

INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS' CLASSROOM VISITATION ON TEACHERS' PRODUCTIVITY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The study is an examination of the influence of external supervisions' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state: Implications for functional education. The study arose because of the complaints among education stake holders in Ebonyi state that teachers' productivity has declined tremendously. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. The design for study was descriptive survey and the population for the study comprised all the 4,360 teachers in the three education zones in Ebonyi state. The sample for the study comprised 872 male and female teachers selected through proportionate stratified random sampling technique, which represented 20 percent of the population. The instrument for data collection was a thirteen-item researcher constructed questionnaire validated by three experts in measurement and evaluation and educational management. The reliability index of the instrument was determined using Cronbach alpha. The data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. While mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question using mean score of 2-50 as benchmark, the t-test statistics was employed in testing the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that classroom visitation offers supervisions to opportunity to check teachers' statutory records and observe them in action with a view to identifying and solving their problems which will enhance increase in the productivity of teachers. It was recommended that the Secondary Education Board and the State Ministry of Education should ensure that supervisors pay regular visit to schools to supervise teachers' classroom instruction.

Keywords: Influence, Supervision, Classroom Visitation, Productivity.

Introduction

Supervision in education is regarded as a service to teachers and learners both as individuals and groups. It is required as a means of offering a specialized help in improving instruction. It constitutes the leverage point for instructional improvement, teachers' competence and efficiency of the educational system. On the other hand, an unsupervised instruction may mar the standard of education (Archibong, 2012). Supervision is a complex process that must play a prominent role in all educational systems. Orenaniya, Adenowo, and Dusega (2014) defined supervision as a formally designated behaviour systems that interact with the teachers behaviour systems in order to improve the probability that the goals of teaching will be achieved. This definition suggests that cooperative attitudes and behaviours must be established between the teachers and education supervisors for achieving positive results as an individual, group or organization. Supervision can be broadly categorized into two, namely internal supervision and external supervision.

External Supervision, which is the focus of this study, is the type of supervision conducted by the government and its delegated agents (Walker, (2016). It is the type of supervision that comes from outside the school. It is carried out by resource persons or external consultants who have been requested to render expert assistance by the education

board. According to Ogbo (2015), external supervisors are designated officials whose rank functional titles vary. These include officials from various relevant educational agencies at both federal and state government levels and at times, the local government. In external supervision, a supervising team from the Ministry of Education or the Secondary Education Board visits a school to determine the extent to which teaching and learning are going on. One of the important techniques external supervisors apply when carrying out this function is classroom visitation (Ajih, 2015).

Classroom visitation is one of the most common forms of the teacher evaluation. It involves live observation, by a supervisor, of a teacher and analysis of his/her classroom practices, his pedagogical skills, personality and student-teacher interactions in the lesson (Panigrahi, 2012). Ani in Mbazu and Eze (2018) observed that classroom visitation is a situation where the supervisor observes the teacher in action in the classroom, interact with the teacher, share opinions with him and determines his areas of needs. This formal technique involves face to face contact between the supervisor and the teacher. This is followed by post classroom observation conference analysis to help the teacher improve and give feedback (Gold hammer in Mohammed, 2014). The supervisor can also employ an informal class visit where he walks into the classroom to see how instruction is going on. It provides a quick look at the teacher's performance and environmental factors in the classroom. This may last about 30 minutes during which the teacher's practices are observed and documented for further discussion.

A study conducted by Romano (2014) showed that teachers perceive themselves as involved in decision making only in the area of classroom management. Olacrole (2010) advocated for self-supervision and also suggested that supervision should increase teachers' willingness to supervise themselves and their colleagues. Sharma, Yusoff, Kannan and Baba (2011) concurred with the view of Olawole by coining the term auto supervision. They emphasized the new desire by teachers to shift from being overpowered by administrative decisions and confined to classroom to being more involved in collegial instructional supervision and general organizational decision. If supervisor would spend more of his time and energy in classroom supervision followed by a helpful conference, teachers would appreciate supervision, (Sharma, Yusoff, Kannan & Baba, 2011). This will prevent a blame game where class visits are just a paper filling exercise that has no impact on teacher productivity (Olawole, 2010).

