

Analysis of the Theories Purposes, Functions and Methods of Supervision: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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Abstract

This paper was an attempt to discuss the theories as applied to the analysis of the purposes, functions and methods of supervision. This is due to the fact that supervision is dynamic and education which is supposed to serve the society should also be dynamic. Education is an expensive commodity and a worthwhile venture in Nigeria. To show support for this venture, the Nigerian educational system must be supervised to ensure effectiveness and reliability. In doing this, the paper examined the definitions of supervisions as well as the problems confronting supervision in Nigeria. It was concluded that supervision should be effective and regular so that education justifies that huge amount of money the government spends of education.

Keywords: Supervision, Theories, Functions, Methods, Analysis.

Introduction

The society is dynamic and education which is supposed to serve the society should by dynamic as well. Education is an expensive commodity and a worthwhile venture in Nigeria. To show support for this venture, the Nigerian educational system must have a good supervision unit situated in the Ministry of Education and other agencies of the Ministry. All human beings in the educative process – students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, the parents and other lay people are individuals of worth, endowed with unique talents and capabilities (Apolot, Otaala, Kamanyire, & Komakech, 2018). In modern society therefore, education and supervision should be democratic. We can then say that modern supervision is positive democratic action aimed at the improvement of classroom instruction through the continual growth of all concerned. What then is supervision?

Supervision is the process of enhancing and improving effective teaching and learning in schools, supporting this view, researchers in educational theory agree that supervision exists for the primary purpose of instruction. Jacob and Solomon (2021), defined supervision as an “expert technical service primarily aimed at studying and improving cooperatively all factors which affect child growth and development.” For Kamindo (2016), supervision is “all efforts of designated school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction; involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction and methods of teaching; and evaluation of instruction”.

Eya, & Chukwu, (2012) in discussing supervision, brought in other elements. For him, supervision is concerned with oversight of instructional programme. The term instructional supervision is used frequently to differentiate the latter aspect even more specially. Beach, & Reinhartz, (2010) described supervision as "consisting of all the in-service education and curriculum". Spears, (2017) defined supervision as "the phase of school administration which deals primarily with the achievement of all the appropriate elected instructional expectations of education service". Sergiovanni, & Starratt, (2017) sees supervision as "the maximum development of the teacher into the most professionally efficient person he is capable of becoming".

Umar, Adamu & Nura (2017) says that, "supervision deals mainly with improvement of learning and teaching and helps teachers to recognize and accept general aims, and work towards the achievement of the purposes to help them to see beyond their present performance and seek improvement to identify and coordinate efforts and resources for more efficient and greater impact on important educational problems; to increase the amount and quality learning by students; to promote continuous appraisal of performance of all who emerge in the educational process". Wanzare, (2011), in his definition state that, "supervision is the process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with pupils. Supervision is a process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to help themselves".

To Good (2005), supervision is perceived as a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and over-seeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisors to be successful in their tasks of supervision. Other schools of thought see supervision as a way of persuading people to desist from applying wrong procedures in carrying out certain function on their jobs, and at the same time try to emphasize the importance of good human relations in an organization. The essence of supervision is therefore, the monitoring of the performance of school staff, noting the merits and demerits and using befitting and amicable techniques to ameliorate the flaws while still improving on the merits thereby increasing the standard of schools and achieving educational goals. Thus, the concern of education supervision is the improvement in teaching and teaching environment in order to promote effective teacher performance and learning in the school.

Supervision is thus a combination or integration of a number of processes, procedures and conditions that are consciously designed with the sole aim of advancing the work effectiveness of teachers and other personnel involved in the schooling process (Berteau & Villeneuve, 2016). We should note that educational supervision focuses on changing the behaviour of staff for an improved performance. In most cases, it is internally arranged by the school head and at times assisted by other agencies and stakeholders. Supervision pays more attention to personnel and instructional delivery more than the pupils in the school. In other to enhance instruction, the role of the supervisors should be supportive, assisting, explanative, encouraging, guiding, advisory, improving and sharing rather directing.

