



## MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION IN NIGERIA IN AN ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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### Abstract

*Management of School supervision and inspection in Nigeria in an era of digitalization is very important in today's technological world. Both human and material resources made available for effective teaching and learning in school cannot achieve the goals of education if there is absence of supervision. Similarly the power of inspection serves as quality management in education in line with the technological age we are in today. In the light of this, both supervision and inspection remains a necessity for the attainment of educational goals as contained in the National policy on education. This paper review examined the concept of inspection as an inspectorate power for quality management in education and also discusses the challenges in quality management. The paper takes an indebt look at supervision as well as some challenges hindering effective school supervision in Nigeria. The paper concluded by suggesting among others that there should be adequate supply of competent personnel to schools for effective school supervision.*

**Keywords:** Management, Inspection, Schools, Supervision, Digitalization, Nigeria

### Introduction

Nwogu (2024) defined management as the coordination of human and material resources to achieve goals. In the light of this definition this paper takes an indebt look at the management of school supervision and inspection as it concerns administration of schools in Nigeria in this present era of digitalization. The need for the achievement of educational goals and objectives in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Year in year out government at all levels are said to have spent much in providing materials needed for educational purposes all with the aim of achieving educational goals as enunciated in her National Policy of Education. To achieve this, the educational system must be reliable. Reliability of educational system can only be achieve through proper and effective school supervision (Olowonwfa & Orieaha, 2016).

School supervision therefore becomes a veritable tool for proper monitoring, guidance, direction and integration of available human and material resources for schools utilization as well as important component of quality control strategy in education for the maintenance of high educational standard in Nigeria (Oku, Emenalo &



Okeke, 2013). This paper therefore examined the concept of school administration and school supervision as well as looked into the importance of school supervision and challenges to school in Nigeria. Conclusion and Recommendations were also made.

## **The Concept of School**

The activities of teaching and learning with respect to formal education takes place in an organized environment designed for it, and such environment is called a school. According to Anyaogu (2016) school is a formal institution where members of the community are exposed to the values, skills and culture that make them useful to themselves and the society. It is the institution design for the teaching of students (or pupils) under the direction of teachers. School is technically the institution wherein a child is first exposed to a hierarchical bureaucratic set up under which everything takes place within a framework of rules and regulations (Uche in Annette, Awujo & Agbakwuru, 2014). No wonder, Olowonefa and Orieha (2016) remarked that school is a temple of learning as well as a place where teaching and learning has been institutionalized. The learners assemble there, sit together under the same roof, on the same floor, carpet or desk and learn from the same teacher irrespective of caste, colour and creed. Therefore, the school is an institution set up to undertake the services of providing education to the child and whosoever that may require various kind of education irrespective of age.

## **Inspectorate Power for Quality Management in Education**

The concept of inspection is variedly defined by scholars. According to Adetula (2005), it means assessing the state of educational system.

Inspection is a process of external quality control of the school as a place of learning through the school. It is an episodic interaction where the inspector monitors the educational activities of the institution on behalf of the government through the Ministry of Education (Ihejirika, 2000). The modern Inspector is seen by Ugochukwu (2001) as an agent of quality control who does not compromise the issue of standard and quality of education and has no room for lazy and lousy school heads.

Nations all over the world hope to achieve most of their national goals and objectives through education and huge amount of money is budgeted and spent yearly on the education sector. It, therefore, becomes necessary to establish a system that will regularly monitor all educational institutions to ascertain and ensure that they operate in accordance with the national policy on education. Different monitoring or regulatory bodies have been instituted with legal backings for the various levels of education in Nigeria. For example, the universities are monitored by the National Universities Commission (NUC), College of Education by National Commission for College of Education (NCCE) and Polytechnics by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) while the primary and post-primary schools are monitored and controlled by the Inspectorate department of Ministry of education both at the federal and state levels.

The powers of the Inspectorate department of the Ministry of Education are driven from the Education Law, for example, Decree: 16 of 1985 known as National Minimum standard and Establishment of Institutions Decree. It spelt out the responsibility for the maintenance of a minimum standard to the Hon. Minister of Education and Commissioner for Education at the Federal and State Levels. These responsibilities are being discharged by the Inspectorate Division of Federal and State Ministries of Education on behalf of the Minister of Education and Commissioner for Education respectively (Ugochukwu, 2001).

