



ETHICAL STANDARDS IN SCHOOL SUPERVISION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA



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Abstract

This work assesses Ethical Standards in School Supervision for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria. Supervision is the process of helping, guiding, advising and stimulating growth in subordinates in order to improve on the quality of his work. The Scope of School Supervision was examined; the purpose, importance, key ethical standards and unethical practices to avoid were considered. In addition, the consequences of unethical behavior in supervision was looked into and the ways of promoting ethical conduct. Lastly school supervision standard was examined including key areas covered by supervision standards in supervision. It was concluded that Schools where unethical practices in schools cannot produce disciplined and quality graduates. This reduces the value of our school products, based on the standard by which we judge human behavior. In other words, moral rules, promoting those things thought of as good and minimizing or avoiding those things thought as bad learnt at early age at home and school. It was recommended among others that School supervisors should create a positive and productive learning environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

Keyword: Ethical Standards, School Supervision, Sustainable National Development

Introduction

Educational system as an investment lies in its capability to continuously serve its targeted beneficiaries (students, teachers, parents, employers of labor and the society at large) and consistently remain relevant. Educational stakeholders are saddled with the responsibility of managing the educational system with the challenge of making schools as good as expected through supervision with professional ethics. School supervision is an indispensable variable in the teaching learning process which has brought about ethical standards in the teaching profession in the world general and Nigeria in particular. The history of supervision for improving educational programmes which helps teachers to achieve both qualitative and quantitative instructional delivery could easily be deduced that supervision is life wire of any educational system. Igbo, (2002) looked at supervision as the process of helping, guiding, advising and stimulating growth in subordinates in order to improve on the quality of his work. Supervision involves the stimulation of professional growth and the development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and methods of teaching and evaluation of instruction with fairness (Ethics) for a better future. Ethical standards in school supervision emphasize the principle of fairness, respect, and confidentiality, ensuring a supportive and professional environment for supervisor, educators and students for a conducive teaching/ learning

environment. This paper exposes you to the nitty gritties of ethical standards in school supervision for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria.

Concept Clarification

What are Ethical Standards?

Ethics is derived from the Greek word “ethos”, meaning the science of morality that regulates human conduct. Ethics, though ancient in its origin, has in recent time and clime become a novel and compelling topic, both in its theoretical and practical engagements. Globally, issues of ethics are legion (Shambe, 2017). Implementation of ethical values could be seen as moral principles and practices that govern a person's behavior or the person's way of conducting an activity. It is the branch of knowledge that deals with moral principles affecting how people make decisions and live their lives.

Ethical standards are guidelines that promote good behavior and positive image for individual and organizations. Ethical standards encompass principles like fairness, kindness, integrity, honesty, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness. These standards help individuals and organizations make sound judgments and decisions in various situations. These standards guide supervisors in their interactions with teachers and students, ensuring a positive and productive learning environment. Ethical standards also include those that enjoin virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. They include standards relating to rights, such as the right to life, the right to freedom from injury, and the right to privacy. Nevertheless, unethical behaviors occur when decisions enable an individual or organization to gain at the expense of the larger society (Wuese, 2023). Unethical behaviors can include issues like favoritism, unfair assessment practices, and exploitation of students. Unethical issues relates to issues concerning rape, indiscipline, dishonesty, gangsterism, staff criticism, gossip, sexual harassment and molestation related to abuse of office, plagiarism, drug abuse, cultism, intimidation, bribery and corruption, embezzlement of funds, greed, stealing, murder, assault, slander, fraud, examination malpractices and any kind of malpractice of sort, kidnapping, among others (TRCN, 2013).

Ethical problems have forced various governments in Nigeria since the 1976 administration to introduce one form of legislation or the other to curb this monster. Since, 1997 and up to date, Nigeria had consistently been listed as one of the corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International. In its 2001 annual corruption index released by Transparency International (TI), Nigeria was second to the Asian country of Bangladesh (Iorbee, 2021). Other factors as highlighted in the study include: lack of facilities, gender, age, marital status with its responsibility, inability to cope with stress, employment status, nature of employment, income level, lack of morals and education status distribution, work experience and commitment to organization. These unethical practices have great consequences on school supervision for sustainable national development in Nigeria. This could lead to lack of attractiveness of investment opportunities to foreign investor especially in education sectors in Nigerian and the world at large. On the other hand, the cost of attracting foreign investment will become higher in Nigeria vis-à-vis other parts of the world. That is why in most public organization and professions in Nigeria there is code of conduct which are ethical principles that guides people's actions, behavior and their relationships with other people and their job. Failure to maintain good work ethics in schools, it has great consequences on school supervision for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria.

