

THE CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper is an effort to X-ray the challenges and future of supervision in Nigeria and their implications on supervision. Educational supervision forces primarily on the achievement of the appropriate instructional expectations-and efficient management. As the Nigerian educational system is currently undergoing rapid development, expansion and curricular changes, educational supervision is faced with some challenges such as population explosion, technological advancement, increased leisure, management leadership, communication. These are highlighted. The paper discusses the implications of these changes on supervision bringing out the type of supervisors needed in Nigeria - humanistic supervision - those who should feel concerned for people, realizing that people must be happy in order to work effectively.

Introduction

Educational supervision is all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to the teacher and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction, it involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational objectives; material of instruction, methods of teaching and the evaluation of instruction. In other words, educational supervision is a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and overseeing teachers with the hope of seeking their co-operation so that educational supervisors will be successful in their tasks of supervision. However, educators have been particular about the challenges and changes that affect educational supervision and the implications of these. Although it is dangerous to foretell the future since the process of change and human development are difficult to forecast, but on the other hand, as clearly observed by Obanya (1982), "most of the social problems of the contemporary world have been caused by insufficient in-depth analysis and the failure to draw up long term plans and to monitor their implementation adequately". It then becomes necessary for man to understand the future as part of the cycle already determined and has to be completed and to look into the future of educational supervision in Nigeria with the hope of finding solutions to the problems that are likely to emerge. People are curious and anxious to know what the position of educational supervision in Nigeria will be by asking series of question such as: Why will there be change in Educational Supervision. What will be some contributing factors to the change? What does today's supervisor need to know in order to come with his or her supervisory practices? A close look at these questions shows that urgent answers are necessary in order for educational leaders to cope with the future demand of the school. Looking into the future conditions of the Nigerian schools system and coming up with a perfect solution especially in this rapidly changing world is not easy for anyone.

Challenges of Educational Supervision In Nigerian

Population Explosion and Urban Development

Few years ago, population experts warned the entire world about over-population of its inhabitants. In the United States of America, a campaign was launched for zero population in Nigeria which has a population of about 100 million, an attempt was made to convince people to embark on the use of birth control methods. The warning seemed to have been neglected and the entire world got caught up with the problem of over-population. Consequently, there was also a great expansion of various industries and corporations which also result into air pollution. As a result, Nigerians who could afford moving out of the city to sub-urban areas did so without hesitation. The outcome of population explosion and urban development, when properly examined, revealed that problems have been created

and will continue to be in existence especially in the areas of staffing and school building facilities. It will also have an impact on the school class size as a result of population mobility. Supervisory programme must lay emphasis on the improvement of teachers in helping pupils to become independent learners. Chase (1960) agrees with this prediction when he said, "a new image of the school is emerging, one in which the focus will be on learning rather than teaching and in which teaching will not be so much a means of imparting knowledge as a way of managing a great variety of resources".

Technological Advancement

This is another challenge. Research in technology and the use of electronic devices are progressing so rapidly today. It is thus obvious that machines will replace human beings in the performances of certain tasks. The challenges will be greater and it will be left to schools to accept or not to accept the challenges. If the school accepts the challenges, then it means that machines will be made to serve man, if not man may have to be controlled by what he invents. To be precise, technology will definitely not affect only the school curriculum content; instead, it will also affect the purposes of the curriculum, the programme developed, the techniques to be used, the procedure to be followed and the entire phases of education.

Scientific Discovery and Invention

Man has, out of curiosity over his environment discovered a lot of hidden secrets and thus improved his living conditions. Through scientific method, better means of food preservations have been devised. Not only have that, building materials, house-hold appliances, electricity and medicines been discovered in order to make life a lot easier for man. Similarly play machines and various gadgets have been invented for amusement and fun. Man, through his strong will, is moving to conquer the world. Yesterday's dreams are today's realities, today's vision will become tomorrow's actualities. The result of man trying to explore his universe will definitely have some effect on school supervision. The effect would be in the improvement of school buildings and the use of various gadgets in the field of audio-visual education as an alternative means of teaching and learning in schools. Means of communication will improve and new chemical compounds will be discovered that will assist the learning process. More science subjects will be taught in schools and current affairs will play an increasingly more important role in the curriculum. Finally, emphasis will placed on practical aspects of learning which are more scientific in nature and approach than the theoretical aspect of learning.