By the responsibilities bestowed on the inspectorate and the goals of inspectorate services such as:

1. Set, maintain and improve standard of the school system.
2. Ensure uniform standard and quality control of instructional activities in schools through regular inspection and continuous supervision.



3. Obtain information on problems and difficulties of teachers, institutions and offer practical solutions to them.
4. Encourage dissemination of information on innovation and progressive educational principles and practices in the school system through publications, workshops, seminars and conferences, etc (Federal Republic of Nigeria, National Policy on Education, 4th edition 2004: 561; the Inspectorate has the powers and influence to impact on the quality of management in Education.

The Inspectorate strive to maintain the set standards of the Ministry of Education by periodically visiting schools to ensure that such standards are maintained and to assess the problems in the total management of schools, such visits focus attention on the professional matters and nonprofessional matters in schools. By assessing, monitoring, correcting and updating the educational inputs and processes, the inspectorate is effecting the quality management in education. Most schools have the problems of:

Dilapidated building, inadequate instructional facilities, Dearth of teachers, Non-committed and obsolete teachers, Mal-administration, Indiscipline among students and teachers and so on

All these are indicators of poor educational management which inhibit the attainment of quality education. But when the situation is adequately assessed, articulated and reported by the inspector, the policy makers are enabled to plan and provide for the facilities, shortage of staff, condition of service and so on in schools, thereby improving quality.

By providing professional guidance and consultancy to both the teachers, heads of schools and students, the inspector encourages, motivates and assists teachers and head teachers to do their work better and the students to improve their learning situations or habits. Total Quality Management entails the involvement of every organizational member to work towards the general improvement of the organization and the aim of the inspector is to raise the standard of education. He, therefore, uses the attribute of a modern inspector to uplift the morale of the teachers and guide them to a more efficient performance.

The inspectorate enables the school and staff appreciate the need for quality and empowers them to work for and desire quality output. When seminars and workshops are organized by the inspect/, at a regularly to train and retrain the serving and new teachers and head teachers, their knowledge and skills on cu rent innovations in education will be updated. Thereby empowering them for quality output. Also, when diagnostic inspections whereby teachers' professional problems are discovered and solutions proffered are carried out by the inspectors, quality teaching and learning are facilitated.

According to Adetula (2005), inspectors have the powers to invoke the force of law and recommend sanctions against erring teachers and head teachers just like the inspectors in the police and customs.

In view of these, the inspectorate powers for quality management in education are enormous and indispensable.

### **Challenges in Quality Management in Education**

There is a raging clarion call for quality education which is a product of quality **management**. And total quality management in education requires concerted and agreed efforts of every member of the organization and other stakeholders. It is concerned with the input, process and output of an institution. For quality management in education to be realized, certain issues need to be addressed.

**Education Input:** This refers to the physical facilities/instructional materials, data, personnel, fund and pupils/students. Management has the check the adequacy of these inputs, their quality, state and utilization, their provision at the right time, recruitment and placement of the right persons in the right positions so as to have the needed quality education outputs. A situation where educational institutions are in a deplorable condition in terms of structures, obsolete and inadequate facilities, dearth of motivated teachers does not indicate quality management.



Non release of approved funds for education has been a hindrance to quality management. Annual budgets always allocate substantial amounts of money to the education sector. At times, these funds are difficult to get and very late too.

