Problems of School Inspection/Supervision in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

The study on problems of schools inspection/supervision was a descriptive survey. The main purpose of the study was to identify the problems militating against effective inspection of schools in Nigeria. The instrument used for the study was a structured type of questionnaire. Two research questions guided the study. 220 respondents formed the sample population. The instrument was face validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation. A test retest procedure was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, while Pearson monument product correlation coefficient was adopted to determine the correlation between the two results which yielded 0.74. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage. The study produced many results as the problems militating against effective inspection of schools in Nigeria, such as: inadequate number of inspectors, inadequate motivation of inspectors, lack of executive power to ensure implementation of inspection recommendation among which are: 1. Provision of adequate number of inspectors 2. Provision of adequate transport facilities etc.

The term inspection is defined by Ogelabi (1981) as the critical examination and subsequent place of learning so as to make it possible for the necessary advice to be given for the purpose of improving the school. Hornby (1995) sees inspection as to examine some thing / somebody in order to detect the presence of something; to visit an institution officially to see that rules are obeyed, that work is done properly. Dodd (1968) defines inspection as a specific process whereby a school is learning in such a way that advice may be given for its improvement and that advice embodied in a report. Inspection affects the entire life of the school and this makes it collective in nature.
Dodd (1968) defines supervision as a constant and continuous process of more personal guidance based on frequent visits when attention is directed to one or more aspects of the school and its organization. Nwaogu (1980) sees supervision as the process of bringing about improvement in structure 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. Supervision is used to describe those activities which are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils and teachers. The word, supervision was derived from a Latin word, “Supervideo” meaning to “oversee”. In education supervision is that phase of school administration which sees to the improvement of instruction.

Inspection as an educational activity is carried out for the following purposes according to Ojelabi (1981).

1. To make sure that minimum standards are adhered to. The intention of this being to provide relative equal educational opportunity for all children by ensuring that set school standards are maintained.

2. To provide a forum through which purposeful and constructive advice can be rendered for the sake of improving the quality of teaching in school through improvement of educational facilities.

3. To make sure that prudence is maintained in the way and manner that public funds are spent in running the schools.

4. To make available to the appropriate authorities true position of human and material resources as they concern the schools through inspection reports. Some of the issues under review here include availability of space, size of classes, state of facilities, staff strength and appropriateness of teaching qualification of teachers as well as the inspector perceptions of the other numerous difficulties that the school has to contend with.

5. To stimulate and provide guidance in the display of desirable education practices while noting the various negative education practices.

6. To provide a verifiable foundation upon which various courses of action can be initiated by the teachers and principal locally within the school, and the inspectors and government on a larger scale.
There are various schools of thought about instructional supervision, which is the philosophy of instructional supervision. In the first instance, some people recognize the teacher as an expert. In supervision, they assist without directly imposing their will so that they will allow the teacher to develop his ideas without much observation. This non-directive approach to supervision is called creative supervision. Secondly, there is the philosophy which regards the teacher as an instrument that should be closely watched because he is not professionally dedicated to his responsibility. This is called autocratic supervision. Thirdly, another school of thought feels that instruction by an individual teacher makes a good contribution to teaching but contribution by a group of teachers will be better appreciated as making a greater impact towards improving instruction. This group looked at supervision as a continuous exercise in group dynamics and in human relation and also improving instruction and creation of a conducive climate and a productive effort of a group. This is known as teacher approach. Finally another philosophy holds that there is always room for improvement, that a typical competence profile reveals strengths and weaknesses. To identify those, there is need to watch the lesson with rating scales. This is scientific supervision. Whatever is the philosophy behind supervision or the approach used, there is a consensus of opinion by experts that it should be a process of instructional improvements by:
1. Stimulating teacher’s professional growth.
2. Making adequate provision for conditions essential for effective teaching.
3. Giving a specialized and technical service to motivate teachers.

**Problem of the Study**

Modern education systems like other social and economic systemic have become increasingly complex. The complexities of educational systems and their institutions in Nigeria tend to be characterized by such phenomena as student population explosion, examination malpractice, indiscipline, inadequate provision of educational resources and poor academic performance among students. It is argued that these factors impact on the system’s capacity to install and maintain a viable programme of quality control and assurance.

The existence of 36 states in Nigeria and the federal capital territory Abuja and the expansion in our reduction systems have brought about numerous inspectorate units in Nigeria. Despite the nation-wide spread of inspectorate units, reactions from the stakeholders in education (parent, teachers etc.) tend to indicate that the schools are not regularly and properly supervised or inspected and that the quality of instruction in the schools has progressively declined as evidenced by the poor performance of students in public examinations such as those of Joints Admissions and Matriculation Board, National Examination Council, West Africa Examination Council etc. Worse still, gone are the days when primary school leavers could read and write. Today, the story has negatively changed.
The present study was therefore designed to investigate the perception of School Inspectors on the problems which tend to limit the effectiveness of school inspection in Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

Two research questions guided the study.

