - V. To determine whether a teacher should be transferred, promoted, retrained or dismissed.
 - VI. To improve the incompetent teacher.
 - VII. To discover special abilities or qualities possessed by teacher in the schools.
 - VIII. To provide a guide to staff development.
 - IX. To know the effectiveness of classroom management.
 - X. To assess the “tone” of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs (pp. 12-15).

2.7 PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION:

There is an array of procedures that a skillful instructional supervisor can employ to bring about desirable effect in teacher behaviour for achieving teaching effectiveness. Harris (1975), Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski, (1980) and Ogunsaju (2008) listed several procedures for instructional supervision. These procedures include the following:

1. **Classroom Observation:** Observing in classroom is one of the most commonly used procedures of instructional supervision. This procedure involves the systematic live observation of a teacher and analyzing his or her classroom practices and the teaching and learning process. It is a situation where the teacher is working directly with the learners and the supervisor is present as a witness to observe systematically classroom events. During observation, the supervisor also looks for planning and preparation, lesson presentation, teacher’s personality and student-teacher interactions or relationship.
2. **Demonstration:** Demonstration is one of most effective techniques of stimulating teachers’ growth. It involves the presentation of prearranged series of events to a group for their viewing. To be effective however, the demonstration should be realistic, practicable and devoid of any form of artificiality.
3. **Teacher Visitation:** This activity which is also referred to as “intervisiting” involves one teacher visiting and observing another teacher in action in another class within the same school (inter-class visitation) or in a class in another school (inter-school visitation). This procedure gives opportunity to various categories of teachers to visit others in another school and watch them teach. This procedure is particularly helpful if the beginning or inexperienced teacher watches experienced teacher in action, thus helping him to learn how to organize and manage students in the classroom, and to plan effectively and in the effective utilization of resources.
4. **Workshop:** This is another very useful procedure in instructional supervision. The activity involves a small group of people that is temporarily formed to discuss a specific topic, or work on common problem, and trying to find solutions to a specific problem. A workshop may be organized at



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a particular time during the year to meet a particular need. In workshops, maximum emphasis upon interaction and an optimum amount of critical analysis of ideas related to the problem or topic at hand is encouraged in a permissive topic-centered, face-to-face situation (Harris, 1975; Ogunsanju, 2006).

5. **Micro-teaching:** This activity is very essential for the training of both pre-service and in-service teachers. Ike (2008, p.12) provides a concise description of micro-teaching as a procedure that could be utilized by supervisors. He stated that micro-teaching is a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time, class size, and teaching complexity to allow the teacher focus on a selected teaching strategy. It is designed to develop new skills and refine old ones.

6. **Listening to tape, radio, or recordings:** This supervisory procedure according to Harris (1975), involves using sound recordings to present ideas to one or more listeners in such a way as to help develop understanding or skill. Tape recordings of selected portions of a class meeting have been successful in stimulating group discussions and consequently changes in teacher behaviour that enhances teaching effectiveness. The use of visual presentations through the media of film, television or videotape is increasingly important in the supervisory process.

7. **Guided practice:** This supervisory procedure involves individualized or small group manipulative activities. It is an approach in which doing is emphasized rather than talking.

8. **Research:** Research is the systematic and objective collection and analysis of data in order to find solutions to identified problems. It could be used as a procedure for instructional supervision. In this regard, the supervisor has to work with and through teachers to finding solutions to problems of teaching and learning that confronts them instead of dictating solutions to or autocratically setting educational problems relating to teaching and teachers.

2.8 QUALITIES OF AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISOR:

There are a number of qualities or dimensions of the supervisory job that experts look for. For example, Bittel (1980 p.1), identified seven important dimensions of the supervisory job as technical know-how, administrative skill, ability to develop a plan to meet department goals, ability to deal with the manager to whom you report, communication skills, ability to deal with people inside and outside the operating unit and ability to deal effectively with people who report to you. Bittel (1980) explains that other researchers after various studies also identified success-related qualities of a supervisor as creativity, stress tolerance, initiative, independence, problem analysis, decisiveness, flexibility, risk taking and use of delegation. Also, in a study (Ofo, 2008 p.202) on teachers attributes as perceived by administrators, teachers and pupils, the “expertise” factor was rated higher than any other test factor. Some important attributes noted under the expertise factor were; interesting presentation of lesson, ability to plan, organize and have good work habits, and a thorough knowledge of subject matter.



