



ADMINISTRATION OF ETHICAL STANDARDS IN SCHOOL SUPERVISION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN UMUAHIA EDUCATION ZONE OF ABIA STATE



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Abstract

This study investigated the Administration of Ethical Standards in School Supervision for Sustainable National Development in Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a total population of 662 individuals that comprised 56 Principals, 112 Vice Principals, and 494 teachers from Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Education Zone. The study's sample size was 170, chosen through simple random sampling. It comprised 60 principals/vice principals and 110 teachers. The instrument used for the collection of data was a 19-item self-structured questionnaire titled; "Administration of Ethical Standard in School Supervision for Sustainable National Development in Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria Questionnaire" (AESSNDPSQ) which was validated by two experts from Education Measurement and Evaluation and Education Management and Planning, Imo State University, Owerri. The reliability of the instrument was established at 'r' = 0.82 using the Cronbach Alpha statistical tool. Two research questions guided the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions 1 and 2, structured on a 4-point scale of Very High Extent VHE, High Extent HE, Low Extent LE, and Very Low Extent VLE with a mean point of 2.50. The findings revealed that the respondents indicated the extent of the ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools as being high, with a cluster mean of 2.5, and that the respondents agreed to a high extent with the strategies to be administered to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should provide continuous professional development (CPD) in ethical leadership and decision-making through partnership with the teachers' training institutions or educational consultants, the supervisors should schedule regular feedback forums where teachers can express concerns or suggest improvements, there is need to maintain regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that ethical practices are sustained and conduct an orientation programme for appointed government officials to lead by example.

Keywords: Administration, Ethical Standard, School Supervision, Secondary School, Sustainable National Development.



Introduction

Education is viewed as an indispensable catalyst that strongly influences nations' development and economic fortunes and the quality of life of their people. In Nigeria, education is the instrument par excellence for national development (FGN, 2013). The Nigerian nation believes that education is the vehicle that can drive the country to national development (Kalu and Nwaneri, 2019). They further state that the relevance of education to an individual and the Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized, as it permits all spheres of human endeavours. Anyaogu (2021) sees education as the eyes, the way, and the means for the development of any nation. Therefore, an individual masters his environment and acquires the necessary equipment for living a worthwhile life. Isiozor (2019) asserted that secondary education occupies a very unique position in the education system in Nigeria, because it is that level that determines the academic and professional career of students. Anyaogu (2021) noted that secondary education is the education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary level. The duration of study at this level is six years.

According to the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013), the goals of secondary education are to prepare students for useful living within society and to prepare them for higher education. Specifically, secondary education is aimed to provide opportunity for qualitative education for primary school leavers, offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents of the pupils, develop Nigeria cultural heritage, produce a generation of people who respect the dignity of labour, foster Nigeria unity and to inspire its students with the desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and in later life. Anyanwu, as cited in Isiozor, Emeribe, and Anyanwu (2017), states that quality education is a functional and sustainable system that serves the needs of individuals and enables them to facilitate the development of their nation. Education, therefore, is of quality if it has the potential to produce individuals who can render useful services to their country and themselves. To this effect, quality education is a tool for sustainable development. Isiozor et al (2017) added that national development means the level of improvement sustained over a period in the economic, social, and political sectors of a nation, resulting in traceable better welfare of the citizens. Kalu and Nwaneri (2019) view education as that which forms the bedrock of development, adding that to develop, there must be relevant education of all citizens, both in quality and quantity. Isiozor (2019) asserted that only the provision of qualitative education can guarantee the accomplishment of the secondary education goals. Olowonwfa and Orieha, as cited in Akuchie and Amataobi (2020), asserted that to achieve the educational goals as enunciated in her National Policy on Education, the educational system must be reliable. The reliability of the educational system can only be achieved through proper and effective school supervision.

