RETHINKING SCHOOL SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Abstract
The paper examined school supervision and inspection in an era digitalization. The advent of digitalization has transformed the educational landscape, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional school supervision and inspection practices. This paper urges that the conventional approach which is reliant on physical visits and paper-based reporting is outdated and inefficient instead a digitalized framework that leverages technology to enhance the effectiveness reach of supervision and inspection by harnessing online monitoring software for real time tracking of classes, automated system for tracking students engagement and progress, virtual inspection platforms for remote evaluation, data analytics tools for informed decision making, communication platform for feedback and support, supervision management software for organizing and tracking evaluations, online training platforms for professional development as well as mobile applications for on-the-go supervision and feedback. With the aid of all these tools, administrators and supervisors can access real time insights into students learning, teachers performance and the school operations. This enables targeted interventions, facilitates monitoring, hereby reducing the need for physical visits for a more frequent and refined supervision for excellence, equity and innovation, ultimately benefitting students, teachers and the broader education community.
Key words: *Rethinking School Supervision, and Inspection in the Digital Age*

Introduction
School supervision and inspection refers to the process of monitoring, evaluating and guiding educational activities to ensure quality teaching, learning, and school management. The relevance of school supervision and inspection are enormous ranging from ensuring accountability, improving teaching and learning, enhancing school management, supporting the teachers professional development to promoting the quality of education. Sule & Okon (2013). In recent times, the traditional models of school supervision and inspection, rooted in the ancient regime of physical presence and observation, reliance on manual data collection and analysis, limited accessibility and scalability, subjectiveness and biasedness and limited feedback and follow-up are facing unprecedented challenges in the digital era. The rapid transformation of education, fueled by technological advancement and shifting learners needs, demands drastic rethink of how we evaluate and improve our schools. The old

paradigm of periodic top-down inspections and fragmental supervision can no longer suffice in an era where real-time data, collaborative learning, and personalized instruction are becoming the norm.

As we navigate into the unchartered rain, it is pivotal to reexamine the purposes, processes and the players of school supervision and inspection, the potentials of digital tools, big data, and a collective wisdom to create a more agile, inclusive and student-centred approach to school evaluation and improvement. This article explores the opportunities and challenges of rethinking school supervision and inspection in the digital age, with a pinpoint on innovation strategies. Top-notch practices and emerging trends that can help us build a more effective, efficient and equitable system for all.

School supervision in the digital age

In the digital age, school supervision encompasses a variety of strategies and tools to ensure effective teaching, learning, and administrative operations. Key aspects include:

Digital tools and platforms: Utilization of learning management systems (LMS), such as Google Classroom, Canvas, and Blackboard, allows for streamlined communication, assignment distribution, and grading.

Remote monitoring: With the rise of online and hybrid learning models, supervisors can use software to monitor virtual classrooms, ensuring that instructional time is used effectively.

Data analytics: Schools leverage data analytics to track student performance, attendance, and engagement, enabling data-driven decision-making and personalized interventions.

Cybersecurity and privacy: Ensuring the safety and privacy of student data is paramount. Supervisors must implement strong cybersecurity measures and comply with regulations such as FERPA and GDPR.

Professional development: Continuous training for teachers on new technologies and digital pedagogies is crucial. Supervisors play a key role in organizing and facilitating these professional development opportunities.

Communication tools: Effective communication with students, parents, and staff through digital platforms like email, school websites, and messaging apps is essential for transparency and collaboration.

Digital citizenship: Educating students on responsible and ethical use of technology is a key component of modern school supervision. By embracing these aspects, school supervision in the digital age aims to enhance educational outcomes, ensure safety, and foster an adaptive learning environment.

The digital age offers a plethora of tools and opportunities to transform school supervision and inspection by harnessing the power of data analytics, artificial intelligence and remote monitoring which can enhance transparency and traceability, improve real-time feedback and intervention, increased accessibility and inclusivity as well as reducing cost and optimize resources.

Traditional and digital supervision

Traditional methods of supervision and digital methods of supervision in education is characterized by both continuity and transformation. These two approaches intersect and complement each other: Continuity in core objectives

Traditional methods:
Classroom Observations, supervisors visit classrooms to observe teaching practices and student engagement.
Face-to-Face meetings, regular in-person meetings with teachers to discuss performance, provide feedback, and plan professional development.
Paper-based record keeping, maintaining physical records of student performance, attendance, and other administrative data.

Digital Methods:
Virtual classroom observations, using tools like video conferencing to observe remote or hybrid classes in real-time.
Online meetings, Conducting virtual meetings via platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams for convenience and flexibility.
Digital Record Keeping, utilizing educational software and databases to maintain and analyze student data electronically.
Enhancements and Innovations

Efficiency:
Traditional: Physical paperwork and manual data entry can be time-consuming and prone to errors.
Digital: automated data collection and analysis through LMS and data analytics platforms streamline processes and improve accuracy.