Importance of Ethical Standards

Ethical standards are of immense importance and can be found in the following ways:

- a. Building trust: Ethical behavior builds trust between individuals, organizations, and the public.
- b. Promoting positive relationship: Ethical standards help foster positive relationships based on respect and fairness.
- c. Ensuring accountability: Ethical standards provide a framework for holding individuals and organizations accountable for their actions.
- d. Protecting stakeholders: ethical standards help protect the rights and interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, and the public.

Some of the key ethical standards in school supervision are

- Honesty and integrity: Supervisors should be truthful and act with integrity in all their dealings.
- Fairness and impartiality: All individuals, including teachers and students, should be treated fairly and without bias.
- Respect for dignity and rights: Supervisors should respect the dignity and rights of all individuals, including their right to privacy and freedom from harm.
- Professional competence and responsibility: Supervisors should possess the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their duties effectively and responsibly.
- Confidentiality: Information shared in supervision sessions should be treated confidentially.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest: Supervisors should avoid situations where their personal interest might conflict with their professional responsibility.
- Due process: Supervisors should uphold the principles of due process and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals

As school supervisors there are some Unethical practices to be avoided, these include the following as outlined by Kuna (2015) as truancy, lateness to school, cheating at examination, improper dressing, drug abuse, lying and lateness to school and lessons. At tertiary level, lecturers extortion of money from students, conduct of armchair research, sexual harassment by both lecturers and students, plagiarism, delaying unduly the marking and release of examination results, and leaking examination questions among others. These unethical conducts disturb the minds of teachers and students, which interfere with the learning of both the students and their peers (Kater, 2019). Notwithstanding, solutions to unethical behavior must focus on changing people by employing the following approaches as identified by Jingi, (2022); values related, economics, legal/judicial sanctions, religious, managerial, leadership, family, socio-cultural, educational, training and development, police/armed forces reforms, motivation, modernization, development and multi-dimensional approaches. Practice of learning and work ethics is a good determinant of qualitative education.

Promoting Ethical Conduct

To foster ethical behavior in school supervision, schools and educational institutions should

- i. Develop and implement a clear code of ethics for supervisors
- ii. Provide training and professional development on ethical leadership and unethical conduct
- iii. Regularly evaluate and monitor the ethical conduct of supervisors

By upholding high ethical standards, school supervisors can create a positive and productive learning environment where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. School ethical behavior and standards is expected of all – be it teachers, staff, lecturers or teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students and likewise their parents and guardians.

Who is a School Supervisor?

A school supervisor could be the principal of a school, or a senior member of staff of a school checking the efficiency of work done in the school. It is also a person that is involved in an evaluative, long-term relationship between a “more senior member of a profession” and “a more junior member of that same profession” (Bada, 2010). The school supervisor is selected by the head office or ministry to do the work of supervision in a school be it a primary, secondary or tertiary institution (Akuta 2025). The primary responsibility of supervisors is to see that high ethical standards are maintained and that schools are run in accordance with the laid down regulations.

What is School Supervision?

Supervision in a school system implies the process of ensuring that policies, principles, rules, regulations and methods prescribed for purposes of implementing and achieving the objectives for education are effectively carried out. Mbahan (2010), viewed school supervision to involve the use of expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning in schools. School Supervision involves the stimulation of professional growth and the

development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and method of teaching and evaluation of instruction (Naabo, 2012).

School supervision occupies a unique place in the entire education system. Just as the personality of each supervisor differs from the other, the supervisory strategies adopted are varied and so their effects on the educational system. The supportive and educative process of supervision is aimed toward assisting supervisees in the application of theory and techniques to their works (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, 2003). The supervision of personnel and materials in order to ensure the set minimum standards are attained, sustained and seen to meaningful impact on Nigeria and society at large. The effective improvement of instructional delivery and maintenance of standards in the school system are enhanced through regular internal and external supervision. According to Atooi-kyese (2022) schools are presently supervised by two categories of people, viz: (i) internal supervisors those within-the school, supervisors as principals, vice-principals and heads of departments: (ii) external supervisors those outside the school, supervisors as the formally designated officials from the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education and the various Area or Zonal Education Offices.

