Instructional Supervision and Staff Professional Development in Public Primary Schools in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State

By

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Abstract

Instructional supervision is one of the tools of government control and monitoring of education service delivery; but most importantly it is a capacity- building tool for teachers especially the beginning ones so as to improve teacher's task performance. The study therefore investigated the relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development in the public primary schools in Oyo Metropolis. The study was a survey but carried out ex-post-facto. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in the public primary schools in Oyo Metropolis,, Oyo State. A multi- stage sampling technique was used to select 210 respondents from a total of 37 primary schools in the Metropolis. Simple random sampling technique was used to select subjects at each stage of sampling process A self-constructed questionnaire tagged 'Instructional Supervision and Teachers' Professional Development Scale' was used to elicit relevant data from the respondents. Data collected were analyzed and tested at .05 level of significance. The statistical tools employed in the data analysis included frequency counts, simple mean and Pearson Product Movement Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study revealed that instructional supervisory practices were not regular in the schools sampled. In addition, there was a significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development. In view of the findings, the study recommends amongst other things that supervisory practices in terms of school visitation and observation should be regularly carried out.

Introduction

The primary education system represents the foundation of other levels of education in Nigerian and all over the world. The National Policy on Education (2013) conceived primary education as an instrument to achieve national objective. The government perceives access to primary education as a sine-qua none, hence, the policy document stipulated that primary education shall be free, universal, compulsory and qualitative (FGN 2013). One of the means of government control and monitoring of educational offering and delivery in primary schools and other levels of education in the country is instructional supervision otherwise, called school supervision.

De-Grauve (2001) noted that national governments in different countries of the world rely on school supervision to ensure the quality of educational service at all levels of education. Bafour-Awuah (2011) viewed school supervision as a cooperative venture in which both the supervisor and the teacher engage in dialogue for the purpose of improving instruction.

On the objectives of instructional supervision, Avwiri (2012) expressed the view that supervision of instruction aims at realization of quality education. Similarly Ojogwu (2001) cited in Avwiri maintained that supervision creates awareness of sound educational philosophy in teachers. The author stated further that instructional supervision ensures that teachers are made aware of educational policies and reforms so as to achieve the goals of education. Jaiyeoba (2006) and Chike-Okoli (2006) shared the belief that

school supervision is a process which aims to improve conditions of teaching and learning so that the goals of education can be achieved. A concept often used interchangeably with supervision is inspection. It is generally believed that the word inspection metamorphosized into supervision and the latter was often conceived as witch hunting or fault finding. Supervision has been accepted as a collaborative concept which encourages collegiality and dialogue between a supervisor and a teacher. Though the two concepts- supervision and instruction - have almost the same focus, that is to improve teaching and learning, yet Olagboye (2004) was of the view that there are subtle differences between the two concepts. Olowo and Oso (2015) identified a number of the differences between supervision and inspection. According to the authors, one of the major differences between the two concepts is the fact that inspection is carried out by an external agent and its main purpose is to serve as a control mechanism by the government. On the other hand, supervision is undertaken to provide guidance, counselling and or advice to teachers so as to improve teaching and learning. In another dimension, supervision is usually carried out as a routine activity whereas inspection is a formal activity which usually requires prior notice of two-three months. In spite of the assumed differences, Olowo and Oladimeji (2012) opined that supervision or inspections are aimed at revitalization or reinvigoration of educational system so that the goals of schooling can be achieved.

Blasé and Blasé (1999) and Greene (1992) expressed the view that though the ultimate aim of instructional supervision is to improve students' learning outcome, yet the direct target of instructional supervision is to impact on teachers' professional development. Professional development occurs when a teacher is able to acquire a new knowledge or skill and is able to apply such in teaching and learning situation so as to improve teaching and learning. According to Greene (1992) a major concern in education today is how to ensure continued growth and development of teachers. Instructional supervision as an integral part of a learning community has been associated with teacher's professional development. Dufour and Dufour (2003) posited that instructional supervision is a tool to support professional growth and competency of teachers. Similarly, Nolan and Hoover (2004) identified instructional supervision as an integral component of staff development. Glickman (1998) noted that the ultimate goal of any instructional supervision should be geared towards teachers professional development to a point where the teacher can take ownership and assume full responsibility for instructional development.