Akubue (2003) states that current trends and thinking regard information as a resource in addition to the traditional resources of **3ms**- men, money and material. Of course, information in form of data is highly needed to plan and take rational decisions in educational matters. But what do we observe in education? Policy makers and managers are fed with inadequate, incorrect and belated data for one reason or the other. For quality management of education, adequate, current and correct data generated at all levels have to be sourced, collated, processed monitored and utilized for educational services. This is necessary because we are in the age of information technology where amount of digitalization/ information is on the increase from research, reports, routine reports, special survey reports from various educational agencies and programmes from the internet and so on. There is the need to create a healthy, participatory and hospitable quality culture among members of educational institutions at all levels of education. This will help to nurture and build good organizational climate for staff growth and development as well as improve staff behaviour towards accepting and working towards quality change. Managers need to realize that men are rational beings who accept or adopt change if it can be rationalized to be beneficial. So efforts have to be made to change the attitudes, relationship, skills, commitment of staff for installation of any change in education rather than the fire-brigade and coercive strategy of employing political, legal, economic or administrative sanctions to bring about change in education. Of concern also is the notion that any person can manage the education system. This is connected to unnecessary interference in the management of education. Cases abound where employments and appointments are made to satisfy political interests. Education managers without technical, human and conceptual skills are appointed and merit is sidetracked. This has greatly affected the educational system (Alani, 2001). It therefore means that, for quality management to thrive, government has to ensure that decisions and actions on education maximize rather than sacrifice. It is true that there cannot be *a political* educational policies. Education and politics are inseparable but *unnecessary* politicization of education needs to be reduced because it has caused considerable damage to the system. Also, attention has been focuses on provision of funds, facilities, and personnel without recourse to what goes on in the classroom between the staff and students in terms of the content of course coverage, quality of teaching, actual contact hours utilized, as well as laboratory works and teaching practice which are vital component of professional training for the neophytes in the profession. Admittedly, provision of the required inputs in schools is fundamental but if adequate and proper monitoring and improvement are not placed in the processing of these inputs by the management, there is bound to be faulty output.

Moreover, the inspectors, who have been assigned to the task of raising the standard of education through their regular visits to schools and other activities, lack the logistics to carry out the job as expected. The inspectorate department of the ministries of education are too ill- equipped, ill-funded and under-staffed to make the needed impact. Even many a time inspectors' reports are never reacted to.

As prescribed by the NPE, Ministries of education at both federal and state levels are to prepare their educational plans taking cognizance of the social, economic and other needs of the society. It becomes necessary that the planning departments of ministries of education that carry out this function be adequately staffed and headed by well-trained education planners rather than ordinary planning officers.

However, for inspectorate powers to make appreciable and lasting impacts on quality management, the inspectorate departments of ministries of education need adequate and qualified inspectors who are credible and committed.

### **School Supervision**

The term supervision has been viewed in different ways by so many scholars based on their perception of what supervision is. While some scholars may see it as a means of improving instructional programmes, others perceive it as a punishment as well as threat to their job, some teachers may also see it as a way of strengthening





their teaching ability. Be it as it may, school supervision is a necessity to instructional programmes' improvement which cannot be jettisoned from school administration. Olowonefa and Orieha (2016) saw supervision as an activity that is carried out by an administrator in a school which affects the child growth and development. Supervision deal with all factors in the school which include classroom teaching and learning and other activities that occur in the school. School supervision is an important component of quality control strategy in education for the maintenance of high educational standards (Oku, Emenalo & Okeke, 2013). In reiteration, they maintained that supervision is a leadership process used by managerial personnel to influence their subordinate to achieve organizational and personal goals.

School supervision leads to high productivity in educational system as it enables the efficient and effective utilization of the available resources to achieving the goals and objectives of education in Nigeria via teaching and learning. Nwaogu in Nwakpa (n.d) saw supervision as the process of bringing about improvement in the structure by working with people who are working with pupils (students). It is a process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to help themselves.

School supervision is used to describe those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils and teachers (Nwakpa, N. D.). Etymologically, he maintained that the word supervision was derived from a latin word "supervideo" meaning to "oversee". Supervision is that phase of school administration which sees to the improvement of instruction. In his words, Kamindo in Umar, Hauwa and Nura (2017) opinion that it is a leadership for the improvement of instruction and ultimately student learning. These stands according to him suggest that the role supervision is to improve teaching and learning through a deliberate emphasis on ways and means if instilling excellence in the quality instruction. School supervision is a process which strives to stimulate teachers towards effectiveness or productivity.

Okeke and Uwazuruike (2016) observed that school organization is made up of four variables which include the leader (supervisor) who influences and determines output, the subordinates (teachers/ supervisee) or followers, on whom influence s exerted with positive and negative impact, then the situation or environment which the leader and subordinates are interacting and the product (student) which emerge from the organization. Also, they believed that if leader the leader performs his function extensively, it will make a positive impact on the employees, who will produce effective teaching and learning experience whose end product would be bright students who will be useful to themselves and the society. Thus, effective guidance and monitoring of school activities by the school administrators is essential to the achievement of educational objectives in Nigeria as it behooves on them to systematically utilize the available resources in their disposal to achieve the results for establishing a school.