3.0 CHALLENGES OF SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION IN NIGERIA.

There are many challenges facing instructional supervision in Nigerian educational institutions. Some of the challenges are discussed below according to Noun (2007):

(i) The dearth of qualified and trained personnel:

Most of the personnel used as supervisors of instruction in most states in Nigeria do not have the pre-requisites teachers' qualification and experience.

(ii) Inadequate funds for supervision of instruction:

Funding has been a major challenge facing not only supervision of instruction but also education in general. The available fund to the inspectorate unit in the ministry of education is not sufficient to carry out the enormous task given to them.

It is becoming increasingly impossible for inspectorate unit of the education ministries to service and repair vehicles needed for supervision exercises and even to pay duty tour allowance (DTA) of supervisors where need be.

(iii) Lack of relevant supervisory competencies:

Nigerian supervisors of education are deficient in relevant supervisory skills because there is no pre-professional or pre-practice training for the supervisors. School heads need to be trained in order to acquire the relevant skills for performing the supervisory functions.

(iv). Styles of supervision adopted by supervisors:

Some supervisors still adopt autocratic, fault-finding styles of inspection. This makes the school head and teachers become apprehensive. This set of supervisors always assumes mastery of the subjects and expect the teacher to be subservient to hem. They assume that supervisors have the knowledge and regard the teachers as inferior workers who should take instruction from them without questioning; this will always breed disdain and contempt instead of cooperation.

(v). Low teachers' morale:

School supervisors, school heads and the supervisees do not receive corresponding or much incentive to enable them to be totally committed to their jobs. The general belief by Nigerians is that teaching profession is of low esteem. More than half of the teachers on the job are bidding their time to get alternative employment and opt out of teaching because they are dissatisfied with the job. It is difficult for such a teacher with the mind-set that teaching is a stepping stone to be totally committed to their job and this could greatly have negative influence on their teaching, thereby making supervisor work more tedious.

(vi) Inadequate transport facilities:

Supervisors of education have often complained of inability to cover most of their areas of operation. This is compounded by inaccessibility of some areas e.g. riverine, nomadic and rural areas where



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schools are located. The problem of transportation cannot be separated from poor funding of the inspectorate unit in the ministry of education and the state of all Nigerian roads.

(vii) Pre-occupation of school head with administrative duties:

School heads are sometimes occupied with administrative duties to the extent that they have no time for academic leadership. They are more occupied with obtaining information from the ministry of education; attend parent teachers' association meetings, maintaining community – school relationship at the detriment of supervision of instruction which is one of their primary duties. School heads prefer to travel most time because of self-gain in traveling. This situation makes them toe the grip of the situation in their schools.

(viii) Attitude of ministry of education officials:

During the colonial and postcolonial era, funding of schools was based on the submitted reports by the supervisors of education about the development of the schools. Funding schools in contemporary times does not depend on school performance in examinations. Supervisor's report is now worthless at the ministry because the reports are not being taken seriously by the ministry of education officials in the recent past as they were in the colonial period.

(ix) Policy instability:

This has to do with frequent change in educational policy without adequate knowledge of the supervisors which often leads to confusion or uncertainty. The supervisors are not carried along when policies affecting education are to be changed/amended. For example, change of school calendar, abolition and re-establishment of bodies like NPEC, abolition and re-introduction of private universities etc (Noun 2007).

4.0 WAY FORWARD:

To ensure effective instructional supervision in the Nigerian educational institutions, the following were recommended:

- a) The government should increase the funding of school supervision;
- b) The government should employ more qualified professional supervisors and deploy them to ministries and agencies handling supervision across the country;
- c) More working materials should be provided for supervisors to carry out their function;
- d) Training and retraining programme should be organized for all supervisors in the country;
- e) The government should ensure stable educational policies.
- f) The government should provide adequate transport facilities to aid movement of supervisors of supervision
- g) The government should motivate the supervisors by increasing their salaries and other allowance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In this paper, the difference between instruction and supervision was identified and explained in line with the views and opinion of experts. The writer cited and examined various definitions given by



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different authorities in the field of education regarding supervision and instructional supervision. Discussions were made on instructional supervision, principles of instructional supervision, procedures and purposes of instructional supervision and problems facing instructional supervision in Nigeria. Finally, the writer examined and identified a number of qualities of an instructional supervisor as given by (Bittel,1980, and Ofo, 2008) based on studies conducted by experts so that supervisors can offer supervisory roles to the supervisee to enhance teaching and learning process. All the recommendations raised need an urgent attention of the government at all levels.

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