

# EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION: CONCEPTS AND PRACTICE WITH REFERENCE TO OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

This paper examined the concept and practice of educational supervision in its universal context. It was noted that the concept of educational supervision has changed over the years. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, supervision was perceived to be synonymous with school inspection. Teachers in the school system were expected to carry out instructions and directives of supervisors without question. However, today's supervisors are more humane in their duties as a result of Human Relation Movement in practice. The paper also examined the concept of educational supervision with reference to Oyo State. In Oyo State, supervision in schools is carried out for a number of purposes among which are: grading of schools, subject inspection, checking of records among others. Problems to effective supervision in schools in the state were discussed and means of reducing the perceived problems were also highlighted.

Educational Supervision is a branch of Educational Management.

Supervision could be defined as a day-to-day guidance of all education operations, coordination of the detailed work and cultivation of good working relationship among all the people involved in the teaching-learning process..

Supervision is in a sense, the back-bone of educational improvement (Education commission). Supervision is provided by the inspectorate division of the ministry of education to help educators and educational administrators to do better jobs. This service provides educational leadership and guidance to various personnels in the field of education.

Supervision is necessary in education to ensure uniformity and effectiveness of educational programmes it is required to promote teaching and learning in schools. It incorporates checking, enquiry, fact-finding, keeping watch, survey, correction, prevention, inspiration, guidance, direction, diagnosis, and improvement.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) under the broad heading "Planning, Administration and Supervision of Education, contains precise objectives of educational supervision. It is to ensure quality control through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services (NPE, 2004:55).

The National Policy on Education further states that a Federal Inspectorate service section has been set up in order to facilitate educational administration through supervision. The prominence accorded educational supervision in Nigeria's educational programme tend to reflect the importance of supervision in the education enterprise.

This paper examines the following aspects of educational supervisions, with particular reference to Oyo State:

1. Concept of Educational Supervision
2. History of Educational Supervision
3. Management structure of supervision
4. Purpose of Educational Supervision
5. Problems of Educational Supervision
6. Solution to the problems of Educational Supervision

### **Concept of Educational Supervision**

Like many other management and sociological terms, supervision has no single definition indeed, supervision has been used synonymously with related administrative terms.

Mbiti (1974) saw supervision as the centre piece of administration. Members of the public sometimes equate supervision with inspection. Within the school system itself, the concept of supervision varies, depending on whether the perceiver is a subordinate or a superior officer. A subordinate staff working under a leader whose conception of man is that he must be controlled and told what to do, see supervision as a synonym of control. When a leader is accommodating and recognizes the worth of his subordinates, the junior staff will interpret supervision as cooperative action. In each case, the conception of supervision changes depending on the leadership pattern and interpersonal relationship with the co-workers/staff members.

In the school context, supervision is viewed as the process of observation, discussion and decision-making by principals and inspectors of education to improve teaching/learning process (Ogunsaju, 1983).

Educational supervision is not a uni-dimensional concept. It is not the concerns of superiors, principals or ministry officials alone. It arises from collaborative activities between a designated leader and the led. Indeed, there would be no supervision if there is no people to be supervised (Led). Therefore, it appears, that there are four important elements associated with the concept of supervision. They are: supervisor (a designated leader), set tasks and objectives, resources (human/material) and cooperative action. While it is clear that the concept of supervision embraces the first three elements, the element of cooperation is often neglected. This makes the supervisor to become an autocrat with the perception that his main role is to prescribe procedures to subordinates rather than cooperate to fashion out alternative approaches to solving crucial problems.

According to Owoeye (2002) supervision is “that part of school administration which has particular pertinence for the appropriateness of instructional expectations (products) of educational programmes”. By this definition, supervision can be viewed as the management of personnel to carry out purposes of administration.

Ajayi (2000) opined that supervision is a helping relationship whereby the supervisor guides and assists the teachers to meet targets.

Knice (1974) summed it all when he defined supervision as “the art of selecting, developing, co-ordinating and directing assistants to secure desired results”.