The concept of supervision is common to all professions and occupations. This implies that no organisation can function effectively without effective supervision (Jeremiah and Queensoap, 2024). Supervision is defined by Babalola, as cited in Jeremiah and Queensoap (2024), as the interaction between at least two persons for the improvement of activities. It is a formative, supportive, and developmental process directed to improve and promote growth and development. According to Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021), School supervision can be described as the development of an authentic helping relationship between teachers and supervisors. It involves providing a guide for teachers to facilitate improved performance on the job. They further affirm that supervision is a service to help teachers improve instruction. Supervision influences the quality of teachers in service delivery. Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) see supervision as a phase of school administration, which deals primarily with the achievement of all the appropriate selected instructional expectations of education services. Okeke, Njoku, and Obasi (2019) defined administration as the range of activities connected with organising and supervising the way our institution or organisation functions. Furthermore, it is the guidance, leadership, and control of a group effort towards the achievement of expected goals. Anukam, as cited in Anyaogu (2021), emphasised that the process involves decision making, organising, communicating, directing, coordinating, and evaluation carried out to achieve the organisational goal. Isiozor and Odu (2021) see supervision as a process of assisting, directing, stimulating, and motivating teachers to embrace the teaching and learning process in educational institutions. According to Oku, Emenalo & Okeke as cited in Akuchie and Amataobi (2020), school supervision therefore becomes a veritable tool for proper monitoring, guidance, direction and integration of available human and material resources for

school utilization as well as an important component of quality control strategy in education for the maintenance of high educational standard in Nigeria. Akuchie and Amataobi (2020) asserted that school supervision leads to high productivity in the educational system as it enables the efficient and effective utilisation of the available resources to achieve the goals and objectives of education in Nigeria via teaching and learning. Agbajeola (2019) asserted that maximum productivity is achieved when the resources are prepared, aligned, and used for their intended purpose with learners. Okeke and Uwazuruike, as cited in Akuchie and Amataobi (2020), maintained that the supervisor's primary function is to oversee and coordinate school activities. According to Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016), Supervisors assist, guide, and mentor fellow teachers on their day-to-day activities to enhance effective service delivery, and inspectors obtain information and disseminate it to stakeholders in the education industry. This practice is a fundamental norm for effective service delivery and a core and determinant issue on the workability or otherwise of the government's innovations and policies in education that target possible review or change of gear that can bring in the much-desired change or result in the education system. Nwakpa in Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) states that supervision is a way of stimulating, helping and improving, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, and overseeing teacher in their tasks. From the foregoing, supervision extends beyond finding faults in service delivery but includes providing guidelines for improvement more cordially.

According to Eziugo, cited in Ojeka (2024), there are two main types of supervision: internal and external supervision. Internal supervision is more effective, their reasons being that it helps the less effective and inexperienced teachers to improve their teaching. The internal supervision is more regular and effective because the internal supervisors are always with the teachers; they do not schedule visits like the external supervisors. On the other hand, external supervisors are educators and administrators from the Ministry of Education, the Education Board, etc. Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) define internal supervision as all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. This could suggest the following: stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction, methods of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction. Aja-Okorie and Oko (2021) further asserted that in secondary schools, internal supervision is the functional role of the principal, dean of studies, and the sectional heads of departments or those delegated to do so. According to Isiozor and Odu (2021) supervisor role connotes opportunities for teachers to be groomed through discursive critical study of classroom interaction to carry out their teaching tasks in line with professional codes of conduct. Tedla, as cited in Ojeka (2024), asserted that teachers' supervision is one of the best ways principals enhance and upgrade teachers' profession, maintain school standards, and ensure checks and balances. Edomwande and Anakah (2020) asserted that a 21st-century principal can juxtapose visionary, instructional, and managerial leadership to support changes and stability.

Supervision becomes imperative for monitoring the factor resources for the pursuit of maintaining standards and quality. Supervision is generally aimed at improving teaching-learning situations and identifying the demanding needs of the school to find appropriate solutions (Abdullahi, Omosidi, Sheu & Abdulkareem as cited in Abdullahi and Adebayo, 2019). According to Jeremiah and Queensoap (2024), reports from school supervision and inspection provide feedback for regulatory agencies, which are used as quality control mechanisms to modify or otherwise the content area, methodology, teacher production and utilisation, school plant management, and other related aspects of the school programme. Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016), maintained that constant surveillance of the activities of teachers, students, parents and host communities of educational institutions is necessary because, in addition to admitting constant changes, the education industry bristles with thorny social, economic, moral, and political, scientific and general issues that consistently demand the attention of stakeholders and the general public as to ensure that the objectives upon which schools and educational institutions are established are achieved. Fatimah (2022) concluded that a supervisor must have the competence to guide and motivate teachers to use technology in learning to achieve effective and efficient educational goals.

