

Adequacy of Monitoring and Supervision of Public Primary Education in Ogun State, Nigeria: An Evaluation

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Abstract. The study appraised the state of monitoring and supervision of public primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. It adopted the descriptive survey design. The Supervision and Control of Primary Education Questionnaire (SCPEQ) was used to gather data. Data obtained were analysed using frequency count, percent, mean and standard deviation. The results show that public primary school supervision was not regular, continuous and thorough. They also reveal that there were not enough professionally trained school supervisors, and that the volume of work was so enormous that supervisors on ground were often overwhelmed. They indicate further that inspectors did not employ cooperative strategies with teachers to ensure efficient functioning of the school system and that they maintained a superior-subordinate relationship with teachers. The study recommends the employment of professionally trained personnel in adequate number. It also suggests the provision of efficient transportation arrangement for school inspectors, especially in the rural areas, and prompt payment of travelling allowances to encourage and motive them to greater productivity.

Keywords: Monitoring; Supervision; Appraisal.

1. Background to the Study

It is universally acknowledged that education is the process of preparing an individual to become a functional, responsible and acceptable member

of the society. Education is the aggregate of the process by which a child acquires attitudes, abilities and other forms of behaviour of positive value to the society in which he lives. It helps the individual to develop physically, mentally, morally, socially and technologically, Education has the power to transform lives. It widens people's freedom of choice and action. It empowers them to participate in the social and political lives of their societies and equips them with the skills they need to develop their livelihoods.

At the foundation of every education system is the primary level of education. Primary education, as referred to in this study, is the type of education given in institutions to children, usually between the age of six and eleven years, to equip them with sound basic education in reading, writing, and mathematics, and an elementary understanding of subjects such as history, geography, natural sciences, social sciences, art and music. It is the kind of education that develops in the individual the capacity to read, write and calculate, and have a general knowledge of the world around him. It also lays a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking (Akinbote, 2007). This way, it helps to eliminate illiteracy, which is one of the strongest predictors of poverty, and prepares the foundation for an individual's intellectual growth and development. As a result of its basic nature, primary education is the only education sub-sector that is available to children in all

countries, both developing and developed, as well as in rural and urban areas. This, probably, is the reason why it is the largest sub-sector of any education system, and offers the unique opportunity to contribute to the transformation of societies.

Scholars, researchers and other stakeholders in the education industry have expressed concern about the state of primary education in Nigeria. The public perception was that the quality of education at this level was low and that standards had dropped. Moja (2000) observed that the general performance of pupils in public examinations was poor and that this was due to lack of adherence to acceptable educational practices such as effective monitoring and supervision of schools. The Department for International Development (DFID) described primary education in Nigeria as facing ‘a multi-dimensional crisis.’ According to it, access was limited and quality was poor. It reported that large number of children was out of school, while some were in school but not learning basic skills such as reading, writing and calculating. The agency found out that learning outcomes in Nigerian primary schools were worse than in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It identified several factors responsible for this situation, and noted in particular that teachers and school activities were often poorly supervised (DFID, 2009). Other scholars and researchers (Ogunu, 2005; Worlu, 2011; Obiweluzor, Momoh & Ogbonnaya, 2011) have posited that inadequate monitoring and supervision of public primary schools remains one of the banes of the Nigerian education system.

Monitoring, according to Eweniyi (1998) refers to the activity of measuring progress in a plan or project implementation. It entails the collection of information about what actually takes place during the process of implementation in order to find out:

- how the resources put into the plan are being utilized;
- how activities that are crucial to the implementation are progressing;
- if deadlines are being met or not;

- whether or not plans are working out as anticipated.

Monitoring is a continuous exercise. It is a strategy for correcting deviations that may arise between what is intended to be done and what is actually being done. Hence, it is part of the learning process designed by those directly involved in its implementation. It is a process whereby the activities of the school are followed with the aim of ensuring that school objectives are realized.