### **Why Educational Supervision?**

Education as a sector of a nation’s economy has objectives, programmes, resources and budgetary allocations to meet educational needs. Supervision is necessary in order to relate the objectives of education programmes to actual and observed performances. Whenever any ministry official supervises, he or she wants to check whether the laid down procedures are followed in schools or not.

Supervision is a control mechanism that reduces variance between standard policies and procedures and the interpretation and implementation of educational programmes.

Supervision in schools is very necessary to inform and discuss with teachers new and alternative methods of teaching. It is to make available for teachers instructional materials which are useful for effective teaching and learning in education.

Supervision as a process of inventory and stock-taking is required to draw attention to the personnel, equipment, finance and general needs of a school. This is for the fact that it is believed that certain minimum requirements are essential for schools to maintain government prescribed standard and the objectives of education.

### **Educational Supervision in Oyo State: Historical Antecedents**

The history of educational supervision in Oyo State of Nigeria cannot be discussed without a look at the history and practice of educational supervision and policy making in Nigeria as a whole. Because of the scope of the subject, attempt will only be made here to trace in brief, the origin of educational supervision in Nigeria with Oyo State as a case study. The beginning of government control of educational practice in Nigeria before 1882 was when the various missionaries managed the education enterprise. Each missionary body was concerned with the supervision of its own schools along its concept of what education should be. This was to provide a standard for educational practice. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) for instance, was believed to have

established school boards and appointed inspectors to supervise its schools before 1882 (Fajana, 1978:44).

The provision of Education code of 1882 was the earliest attempt to appoint government inspectors for the purpose of school supervision. Rev. Metalfe Sunter was appointed as “Her Majesty’s Inspector of schools for the West African Colonies”. His duties included preparation of curriculum for teacher training programme, working out the modalities for grants in aids to schools, deciding on teachers salaries, inspection of schools and submission of memoranda and supervision reports (Fajana, 1978:52).

In general, educational supervision in 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial Nigeria was intermittent and ineffective. It was inadequate in both its concept and practice. For instance, the inspectors of that time were officials who snooped on schools to enforce what they considered as standard practice.