Wanzare and Da Costa (2000) reported a positive relationship between instructional supervision and teachers' professional development. The authors remarked that supervision that is provided in a non-judgmental manner can lead to genuine and authentic staff development. The importance of instructional supervision lies in the fact that quality educational programmes rely heavily on highly trained teachers with continuing learning. Studies, for instance, Nolan and Hoover (2008) have shown that instructional supervision enhances staff professional development when supervisors adopt personalized approach to supervision whereby teachers' career-stage, learning style and life conditions are given serious consideration. Burant (2009) opined that teachers need to have

control or ownership of instructional supervision based on their need. The author therefore recommends shared professional norms rather than the bureaucratic control in instructional supervision which geared towards staff development. Fear, lack of trust and bureaucratic practices have been identified as impediment to teacher's improved instructional skill. Burant (2009) citing Meyer (1994) concluded that when teachers are given time, space and security for a collegial dialogue between teacher and an instructional supervisor then an authentic professional growth and development may emerge.

Nolan and Hoover (2008) suggested that in order to enhance teacher's professional development, instructional supervision needs to consist of components such as peer coaching, self-directed teacher development, action research and other approaches of instructional supervision that can improve teacher's professional development. A number of instructional supervision approaches can be used to enhance teacher's professional development. These approaches according to Olowo (2016) include classroom visitation and observation, clinical supervision, workshop and demonstration. These approaches are usually employed by supervisors to carry out their over sight function and to offer guidance to teachers.

However, developmental approach to instructional supervision offers ample opportunity for teacher's professional development. The need for developmental approach to supervision arose as a result of the diverse instructional needs of teachers as they have different length of teaching experience, educational qualifications etc. There are variants of developmental approaches to instructional supervision.

Rettig, Lampe and Garcia (2000) advocated for the use of differentiated model of instructional supervision which can accommodate different needs of new teachers, experienced teachers and teachers who may have one problem or the other. Differentiated supervision consists of four types which include (1) directive supervision (2) directive informational supervision (3) collaborative supervision and (4) non-directive supervision. According to the authors these approaches of developmental instructional supervision give room for different forms of guidance from the supervisor and varying degree of ownership by the individual teachers concerned.

In the case of directive supervision, the supervisor gives a direct guidance in form of instruction. The supervisor controls the whole process of the supervision with the teacher playing a passive role. This form of supervision can be used when the teacher concerned is a new member of teaching staff and needs directive guidance. Teachers with some teaching problems may also fit into directive supervision. The role of a supervisor in a directive supervisory style is prescriptive and active.

Directive informational supervision is ideal for teaching staff with one or two years of experience. This approach is adopted to guide new staff in their endeavour to fine tune their teaching effectiveness. Though the supervisor still assume ownership of the supervisory situation yet the supervisor is open to suggestions from the teacher unlike the directive supervision stage.

Collaborative supervision is usually employed when teachers have a reasonable length of experience and expertise. It is often used when the supervisor and the supervisee have almost equivalent teaching experience. In case, the supervisee have a teaching problem the role of the supervisor is simply to help him or her explore all possible solutions, but the final decisions lie with the teacher. The essential role of the supervisor is just to assist in

classifying issues and provide direction. Glickman (1998) asserted that this form of teacher supervision is used among equals to provide solutions to teaching problems. Rettig, Lampe and Garcia (2009) commented that the ultimate aim of this style of supervision is to make the teacher self-directive.