1. What are the problems militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria?
2. How do the school inspectors perceive the seriousness of the problems?

**Methodology**

The study is a descriptive survey based on the perceptions of school inspectors absent the problems militating against school inspection.

**Population and Sample**

The population of this study was comprised of 449 school inspectors in South-East and South-South States of Nigeria. Two hundred and twenty (220) school inspectors where randomly selected from eleven (11) States out of the 36 states in the country constitutes the sample population. Twenty (20) school inspectors where drawn from each of the eleven (11) States.

**Instrument for Data Collection**

A questionnaire instrument tagged Problems of School Inspection in Nigeria Questionnaire (PSINQ). The questionnaire instrument was constructed by the researcher and was face validated by three experts in Educational Measurement and Evaluation in Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. The instrument was pilot-tested using a sample of 10 school inspectors selected from the Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja. The two results from the pilot study were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and it yielded 0.74.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A sought personal information about the respondents while part B sought information about the problems of inspection in schools. The respondents were asked to rate the problems of school inspection listed in part B of the questionnaire on a 4-point Likert Scale of very serious; serious; fairly serious, and not serious.

Out of the 220 school inspectors who filled the instrument, only 200 returned their copies properly responded to, and were used. The data collected were statistically analyzed using percentage.
Results and Discussion

The analysis of data obtained from the study is presented as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the problems militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria? The responses obtained for this question were through exhaustive study of relevant literature on problems of school inspection in Nigeria and interviews of schools inspectors, school principals, teachers and even parents. A synthesis of the data obtained from the various sources revealed the following problems:

1. Inadequate number of school inspectors.
2. Inadequate funds for school inspection.
3. Inadequate transportation.
4. Poor implementation of inspection reports.
5. Inadequate facilities for inspection.
6. Inadequate incentives and motivation.
7. Inadequate training and experience in educational supervision.
8. Lack of in-service opportunity for training and retraining of school inspectors.
9. Inadequate time for inspection due to non-supervisory administrative burden.
10. Lack of executive power to ensure implementation of recommendations.
11. Lack of commitment by inspectors.
12. Uncooperative attitude of the school principals and teachers.
13. Inspector’s autocratic supervisory style.
14. Lack of follow-up inspection.
15. Corrupt practice among the school inspectors.
16. Use of unqualified teachers for inspection.

Research Question 2: How do school inspectors rate the seriousness of the identified problems?

The inspectors rating of the seriousness of the problems of school inspection identified in the study are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Inspectors Rating of the Problems of School Inspection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Fairly Serious</th>
<th>No.1 Serious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inadequate number of school inspectors</td>
<td>120 (60%)</td>
<td>15 (7.5%)</td>
<td>5 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inadequate funds for school inspection</td>
<td>110 (55%)</td>
<td>12 (6%)</td>
<td>8 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inadequate transportation</td>
<td>100 (50%)</td>
<td>10 (5%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Poor implementation of</td>
<td>95 (45%)</td>
<td>85 (40%)</td>
<td>15 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The data presented in table 1 show that over 65% of the inspectors perceive the following problems militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria as serious or very serious.

Table 2 below shows the combined ratings of the two categories.
### Table 2: Combined Percentage for “Very Serious” and “Serious” Problems of Inspection by School Inspectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Very Serious/ Serious Combined % Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Inadequate number of inspectors</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inadequate funds for schools inspection</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Inadequate transportation</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Poor implementation of inspection reports</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inadequate facilities for inspection</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inadequate incentives and motivation</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inadequate training and Experience in Educational Supervision</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lack of in-service opportunity for training and retaining of inspectors.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inadequate time for inspection due to non-supervisory and administrative burden.</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lack of Executive power to ensure implementation of recommendations</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Lack of Commitment by inspectors</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Uncooperative attitude of school principals and teachers</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Inspectors’ automatic supervisory style</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lack of follow-up inspection</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Corrupt practices among inspectors</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Use of unqualified teachers for inspection</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Discussion of Findings

The above findings are hereby discussed.

1. **Inadequate number of Inspectors.** This problem is one of the most serious constraints militating against effective inspection of schools in Nigeria. 90% of the respondents rated it as serious/very serious. This finding was supported by Ogunu (2000) who observed that in Edo State which had 1008 primary schools and 145 Secondary Schools, the entire staff involved in inspection in the Inspectorate Division of the State Ministry of Education were fifteen. It was further discovered that out of the 15 inspectors, only 6 had degrees in Education and none had specialized training in educational supervision.

2. **Inadequate funds for school inspection.** It has been agreed by 90% of the respondents that inadequate funds for school inspection is a serious problem militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria. There has been gross under-funding of education generally in Nigeria. Inadquacy of funds to run Inspectorate Services has almost completely paralyzed school inspection in Nigeria. Due to financial problem suffered in varying degrees by all Ministries of
Education, touring advances are not always available to inspectors who therefore cannot travel as often as required for inspection, while the few available vehicles are not always in good condition due to acute shortage of funds.

