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## EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION AND QUALITY EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NIGERIA

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By

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### **Abstract**

*Quality has become the concern of educational policy-makers and administrators of secondary schools in Nigeria as the heart of education. Poor quality means basic educational needs may go unsatisfied. This could create inabilities in learners' lives and compromise their overall experience of living socially, culturally and economically. This paper discussed quality as the standard of something when compared to other things of same kind. The authors submitted that, for quality education to be achieved there has to be effective supervision of both teaching and non teaching staff of secondary schools, because people tend to be more committed when closely supervised. Supervision involves the use of expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning activities in schools. The importance of effective supervision as well as problems of education and effective supervision in secondary schools in Nigeria were highlighted based on which recommendations were made which among others are that there should be provision of adequate facilities and efficient supervisors to carry out the supervisory activities in secondary schools.*

**Keywords:-** Effective supervision, Quality Education Secondary Schools

Quality education is the power house of knowledge evaluation, creation and application. It is an irresistibly desired virtue grasped by developed and developing nations because of its inherent tendency to fast tract an all-round progressive growth and development of any society. People must be given the right type of education that would engender the acquisition of the right type of knowledge, skills, values, abilities, attitudes and aptitude that would prepare them for a functional life in the society. A well supervised workforce is a veritable instrument of quality education. A society with the desire for quality education must be able to put in place effective supervisory strategies in schools where the right quality of education would be delivered for the production of individuals with the capacity to compete globally, for effective national growth and development.

Regarding quality of education, Leu and Price-Rom (2005) contend that, the issue of quality has become critical in many countries that are expanding enrollment and in nations with constrained resources. Success in increasing access to basic education has often led to declining quality. However, in searching for the factors that promote quality education, national programs and literature have increasingly emphasized teachers, schools, and communities as the engines of quality with special attention to teacher quality identified as a primary focus. The key factors in institutions of higher learning include the students, without whom the institutions would not be established, the teachers without whom the curriculum will not be delivered and the non-tutorial staff, both the junior and senior administrators, without whom even the academic activities cannot function for the realization of quality objective in education (Mkpa, 2000).

The absence of effective supervision in place, none of the aforementioned groups can work effectively towards the achievement of the goals of the schools. This brings to bear the significance of supervision for the realization of quality in Education. Ojogwu (2001) stated that supervision creates the awareness of sound education philosophies in teachers. It makes them to be aware of educational policies and reforms and make them part and parcel of the whole system since teachers are vehicles that will always deliver any educational reforms in schools.

### **The Concept of Supervision**

The concept of supervision which is often referred to in education as instructional supervision has been given different meanings by different people. John (1997) submitted that the principal, teachers, students and parents viewed supervision from the angle at which each relates with the supervision. For example to a teacher or subordinate who is being supervised, supervision may mean a challenge to his personality; to another it may mean an avenue for personal recognition. To a principal, it may mean an inquisition. He concluded that supervision means guidance, assistance, sharing of ideas with all those involved in the process of teaching and learning with the main purpose of ensuring the improvement of the learning situation in a school. Osakwe (2010) asserted that supervision is the art of over-seeing the teaching-learning process in

such a way that the school is administered and managed effectively in order to achieve the educational objective.

It is the combined efforts of both the supervisor and supervisee to bring about improvement in the teaching-learning process in schools through mutual interaction. Supervision according to Igwe (2001) is the process of ensuring that the policies, principles, rules, regulations and methods prescribed for the purposes of implementing and achieving the objectives of education are carried out. It involves the use of expert knowledge and experience to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning activities in schools. Ogunu (2000), described supervision as all efforts of designated school officials and directed towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction, it involves the stimulation, direction and coordination of professional growth and development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and method of teaching and the evaluation of instruction.

Supervision, therefore, is the element of administrative process concerned with the effort of the administrator, to guide the day-to-day operations of the organization by stimulating, directing and coordinating the workers and their efforts and cultivating good working relations so as to collectively move towards a more efficient performance of all the functions that lead to goal achievement. The term supervision includes the sub-concepts of leadership and morale.