Increased Leisure Time

People have been debating about the days to be observed as holidays in Nigeria. Presently, Christians appreciate the fact that Sunday has been set aside as a day of rest for all. Moslems are now agitating that Friday should also be set aside as a day of rest, while Saturday in addition should still be left as a free day. If this request by the Moslems is granted, it then becomes obvious that Nigeria shall have three free days in a row (Friday, Saturday and Sunday) and the working day will be reduced to four. It should be remembered that as people have more and more spare time, it becomes essential for them to occupy themselves in various worthwhile leisure time activities.

Boredom may likely become the problem of those who cannot find stimulating and worthwhile activities to occupy their free leisure time. Consequently, supervisors will have to face the responsibility of planning for activities that will fill this great vacuum in the school curricula.

Faster Development Of Children

Whether the phenomenon is true or not, it is generally believed that today's children mature faster than their counterparts of yesterday. This, of course, may be due to the technological advancement now in existence but lacking in the past. No one will dispute the fact that today's children are healthier, more knowledgeable and socially more sophisticated in appearance than the children of the later nineteenth and twentieth century. This change has been brought about by the re-organization of school administration and curriculum right from the primary level to the university.

However, the school has to accept that girls mature faster than boys and it will become the responsibility of the supervisor to cope with both sexes in teaching and learning situations.

New Knowledge And Disciplines

As man continues to search for knowledge, new disciplines will always be discovered, this will call for new roles and responsibilities on the part of teachers and supervisors in our schools for example, the development of educational technology, computer education as fields of study resulted into a wider variety of roles school administrators are expected to provide. "Sociology and its related disciplines can be seen to have increasing influence on the education process" (Culbertson,1973). Consequently, supervisory programmes will similarly reflect this development. Teachers will require more skills and knowledge in order to function effectively in the performance of their classroom duties. Educational supervisors will be much more concerned about the abject poverty of the lower class family and the future economy of the entire nation. Social awareness training programmes will be developed in order to effect more dynamic and effective working relationships in the classroom and community (Marks, 1978).

Curriculum Innovation

The present procedures used in school curriculum will be affected by rapid expansion of schools, extensive state control of Education and greater influence of the Federal Government. Each state created will like to have more schools under its control and will be very keen when compared with the Federal schools.

Management Leadership

The supervisor is faced with the challenge of management of the affairs as a leader. The scope of his authority, taking vital decisions, and obtaining result by establishing a suitable atmosphere that would ensure that the goals of the system are duly met, meeting the expectations of both the parents, his teaching staff and the community at large.

Instructional Leadership

In an era where quality in education is a house hold world promotion of excellent instructional programmes for the school becomes a challenge. Teachers should be helped to improve their teaching skills through proper supervision and retraining. Quality is an essential ingredient in the search of excellence, the concept of excellence in education should emanate from common basic beliefs in our society such as pluralistic approach to value and a university honoured philosophy of individual fulfillment.

Discipline In Schools

True professionalism requires scientific investigation of the practical problems of a profession in order to improve practice and provide a solid base for it. Indiscipline in schools create a great problem in school supervision especially since there is no ready-made solution to it. Proper counselling and periodic consultation are possible approach apart from the military approach.

Communication

Ineffective communication can pose a serious problem in schools because the larger the organization, the more important effective communication becomes for the survival of the organization. Organizational problems stem from difficulty in the exchange of messages among various points in the hierarchy.

Financial Limitation

The financial situation of the school can create problems for supervision in Nigeria. "If the financial condition of a school or the district is poor, the level of funding is thus low" (Ogunsaju, 1981).