Supervision, on the other hand, can be described as a constant and continuous process of personal guidance based on frequent visits to a school to give constructive advice and to encourage the teachers in the bid to improve teaching and learning in the school. Supervision of activities at the school level is a key factor in ensuring the good functioning of education programmes. In fact, supervision has always been an integral feature of education programmes in all countries. It is a primary function of those who are saddled with the responsibility of ensuring school success and improvement in pupils’ achievement through effective leadership. In theory, supervision has two basic functions which directly impinge on school functioning. First, supervision should help to maintain system-level norms. This is important since primary education is a basic unit of a larger system. While each school may have its own uniqueness and individuality, together they have to follow certain common patterns of organization and functioning. Secondly, supervision should promote change and development of every school. While this two-fold definition is accepted in theory, the actual functioning of the supervision system in many countries often presents a one-sided picture of control and monitoring with practically no support for change and development (Govina & Tapan, 1999).

In Nigeria, the need to rejuvenate and make more effective the system of school monitoring and supervision has become important more than ever before. The sudden explosion in the population of pupils, coupled with the attendant increased complexity in school organization, has

made the need for effective supervision more imperative. This is, in addition to the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme introduced in the country in 1999, which entails nine years of uninterrupted schooling for children between six and fourteen years. The curricula of the lower and middle levels of basic education have been expanded to cater for a vast body of knowledge in the light of the ever-changing global trends in science, technology and the arts. For the goals of these levels of education to be achieved, there is the need for effective and result-oriented teaching and learning process, and healthy interaction among teachers, pupils, and external education officials. It means there is the urgent need for both internal and external inspection and supervision of schools.

Governments at various levels in Nigeria have recognized the need to monitor not only school activities, but also the financial provisions to the system. Education officials at the Ministries of Education, both federal and state, and the local levels have set up quality control divisions in their respective ministries and boards to ensure that quality education is maintained through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructions and educational services as laid down in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2004).

Many scholars have, however, observed that primary school inspection and supervision in Nigeria is not being done as effectively as it should be, and that this lack of effective control is one of the challenges facing the Nigerian education system. They note that supervision of schools is neither regular nor continuous, and that schools are supervised only routinely. They also posit that there are not enough professionally trained inspectors and supervisors to do the work as effectively as it should be done (Sulaiman, 2004; Ogunu, 2005). According to Ogunu, supervisors and inspectors from the ministries of education are usually insufficient and not adequate enough to carry out the duties required. In addition, many of these school inspectors have not been professionally trained and therefore are not qualified to perform the task. The consequence of this is that a lot of unprofessional practices are carried out in the schools to the detriment of pupils and the school

system. Ogunu observes further that internal supervision is equally ineffective as school leaders are weighed down by routine administrative duties such that they have little or no time to visit classrooms and observe classroom interactions. This study evaluated the adequacy of monitoring and supervision of public primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The sampling technique was random. Ten (10) public primary schools were randomly sampled from each of the randomly selected seven (7) local government councils (there are 20 local government councils in the state) cutting across the three senatorial districts in the state. 5 classroom teachers were randomly sampled from the 70 selected schools, making a total of three hundred and fifty (350) participants. A self-designed questionnaire, the Supervision and Control of Primary Education Questionnaire (SCPEQ) was used to gather data. The Supervision and Control of Primary Education Questionnaire had two sections. Section A consisted of twenty items designed along a 4-point Likert Scaling System (Not true, Almost True, True, and Very True). It contained items designed to measure the frequency with which education inspectors visited schools, adequacy of number of inspectors, compliance of school inspectors with the principles of school supervision, and inspector - teacher relationship, among others. Section B contained 10 items of the 'Yes' or 'No' format (items 21 – 30) which dealt mainly with the duties and responsibilities of school supervisors.