Accessibility:
Traditional, supervisors need to be physically present for observations and meetings.
Digital: remote access to classrooms and virtual meetings enables supervision across different locations and times, enhancing accessibility.

Data-Driven Insights:
Traditional: insights are often based on qualitative observations and manual record analysis.
Digital: advanced analytics provide quantitative data and real-time insights, allowing for more informed decision-making and personalized interventions.
Complementary approaches

Blended Supervision:
Combining traditional in-person observations with digital tools allows for a more holistic view of teaching practices and student learning. Digital tools can supplement traditional methods by providing additional data points and enabling follow-up on specific issues identified during physical observations.

Professional Development:
Traditional: workshops, seminars, and in-service training sessions held on-site.
Digital: online courses, webinars, and digital resources expand opportunities for continuous learning and development, often at the individual's own pace.

Stakeholder engagement:
Traditional: Parent-teacher conferences and school meetings.
Digital: Online portals, communication apps, and social media platforms facilitate more frequent and diverse interactions with parents and the broader community.
Challenges and Considerations

Integration:
Seamlessly integrating digital methods with traditional practices requires careful planning, training, and sometimes significant investment in technology infrastructure.

Digital divide:
Ensuring equitable access to digital tools for all students, teachers, and administrators is crucial. Addressing disparities in technology access remains a significant challenge.

Privacy and Security
Protecting student data and maintaining privacy in the digital realm is a priority. Supervisors must be vigilant about cybersecurity threats and compliance with legal standards. Traditional and digital methods of school supervision are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. By integrating the strengths of both approaches, schools can create a more effective, efficient, and responsive supervisory framework that meets the demands of the digital age while retaining the personal touch and insight provided by traditional methods (Adie, 2013).

Areas of supervision in digital age
As we embrace the need for innovative methods of supervision, diverse parental backgrounds should be taken into consideration. Adie (2020) found that parents socio-economic status, education and occupation can influence their involvement in the child's education and school activities which turns to affect school supervision. She expressed that parents with higher socio-economic status may be more likely to engage with teachers and administrators, advocating their child's needs. Education in Nigeria is for all according to FME, NPC (2014). Consideration should be given to learners who may not be privileged to come from such homes.

Cultural background is another point to consider in enhancing digital supervision and inspection of schools. Parents' cultural beliefs and values can shape their expectations from the school and their child's education which may influence how teachers, administrators and supervisors approach supervision, ensuring cultural sensitivity and inclusivity.

Kumar, Sharma, and Sharma, (2020) pointed that different cultures have varying values, beliefs and practices related to technology, education and authority. They expressed that in some cultures, privacy is highly valued and digital surveillance may be viewed as in invasion of privacy. In the same vein, Katz and Rice (2009) expressed that culture can influence the adoption and comfort level with technology which can affect the implementation and acceptance of digital supervision.

Teachers training and readiness should be considered in transitioning from the traditional to digital school supervision and inspection. Digital supervision requires qualified teachers and inspectors who are trained and ready to apply the digital tools Aniah, Edeh, & Adie (2019) refers readiness to be the extent to which an individual is prepared for a particular task performance.

Another critical point to mention is educational supervision, as it creates awareness about digital technologies and ethics. Such as: digital literacy which is an essential skill for effective learning in the digital age, educational supervision plays a role in ensuring that students develop this skills and develop readiness. Aniah, Edeh & Adie (2019) pointed out that learners readiness is a stage where the learner is effectively matured and well equipped for effective learners task performance in the formal school setting in terms of reading and note taking, concentration, knowledge acquisition and homework.

Safety and security is also an aspect to be considered in embracing school supervision in digital age. Adie (2013) highlights the importance of effective educational management in promoting peace and security in schools. The study emphasis the need for effective management of educational resources, peace and security in schools. To ensure cyber security and data privacy, monitoring online activities and social media, addressing cyber bullying and digital harassment, there should be peace and security.

Rethinking school supervision in the digital age, is crucial to support education excellence innovation and equity. It is therefore beneficial to use the hybrid approach so as to ensure that a

comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the school including physical infrastructure, teaching methods and digital resources is achieved. Secondly, the traditional model enhances monitoring by observing interactions while the digital supervision only provides insight into online activities, creating a more comprehensive system.

Another reason is that there will be improved data collection. Combining both approaches can provide a richer, dataset, enabling more accurate assessments and informed decision making.

Professional development is another reason why the blended or hybrid approach is encouraged. Supervisors can develop new skills and teachers too can benefit from targeted support and training. Also, the flexibility and adaptability aspect. The blended approach allows for adjustment based on changing needs and technological advancement.

Lastly, there is enhanced accountability. Combining traditional and digital supervision promotes transparency and accountability across all aspect of school operations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the digital age has ushered in a new era of school supervision and inspection, demanding a paradigm shift from traditional methods. The hybrid approach which combines the strength of both traditional and digital supervision, offers a forward-thinking solution. Instead of the one-size-fits-all approach which may not be optimal and seek to create a dynamic, responsive and inclusive supervisory environment.

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