

Enhancing Quality Education in Nigerian Unity Schools through Effective Supervision in a Changing Environment

Francis Briggs
Federal Government College, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract: It is the desire for the Federal Ministry of Education to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Unity Schools. Supervision (internal and external) is an important component for quality education. This paper discussed the strategies for enhancing effective supervision, such as good leaders occupying principal position, effective communication and improved curriculum. It also stated the problem associated with effective supervision in achieving quality, which includes inadequate provision of infrastructure (buildings, learning and teaching materials), irregular training and re-training for staff and students, supervisors finding fault in the supervisee, partial or non-implementation of proffered solutions by the government. The paper equally highlighted the usefulness of supervision and made suggestions on how supervision could be improved to enhance quality education in a changing environment.

Keywords: *Quality, education, schools, supervision, environment*

1. Introduction

The second tier of education (secondary) is very important for the survival and progress of any nation in a changing environment like Nigeria, because it is an ingredient for the formulation of national policies which when implemented, will enhance growth and development. In order to stamp out cultism, examination malpractice, bullying, fagging, stealing, sexual abuses, and other vices in our educational system, secondary education in Nigeria is expected to conform to the global reform agenda in terms of effective supervision, which will bring about quality in our educational system. In unity schools, the workforce is made up of management staff, teaching and no-teaching staff and non-governmental organization, such as the P.T.A and the Old Boys Associations. Unity schools Old Boys Association is presently engaging government at all levels and the private sector on constructive, positive advocacy, actions and initiations geared towards revamping educational statements across our public schools. Input by these categories must be qualitative so that the process yields positive output. Supervision is a mechanism used for achieving quality in effective management and control of education. It is the modern concept, which aims improvement of teaching and learning in a changing environment. .

What is Supervision? According to Nwagwu, Ijeoma & Nwagwu (2004), supervision could be regarded as a concept with emphases on the improvement of instruction. This instruction could be policies, principles, rules and regulation. It is characterized by totally overseeing and evaluating all aspect of teaching, learning, and physical facilities. According to Nwabua, Okorie, Agabi & Igwe (2004), supervision can be viewed as; *“All efforts of designated school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the achievement of instruction. Involve the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, the selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instructions and method of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction”*. The effectiveness of supervision will enhance leadership styles of both teachers and students, greater staff cooperation in terms of inter personal relationship, staff development, achievement of organization goals, resource procurement, greater participations of non-governmental organizations and appraisal. Supervision is very essential in any formal organization for which secondary schools is one. Lack of effective supervision will mean that most tasks cannot be accomplished and organizational goals cannot be achieved, because it is expected that all the units that make up the components must be functional.

2. Quality Education

Generally, the word quality in the views of Babalola, Akpa, Hauwa & Ayeni (2008) could be used to mean fitness for purpose. Thus, it examines how efficient and effective the following are administration teaching/learning and research in Education System. Quality in Education cuts across measurement and extent of conformity to set standards, formulation of policy as well as implementation of educational processes, curriculum content coverage, teaching/learning process, students and teachers performance evaluation and so on. This goes to support Okorie & Ememe (2008) who are of the view that to achieve quality education, there is the need to put into use Total Quality Management as a complete management system that sees the Organization (School) in its totality or completeness with the aim of infusing the tradition of on-going organizational improvement. Quality education is very essential in Unity Schools, as it is the determining factor of the extent learning has actually occurred in the learner. Babalola et al., (2008) relates quality in Education to factors, such as properly planned curriculum, strong and well-articulated national goals, well stated assessment procedure and instruments, effective utilization of assessment outcomes as well as quality of students enrolled. Quality Education can also be said to measure how good and efficient the teachers are, how adequate and accessible the physical facilities and teaching aids needed for effective teaching/learning are, as well as how the graduates are solving challenges in the field of work. Ebong & Afangideh (2009) equally contributed that quality could mean a standard against which performance and actions is measured. This means quality in Secondary Education in the Unity Schools has an all important role to play in terms of conformity to standard, effective teaching/learning process, that is, involving supervision, parents and client in quality process.