The SCPEQ was given to some lecturers in the Department of Educational Foundations and Counselling, and the Institute of Education, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago – Iwoye, for comments and suggestions. Their observations and suggestions were factored into the final copy. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was carried out using the test-retest method. The instrument was administered twice to the same group of teachers at an interval of two weeks. The selected number of participants was small, and they did not form

part of the sample of the real study. The instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

The researcher, and his three research assistants, took the instrument to the selected schools and administered them on the selected teachers. Data gathered were analysed using frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

3. Results

Frequency Table on the State of Monitoring and Supervision of Public Primary Schools in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Item	Not True		Almost True		True		Very True		Mean	SD
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1. Schools are supervised only routinely.	53	16.2	93	28.4	137	41.9	44	13.5	2.48	1.009
2. There are not enough inspectors to inspect schools.	91	27.8	113	34.6	81	24.8	42	12.8	2.22	1.001
3. School inspectors are often overwhelmed by the amount of work such that supervision is not thorough.	88	26.9	152	46.5	59	18.0	28	8.6	2.08	.898
4. School inspectors are often confused over what to monitor.	125	38.2	149	45.6	39	11.9	14	4.3	1.82	.812
5. Inspectors do not offer corrective measures based on their observations.	102	31.2	155	47.4	47	14.4	23	7.0	1.97	.859
6. Criticisms by inspectors are not free of bias.	56	17.1	109	33.3	116	35.5	46	14.1	2.46	.942
7. Inspectors do not employ cooperative strategies with teachers to ensure efficient functioning of the school system.	88	26.9	125	38.2	86	26.3	28	8.6	2.15	.944
8. Inspectors maintain a superior-subordinate relationship with teachers.	17	5.2	81	24.8	156	47.7	73	22.3	2.87	.824
9. Supervision is done in such a way that teachers are not given the opportunity to prove their worth.	72	22.0	158	48.3	60	18.3	37	11.3	2.19	.907
10. Inspectors do not motivate teachers to improve their productivity.	105	32.1	141	43.1	49	15.0	32	9.8	2.02	.935
11. Supervision helps to ensure that the quantity and quality of teachers' work are clearly specified.	7	2.1	13	4.0	143	43.7	164	50.2	3.42	.686
12. Supervision helps to ensure that school environment is free of tension and emotional stress.	14	4.2	50	15.3	149	45.6	114	34.9	3.10	.833
13. School supervision ensures immediate recognition of good work and makes this public to others.	10	3.0	28	8.6	159	48.6	130	39.8	3.24	.782
14. Supervision helps to identify the merits and demerits of the school system.	6	1.8	17	5.2	137	41.9	167	51.1	3.42	.691
15. Supervision helps in applying appropriate techniques to eliminate/reduce the demerits in the school system.	8	2.4	26	8.0	163	49.8	130	39.8	3.26	.745
16. Supervision helps to create confidence in incompetent teachers.	29	8.9	35	10.7	142	43.4	121	37.0	3.09	.909
17. Supervision assists in identifying urgent needs in classrooms and schools in general.	7	2.1	21	6.4	141	43.1	158	48.3	3.37	.665
18. Corrections offered by inspectors help to improve teaching competence.	5	1.5	8	2.4	138	42.2	176	53.8	3.48	.654
19. Corrections made by inspectors help teachers in the task of school management.	8	2.4	7	2.1	168	51.4	144	44.0	3.37	.665
20. Supervision motivates students to work harder to achieve the required standard.	13	4.0	23	7.0	146	44.6	145	44.3	3.29	.778
Items	No		Yes		Mean		SD			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
21. Supervise teacher's classroom competence.	24	7.3	303	92.7	.93	.261				
22. Supervise teacher's personality and effectiveness.	38	11.6	289	88.4	.88	.321				
23. Inspect teacher's class control and discipline.	21	6.4	306	93.6	.94	.246				

24. Inspect class organization and discipline.	40	12.2	287	87.8	.88	3.28
25. Supervise teacher/pupil relationship.	56	17.1	271	82.9	.83	.377
26. Check pupils' class work.	16	4.9	311	95.1	.95	.216
27. Inspect the state of facilities in the school.	78	23.9	249	76.1	.76	.427
28. Inspect the general cleanliness of the school.	37	11.3	290	88.7	.89	.317
29. Inspect school records.	20	6.1	307	93.9	.94	.240
30. Offer corrective measures based on their observations.	69	21.1	258	78.9	.79	.409