3. Inadequate transportation. The study showed that Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents rated inadequate transportation as very serious/serious. Inspectors need transport to visit schools assigned to them. Mobility is often hampered because there are no available vehicles for use by the inspectors. Most of the inspectors interviewed confirmed that their transport claims for supervisory travels are never paid. Inspection visits to schools especially those ones in remote and far places therefore becomes very irregular.

4. Poor implementation of inspection reports. Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents rated poor implementation of inspection reports as very serious/serious impediment to the effectiveness of school inspection. Inspection reports no longer have the impact they used to have on school development because subventions to schools are no longer related to the finding of inspectors about the work of the schools. This is because school funding is no longer operated through the system of grants-in- aids. Inferior schools with mediocre teachers are therefore on the same funding basis with good schools with effective teachers.

5. Inadequate facilities for inspection. This constraint was rated by 85% of the respondents as very serious/serious. For any inspection to be effective, infrastructures need to be put in place and also in workable condition. Information gathered from the various Inspectorate Units of Ministries of Education reveal that the inspectorate division lack adequate infrastructural facilities such as computers, photocopiers and even stationary to work with.

6. Inadequate incentives and motivation. This problem was rated by 87% of the respondents as a very serious and serious problem militating against effective school inspection. Answers generated from most of the inspectors when interviewed show that just like classroom teachers in Nigeria, they were never motivated to put in the best in them. Thus, they do the work of school inspection with negative attitude.

7. Inadequate training and experience in educational supervision. Ninety five percent (95%) of the studied subjects rated this problem as very serious/serious problem militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria. It is quite unbelievable that in the 21st century, Nigeria is still operating school inspection with non-professionals, that is staff without a degree in Educational Supervision. This finding is in conformity with Ogunu (2000) when he observed that in Edo
State where 15 Inspectors were to inspect 1153 schools and only 6 had degrees in Education. This shows the high level of inexperience among the school inspectors in Nigeria.

8. Lack of in-service opportunity for training and retraining of inspectors. This problem was rated very serious and serious by 85% of the respondents as a constraint militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria. In-service programmes are rare commodities in Nigeria, especially in-service training programme with pay. Teachers only embark on in-service training programmes on their own expense during school vacations and it is not applicable to the school inspectors in the Ministry of Education.

9. Inadequate time for inspection due to non supervisory and administrative burden. This constraint was rated by 88 percent of the subjects as very serious/serious impediment to effective school inspection. This shows that other office engagements could not permit the inspectors to give full time to school inspection. This action is not healthy to school inspection.

10. Lack of executive power to implement the recommendations of the inspectors. This constraint was rated by 97% of the respondents as very serious and serious problem militating against effective school inspection in Nigeria. Since there is very low political will towards funding of schools in Nigeria, the recommendations of school inspectors are often mere academic exercise, their golden recommendations never saw the light of the day.

11. Lack of Commitment by the inspectors. This problem was rated by 97.5% as a very serious/serious impediment to effective school inspection in Nigeria. Can unmotivated worker be committed to his job? The answer is capital No, can uncommitted worker be very productive? The answer is Capital No. On this premise, one can see why school inspectors are not very active, productive and serious with their job. The unseriousness of the school inspectors is one of the major reasons why our schools are not performing as expected.

12. Uncooperative attitude of school principals and teachers. This problem was rated by 95% of the respondents as a very serious/serious constraint confronting school inspection. The researcher believes that this is so because the inspectors themselves are not serious, and that most of the recommendations are not carried out.

13. Lack of follow-up inspection. This problem was rated by 87.5% of the respondents as a very serious/serious constraint to effective school inspection in Nigeria. The inability of the inspectors to call back and see that their
recommendations are carried out does not create much impact on their job, and even when they call back and see that their recommendations are not taken seriously especially by the government, they feel demoralized.

14. Corrupt practices among inspectors. This constraint was rated by 97.5% of the respondents as a very serious/serious problem confronting effective school inspection in Nigeria. The level corruption in Nigeria today is at an alarming rate. It has reached all sectors of the economy, and it does not encourage hard work. Today in Nigeria, school inspection and supervision only end in the school principal’s office where “Brown envelope” is exchanged for effective school inspection or supervision. Oh! What a society?

15. Use of unqualified teachers for inspection. This problem was rated by 97.5% of the respondents as a very serious/serious impediment to effective school inspection in Nigeria. It is quite unfortunate to have unqualified teachers going from school to school in the name of inspection. What are they going to inspect when they lack the skill, knowledge and methodology. They are then making mockery of the job of school inspection and supervision.

Conclusion

In conclusion the paper 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 etc

As a result of the findings of the study, 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 visit 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.

References


