



SCHOOL SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION IN AN ERA OF DIGITALIZATION

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Abstract

School supervision occupies the central role in the educational system. It is needed to improve teaching and learning activities and the entire atmosphere of the school. Inspection as a twin concept is also used to assess, examine, criticize and evaluate the teachers and school programmes in order to get things done in accordance with strict rules. Succinctly, the current state of the society where internet and other digital devices are used to perform many tasks, has significantly affected school supervision and inspection. In fact, the entire educational sector is undergoing changes, since, the emergence of digital technology. For instance, during the COVID-19 period, many school activities, including supervision and inspection were carried out via internet and other information technologies. This is currently impacting on school supervision and inspection in the face of educational development. Teachers in classrooms are no longer totally clinging to traditional way of delivering instruction, but, have embraced the application of digital devices for effective teaching-learning activity due to current trend. Nowadays, an effective educational system may not be unconnected with a well programmed and articulated digitally- driven school supervision and inspection. Therefore this paper spotlights school supervision and inspection; technologies employed, challenges, implementation, benefits challenges, and recommendations for way forward and its implication to the society in an era of digitalization.

Keywords: School supervision, inspection, digitalization

Introduction

School supervision and inspection has passed through series of revolutionary changes right from the colonial and post-independence period. Retrospectively, during the colonial time, officers from the inspectorate division of the State and Federal Ministries of Education often visit respective schools to



carry out inspection aimed at assessing, criticizing, appraising and examining the activities of teachers, pupils/students and other aspects of the school programmes to see that they conform within strict rules and regulations, in substance of uniform standards of education across the country. In recent times, educational industry, in the light of school supervision and inspection experiences speedy changes and innovations in its operation through the adoption and application of digital technologies. Rusmariar and Setiyo (2023) avert that the education sector is currently undergoing changes toward digitalization because of technological developments and the impact of pandemics.

According to Marupah, (2022) digital technology is now being used in all aspects of education. The application of modern technologies in school supervision and inspection is believed to be geared towards the improvement of the entire teaching environment in the school. The teaching activity is carried out by the teachers who suppose be resourceful and innovative in machine learning, so as to deliver good instruction in the classroom for effective learning to take place. The teachers as drivers of the curricula, need to be ready to embrace, adopt and use new information technologies for the day-to-day activities in the schools. Nevertheless, it has been discovered that, one of the best ways of improving teachers' classroom competence especially in the era of digitalization is the use of virtual means in supplement of the pre-existed one-to-one school supervision/inspection to drive home quality teaching and learning. Invariably, the duty of the supervisor is to harness digital resources for effective task accomplishment in the school, in order to achieve quality instruction, learning and the overall improvement of the school. In the same vein, Ogban, Nnaji, Unamba and Effah (2022) opine that the sustainable empowerment of youths can be achieved through the provision of ICT facilities in schools.

Clarification of key Concepts

School Supervision: This is the process of overseeing all the activities in the school in order to improve and achieve quality. According to Amanda, Salam and Saggat (2017), the higher the quality of academic supervision implementation, the higher the teachers' performance in learning activities. Sule and Okon (2023) posit that, school supervision ensures the creation and maintenance of smooth and conducive atmosphere aimed at improving instruction and learning. School supervision and inspection is carried out by the personnel of the domiciled school such as the principal, headteacher, teachers, and even parents as well as staff of the Ministry of Education.

Supervision in this context, is the systematic way of assisting and guiding all those who work and study in the school for the obtainment of educational goals and standards. Suhardian (2010) sees school supervision as the oversight of academic activities such as the teaching and learning processes. According to Astuti, Hidayatulloh and Nisok (2024) supervision is needed as a monitoring activity to provide guide and administration to improve teachers' quality in education, as a form of monitoring the potential and capacity of the teachers.

School inspection: School inspection is the process of assessing, evaluating, examining and appraising the activities of members of the school community to achieve set goals in conformity with laid down standards or rules. The officials of the inspectorate division, Ministry of Education, known as inspectors often exercise absolute power and authority over school subjects; they also ascertain how far the objectives of the school have been achieved to ensure uniform standards all over the nation. To them, there must be strict compliance to the already set rules and standards. Sule and Okon (2023) define school board inspection as the process of observing, examining, criticizing and evaluating teachers, learners, programmes and facilities to induce conformity, compliance and goal achievement.