Having a Quality supervisor is important because it will ensure that goods services produced in a school are of highest possible ethical standard, as well as protecting buyers from purchasing sub-standard products which will be half baked graduates (Mbahan, 2023). Quality supervision is a baseline standard in education which can be measured on a scale of reference. It is an expression of standard or a means by which a certain set standard in education can be achieved. It could easily be deduced therefore that quality in education is a totality of the combination of such indispensable variables such as quality teachers, quality instructional materials and quality infrastructure (classrooms, seats, tables, chalkboards etc.). Others include, favorable teacher/pupils ratio, favorable pupils/classroom ratio and quality instructional supervision. All these and more surely results to quality product (student) who is exposed to a balanced and result oriented education. A supervisor who is well prepared for his/ her job should not only face the challenges of supervision but the challenge of professional ethical standards to administer supervisory roles through technical and administrative service in any school set up, that is, primary, secondary or tertiary education.

Forms of School Supervision

To Egbebi and Harbau (2019) supervision of schools can take different forms which are:

1. **Full scale supervision:** This form of supervision covers all that concerns the school system. After the conduct of this form of supervision, a report is usually compiled, published and forwarded to the appropriate education agency that is responsible for the implementation of the recommendations of such report. In most cases this form of supervision lasts for days (3-5 days depending on the school size and the area to cover).
2. **Routine supervision:** This involves routine visits to schools by designated school supervisors to inspect selected aspect of the school that require urgent attention and help solve the problem on the spot. The report in this form of supervision is usually not published.
3. **Follow-up Supervision:** This form of supervision is mostly carried out after a full or routine supervision to ascertain the extent which the observations and recommendations made during a full or routine supervision have been implemented.

The Purpose of School Supervision

According to Rumum (2021), school supervision includes all efforts of school officials directed to provide leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. The effective school research identifies schooling practice and characteristics which supervisors use in doing their jobs associated with measurable improvements in student achievement and excellence among student achievement. These “effective school practices” include elements of schooling associated with ethical and clearly defined curriculum; focused classroom instruction and management, firm consistent discipline, close monitoring of student performance; and strong instructional leadership as follows:

1. To acknowledge that teachers are individuals and professionals with different needs and interests.

2. To define supervision as an art and science.
3. To consider that taken together, passion for learning and reflective practice provides modeling and the basis for individual perception and insight.
4. To maximize individual growth through reflective practice and professional dialog.
5. To provide time and support for growth and change.
6. To encourage self-initiated professional/ ethical development.
7. To develop an educational environment characterized by collaboration cooperation, and communicating yielding a supportive, non-threatening environment to foster professional growth.
8. To assert that all faculty have a professional responsibility to continually learn and improve.

Scope of School Supervision

For the purpose of educational development in Nigeria, the scope of school supervision to Eya and Leonard (2012)) include:

Instructional work: Within this scope, the designated supervisor aims at various areas of improving the existing quality of instructions given. For this the supervisor focus on method of teaching adopted for different subjects, audio-visual aids that are used, school time table, allocation of duties among teachers, students' class works and its corrections, teachers' lesson notes, diaries and scheme of work.

Co-Curricular Activities: Under this, the designated supervisor focuses on how various co-curricular activities are organized in relation to their need and importance to education. These activities include; dramatics, games and sports, school magazines, excursions, field trips, picnics, and library services

Records and register: The designated supervisor has to focus on all school records and attendance register of both staff and students by checking admission register, staff and students' attendance register, the cash book, the log book, the stock register, the movement book, and the receipt book.

The School Environment: In this, the supervisor focuses on the level of discipline among staff and students, inter-relationships between individuals, general behavior of students, plantation of trees, morale of classrooms, hygienic condition of school toilets, school beautification, and relationship between the school and host community

Management: The management of school is also an important area of concern to designated school supervisors without which all efforts of overall improvement of teaching and learning process will be jeopardized. The supervisor therefore need to focus on the cooperation of teachers and members of the host community, the ability of the head of the school to run the school, the coordination and cooperation between teachers and head teacher in organizing school programs, achievements and failures of the school, and how duties and responsibilities are rendered by heads and members of various sub-committees for different school programs.

Guidance to teachers: The work of a designated supervisor is not only to oversee but also to guide the teachers and head-teachers in their inputs in ensuring quality education. Here, the supervisor focuses on the innovation of teachers, remedial instructions, community mobilization and support and organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and in-service trainings.

Importance of School Supervision Standards

School supervision standards are of immense importance to the all stakeholders in the educational sectional sector as follows

1. Improved teaching and learning: Supervision helps teachers enhance their skills and improve the quality of instruction, leading to better student outcomes.
2. Enhanced Accountability: Standards provide a framework for holding teachers and school administrators accountable for their performance.
3. Effective Resource Management: Supervision ensures that resources are used effectively and efficiently to support teaching and learning.
4. Positive school culture: Supervision can foster a collaborative and supportive environment that promotes professional growth and student well- being.