### **Who is a School Supervisor?**

It is important for us to know who a school supervisor is and his functions. A school supervisor is an individual who is manned with the responsibilities of monitoring the daily activities of teachers and making sure they carry out instructional duties in accordance with stipulated rules and standards. He also oversees the daily operations of the school. Furthermore the supervisor is that personnel who see about the utilization of human and material resources made available for day-to-day running of the school. According to Olowonefa and Orieha (2016) a supervisor is an individual who by the virtue of his function carries out duties which deals with managing both human and material resources within the school system and now they can best be utilized. On this note, it is not out of place to say that a school supervisor can s well be a school administrator. Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2013) held that supervision of instruction is one of the major aspects of school administration which involves the school head or any person appointed preferably Head of Departments interacting with teachers and students/pupils in the classroom on a regular basis and through this way monitor teaching and learning processes and outcomes. A supervisor is an individual who influences and assists his subordinates in the improvement of the school conducive level, they include the officers of the schools board, ministry of education, their local



representatives and school executive (the principal, headmaster etc). it behooves on the school administrator to appoint any of his subordinate who will perform supervisory duties on his behalf.

Okeke and Uwazuruike (2016) maintained that the supervisors primary function is to oversee and coordinate school activities. He encourages and discourages certain behavior and teaching methodologies. The supervisor does not only direct work of those under him but is the only personnel who link the school, teachers and students to his superordinate and the community. He is responsible for the implementation of policies and programmes. This he does by creating a viable structure which works independently as he is perceived as expert in human relations.

### **Qualities of a Good Supervisor**

For a school supervisor to carry out numerous and complex activities involved in supervision he must possess some good qualities. Magaret in Olowonefa and Orieha (2016) identify some qualities required for a good supervisor as follows:

1. A supervisor must understand the meaning and issues in supervision.
2. He should be able to help teachers in classroom management.
3. He should be a man of high integrity who is always honest and true to his word.
4. He is creative, imaginative, inventive and innovative.
5. He should be approachable, humorous and open to suggestion from teachers.
6. He develops objectives and standards of performance expected of those he supervises and so on.

In similar vein, Nwaogu in Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2013) stated that “a supervisor appointed to supervise others should possess sound knowledge and teaching skills if he is to be involved in stimulating teachers”. He therefore advocated that the supervisor needs to secure a fundamental understanding of the humanities, technology, science and social science and psychology. A supervisor who is also a leader should possess the necessary skills required of him/her as a leader. The leadership skills as put forward by Doyle (2019) include:

**Communication:** this involves the ability to clearly and succinctly explain to subordinates all they need to know about organizational goals to specific task.

**Motivation:** This deals with the ability to inspire workers to go extra mile for their organization. Hence, it is stimulation of workers towards achieving organizational goals.

**Creativity:** ability to try nontraditional solution or approach to solving problems.

**Responsibility:** This involves the willingness to accept blame when something does not go correctly.

It is pertinent to state that a supervisor must possess technical, interpersonal, conceptual and administrative skills because for effective supervision to take place there must be combination of the aforementioned skills by the supervisor.

### **Importance of School Supervision**

School supervision is important due to the following reasons:

- a. Supervision is directed towards the improvement of learning and teaching.



- b. School supervision helps teachers to see beyond their present performance and seek improvement.
- c. School supervision helps teachers to improve their teaching methods and techniques, utilize newly discovered principles of group dynamics, provide for individual differences, locate and utilize community resources and evaluate their teaching competence.
- d. It helps to assess the performance of the teachers recruited to teach in the school system.
- e. It helps in the assessment of the “tone” of the school and in the identification of some of its most urgent needs.
- f. It helps to discover special abilities or qualities possessed by teachers in the school system (Nosiri & Nwagbo, 1997).

### **Challenges of School Supervision in Nigeria**

There are some problems which hinder effective supervision by school administrators or any one appointed to discharge the duty of supervision in schools in Nigeria. These problems include:

#### **Poor Communication in Schools**

Communication remains essential to cordial relationship not only in schools but also in any organization. However, it's quite unfortunate that many supervisors do not have effective communication with their teachers as a result of poor communication skills. Hence, it becomes difficult to relate and stimulate teachers' morale to achieving the goals of education.