According to Babalola, Akpa, Ayeni & Adededeji (2007), quality in Education really means a multidimensional concept transferring every action, which goes into making the process of education possible. They further maintained that quality education pervades all elements of the activities and programmes undertaken in the course of educating, and total benefits of educational activities to both the individual learner and the society at large. Babalola et al., (2007) contributed by stating that the following essential elements (inputs and processes) enhance quality in education.

- The involvement of the society in programme development, acceptance and ownership.
- Policy must be democratically formulated and articulated, adapted to suit local conditions.
- The decentralization of management frame works, power and initiatives moved to the grass root level and enabling empowerment and autonomy for operations down the line.
- The teaching force should be qualitatively, adequately educated/trained and professionally prepared.
- The curriculum must be responsive to needs and aspiration of the individual and society, comprehensive in coverage and suitable to changing needs, time and conditions.
- The infrastructure should be qualitative, aesthetic and equally adequate, should equally be learners and teachers friendly. Classroom, workrooms, recreational facilities, toilet and first aid facilities should be adequate.

Babalola et al., (2007) maintained that quality outcomes in =education can only be achieved through effective supervision of inputs and processes in the education industry such as Unity Schools. Thus quality education in Unity Schools as applicable to all other sectors of education can only be achieved as supervisors effectively supervise all inputs and processes in Unity Schools ensuring accountability, full effective and efficient utilization of educational systems and services. This relates to the missions, contexts and declared objectives of the National Policy on education, focusing on the learner, the teacher, the teaching/learning process and output or outcomes measured in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes which include relevant and appropriate skills or tools to evaluate them.

3. Strategies of Enhancing Effective Supervision

One reason for the establishment of Federal Government Colleges in Nigeria is to encourage unity among different ethnic groups, religion, cultural backgrounds and economic, social and political aspect. It is important to note that for effective supervision to be achieved, the following strategies must be adapted.

- Good leaders should take principal position. According to Hoy & Miskel (2008). *“Leadership should be defined broadly as a social process in which a member(s) of a group or organization influence the interpretation of internal and external events, the choice of goals or desired outcomes, organization of work activities, individual motivation and abilities, power relations and share orientations*
- The principals should be able to provide a good working environment where there will be a good relationship between staff and authority and between staff and students. This inform the reason why there is a School Base Management Committee (SBMC), which is the higher body responsible for taking decision and guiding the principals to take informed decision.
- Supervision must involve effective communication: If communication is effective, it will allow for inter-personal relationship among staff and students. Recently, the Ministry of Education set up a Visitation/Assessment Committee for the Federal Unity Colleges, to assess the state of infrastructure, level of compliance with ministerial directive on the renovation of infrastructure in the colleges, laboratories and special rooms. They are to assess the adequacy and conduciveness of the learning environment, assess the availability of teaching and non teaching staff in terms of lighting of number vis-à-vis the various subject areas, assess level of coverage of curriculum, access and analyze the academic performances of students in WAEC, NECO and NABTEB in the last 5 years as well as internal examinations. They are equally to study the leadership style of the principal officers of the college with a view to determining the level of rapport between the leadership and other members of the school community on one hand and with the host community on the other hand etc. The committee met with all teaching and non-teaching staff to proffer solution on how the performance in the education can be enhanced.
- For supervision to be enhanced, the curriculum must be improved as to meets the challenges of the society. According to Nnabuo et al., (2004), curriculum is all the learning experiences provided in the school for learners. The supervisor/principal is expected to assist teachers to achieve educational goals, by recommending training and retraining of staff in unity schools. Today there is the ICT centres in all unity schools in Nigeria, where teachers are trained on the use of computers, workshop and seminars, are organized by the World Bank through step-B, capacity training by NDDC and the involvement of leadership training for prefects and teachers in Unity Schools by the PTA. One of the recommendations of the Visitation/Assessment Committee is that supervision in school should be enhanced as to improve teaching and produce good result in the external examination.