The primary obligation of supervision is to fulfill the responsibility of professional development of teachers. Professional improvement is a basic requirement of successful supervision as it facilitates

teachers with supervisors' expertise and educates them in the art of instruction (Saeed and Ain, 2022). According to the National Council of Education Research and Training, as cited in John-Nelson, Ihunwo, and Ohanyiri (2025) asserted that the process of education inculcates ethics and values to equip the learner with a kind of life that is satisfying to the individual under the cherished values and ideals of the society. According to Kanu, as cited in John-Nelson, Ihunwo, and Ohanyiri (2025), ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with the morality of human actions or the norms of human behaviour. Ethics studies the proper course of action for man. Ethics is primarily concerned with those actions that fall within the sphere of humankind's morality. Many humans work throughout their lives to earn a living. This employment is sometimes called "professions", and the acts of people while engaged in these enterprises fall into the scope of ethics. Professional ethics, which emerged along with the process of professionalisation, addresses the "right" and "wrong" actions pertinent to a certain profession (Demirtas, 2011). Ethical standards include integrity, competence, confidentiality, and responsibility. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish and maintain standards for supervisors and to inform their supervisees and organisations seeking their services, as well as members of the public (www.hult.edu/en/ashridge/). Professional ethics refers to the ethical principles and standards that govern the behaviour and decisions of professionals in their specific fields. These principles and standards are established to ensure that professionals act with integrity, honesty, and accountability while providing services to their clients, customers, or stakeholders (<https://edukedar.com>). Hazi, as cited in Gordon (2019), described classroom visitation, curriculum work, and staff development as three functions of supervision, and predicted increased regulation of all three functions "because these three aspects of supervision are interconnected and focus on teacher quality and student learning. Wiles as cited in Gordon (2019), a supervisor should exhibit a belief in the worth of all individuals, respect for the wishes and feelings of others, the will to see that all live and work in harmony, plus skill in working with individuals and groups in such a way that these ends are promoted.

Ethical considerations in school supervision are crucial to maintaining professional integrity, supporting teacher development, ensuring student welfare, and fostering a positive learning environment. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2014) asserted that supervision should be aimed at growth rather than punitive measures. Ethical supervision supports continuous professional learning and reflective practice. Atik (2017) found that ethical issues related to confidentiality, privacy, and avoidance of multiple relationships appeared in supervision. According to Koçyiğit (2022), the most challenging factors were conducting supervision, supervision methods, techniques, evaluation, and the focus of supervision. The supervisor encounters ethical problems such as confidentiality and privacy, emergency, evaluation process, unprofessional behaviour of the supervisee, and multiple relationships. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) asserted that supervisors must respect their autonomy while guiding instructional improvement. Ethical supervision involves recognising and avoiding any conflicts that could influence decisions or evaluations. Wiles, as cited in Gordon (2019), proposed that the supervisor promote human relations by developing self-confidence, inspiring self-confidence in others, and respecting others. He believed the supervisor should promote teacher creativity and teacher leadership. Supervisors should bring teachers, pupils, and parents together in collaborative efforts toward a common purpose (Gordon, 2019). According to Kelly, Diamond, Davis and Whalen (2019), supervisors should serve as role models for supervisees in evaluating the rights and responsibilities of both parties and ensuring the welfare of both their clients and themselves.

Implementing ethical standards in school supervision is vital to fostering a just, respectful, and effective educational environment. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016) asserted that school leaders and supervisors should undergo ethical leadership training to model and enforce ethical behaviours. Glanz (2014) maintained that supervision should be objective, fair, and transparent. Clear criteria for evaluation and feedback should be used. To maintain a sustainable accountability system, According to Issa-Onilu (2024), the National Orientation Agency (NOA) shall organise a compulsory orientation programme on the National Values Charter for all appointed and elected government officials. This programme is critical for building a competent, ethical, practical public service. Issa-Onilu (2024) further asserted that by providing essential training, fostering an understanding of roles and responsibilities, and promoting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, it will ensure



that government officials are well-prepared to serve the public and contribute to the effective functioning of government institutions. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the administration of ethical standard in school supervision for Sustainable National Development in public secondary schools in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State, Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the extent that ethical standards are administered in school supervision and the extent agreed with the strategies to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education Zone in Abia State.