#### **Inadequate Number of Personnel**

There is the presence of short supply of supervisory personnel in schools in Nigeria both in quantity and quality. Most personnel employed for supervision did not have the needed qualification and experience. In some schools youth corp members who are inexperienced are used as supervisors. Secondly, in most situations the supervisor/institutors supervised the subjects that are not their area of study or specialization. Ogunu (2001) observed that personnel without the experience of teaching in schools were deployed to supervise teachers. This practice hinders quality control and consequently, resulting in poor quality output while maintaining standards of the students are affected.

#### **Poor Funding**

Inadequate funding of the schools by the government or its agencies affects schools supervision. This severely affects the provision of necessary materials needed for supervision. Impress are not available for purchase of stationary and other equipments, the office are not conducive and so on. Anuma (2004) stated that inadequate fund has been the bane of the supervision and has almost destroyed inspection of schools in Nigeria. The education sector competes with the industrial, health, agricultural, communication and steel sectors of Nigeria economy. It should be noted that as education demands effective funding from the government, other sectors of the economy demands same from the government. Thus, the fund made available for education are never enough as other sectors must receive attention as well (Ogbonnaya, 2005).

#### **Bureaucratic System**

The inspectors do not make decision on issues concerning school inspection alone without the knowledge of the higher authorities. Secondly most of their reports are kept aside during decision making. In support of the above assertion, Eya and Chukwu in Olowonefa and Orieaha (2016) held that inspectoral system in purely



bureaucratic. It is a top-down hierarchical and authoritarian in nature. In this case inspectors are unable to make decision on matters pertaining to school inspection without consulting authorities who may have little or no knowledge of the situation in school.

### **Principals Overwhelmed with Administrative Duties**

According to Anunu (2004) principals are performing administrative duties that hardly have time to offer academic leadership because they are preoccupied with obtained information from the Ministry of Education, Schools Board, Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, parents, the students and other educational stakeholders to the detriment of internal instructional supervision which is their main duty.

Oku, Emenalo and Okeke (2013) aptly summarized the problems of school supervision in Nigeria as:

1. Inadequate supply for needed facilities such as transport facilities, writing materials etc.
2. Lack of proper training of supervisors and inadequate exposure to innovation.
3. Ineffective/poor styles of supervision.
4. Poor communication in schools
5. Lack of motivation of school staff.
6. Inadequate funding of inspectorate division.
7. Inadequate number of supervisory personnels in terms of quality and quantity.

They maintained that paying attention to the aforementioned problems by funding the education system adequately will go a long way to ameliorate the problems thus providing an enabling environment for effective external and internal supervision of schools in Nigeria. In the view of Umar, Hauwa and Nura (2017), supervision are faced with a lot of obstacles due to insufficient materials. This is a serious problem which hinders their assignment. The job of supervision is done through the use of material resources. Therefore, what materials to use and how many are available to the instructional supervision may depend on the type of supervision envisaged.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper viewed supervision as a leadership process which strives to stimulate subordinate towards greater effectiveness or productivity in educational system. The need for effective school supervision is necessary for the maintenance of high educational standard in Nigeria cum achievement of educational objective as spelt out in her National Policy on Education. Therefore, the need for school supervision remains indisputable in modern school administration in Nigeria. From this discussion Quality Management Practices including inspectorate powers and responsibilities are effective tool. For quality assurance of our educational products.

### **Suggestions**

- a) There should be adequate supply of competent personnel to schools for supervision. Since this problem is seen almost all the states in Nigeria. Government should employ more personnel and give them adequate training for effective supervision.





- b) Supervision should be made to enhance their communication skills in order to reduce any factors that could impede the smooth exchange of information because effective communication is very important for effective working of school supervision.
- c) The government through its agencies should make available the necessary materials needed for supervision on time and in adequate quantity as this will make supervisors discharge their duties very well without difficulties.
- d) Although application of bureaucratic principles cannot be jettisoned from any organization. However, in some cases the supervisor/inspectors should be allowed to make decision on matters regarding school inspection. The supervisors are the ones who go to the field and obtain first hand information on ground and should be able to take decisions on certain matters because they know the level of urgency required in treating a matter than those who sit in the office and awaits a report before something can be done.
- e) The principals' should be advised not allow other administrative task to be the detriment of instructional supervision. Hence, they should have room the internal instructional supervision and not to be wholly occupied by other administrative duties.

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