Non-directive supervisory approach is applied when the teacher appears to be an expert in his own subject area than the supervisor. For instance the teacher may be an expert in history while the supervisor is an expert in general education. One unique characteristics of non-directive supervision is the fact that it is the teacher that takes the initiative to contact the supervisor for assistance. The intention of the supervisee is to allow another person's perspective about a problem. In other words, the teacher asks for the suggestions from the supervisor on how to think through the problem.

Another variant of developmental model of instructional supervision is contextual supervision (Fritz and Miller; 2003). Contextual supervision attempts to match supervisory style with the level of teacher's development, otherwise called readiness level. According to the authors, readiness level is determined by the teacher's competence and confidence. Competence is measured by the extent of teacher's knowledge, skill or ability to perform a particular task while confidence relates to teacher's self-assurance, willingness and motivation (Fritz & Miller; 2003). The use of this model of developmental approach to supervision requires that the supervisor is able to provide supervision that is tailored towards the teacher's individual needs. Hence the model has four quadrants of teacher's level of professional development. These are high confidence and low competence, low confidence and low competence, low confidence and high competence and high confidence and high competence. In the case of the first quadrant which is high confidence and low competence, the teacher exhibits high confidence but has poor mastery of the subject's content. In this case Raph (1998) suggested that the supervisor should provide low support and high task for the teacher. Support is interpreted here as encouragement and collegiality while task is defined as providing guidance in the task area.

A teacher that shows low confidence and low competence is not enthusiastic about teaching and does not possess relevant knowledge and skill to perform effectively. In this case the supervisor provides high support and high task.

In the case of the third quadrant, the teacher exhibits, low confidence but high competence. The teacher who shows low confidence but high competence may not be highly enthusiastic about teaching profession but possess high teaching skills. The role of the supervisor in this case is to provide high support and low task. The fourth quadrant is high confidence and high task. The teacher is highly proficient and 0motivated about teaching task. The concern of the supervisor here is to provide feedback in case of any teaching problem. Other forms of developmental approach to supervision include, intensive development, cooperative professional development, self-directed and administrative monitoring (Fritz and Miller, 2003).

Ajibade (2005) observed that the quality of graduates from teacher education programmes needs serious attention as their competence is having negative effect on student's academic performance. Though, teachers in public primary schools are often trained and certified teachers. yet, they need regular retraining so that they can experience

professional growth and development. Continual training otherwise called in-service training is an important component of instructional supervision.

Sergiovanni and Starrat (2007) argued that instructional supervision as one of the functions of educational institutions offers opportunity for professional development of teachers. Supervisors from Federal and State Ministries of Education, States Universal Basic Education Boards do provide supervisory services to public primary schools in the Oyo Metropolis. This is in addition to the supervisory activities of the within-school designated supervisors such as the head teacher, assistant head teacher, heads of department and other assigned teachers. In spite of this there has been hues and cries about the quality of education in terms of teachers' pedagogical competencies that is being provided in such schools. The researcher through personal experience has found that some teachers in the primary schools, despite instructional supervision by the school heads and other designated within-school supervisors, are not able to write a concise and meaningful lesson plans. This study is therefore undertaken to examine whether there is any relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development.The following research question and hypothesis guided the study.

Research Question

1. How regular is the instructional supervision practice in the public and private primary schools?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study is a survey research which sought for the perceptions of the respondents on the variables of interest.

The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in primary schools in Oyo City with three to five years of teaching experience. The study selected two hundred and ten teachers including head teachers through multi-stage sampling procedure.

A questionnaire tagged "Instructional Supervisory Practices Scale (ISPS) was used to collect relevant data from the respondents. The first section of the questionnaire solicited for biographical information from the respondents. The second part of the questionnaire has test items that elicited information about the respondents' perception about the regularity of supervisory practices in the sampled schools. In addition, the study requested for the perceptions of the respondents on the relationship between their supervision and professional development. That is, the teachers were asked whether their supervisory experiences had led to any significant improvement in their professional development. Likert's rating scale was adapted for the study. In the case of the first research question which asks about regularity of supervisory practices, the test items were rated from Very Often to Seldom.