Digitalization: This is the process of applying digits (fingers or toes) to carry out some operations using appropriate technological gadgets or machines. It can also be explained as the process transforming from analog or traditional way of carrying out activities to computer or digital-driven way. Nugroho and Hydayata (2023) see digitalization as the application of digital technology to carry out tasks. Such digital technologies include the use of cell phone, computers, labtops, Hi-pads, palmtops, projectors,



etc, that provide many services such as internet, worldwide webs, telnets, teleconferencing, zoom, whatsapp, etc.

Digitalization of School Supervision and Inspection

This can be conceptualized as the application of digital technology in the supervisory activity of the school by either heads or inspectors such technologies include cell phones, internets, projectors, palmtops, laptops, etc. Digitalization of school supervision involves the use of digital or online strategies to carry out classroom observation, support, peer conference, feedback and post-conference Ma'ayis and Haq (2022) state that the presence of technology can be a new innovation for supervisors in utilizing digital academic supervision also known as e-supervision. According to Astuti, Hidayatulloh and Nisak (2024) it is a technology that can be used by the supervisors in carrying digital-based academic supervision such as online platforms or software to observe, provide feedback, support teacher development in teaching. Emphatically, total transformation in school supervision and inspection can only be witnessed with the use of relevant digital technology especially in this of modern day education. This goes a long way to promotes quality teaching and learning in the school community. In the light of this, Rusmaniar, Widiyasih and Seiyo (2023) avert that digital-based (academic) supervision activities are more focused on a comprehensive assessment of the quality of teacher assessment implementation rather than just administrative completeness.

In this era of digitalization, classroom observation can be carried out through tele- conferencing and video-conferencing, in line with the time agreed upon or considering the teaching period/hour of the teacher. In this case, the cameras or videos are set by both the supervisor and the teacher (supervisee) to cover or videotape the ongoing classroom instruction. This allows immediate feedback by the supervisor or inspector to the teacher for immediate improvement. Also a clinical supervision technique could also enjoy e-supervision where pre-conference, classroom observation, post-conference, analysis of classroom data and feedback are carried out in a systematic or sequential manner. Based on this, Ogban, Nnaji, Umamaba and Effah (2022) corroborate that for sustainable youth empowerment and job creation information and communication technologies need be provided in schools. Various digital applications that can be used in digital- based school supervision and inspection include zoom, cloud meeting, seesaw, Microsoft teams, google meet, cisco, webex, and UmeetMe (Muta'ali, 2023). This type of supervision is carried out through online classroom websites, observations, discussions with teachers and provision of feedbacks. Supervisors and inspectors can also use e-supervision to monitor the activities of teachers in different classrooms and the entire climate of the school whether they are within or outside the school premises.

Implementation of the Digitalization of School Supervision and inspection

In Nigeria educational system, it is believed that the traditional or conventional method of school supervision of visiting the classroom for instructional observation is still upheld tenaciously, but not goal oriented Astuti, Hi dayatulloh and Nisak (2024) observe that the model of academic supervision is still conventional, such as visiting and observing classes, which can affect the readiness of teachers and increase their mental burden while teaching in front of the classroom. Purba, Hasan, Panjaitan and Mamli (2023), deduced that conventional supervision has many obstacles related to the limited time of the principal or the supervisor, which could hinder the effectiveness of supervision.

Apparently, the role of the principal, headteacher or inspector in this modern era is to adopt and utilize the digital technologies in having conference with the teachers, observe classroom instruction, evaluate, assess notes of lessons, and provide quick feedback which supports the teachers thereby leading to innovational learning. The implementation of digital based supervision is not the responsibility of the supervisor alone, but, requires a proactive approach by the stakeholders in education. It behooves the principals, as well as, school inspectors to have competencies as supervisors and the supervisees applying this technological innovation. This is why Purba, Hatan, Panjautan and Morali et al, (2023) uphold that the advancement of technology in education requires the principal,



supervisors and teachers to possess competencies in technology. According to Basilio (2021), the principal has a responsibility to carry out academic supervision including planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching. In this wise, school supervisors and inspectors alike, should be able to lead the teachers; develop school programmes that encourage innovation and help teachers adapt to the digital age (Basilio, 2021).