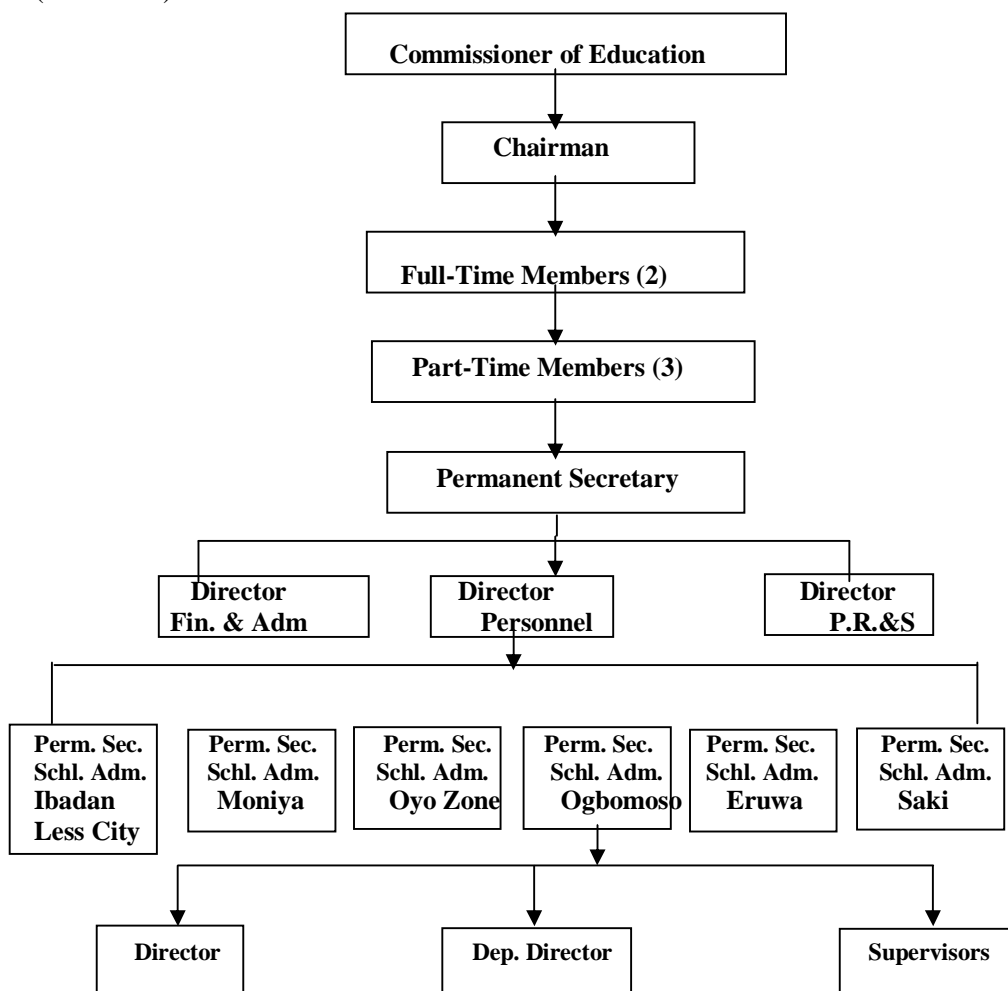
The early twentieth century colonial education policy in Nigeria was characterized by poor supervision. The Phelps-stoke commission on education in Africa of 1920-1926 indicted educational policy makers of the period for the dismal state of the education system. It reported that “Many of the failure of educational system in the past were due to lack of organization and supervision” (Akanbi G. O. et al, 2004:39).

The era of Regional Political set up in Nigeria arising from Arthur Richards and McPherson’s constitutional provision of 1947 and 1952, respectively, resulted in greater attention and impetus being given to education at regional levels. For instance, Western region was divided into four Educational Zones for the purpose of adequate organization and Supervision. These were Egba/Ijebu Zone with headquarters at Ijebu -Ode (present Ogun State), Ijesa/Ife (present Osun State) with headquarters at Osogbo, Oyo/Ibadan Zone (present Oyo State) with headquarters at Ibadan and Ondo Zone (The present Ondo State) with headquarters at Akure. The supervision in the then Western Region and Later Western State was based in the Ministry of Education. The ministry was headed by a Minister later called commissioner of Education. Under the commissioner are the two immediate subordinate officers, the permanent secretary and the chief Inspectors of Education. The permanent secretary dealt with policy and general administrative matters while the chief Inspector of Education as a Technical officer receiving instruction from the permanent secretary on inspection of schools. The chief Inspector of Education was supported by principal Inspectors of Education in each of the four Education zones. This was the time when effective supervision of schools began in the South-Western part of Nigeria.

Oyo State was carved out of the former Western State of Nigeria in February, 1979. The pattern of the Ministry of Education in the old Western

State was replicated in each of the new states. One novel practice, however, was the division of the Inspectorate Department of the Oyo State Ministry of Education into special units based on the type of schools and services provided. For instance, there was the primary and secondary sections which are being supervised by the State Primary Education Board (SPEB) and the Post Primary Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) respectively. Particularly reference will be made to the TESCOM, for it is the commission that is directly set up by the Oyo State Government.

Figure 1 below is an organogram of the Ministry of Education, Oyo State with an elaboration of the Post Primary School Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM).



**Fig. 1: Organizational Chart of TESCOM**

Under the permanent secretaries (school Administration) for each zone are Directors, Deputy Directors and supervisors who are directly in charge of school supervision in their respective zones of the state.

### **School Headmasters and Principals as Supervisors**

The Head of an educational institution either at the primary or secondary school level in Nigeria has two main functions which are administrative and academic. Like any other state in Nigeria, the headmasters and principals of primary and secondary schools respectively are expected to give both administrative and academic leadership. The academic leadership role of the school head includes supervision.