Stark, Mcghee and Jimerson (2017) opined that one of the most important statutory duties of external supervisors is to supervise teachers. According to them, supervisors should regularly visit teachers and supervise their work on duty. This is one of the strategies to achieve effective learning by students, hence improving teachers' productivity. The supervisor, therefore, is a professional instructional leader who holds the key position in the programme of instructional improvement through classroom visitation. If teachers are not well supervised, effectiveness in instruction will be adversely affected and the instructional process may not be well realized. Negligence in the improvement of instruction though regular classroom visitation if not checked may lead to low quality instruction and invariably teachers' lack of commitment to the job. Consequently, supervisors using classroom visitation, should provide professional guidance to teachers in order to improve the conditions which affect learning and growth of both teachers and students.

In carrying out this supervisory practice, the external supervisor can help teachers for better task performance in the following areas:

- checking of lesson notes/lesson plan;
- checking of scheme of work;
- checking of teachers' punctuality;
- checking of teachers' regularity;

- checking of students notes and exercise books
- moderation of examination questions and making schemes (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2014).

Deeborn and Zite (2016) observed that lesson plan shows the level of preparedness and the effort the teacher made in gathering information for the lesson. If the lesson plan is poorly prepared, it indicates how less committed the teacher is in his teaching. During visitation the supervisor should, therefore, examine the following items in the lesson plan:

- the clarity and appropriateness of the learner behavioral objectives;
- the relevance and adequacy of the lesson notes;
- selection of the appropriate teaching aids; and
- appropriate evaluation techniques to determine the extent of achieving the objectives (Deeborn & Zite, 2016).

Teaching is said to be effective if the objectives are achieved. The supervisor, during classroom visitation should pay attention to the following areas:

- teachers lesson presentation;
- reference materials used by the teacher;
- the relationship between the teacher and the students;
- general classroom, management; and
- personality of the teacher (Okorji & Ogbo, 2013).

It is expected that teachers should demonstrate high standard of academic excellence through periodic classroom checks to improve the quality of their work. On the other hand, supervisors are expected to guide and encourage teachers to popularize innovative instructional processes taking appropriate steps to eliminate obstacles that may constrain their ability to adopt and acquire competencies in teaching (Okorji & Ogbo, 2013). The world of work has enormous potential for providing individuals with enrichments, challenges and self-development, and the success of any school administration programme largely depends on supervisors' regular classroom visitation. All these approaches are geared towards enhancing teachers' productivity. This study, therefore, becomes necessary in order to find out the influence of external supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

Supervision is an important index of quality assurance in secondary school. It is through supervision that the weaknesses and strengths of teaching and learning are identified. These weaknesses are remedied and strengths are reinforced for purposes of effective education delivery. External supervision complements the internal supervision. All are geared towards quality assurance in school system. For some time now, there have been complaints among education stakeholders in Ebonyi State that teachers' productivity has declined tremendously. The decline is reflected in students' performance in both internal and external examinations. The stakeholders have blamed this decline on both lack of and inadequate external supervision to ensure effective education delivery. They have argued that the absence of adequate external supervision has led to the decline of teachers' productivity. They have argued that external supervision based on classroom visitation can enhance teachers' productivity if handled effectively.

This belief of the stakeholders has not been investigated to determine the extent to which it is true. It is this belief that have motivated this researcher as well as constituted his worries to engage in this research work to determine the veracity of this assertion. The problem of this study is therefore put in a question form "What is the influence of external supervisor's classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi State, Nigeria?"

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of external supervisory practices on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. Specifically, this study:

1. investigated the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on teachers' productivity.

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the influence of supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state?