Very often = 4, Often = 3, Rarely often = 02, Seldom = 01, The test items also requested for the perception of the respondents on the relationship between instructional supervision and teachers' professional development. The indices of teacher's professional development in the study included knowledge and skill in classroom management, teaching method, evaluation and teacher –student social interactions.

The research instrument was given to experts in the field of educational management to ensure validity of the test items. In order to ensure that questionnaires were reliable, split-half-reliability test technique was used. The

coefficient yielded- 0.76- was considered suitable.

The questionnaire was administered personally with the assistance of some teachers in the schools sampled. The data generated from the study were analyzed using simple mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic. The standard mean used for the study is 2.5.

(4+3+2+1=10 ÷ 4 = 2.5 Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to determine whether a relationship exists between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development.

Results

Research Question 1: How regular is the supervisory practice in the sampled school?

Table 1: Perception of the Respondents on the Regularity of Supervisory Practices in the Sampled Schools.

SUPERVISING PRACTICES	VERY OFTEN 4	OFTEN 3	RARELY 2	SELDOM 1	N	EX	X	S.D.	Decision
1. Provision of assistance to teachers to solve problem	27	30	80	73	210	436	2.076	1.021	Reject
2. Classroom Visitation and Observation	88	58	47	17	210	637	3.03	1.011	Accept
3. Providing teachers with research findings to improve Instruction	15	16	95	84	210	382	1.81	1.001	Reject
4. Use of workshops/ seminars to improve teacher's knowledge and skills	17	18	87	91	210	387	1.84	1.113	Reject
5. Evaluation of teacher's Work	86	85	21	18	210	662	3.15	1.127	Accept

Table 1 reveals that most of the sub-scales of supervisory practices are rarely offered or provided by the supervisors. For instance out of the five subscales of supervisory practices, two were accepted while three were rejected implying that the supervisory practices were mostly irregular and were not provided often. Classroom visitation and observation; and teacher's evaluation that were the only sub-scales of instructional supervision perceived by the respondents as regular and adequately provided.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development.

Table 2: Perception of the Respondents on Relationship between Instructional Supervision and Teachers' Professional Development.

Variables	X	S.D.	N	Df.	r.cal.	r.tab
Instructional Supervision	7.42	1.93				
			210	207		
					1.44	.088
Teachers' professional Development	16.14	6.34				

The table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development as the value of r.cal.is greater than the value of r.tab.. (r.cal. = 1.44. r.tab. = .088, df = 207, p<.05). The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development in therefore rejected.

Discussion

The result of the research question which probed the regularity of supervisory practices in the schools shows that majority of the respondents expressed the view that supervisory practices were rarely provided. This finding is in line with Alimi (2003) who reported that supervisory practice such as classroom visitation and observation was not frequent enough. Similarly Adegun (2003) found supervisory practices to be inadequate in terms of frequency of supervisors' visitation and their oversight functions to the schools. Hence the author suggested employment of more supervisors.

The study according to the perception of the respondents revealed that supervisory practices should lead to teachers' professional development. This finding is in line with Sergiovanni and Starrat submission that instructional supervision has a positive association with teacher's professional development. Tesfaw and Hafmam (2014) in a study on the relationship between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development also reported a significant association between instructional supervision and teacher's professional development. Though the respondents did not experience frequent supervision yet they hold the belief that instructional supervision enhances staff professional development.

Conclusion

The study examined the relationship between instructional supervisory practice and teacher's professional development with a view to improving quality of education in the public primary schools. The results from data analysis in conjunction with reviewed related literature revealed that there is a significant relationship between instructional supervisory practices and teacher's professional development. The study therefore concluded that instructional supervisory practices have significant roles to play in the professional development of primary school teachers.

Recommendation

In view of the finding of the study, the following recommendation was made:
Instructional supervisory visits to primary schools should be improved in terms of regularity. It is advised that the visits should be often as much as possible.

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