Statement of the Problem

Supervision is a major aspect of personnel administration in the education system. Supervision in secondary schools is carried out with the hope of ensuring the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning activities. Ethical considerations in school supervision are crucial to maintaining professional integrity, supporting teacher development, promoting inclusive practices, ensuring student welfare, and fostering a positive learning environment. Unfortunately, these efforts have not yielded better results in maintaining competent, ethical, sustainable practical public service. Given the above premise, this study seeks to investigate the administration of ethical standards in school supervision for Sustainable National Development in public secondary schools in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State.

Research Questions

To what extent are the ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools in the Umuahia education zone of Abia State?

To what extent do you agree with the strategies to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education zone in Abia State?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design with a total population of 662 individuals that comprised 56 Principals, 112 Vice Principals, and 494 teachers from Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Education Zone. The study's sample size was 170, chosen through simple random sampling. It comprised 60 principals/vice principals and 110 teachers. The instrument used for the collection of data was a 19-item self-structured questionnaire titled; "Administration of Ethical Standard in School Supervision for Sustainable National Development in Public Secondary Schools in Umuahia Education Zone of Abia State, Nigeria Questionnaire" (AESSNDPSQ) which was validated by two experts from Education Measurement and Evaluation and Education Management and Planning, Imo State University, Owerri. The reliability of the instrument was established at ' r ' = 0.82 using the Cronbach Alpha statistical tool. Two research questions guided the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse research questions 1 and 2, structured on a 4-point scale of Very High Extent VHE, High Extent HE, Low Extent LE, and Very Low Extent VLE with a mean point of 2.50.

Results and findings

Research Question 1

To what extent are the ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools in the Umuahia education zone of Abia State?



Table 1. Mean scores and standard deviation of responses on the extent of ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools in the Umuahia education zone of Abia State.

S/ N	Ethical standards	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	$\bar{X}$ ST D	Decision
1.	The use of rubrics and clear performance indicators when conducting classroom observations	20	32	79	39	2.2 .44	LE
2.	Handling sensitive information about teachers, students, and the school with discretion.	59	65	26	20	3.0	.60 HE
3	Possess the necessary skills and knowledge to guide and support educators effectively	19	46	65	40	2.3	.45 LE
4	Acknowledging teachers' expertise in subject areas.	39	65	46	20	2.7	.45 HE
5	Ensuring teachers use culturally responsive pedagogy and equitable practices in diverse classrooms.	72	66	19	14	3.2	.87 HE
6	Foster a culture of trust and respect within the school community	49	39	38	44	2.6	.54 HE
7	Applying consistent assessment standards and avoiding bias.	20	26	65	59	2.0	.32 LE
8	Transparency in their decision-making processes and being accountable for their actions	34	25	51	60	2.2	.44 LE
9	Advocating for equitable access to resources and opportunities for all students	39	79	32	20	2.8	.51 HE
10	Recognize and avoid any conflicts that could influence decisions or evaluations.	40	60	49	21	2.7	.51 HE
11	Maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries with staff and students	34	38	40	58	2.3	.45 LE
12	Encouraging collaborative goal-setting and offering constructive feedback to help teachers improve.	17	29	62	62	2.0	.32 LH
13	Fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected	27	47	45	51	2.3	.45 LH
Cluster mean and Standard deviation					2.5	.5	HE

Expected mean = 2.50

HE = High Extent

LE = Low Extent

No. of Respondents = 170

The data analysis presented in Table 1 revealed that it is only items 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 10 in the table has a mean above the expected mean of 2.50. The respondents indicate the extent of the ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools in the Umuahia education zone of Abia State as being high, with a cluster mean of 2.5

Research Question 2

To what extent do you agree with the strategies to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education zone in Abia State?