Analysis of the Purposes of School Supervision

The major concern of school supervision is the enhancement of the quality of instruction in schools. Harris (2013) perceived supervision as “what school personnel does with adults and things for the purpose of maintaining or changing the operations of the school in order to directly influence the attainment of the major instructional goals of the school. Supervision has its impact on the learner through other people and things”. From the above, the role of supervision will include:

- Deciding the nature and content of the curriculum
- Selecting the school organizational patterns and materials that will enhance educational growth
- Improvement of teacher effectiveness
- Ensuring that teachers are performing their duties as scheduled.
- Improvement of the incompetent teachers
- Providing a guide for staff development
- Determining the effectiveness of the teachers’ classroom management
- Determining the tone of the school
- Determining special abilities possessed by teachers and deciding who to be transferred, retained, promoted or disengaged.

The Head teacher is usually the supervisor within the school. He/she is foremost on instructional leader. However, there are many other managerial activities expected of him/her in the school. It is regrettable that many head teachers do not often see themselves in the supervisory role of promoting the quality of teaching and learning in schools rather they see their main roles to be those of teachers, administrators, and managers of personnel and finances, counsellors and disciplinarians for students, liaison with parents and school board ministry of education, and supervisors of academic areas of the institutions.

In carrying out the role of a supervisor, the head teacher should be visible in all corners and crannies of the school and not hide away in his office all day long. In a school based supervision, the head teacher should;

- Visit teachers in their classes regularly and discuss their observations with them;
- Help both new and experienced teachers with planning their schemes of work and lessons and counsel them regularly;
- Have authority, and use it with the teachers, to set school level objectives, and to determine the school’s activities to achieve those objectives;
- Teachers’ lesson plans regularly and comment on them;
- Be accessible to both teachers and students and listen to their concerns and interact informally with them;
- Trust their teachers and delegate authority to them; and
- Check regularly on the safety and welfare of teachers and students and take care of problem as they arise.

Adhering strictly to the above amount to a systematic and efficient supervision, which will result in an effective and efficient school characterized by:

- i. Excellent achievement by many pupils in examinations;
- ii. Excellent performance in games, sports, drama, debates, music, festivals, etc;
- iii. Well behaved pupils; and
- iv. The success of past students.

The Analysis of the Functions of Supervision

These functions spell out the various activities, which are undertaken in the process of supervision as well as the role of the supervisor in the process. The functions can be categorized into seven as listed below (Wiles & Loveel, 2015):

1. Goal development
2. Programme development
3. Control and coordination
4. Motivation
5. Problem solving
6. Professional development
7. Evaluation of educational outcomes

These functions are now discussed below;

Goal Development

The most important function of supervision is to ensure that teachers and supervisors work together cooperatively in developing the goals of the school organization. It should be noted that the school goals are generated from the goals of society. Goal development as a function of supervision is a continuous process which requires regular examination, evaluate modification and changing (if need be) of the goals of the teaching/learning process through the cooperative efforts of both the teachers and the supervisors. The regularity of concern for goal development in a measure of the sensitivity and responsiveness of the supervision scheme to the dynamism of the societal goals as well as clear indicator of the degree of effectiveness of the supervision system.

While recently there is a gap between the teachers and supervisors because the supervisors are not working together as team with the teachers.

Programme Development

The development of curricula and co-curricula activities in a primary responsibility of the teachers. The role of supervision in the matter is to provide appropriate complementary technical and professional services and support. The number and types of programmes developed for the teaching/learning process at the level of either an educational sub-system or individual school or classroom are determined by the earlier developed for the teaching/learning process. So, changes in these goals are expected to lead appropriate. Changes, facilitated by the supervisory system, in the programmes developed.

Teachers are also expected to be part of the curricula and co-curricula activities taking place in the school and also the school activities for effective teaching and learning delivery.