Hypothesis

The follow null hypothesis guided the study and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on their productivity.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey which was used to determine the number of teachers for the population. It was also used to get the number of schools for the study.

The study was conducted in Ebonyi state. Ebonyi state consists of three education zones namely: Abakaliki, Onueke and Afikpo. The language of the people of the area is Igbo. The inhabitants are predominantly farmers specializing in the production of rice, garri and yam. The study covered forty-five secondary schools; fifteen each from the three education zones. Ebonyi state had, at the time of this study, a total of 222 secondary schools spread in the three zones (Secondary Education Board, Ebonyi state, 2021). The State is bordered in the East by Cross River state, in the North by Benue state, in the West by Enugu state and in the South by Abia state.

The population for the study was 4,360 secondary school teachers in the three education zones categorized as follows: Abakaliki zone – 1,838 teachers, Onueke zone – 1,400 teachers and Afikpo zone - 1,122 teachers comprising of 2,555 male and 1,805 female teachers (Secondary Education Board(SEB), Ebonyi state, 2021)

The sample for the study comprised 872 respondents (Male and female teachers) representing 20 percent of the population for the study. In each education zone, proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select 20 percent of teachers. This is in agreement with Uzoagulu (2011) who stated that if the population of study is known and it consists of various groups, each group receives allocation based on its proportion to the population under study. This process yielded a total of 872 teachers comprising of 511 male and 361 female teachers.

The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire titled Influence of External Supervisors' Classroom Visitation Questionnaire (IESCVQ) developed by the researcher. The items are on response scale of strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

The questionnaire consists of two parts, part 1 and part 2. Part 1 contains one item on demographic data of the respondents. Part 2 contains thirteen items meant to elicit information on the influence of supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity.

In order to ensure the validity of the instrument, it was given to three experts one in measurement and evaluation and two in educational management all from Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo, for face validation.

The instrument was pilot tested on thirty-five male and female teachers in secondary schools in Enugu state. The internal consistency of the instrument was computed using Cronbach alpha. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.75.

The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of four research assistants. It was collected the following day. This was to ensure that the selected respondents go through it very well and to avoid mistakes on the part of the respondents. The questionnaire was formulated to elicit necessary information from the respondents on the influence of external supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted and adjudged agree while any mean score below 2.50 was adjudged disagree. The data collected was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Standard deviation was used to determine how teachers' response varied while t-test was used to test the hypothesis postulated at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in Secondary Schools in Ebonyi state?

Table 1: Means ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state

ITEMS S/N	Male Teachers =504	Female Trs. = 356					
		\bar{X}	SD	Dec.	SD	\bar{X}	Dec.
1. classroom visitation by External supervisors helps teachers to: improve their instructional effectiveness.		3.35	0.90	A	3.28	0.95	A
2. identify students with learning impairment.		3.04	0.96	A	3.01	0.99	A
3. seek ways to address learning impairment.		2.97	0.97	A	2.92	1.04	A
4. identify areas of instructional weaknesses.		3.08	0.87	A	3.08	0.86	A
5. resolve instructional weaknesses.		3.03	0.99	A	3.04	0.97	A
6. implement classroom activities which develop students' thinking skills.		3.19	0.82	A	3.17	0.83	A
7. apply effective methods to help students overcome their learning difficulties.		3.22	0.89	A	3.34	0.85	A

8.	identify students' development characteristic that creates positive learning outcome.	3.43	0.96D	2.46	1.04	D
9.	create a democratic climate in class that improves learning outcome.	3.39	0.88A	3.17	0.95	A
10.	stimulate good learning habit in students.	2.78	1.06A	2.75	1.12	A
11.	manage the class properly by applying appropriate disciplinary measures.	3.23	0.89A	3.35	0.78	A
12.	establish positive cordial relationship with students in the class.	3.37	0.92A	3.32	0.84	A
13.	enhance overall job performance.	3.45	0.74 A	3.04	1.01	A
Grand Mean		3.12	0.92	A	3.07	0.94 A