Problems Associated with Effective Supervision in Achieving Quality: Despite several policies and innovation introduced by the government in order to improve the educational system through effective supervision, the problems are endless and are in recurring decimal. These among others include,

- Inadequate provision of infrastructure such as building, learning and teaching materials.
- Irregular training and retraining exercises in Unity Schools today has also affected proper supervision. Most teachers after employment have not attended any training either in form of seminar or workshops. This has greatly affected supervision adversely.
- Most supervisors uses “fault finding method” in their supervision process. This has been a major problem in unity schools.
- Yearly, supervisors proffers solutions bedevilling the unity schools, which are partially implemented and at other times zero implementation.
- Most supervisors do not have professional training. They are transferred from other Federal Ministries/Parastatals to the Inspectorate Division. This has greatly affected quality education in the unity schools, since their input do not make maximum impact in education.

4. Usefulness of Supervision in Unity Schools

The national policy on education stated in clear terms, that government will continue to run good and well-staffed inspectorate services for all levels of education so that quality will not be compromised. Supervision is thus useful because;

- Effective supervision of Unity Schools by the inspectorate division and the federal ministry of education regularly will enhance quality education.
- The advice given by the inspectorate division and the ministry is adhered to by the teaching and non-teaching staff. This has improved the quality of the teaching and learning process in unity schools.

- Effective supervision serves as a check in Unity Schools between the management staff and the ministry on one hand and between principal and the staff on the other.
- When there is effective supervision, good teachers and students are easily identified and bad eggs are flushed out of the system or are encouraged to improve.
- Effective supervision is two ways traffic and it assist teachers, students and management to work hand-in-hand in making sure those goals are achieved.
- Effective supervision has made government to have proper estimate on the provision of infrastructure, labor and instructional materials. The principals defend their budget, base on felt needs of the unity schools every year.
- Adequate supervision has given rise to high level of morals. Non Governmental Organizations moves round all the 104 unity schools, teaching students and teachers good morals.
- Due to effective supervision, there is improvement of the result in internal and external examination

5. Conclusion

Quality education is a veritable tool for economic and national development. Hence, there is the need for stakeholders to be involved in taking adequate steps to ensure that quality education is achieved through effective supervision. Supervision is needed to achieve quality education through effective supervision. It is expected that supervisors should show high level of commitment despite the challenges associated with supervision, so that teaching and learning would produce the desired change in the students, teachers as well as the society. The following suggestions are made.

- For quality to be achieved in Unity Schools in terms of effective supervision, teaching and non-teaching staff, inspectorate division, should be given in-service training (with or without pay). Even students (prefects) should be given leadership training by paramilitary organization to prepare them for effective supervision of other students.
- To make supervisors show interest in supervision, government should provide incentive or good working conditions that will make them give their best.
- Government and nongovernmental organization should continually provide infrastructure in Unity School for effective teaching and learning, so that supervision will be easier.
- Government should continually provide enough personnel who are professionals in the field of education to carry out supervisory role, rather than employing non-professionals who have little or no knowledge about supervision.
- Supervisor should be motivated to read current journals and be ICT friendly to abreast he or herself with relevant research work in all aspect of education.
- All stakeholders should be involved in affecting supervision positively in unity schools to achieve organizational goals.

References

- Babalola, J. B., Akpa, G. O., Ayeni, A. O. & Adedeji, S. O. (2007). Access, Equity and Quality in Higher Education. NAEAP Publication.
- Babalola, J. B., Akpa, S. O., Hauwa, I. & Ayeni, A. O. (2008). Managing Education for Sustainable Development in developing countries. NAEAP Publication
- Ebong, J. M. & Afangideh, S. T. (2009). *African Journal of Educational Research and Development (AJERD)*, 3(1).
- Hoy, K. W. & Miskel, G. C. (2008). Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Nnabuo, P. O. M., Okorie, N. C., Agabi, G. O. & Igwe, L. E. W. (2004). Fundamentals of Educational Management. Owerri: Versatile Publishers.
- Nwagwu, N. A., Ijeoma, K. L. & Nwagwu, P. A. (2004). Administration of Education. Benin: Festa Printing Press Ltd
- Okeke, B. S. (2004). Teaching in Nigeria: The Bureaucracy and Professionalism. Enugu: Mercury International Publishing.
- Okorie, N. C. & Ememe, O. N. (2008). *African Journal of Educational Research and Development (AJERD)*, 2(1).