Control and Coordination

Education is a system made up of many inter-related, interdependent and interacting units. Each unit has its own goals to achieve and at the same time contribute to the realization of the overall goals of the system or sub-system. It is a basic function of supervision to facilitate the proper coordination of the various units. Effective coordination requires the establishment of a comprehensive system of communication among the units in order to strengthen the system of supervision and improve the quality of instruction for the learner. For an effective teaching and learning to take place in the school, both the teachers and the supervisors are expected to work together and coordinate all activities and programmes together. They should also have a good system of communication among themselves in order to pass information effectively. Unfortunately, this is not in practice today. Gap do exist in terms of top-down or down-top levels of communication.

Motivation

Supervision aims at motivating teachers to put in their best so as to achieve both the performance objectives as well as the overall educational goals. This can only be achieved when supervision is done in a professionally friendly manner, when every good work done by the supervisee/supervised is acknowledged and when the poor is constructively criticized and appropriately advised on a one-on-one basis by the supervisor.

Teachers efforts are not highly motivated to encourage them put in more efforts in their work for effectiveness. Therefore, absence of teacher be motivator could ruin the productivity and efficiency in schools.

Problem Solving

Teachers and learners are always confronted with a variety of problem of varying degree of difficulty. These problems may be related to inputs into the educational organization, anticipated learning outcomes, curricula and co-curricula programmes and actual learning. It may be possible for the teacher to solve some of these problems immediately by himself, many other problems may take days or weeks to resolve and require the assistance of the supervisor. In all cases, the supervisory system put in place should be that readily facilitates the resolution of emerging problems.

Both the teachers and supervisors are supposed to work together as problem solvers for the learners. In today's situations, team work is not practiced, especially when the problem requires collaboration efforts in solving.

Professional Development

Teachers are professionals. They are trained, but the needs, problems and aspirations of the society which owns the education system as well as the society's expectations from the

teachers keep changing. Teachers as custodians of the education of the society must also change and reflect these changes in technology, the development of goals, learning engagement and learning environment of educational organization. For this to happen, teachers must be exposed to a continuous, comprehensive and systematic programme of in-service training to enable them cope with these changes of course, it is the function of supervision to initiate, support coordinate and facilitate the realization of the programme of professional development for teachers and supervisors.

As the school system continued to expand, additional professionals were appointed as general supervisors under the leadership of the superintendent. The organization of supervision at that times was such that a highly centralized system of supervision was in practice.

There is poor training and re-training of teachers for them to become professionals in their fields these days. This should not be practice. Updating one's knowledge in today's world is very important such that teachers are not out dated or dried in their fields of specialization.

Evaluation of Educational Outcomes

Educational organizations are set up by the society to meet its needs, it is imperative that both the society and educational institutions are constantly aware of the extent to which their needs are being met. This is done through a systematic programme of evaluation of educational outcomes. This evaluation can be carried out by supervisors so designated from within or from outside the educational institution. This evaluation is an integral part of the functions of supervisors. In conclusion, the assumption throughout the period of administration supervision was that teachers were passive and had to do whatever they were told to do.

For effective teaching and learning to take place today, both the teachers and students should be properly supervised, monitored and evaluated for them to improve in the school activities.

An Analysis of the Methods of Supervision

For a supervisor to be successful in bringing about desirable effect in teacher behaviour for achieving teaching effectiveness, he needs to involve an array of activities. Peretomode (2014) outlined the following methods that the skillful instructional supervisor can utilize to bring about desirable effect in teacher behaviour for achieving teaching effectiveness. They include:

1. Classroom observation
2. Teacher visitation
3. Demonstration
4. Workshop
5. Micro-teaching
6. Listening to tape, radio, or recordings
7. Guided practice

8. Research

Each of these methods is further discussed below:

1. **Classroom Observation** – This involves live observing of a teacher and analyzing his or her classroom practices, the teaching – learning process, teachers’ personality, student-teacher interactions, lesson note and lesson presentation. All these are observed by the supervisor who is present as a witness.
2. **Teacher Visitation** – This activity also called “inter-visiting” or “reciprocal visitations” involves one teacher visiting and observing another teacher in action in another class within the same school (inter-class visitation) or in another class in a different school (inter-school visitation). This method enhances proficient especially if he beginning or inexperienced teacher watches experienced teacher in action.
3. **Demonstration** – This is one of the most effective strategies in assisting teachers grow professionally. With this technique, the services of the supervisor as an experienced and knowledgeable officer or some other expert are in introducing and explaining innovation or problems that need attention and emphasis. It involves the presentation of a pre-arranged series of events to a group for their view. The demonstration should be practicable and worthy of general emulation and the standards set forth should be attainable in most teaching situations by most teachers for whom the demonstration has been planned. The plans and purposes should be presented to the observers in the form of mimeographed lessons and made available to them. Demonstration stimulates teachers’ growth and group discussion.
4. **Workshop** – The activity involves a small group of people temporarily formed to discuss a specific topic or work on a common problem and trying to find solution(s) to a specific problem in a face-to-face situation.
5. **Micro-teaching** – It is a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time, class size, and teaching complexity to allow the teacher focus on a selected teaching strategy. New skills are developed and old ones are refined. Usually it involves a small group of 5-10 pupils where the teacher employs a particular skill within say ten minutes involving content and skill. Emphasis is on the issue of immediate feedback where the teacher is evaluated by the supervisor in form of replaying a recorded lesson or actual discussion (if it was not recorded). When corrections are made the teacher re-teaches the lesson to the same group or a different group for improvement.
6. **Listening to tape, radio or recordings** – This involves using sound recordings to present ideas to one or more listeners in such way as to help develop understanding or skills. Also, the use of visual presentations through the media, film, television, or video tape are increasingly important in the supervisory process.
7. **Guided Practice** – This supervision technique involves individualized or small group manipulative activities. It is an approach in which doing is emphasized rather than talking with practice activities arranged out of context.

8. **Research** – Research is the systematic and objective collection and analysis of data in order to find solutions to identified problems. Here the supervisor works with and through teachers to find solutions to problems of teaching/learning that confronts them instead of dictating solutions to or autocratically setting educational problems relating to teaching and teachers.

Problems of Supervision in Nigeria

Nwakpa (2014) identified the major problems militating against effective school inspecting in Nigeria. Prominent among them are:

1. Inadequate number of inspectors
2. Inadequate transportation
3. Inadequate funds for school inspection
4. Lack of incentives and motivation
5. Poor implementation of inspection reports
6. Lack of executive power to ensure implementation of recommendations
7. Lack of follow-up inspection
8. Use of unqualified inspectors
9. Corrupt practices among inspectors

Conclusion

It is important to note that educational supervision focuses on changing the behaviour of staff for an improved performance. In most cases, it is internally arranged by the school head and at times assisted by other agencies and stakeholders. Supervision pays more attention to personnel and instructional delivery more than the pupils in the school. In order to enhance instruction, the role of the supervisors therefore, should be supportive, assisting, explanative, encouraging, guiding, advisory, improving and sharing rather than directing. It should be effective and regular so that education justifies that huge amount of money being spent by the government.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for effective inspection of schools in Nigeria:

1. Government should ensure adequate provision of human and material resources needed for effective inspection of schools.
2. Only experienced teachers with professional degrees in Educational Management should be appointed inspectors.
3. There should be room for in-service training programmes for inspectors to make them more current and effective in the performance of their jobs.
4. Inspectors should be adequately motivated through provision of appropriate incentives.
5. Adequate transport facilities should be provided for inspection visits to enable the inspectors to cover all the concerned schools no matter their locations.

6. Government through the Ministries of Education should ensure that inspection recommendations are carried out.
7. There should be room for a follow-up inspection to ensure that inspection recommendations are carried out as expected.
8. School inspectors should be adequately remunerated so as to reduce the degree of corruption among them, while the identified bad eggs among them should be adequately punished.
9. Inspectors should not be over saddled with other administrative duties outside inspection to enable them be more effective in the job.

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