Challenges of School Supervision in Nigeria

The challenges facing effective and successful school supervision in Nigeria as outlined by Omorobi (2020) include:

- 1. Finance:** Inadequate financing of the inspectorate unit or department of ministries of education affects the performance of designated supervisors. This can be in form of non-payment of supervisory staff allowances and inadequate funding of the unit or department as a whole.
- 2. Unqualified Supervisors:** Sometimes, there is a wrong assumption that all teachers are qualified supervisors. This has led to the appointment of teachers that are not professionally trained for the purpose of school supervision by using years of service as yardstick for selecting school supervisor. Although, one of the 6 criteria for supervising a school system is teaching experience, but this must be reinforced with relevant academic knowledge and training in education quality control and assurance. If this is not taken into consideration, the art of school supervision will be reduced to mere school visitation.
- 3. Transportation:** The unavailability of functional vehicles at the disposal of school supervisors and poor conditions of roads in the rural parts of the country are militating factor against effective school supervision especially in the raining season. Also some areas such as the coastal areas are usually inaccessible to supervisors. These conditions therefore will limit the role of school supervision in developing education in Nigeria.
- 4. Lack of Follow-up Supervision:** Owing to the current complex nature and rapid expansion of the educational sector, supervisory staffs find it difficult to cover their supervisory jurisdiction even for the first time let alone a follow up supervision.
- 5. Fault Finding Mission:** When the sole aim of supervision is premised on finding the faults of the teachers and head-teachers, it kindles fear in students, teachers and the head-teacher. This will certainly threaten the school development owing to the fact that school supervision is basically for enhancing and improving the quality of instructions given within the school perimeter.
- 4. Casual supervision:** This is carried out by one designated supervisor without any form of formal arrangement. Under this form of supervision, no report is given to the school authorities, but a secrete or confidential report is compiled and forwarded to the appropriate education agency for actions.
- 5. Certification Supervision:** This type of supervision is carried out to affirm the standard and readiness of a school to conduct external examinations such as West African Senior Secondary Certificate examination (WASSCE)
- 6. Fact Finding Supervision:** This type of supervision is carried out to gather information about all sorts of report or petitions against a particular school
- 7. Internal Supervision:** This type of supervision involves qualified an experience head-teachers and teachers in a particular school. They focus on the school work, teachers' behavior and students' attitude to learning. It is carried out under a cordial atmosphere and suggestions for improvements are politely given due to the fact that those supervised are known colleagues.

Key Areas covered by School Supervision Standards

1. Teacher performance and development: Monitoring teacher effectiveness in the classroom and providing feedback for improvement. Also, assessing teacher knowledge, skills, and classroom management strategies and ensuring teachers have access to professional development opportunities
2. Curriculum and instruction: Ensuring the curriculum is implemented effectively and aligned with educational goals and supervising the use of appropriate teaching methods and materials. Also, Monitoring student learning and providing support for struggling learners
3. School environment and operations: Maintain a safe and conducive learning environment for students and staff. Overseeing the use and maintenance of school facilities and resources and ensuring adherence to school policies and procedure
4. Professional Growth and collaboration: Fostering a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration among staff. Providing opportunities for teachers to learn from each other and share best practices



5. Accountability and evaluation: Evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and learning practices. Assessing the overall performance of the school and identifying areas for improvement and ensuring that school resources are used effectively and efficiently

Examples of supervisory activities

1. classroom observations and feedback sessions
2. reviewing lesson plans and instructional materials
3. providing guidance and support to teachers on curriculum and teaching strategies
4. organizing professional development workshops and training sessions
5. monitoring student progress and providing support for struggling learners
6. ensuring compliance with school policies and procedures

In conclusion, school supervision exists nearly everywhere. Supervision was and is a key tool to ensure that all school staffs are respected and treated with dignity in line with the ethical standards (rules and regulations) set for proper smooth running of the school and are followed properly. Schools where unethical practice is highly in operation cannot produce disciplined and quality graduates. This reduces the value of our school products, based on the standard by which we judge human behavior. In other words, moral rules, promoting those things thought of as good and minimizing or avoiding those things thought as bad learnt at early age at home and school.