The table shows that schools were supervised only routinely (55.4%); that there were not enough inspectors to inspect schools (72.2%); that inspectors were often overwhelmed by the amount of work involved such that supervision was most often not thorough (73.1%); that school inspectors were often confused over what to monitor and evaluate (61.8%); that inspectors did not offer corrective measures based on their observations (68.8%); that criticisms by inspectors were not made private and not free of bias (82.9%); and that supervisors did not employ cooperative strategies with teachers to ensure efficient running of the school system (73.1%).

The table further reveals that supervisors maintained a superior-subordinate relationship with teachers (70.0%); that supervision was done in such a way that teachers were not given the opportunity to prove their worth (77.9%); and that supervisors did not motivate teachers to improve their productivity (68.9%). The respondents, however, were of the opinion that supervision, if properly carried out, would help to ensure that the quality and quantity of teachers' work are clearly specified (97.9%); that supervision helps to ensure that the school environment is free of tension and emotional stress (95.8%); that supervision ensures that good work is recognised immediately and made public to others (97.0%); that supervision helps to identify the merits and demerits of the school system (93.0%); and that supervision enhances the application of appropriate techniques to eliminate or reduce the demerits in the school system (97.6%).

Also, the table indicates that supervision helps to create confidence in incompetent teachers (91.1%); that it identifies urgent needs in classrooms and the school in general (91.4%); that corrections offered by supervisors help to improve teaching competences (96.0%); that corrections made help teachers in school

management (95.4%); and that supervision motivates students to work harder so as to achieve the required standard (88.9%). The table also shows that school supervisors supervise teacher's classroom competence (92.7%); supervise teacher's personality and effectiveness (88.4%); inspect teacher's class control and discipline (93.6%); inspect class organisation and management (87.8%); supervise teacher/pupil relationship (82.9%); check pupils' class work (95.1%); inspect the state of facilities in the school (76.1%); inspect the general cleanliness of the school (88.7%) and inspect school records (78.9%).

From the results in the table, it can be seen that monitoring and supervision of activities in public primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria was not regular, continuous and thorough. The results also reveal that some supervisors were not professionally trained and, consequently, some principles guiding school monitoring and supervision were not strictly followed.

4. Discussion

School personnel remain one of the most significant resources in the school. Supervision of school personnel and other resources is an integral component of school leadership function and is central to the attainment of the goals and objectives of education. The Nigerian National Policy on Education has stated in very precise terms the objectives of education supervision which is to "ensure quality control through regular and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services" (FRN, 2004; 2013, p. 50).

The results of this study, however, show that supervision of primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, was neither regular nor continuous. It shows that school supervision was done only routinely. This finding corroborates the finding of Sulaiman (2004) who discovered that

supervision and control of primary schools in Ogun State was not adequate, and that the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education supervised schools only routinely. She observed further that the Ministry of Education and the monitoring department of the Local Government Education Authority were short-staffed and only on few occasions did inspectors and monitoring teams visit schools on either general or routine inspections. The finding of this study also agrees with the position of Ogunu (2005) who posited that school inspection and supervision by officials of the Ministry of Education was not done as often as it should.

This study also shows that there were not enough school inspectors to carry out supervision as effectively as it should be, and that supervisors were often overwhelmed by the volume of work involved such that supervision was not thorough. This also finds congruence with Ogunu's finding that school inspectors were usually insufficient or not adequate enough to carry out the duties required of them. The consequence of this shortage of supervisory personnel is that most often, supervision was not effective to the detriment of children and the school system. Obiweluozor, Momoh and Ogbonnaya (2011) also found out that the number of professionally trained supervisors in Nigerian schools was not enough to meet the needs of effective supervision. They observed that the number of schools had increased, and student population had gone up astronomically, widening the teacher/pupil ratio. The increase in the number of schools and pupils would mean more work for few supervisors which could overwhelm them.