Table 1 above shows the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The mean ratings of male teachers ranged from 2.43 to 3.45, while that of their female counterparts ranged from 2.46 to 3.35. In addition, they had a grand mean of 3.12 and 3.07, and standard deviations of 0.92 and 0.94 respectively. With the exception of item 8 where both male and female teachers disagreed that classroom visitation does not identify students with developing characteristics that create positive learning outcome with a mean of 2.43 and 2.46 respectively, they agreed in all other items as influencing teachers' productivity. The closeness of the standard deviation shows that the male and female teachers are homogeneous in their responses. Thus, the male and female teachers agreed that supervisors' classroom visitation influences teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on their productivity.

Table 2: Summary of t-test Analysis of the Mean Ratings of Male and Female Teachers on the Influence of Classroom Visitation by Supervisors on their Productivity.

	NX	SD	Df	t-cal	level P-value	Dec.
Group						
Male Teachers	504	3.12	.92			
Female Teachers	356	3.07	.94			
				858	1.56 .05 .213	rejected

H₀,not

Data in table 2 for male and female teachers on the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on their productivity indicated a calculated value of 1.56 at 858 degree of freedom with a P-value of .213 which is greater at .05 level of significance. The null hypothesis of no significant difference was therefore not rejected. This implied that no significant difference existed between the responses of male and female teachers on the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on their productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state.

Discussion

In research question one, the study establish that all the male and female respondents were of the opinion that external supervisors' classroom visitation enhances teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The t-test result with regard to the hypothesis showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the influence of classroom visitation by supervisors on their productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. This finding is in agreement with Amadi and Amadi (2019) who discovered that supervisors' classroom visitation has positive influence on teachers' job performance. According to them, when supervisors adopt such practices as checking of teachers' attendance to class, adherence to scheme of work in preparing lesson plans and lesson delivery patterns in supervising teachers' classroom activities in line with recognized supervision procedure, the productivity of teachers' is enhanced. In the same vein, Olawole (2010) and Tshabalala (2013) discovered that supervisors' classroom visitation affects teachers' productivity positively. According to them, teachers appreciate the supervision process if it is done in the right manner and with the objective of improving the learning process and the promotion of teachers' growth. The finding revealed that teachers prefer having classroom visitation at least once or twice a term and that most teachers regard classroom visitation as a necessary activity in the teaching learning process.

This finding is also in agreement with Stark, McGhee and Jomerson (2017) who found that one of the most important statutory duties of external supervisors is to supervise teachers by visiting them regularly on duty in the classroom. This is, therefore, one of the strategies to achieve effective learning by students, hence improving teachers' productivity. The supervisor, by this responsibility, is a professional instructional leader who holds the key position in the programme of instructional improvement through class room visitation. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to develop and maintain teacher instructional competence through regular classroom visit. If teachers are not well supervised, effectiveness in instruction will be adversely affected and instructional purpose may not be well realized. Consequently, supervisors using classroom visitation should provide professional guidance to teachers in order to improve the conditions which enhance learning and growth of both teachers and students.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of external supervisors' classroom visitation on teachers' productivity in secondary schools in Ebonyi state. The views of male and female teachers were analyzed using mean ratings, standard deviation and t- test. The results have been established that external supervisory practices are necessary in secondary schools to ensure enhanced teachers' productivity and improvement in teaching and learning outcomes. It was, in particular, established that classroom visitation offers supervisors the opportunity to check teachers' statutory records and observe them in action with a view to identifying and solving their instructional problems which enhances increase in the productivity of teachers, thereby promoting functional education.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the finding of the study:

1. The Secondary Education Board and State Ministry of Education should ensure that supervisors pay regular visit to schools to supervise teachers' classroom instruction,
2. The supervisors should make it a point duty to always interact well with teachers. They should always make themselves accessible and approachable to teachers. This will make teachers come to them with their professional and personal problems being well assure that they will get solutions for them. This will go a long way in promoting functional education.

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