Delegation of Authority

Since a school is a complex organization, authority and responsibility have to be delegated, hence delegation can be challenging to the future supervisor simply because he may not be familiar with the procedure of delegating authority effectively. Delegation, as the passing on to others of a share in the essential elements of the management process, "is the process whereby the leader of an organization transfers to some of his subordinates the responsibility of taking some particular actions as well as making some decisions in particular department or job areas of the organization", Mbite, 1974). Through delegation, a staff member is given the right to plan the activities of his unit, direct the work of subordinate personnel and make other decisions pertinent to the operations of the school.

Implications On The Future Of Educational Supervision In Nigeria

The efficiency of supervision in Nigerian schools today is being called to question both within and from outside the profession. Many dedicated supervisors admit that the field of professional education is going down the drain simply because the field lacks qualified personnel and manpower resources needed for the improvement of instruction. The challenges facing supervision in Nigeria are many and varied as has been discussed above. More supervisors are needed, training of supervisors to meet the societal needs is a matter of urgency. They should be knowledgeable about what the society needs and aspires to get. The future supervisory programmes must lay emphasis on the improvement of teachers in helping pupils to become independent learners. Supervisors should have the responsibility of planning for activities that will fill the vacuum likely to be created by increased leisure time. They should be prepared to search for knowledge by carrying out research and participating in learned conferences and seminars; because of many challenges ahead, supervisors should orient themselves towards facing the tasks of the 20's as the Nigerian educational system is currently undergoing rapid development, expansion and curricular changes. He must ensure that the interests of one are not sacrificed for others. In an era where quality in education is a household word, the future supervisor has to tackle the challenge of promoting excellent instructional programmes for the school. He should therefore help teachers under him to improve their teaching skills through proper supervision. The future supervisor should study both the staff and students to know the common disciplinary problems and then find ways of solving them, than encouraging people to have self-discipline and to act as a model to those coming after. He too must lead a life-style that manifests discipline.

The future supervisors should realize that the significance of communication in an organization's planning, decision-making and leadership increases in direct proportion to its complexity; this is because the larger the organization, the more important effective communication becomes for the survival of the organization. It becomes the responsibility of the future supervisor to learn how to express himself effectively both to his subordinates and his super-ordinates. Effective channels of communication will help the future supervisors to understand both the staff and the school problems generally.

The future supervisor should cope with any financial situation in which he may find the school and to use the meagre resources to the maximum benefit of the students, the staff and the entire people. Future supervisors should remember that delegation of authority is very important as no individual leader can possibly supervise the institution alone successfully. To this end, an effective supervisor should establish a chain of command to make things work harmoniously and efficiently.

Nigeria at this time need humanistic supervisors who must possess and develop characteristics that enable them to consistently affirm a constructive action that leads to the growth of others. "Supervisors should try to cultivate all the necessary ingredients needed for carrying out the multi-facetal role person-centred and task-centred supervisor" (Albrell, 1974). The supervisor should learn to be a helper, facilitator, and learner. His attitude should be humanistic in nature. He should feel concerned for people by realizing that people must be happy in order to grow and be useful in the society. "His perception of people should be that people are not assumed to be naturally lazy, unmotivated and incapable of self direction"¹ (Bennis and Shein, 1966), or "that people are evil, bad should be coerced and forced to work" (Ene, 2000). Instead he should provide the structure in which the teachers in the school system can develop their talents and make commitment to democratic procedure

when working with others. He must be creative, act directly and effectively to improve instructional programmes.

Conclusion

Education in future would contribute to the conceptualization of what the society should be as opposed to the present which only shows what the society is. In a nut-shell, supervisors would be expected to unify all the instructional staff within their school system for the purpose of curriculum improvement.

Since supervision specifically focuses on the improvement of instruction, Nigeria would need trained and qualified supervisors whose ultimate purpose would be to support and promote pupils' growth. Those already on the job should be refreshed through workshops, seminars, in-service training and working in conjunction with neighbouring institutions - one who can make teachers break the monotony of ritualistic instruction which is an expression of their own personal struggle for fulfillment.

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