Leadership which consists of interpersonal influence involves the dynamic and interpersonal process of planning, organizing and controlling the needs of members in a way that will lead to the achievement of task related group activities. Morale on the other hand refers to group satisfaction in the work situation as members see themselves as a functioning social group with minimum alienation. A supervisor has to then play a leadership role that stimulates and motivates the workers to a high task effort. At the same time, he carefully coordinates their individual efforts so that all lead to the achievement of the group goals.

A supervisor according to Eya and Chukwu (2012) is anyone who is assigned the function of helping others to improve on their instructional competencies. The school supervisor may be seen as an experienced person, who is involved in overseeing the activities of school personnel with a view of helping, stimulating or motivating them to improve in their performance towards achieving the school objectives. Supervision is therefore very crucial in any organization be it educational, military, business, religious, political or family affairs. Quality of education will improve if teachers and other staff are properly monitored and supervised. They will be dedicated and efficient in their duties.

### **Concept of Quality Education**

Quality education in this paper is not limited to standardized, national examinations where students are reported to have high quality education when they score high in these examinations. Instead, quality education is the whole standard

including intellectual, cognitive, psychomotor, social and emotional development. Quality education requires going beyond inputs and focusing on actual measures of achievement such as equity, promotion, completion rates and kinds and quality of facts and skills that students have learnt. Quality education measures the whole process of inputs and outputs of learners i.e. internal and external process of education outcomes. Quality needs strong input or investments to produce competitive outputs.

According to Cheng (1997), quality can be defined as exceptional, perfection, fitness for purpose, value for money or transformation. Quality could be defined as conformance to specifications, conformance to requirements, defect avoidance and meeting customer expectations. Quality like beauty is subjective; it is a matter of personal judgment.

Furthermore, Cheng contends that quality implies a scale and often denotes standards. An object can be of good or poor quality, or it can meet or fail to meet a standard. As a matter of fact, the controversy that arises in defining the quality of education is not really quality itself but the perspective and interest that have been put in education. In other words, education has many aspects which can be taken at the focus of attention since education has many purposes and components. In the end, quality becomes a subjective and personal judgment. As such quality remains elusive and subjective (Cheng,1997).

In spite of the controversy over the definition of quality, Doherty (2008) defined quality as something the organization do; a methodology for judging the degree to which the macro aims, objectives and outcomes of organizations have been achieved. In other words, it is a managerial tool, which can make an effective contribution to improving performance at the institutional, subject or departmental level within an institution.

According to UNESCO (1990), quality of education includes liberty, numeracy and life skills which are inculcated through teachers' content, methodology, curriculum, examination, systems, policies, management and administration. With these definitions education is expected to make a contribution to a sustainable human development, quality of life at individual, family, social and global levels. UNESCO (2004), stressed that, education is human right. Thus, Participation in a high quality of education is an important end in itself. The practice of human rights in education and education as a right facilitate the fulfillments of other rights.

The primary concern in the quality of education is learning; therefore the teacher is critical. In addition to the outputs, the processes,environment and outputs that surround and foster learning are important as well. They positively affect the quality of education at two levels; the level of the learner in his or her learning environment and the level of the education system that creates and supports the learning experiences. UNESCO (2004) used a frame work for understanding quality of education by identifying five demotions where different variables contribute to quality of education. These include:-

(i) Learners' characteristics that affect quality. These are aptitude, school readiness, and perseverance.

- (ii) Context, which also significantly affects quality, refers to socio-economic and cultural conditions, public resources for education, parental support and time available for schooling and homework.
  - (iii) Inputs are critical in quality supervision and improvement. They refer to all types of resources (i.e. personnel, facilities, space, equipment and supplies, information) that support the implementation of a program.
  - (iv) Teaching and learning approaches which refer to learning time, teaching methods, assessment, feedback, incentives and class size.
  - (v) Outcomes which signal overall quality. These entail literacy, numeracy, life skills, creative and emotional skills, values and social benefits.
- Therefore, improving all aspects of quality education means ensuring excellence for all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. However, quality outcomes in education can be achieved only through effective supervision of input and processes.