Concept of Sustainable National Development

Sustainable National Development describes the practice for sustainability (Amadi, 2014). Sustainable National Development is the practice of learning how to achieve global and local sustainable communities through the constant provision of desirable educational needs to the people of young generation in a way that it will be meaningful in their future aspirations. It is said that a country cannot grow beyond its education system, this therefore implies that Sustainable National Development is educational growth that is integrated with economic, scientific, political and home based technological expansion which collectively indicates the level of individual development in terms of increased skills and capacities, greater freedom for self actualization, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility, and general well-being of the society (UNESCO, 2005). The focus of Sustainable Development is to promote lifelong learning process that transcends beyond the four walls of the school premises because it is usually directed towards imparting knowledge, providing job satisfaction, and upholding the tenets of sustainability.

To achieve Sustainable National Development in education, there are statements which are formulated to guide and describe the patterns, skills and attitudes of its participants during and after the completion of an educational program. The goals of Sustainable National Development to Oghiagbephan (2018) are extractions from the seventeen (17) United Nations' (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that were aimed to be achieved by 2030, which include:

1. Ensuring inclusive healthy lives and promote well-being of all at all ages
2. Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls
3. Clean water sanitation
4. Decent work and economic growth
5. Sustainable cities and communities
6. Strongly institutionalized peace and justice
7. Partnership for goals

The goals of Sustainable National Development highlighted above shows the major areas of sustainability in the education sector of any nation as well as covering issues in teaching and learning such as climate change, bio-diversity, poverty eradication, and sustainable consumptions. The achievement of these is likely to ease the burden of insecurity, violence, unemployment and other associated social vices.

Challenges facing Sustainable Educational Development in Nigeria

There exist myriads of challenges facing the quest of attaining Sustainable National Development right to quality education which is worthy of emulation and to be sustained. However, this has failed due to neglect of the use of proper ethical standards in supervision, lack of trained supervisors to handle supervision, lack of supervision knowledge, poor job motivation, unqualified or inexperienced human resources in the education sector and total absence of interest in the teaching and learning profession (Bourn & Hunt, 2017). Furthermore, the role of gender disparities and socio-cultural beliefs in access to basic education is a militating factor against the development of Sustainable Nation in Nigeria (UNESCO, 2005). Another major problem is the inability of most public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to have supervisors at each level to supervise the students in totality (Wanjegbar 2024).

Ethical Standards in School Supervision for Sustainable National Development

Effective school supervision affords stakeholders in the education sector a democratic and co-operative involvement under capable, understanding and discerning administrators. Supervision should be effectively done in line with the laid down rules and regulations, each person involved in the teaching and learning process must be willing to assume certain level of supervisory responsibilities. Schools should focus on ensuring quality teaching, learning, and overall school operations. These standards address areas like teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and the learning environment, aiming to create a supportive and effective educational experience. Supervisors should avoid favoritism and discrimination: showing preference for certain teachers or students based on personal relationships or other irrelevant factors, unfair assessment practices: grading students unfairly or inconsistently or assessing the on skills not taught or practiced, exploitation of students: taking advantage of students for personal gain or benefit, neglecting professional duties: failing to fulfill professional responsibilities or providing inadequate supervision and lack of transparency: not being open and honest about decisions and actions.. Therefore, for Sustainable National Development to be achieved through effective school supervision, school supervision must be a continuous, comprehensive and in line with the rules and regulatory process designed to cover all scopes of school supervision as highlighted earlier in this paper by embracing all educational experiences through primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions.

Conclusion

This paper examined ethical standards in school supervision for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria. It established that ethical standards are guidelines that promote good behavior and positive image for individual and organizations, the paper noted that school supervision is aimed at improving the quality of instructions given in educational institutions. Also, the paper examined the forms, purpose, scope, and importance in school supervision; it looks at the challenges confronting school supervision for Sustainable National Development in educational institutions which include poor funding, deteriorating infrastructure, and unqualified designated supervisors among others. Conclusively, the paper concludes that effective school supervision provides an honest accurate and definite report on: the teachers observed and; educational values obtained from the expenditure of public funds. Consequently, sustainable National Development lies with how functional those that are saddled with the responsibility of school supervision are on the job.

Recommendation

1. School supervisors should create a positive and productive learning environment where all individuals are treated with ethical integrity, that is, respect and dignity.
2. Designated school supervisors should endeavor to make follow-up supervision to ensure that recommendations have been implemented
3. Government should provide statutory authority, prestige and resources to school supervisors in order to continuously work with teachers to develop, maintain and evaluate goals of education for sustainable education development.



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