Table 2. Mean scores and standard deviation of responses on the extent of the strategies to be administered to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education zone in Abia State

S/N	Items	VH			VLE	$\bar{X}$	STD	Decision
		E	HE	LE				
14.	Conduct training sessions and workshops to familiarise staff with the code.	62	57	28	31	2.9	.60	HE
15.	Partner with teacher training institutions or educational consultants to offer structured workshops	53	63	30	24	2.9	.60	HE
16.	Schedule regular feedback forums where teachers can express concerns or suggest improvements.	70		28	23	3.0	.63	HE
17.	Designate an ethics officer or committee to handle complaints and inquiries.	59	49	31	25	2.9	.60	HE
18.	Conduct an orientation programme for appointed government officials to lead by example	48	55	33	28	2.8	.5	HE
19.	Conduct periodic ethics climate surveys among staff and students	72	61	20	24	3.0	.63	HE
Cluster mean and Standard deviation						2.9	.6	HE

Expected mean = 2.50 HE = High Extent LE = Low Extent No. of Respondents = 170

From Table 2, the results of the findings revealed that items 14 to 19 have mean values above the criterion mean value of 2.50, as evidenced in the mean values of 2.9, 2.9, 3.0, 2.9, 2.8, and 3.0. The findings revealed that the respondents agreed to a high extent with the strategies to be administered to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education zone in Abia State with a cluster mean of 2.9.

Discussion of Results

The results of the findings revealed that the extent of the ethical standards administered in school supervision in public secondary schools in the Umuahia education zone of Abia State was high, with a cluster mean of 2.5. The findings revealed ethical violations such as clear performance indicators when conducting classroom observations (2.2), possess the necessary skills and knowledge (2.3), applying consistent assessment standards and avoiding bias (2.0), maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries with staff and students (2.3), encouraging collaborative goal-setting and offering constructive feedback to help teachers improve (2.0) and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected (2.0). Similar to the findings of this study, Koçyiğit (2022) found that ethical issues related to confidentiality, privacy, and avoidance of multiple relationships appeared in supervision. The findings of Gordon (2019) are in tandem with this study, which revealed that a supervisor exhibit a belief in the worth of all individuals, respect for the wishes and feelings of others, the will to see that all live and work in harmony, plus skill in working with individuals and groups in such a way that these ends are promoted. The finding also conforms to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), who asserted that supervisors must respect their autonomy while guiding instructional improvement. According to Kelly, Diamond, Davis, and Whalen (2019), supervisors should serve as role models for supervisees in evaluating the rights and responsibilities of both parties and ensuring the welfare of both their clients and themselves. The above-mentioned findings were per



the research of U-Sayee and Adomako in Saeed and Ain (2022) about principal supervision, which was encumbered by a lack of resources for teachers, inexperienced teachers, nonprofessional behaviour of teachers,

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents agreed to a high extent with the strategies to be administered to implement ethical standards in school supervision in public secondary schools in Umuahia education zone in Abia State, with a cluster mean value of 3.1. This conforms to Shapiro and Stefkovich (2016), who asserted that school leaders and supervisors should undergo ethical leadership training to model and enforce ethical behaviours. According to Issa-Onilu (2024), the National Orientation Agency (NOA) organises a compulsory orientation programme on the National Values Charter for all appointed and elected government officials. This programme is critical for building a competent, ethical, practical public service. Issa-Onilu (2024) further asserted that by providing essential training, fostering an understanding of roles and responsibilities, and promoting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement, it will ensure that government officials are well-prepared to serve the public and contribute to the effective functioning of government institutions. This study agrees with the findings of Saeed and Ain (2022) that regular feedback from the head as a supervisor helps the teachers improve and gain excellence in their work. The researcher believes that supervisors should take precautionary measures to avoid ethical problems, for this is an important professional responsibility.

Conclusion

Based on the result of this study, it was established that implementing ethical standards in school supervision is vital to fostering a just, respectful, and effective educational environment. In secondary schools, where students are at a formative stage and educators are managing both academic and developmental guidance, ethical supervision helps uphold professionalism, trust, and fairness. A comprehensive approach to implementing ethical standards in school supervision involves leadership commitment, staff training, transparent systems, and continuous reflection. Ethics must be embedded in school culture, not just enforced through policy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are the recommendations proffered;

The government should provide continuous professional development (CPD) in ethical leadership and decision-making through partnership with the teachers' training institutions of educational consultants.

The supervisors should schedule regular feedback forums where teachers can express concerns or suggest improvements.

There is a need to maintain regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that ethical practices are sustained.

Conduct an orientation programme for appointed government officials to lead by example

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