### **Importance of Supervision in Schools**

Supervision is meant to evaluate and improve work performance to enhance quality output. School supervision, therefore, aims at ensuring that schools operations are carried out properly in order to achieve the stated goals. Ani in Eya and Chukwu(2012), however grouped the purpose of school supervision into two:-

1. Teacher improvement purpose.
  2. Non Teacher improvement purpose
- According to him, the teacher improvement purposes of schools supervision include:-
- i. To provide a guide for staff development.
  - ii. To improve the incompetent teachers
  - iii. To ensure that teachers perform their assigned functions effectively
  - iv. To determine whether a teacher should be transferred, promoted, retained or dismissed.
  - v. To ensure that discipline is maintained during classroom instruction (i.e. classroom management).
  - vi. To discover special abilities or qualities possessed by teachers in the school.
- The non-teacher improvement purposes include:-
- i. Ensuring that quality of instruction is maintained.
  - ii. Ensuring proper supply of teaching materials to the schools
  - iii. Providing feedback to educational planners on the need for curriculum improvement or changes.

### **Problems of Effective Supervision in Schools**

Effective Supervision of instruction in schools to ensure quality education can be guaranteed if conditions are favorable. However, various challenges militate against effective supervision of schools in Nigeria. These are identified as:-

1. **Shortage of qualified supervisors:**-There is paucity of qualified supervisors in the supervisory agencies. Most of the staff appointed as supervisors do not possess the necessary training, skills and experience for supervisory roles they are expected to perform. In some cases the supervisors are juniors, in all respect to the school staff they are expected to supervise. This affects the supervisory behavior of the supervisors and the supervisees and consequently affects the overall results of the supervisory activity.
2. **Poor incentive:** The incentives accorded supervisors in the school system are sometimes minimal compared with what they are expected to do. The rewards they get are sometimes less than what their colleagues in the other sections or departments get for doing less work. These may not serve as enough motivation for the supervisors. In some cases, people are assigned responsibilities as punishment. This adversely affects their supervisory behavior and roles as they will not put in their best.
3. **Poor funding:** The issues of poor funding of education generally affects instructional Supervision. Effective instructional supervision cannot be carried out where funds required are lacking. This lack of funds affects the provision of the necessary materials and facilities such as instructional materials and transport for carrying out the supervision exercise. Lack of these facilities sometimes leads to cancellation of scheduled visits for so many times which affects the supervision exercise negatively.
4. **Corruption:** Corruption which Ajegi (2005) defined as “anti-social behavior that benefits the individual actor to the disadvantage of the society” affects effective supervision in Nigerian schools. Unholy deals between school heads and supervisors on account of funds meant for the procurement of instructional materials for the school system: and issues of “gratifications” have affected effective supervision and standards that should be achieved in the school system.
5. **Politics:** The interference of politics in education has been problematic to instructional supervision. Political instability resulting in constant changes in government as well as policies regarding education has negatively affected instructional supervision. Other political issues such as appointment of party members or sympathizers to supervisory positions have affected instructional supervision over the years particularly where such appointees are not qualified to hold such positions:

### **Conclusion**

To ensure quality in education, all concerned in the act of education should work hard and be under close supervision by bodies that are responsible. Both internal and external supervision provisions are necessary. Supervisory activity is a cooperative and participatory exercise that requires the supervisor to cooperate with the schools heads and teachers to assist and advice to ensure the achievement of school goals which will in return raise the quality of education.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:-

1. For quality in secondary schools to be achieved, all administrators of schools should be exposed to in-service training to get in tune with the system.
2. To boost the morale of the supervisors, government should provide enough motivational strategies needed for effective, supervision. Government should provide sufficient material to enable the supervisors to carry out their supervisory exercise effectively.
3. Government should provide enough funds for the procurement of materials and transportation required for effective supervisory exercise by supervisors.
4. Appointment of supervisors should be strictly on merit (i.e. experience and academic attainment).

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