Worlu (2011) opined that one of the banes of the Universal Basic Education programme in Nigeria was lack of effective supervision. According to him, supervision involves regular and continuous visits to inspect and evaluate the activities that go on in schools. He lamented, however, that supervision rarely took place. Ezekwesili (2007) also bemoaned that in Nigeria, there had been no supervision of schools in decades. According to him, lack of supervision of schools in the past had been the bane of failed education policies, and that a

system not supervised and evaluated was heading for collapse.

The National Policy on Education notes that in order that the functions of school inspection and supervision

"...may be discharged efficiently, a cadre of qualified staff is required in adequate numbers and quality at the different operational levels by the local, state and federal authorities." (FRN, 2004, pp 50).

Bessong and Ojong (2009) found out that, to the contrary, supervision of Nigerian primary schools was not done regularly principally because of shortage of personnel and other problems such as lack of transportation, especially in the rural areas, and non-payment of allowances and touring advance to supervisors. They posited that the rapid increase in the number of schools, school enrolment, and explosion in knowledge had made school supervision more tedious and demanding, thus requiring more personnel. In what they computed from the Report of the Sub-committee of the Joint Consultative Committee, published in the Journal of the Federal Inspectorate of Education 2008, they discovered that for school inspection in Nigeria in the 2007/2008 academic session, there was 1 inspector allocated to 26 primary schools in Cross River State, 1 to 47 schools in Anambra State, 1 to 123 schools in Akwa Ibom State, 1 to 54 schools in Imo State, 1 to 33 schools in Abia State, 1 to 102 schools in Sokoto State, and 1 to 78 in Ogun State. This was the pattern in almost all the other states of the country.

Arong and Ogbadu (2010) in a study attributed the many complex problems bedevilling the Nigerian school system to lack of adequate educational inspection and supervision, especially at the primary education level. They found out that this lack of adequate inspection and supervision had variables that directly or indirectly contribute to the decline in the quality of education.

Inadequate and ineffective supervision of primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, is not desirable considering the significant role

supervision plays in the achievement of quality education. If qualitative education is seriously desired so that the standard of education in the schools can be improved, school supervision must be accorded high priority. Through inspection and supervision, the inspectors and supervisors assist in improving classroom instruction because teachers are made more confident and competent, and pupils are motivated to work harder in order to achieve the required standard, and in the long run, achieve the goals of education. Without thorough and effective supervision, there will be no assessment of teaching and learning, no improvement in teaching and learning, no means of identifying the merits and demerits of the school system, no means of identifying urgent needs in classrooms and schools, and there will be no avenue to examine continuously school instructional goals and assess teachers' performance in meeting such goals. The sudden explosion of the population of pupils, in addition to the attendant increased challenges of school organization, and the introduction of the Universal Basic Education scheme in Nigeria have made it imperative, more than ever before, that school supervision be given greater attention. A situation where schools are supervised only routinely will make the attainment of the goals of education difficult.

5. Conclusion

Supervision and control of school personnel and activities are significant elements of school leadership and are crucial to the achievement of quality education. Supervision helps to maintain school system-level norms. It also assists in promoting change and the growth and development of every school. This study analysed and appraised the state of monitoring and supervision in public primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. The results of the study show that supervision of these schools was neither regular nor continuous. It also shows that there were not enough school inspectors to carry out supervision as effectively as it should be, and consequently, the few available supervisors were often overwhelmed by the volume of work involved such that supervision would not be thorough. Lack of transportation, especially in

rural areas, and non-payment of allowances and touring advances to supervisors have been identified as some of the problems militating against adequate and effective supervision of schools.

It is suggested that concerted efforts be made to eliminate these difficulties. Government and its agency must employ adequate number of qualified and professionally trained school supervisors who understand the rudiments of the profession. This way, supervision will be less cumbersome and more effective. Transportation must be provided to ease movement, especially in the rural areas, and increase the area of coverage. Prompt payment of allowances and touring advances to supervisors should be done so as to motivate them to achieve higher productivity.

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