Benefits of implementing digital supervision

Adoption and utilization of digital supervision has immense benefits and include the following

- i. It is carried out in a flexible and tension- free manner without barrier.
- ii. It helps to transform the entire school system.
- iii. It helps to address the problem of supervision of large number of staff or teachers at a time.
- iv. It promotes increased digital knowledge or expertise knowledge.
- v. It is used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher for overall improvement of the teaching and learning process.
- vi. It helps to promote professional and learning abilities of the teachers.
- vii. It promotes effective teaching and learning within possible time.
- viii. Technologies employed help to improve teachers' competence towards the use of digital devices.
- ix. Digitalizing school supervision and inspection improve the quality of teacher's classroom competence continually.
- x. It enhances efficiency in the school supervisory processes.
- xi. It provides a platform for collaboration or team work.
- xii. It saves time and energy.
- xiii. It provides immediate feedback to the teachers in tandem with current best global practices.

Challenges Associated with the Digitalization of School Supervision and Inspection

Digital-based school supervision and inspection has inherent challenges and weaknesses such as;

- i. It lacks direct or one-on-one interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee(s)
- ii. School personnel who are computer illiterate may find it difficult to adopt or adapt to the innovation.
- iii. The dearth of professionals to handle major and supportive operations may posed a serious impediment to the digitalization system.
- iv. Low tele-density resulting to network issue may hamper effective digital supervision and inspection in terms of communication.
- v. Some digital gadgets may poss-problem during operation for supervision and inspection of schools.
- vi. There may be unstable or inadequate access to internet or other online platforms.
- vii. Aged supervisors and teachers may find it uneasy to use ICT facilities.
- viii. Consistent use of digital devices can cause some health challenges like blurr eyesight, deafness, etc.
- ix. Insufficient power supply to power the digital gadgets.

Recommendations for Way Forward

The primary aim of digital-based school supervision and inspection is to shift from analog to technology-driven education and to offer teachers and supervisors an efficient platform for effective monitoring of teaching and learning activities for quality assurance in the educational system. Thus, sustaining school supervision and inspection in the era of digitalization would be assured.

To achieve the goals of education in higher terms, efforts must be intensified efforts towards ensuring digital school supervision and inspection the following ways.



- i. Capacity building: In order to achieve effective digital supervision, there should be frequent capacity building programmes for supervisors and teachers particularly in the area of modern technology. There should be regular training and retraining, seminars and workshops for teachers on the use of digital resources.
- ii. Supply of light in the school: Power supply must be made available and adequate for the charging of digital gadgets.
- iii. Improved access to internet or technology: Digital tools should be made available to the teachers and supervisors
- iv. Support from government: Government and other stakeholders in education should provide adequate support services to teachers. There should be supply of communication or digital infrastructures to schools. Adequate funds should also be provided to boost educational operations, especially, in this era of digitalization.
- v. Creativity and innovativeness: School personnel should be innovative by embracing the new technology and innovative ways of carrying out tasks in the school.
- vi. Use of protective devices: Devices such as eyeglasses and ear protective should be used when utilizing digital devices to avoid sudden health challenges on the users.

Implication of the study to the society

School supervision and inspection is the process of overseeing the activities of the teachers in the teaching and learning processes by the leader or supervisor for overall improvement. Changes in the society and education sector have called for innovations to curb certain challenges and aligned with the current changes. For instance, in 2019 and 2020, the experience of COVID-19 brought a lot of changes in the educational industry including online (digital) learning, teaching and supervision. Digitalization of school supervision has great potentials of changing the face of the school system in the post-covid-19 era as it helps to promote efficiency in teaching and learning, as well as addressing the challenges of time, space and energy. However, putting such modalities in place in this perspective by the stakeholders in education would go a long way in the actualization of current best global practices in teaching pedagogies

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