The supervisory roles of the school head covers matters on personnel, instructional programmes, discipline, use and maintenance of school plant. It is the duty of the school head to see to the day to day running of the school. It must be emphasized that while the supervisory roles may be delegated, the overall responsibility for the management of the school lies on the school head (Headmasters and principals).

### **Purposes of Educational Supervision**

There are numerous purposes which supervision is expected to serve in the education system. For any visit to schools to be meaningful, the supervisor should have a clear understanding of what he/she wants in terms of purpose and how he/she would go about it. The modern supervisor of schools should go to schools as a professional to meet the teachers as co-workers in the educational programmes. Some of the purposes of modern supervision include:

1. To ensure that each individual teacher in the school has been performing the duties for which he/she will be paid or is being paid.
2. To promote and develop a favourable setting for teaching and learning.
3. To help the teachers improve – their status, skills, and knowledge.
4. To ascertain the standard of educational performance.
5. To check the available resources in each school.
6. Ascertaining whether guidelines on specific government policies have been followed (e.g. on assessment, school registration, e.t.c.).
7. To assess the climate or tone of the school and suggest remedial measures.
8. To evaluate the success of new methods and theories.
9. To motivate and encourage the teachers to develop healthy attitude towards work.
10. For upgrading of schools.
11. For fact-finding when there is crisis in schools.

The types of visit for school supervision can be classified, based on the purpose of the visitation as well as the length or extent of time spent. Based on

the purpose, Aiyepoku (1987) in Ibukun, (1991), identified three types of supervision in the school system. These are:

- i. Pastoral visit
- ii. Full general inspection
- iii. Subject inspection

The Pastoral visit is usually done within one or two days. The maximum number of supervisors is between one and three. The visit is advisory. It is to find out what is happening on specific issues and give advice to the school management.

The full inspection is conducted for a number of days by a team of supervisors. The main purpose is for administrative convenience. A school can subsequently be approved as centre for final examination .e.g. the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) or the National Examination Council (NECO).

Subject inspection is a comprehensive visitation by subject specialists to ascertain the purpose and effectiveness of the teaching of specific subjects in the school curriculum.

### **Problems of Educational Supervision in Oyo State**

Supervision in schools are essentially faced with multidimensional problems. The problems according to Ibukun, (1990) and Owoeye, (2002) include poor styles by supervisors, financial constraints, lack of transportation facilities, poor motivation, insufficiency of relevant materials, lack of proper training and inadequate exposure of supervisors to new trends in education, negative attitudes of teachers to correction, resistance to change and innovation, lack of motivation, among others.

Taken together, these problems border on insufficient monetary allocation to education in the state. It has been observed for years that state annual budget remains unincreased while enrollment of pupils into primary and secondary schools in Oyo State is continually increasing, i.e. financial allocation have not been increasing at the same rate. The result is that educational services like supervision have been neglected.

### **Suggested Solution to the Problems**

For government to realize the aims and objectives of policies on education, the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education (i.e. the TESCOM and SUBEB) should be well funded. Appreciable money should be allocated to education in the annual budget of the State Government.

Motor vehicles should be provided for the zonal education offices in the six zones of the state to ease their movement for supervision of schools.

More specialist personnel for supervision purposes in the state should be provided so as to achieve the aims and objectives of education in the state among others.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of educational supervision has changed over the years. At a time when scientific management principles were applied to the education system, supervision was synonymous with school inspection and subjugation of teachers. New shift in management thought resulted in a more acceptable and humane conception of supervision as a cooperative enterprise between supervisors and teachers. There are several purpose of supervision. What is most important is that supervisors must have clear focus before setting out on this important function of school. The supervisors should see themselves and the teachers to be supervised as professional colleagues and partners in progress. In Oyo State, educational supervision is handled b the inspectorate division of the Ministry of education in collaboration with the TESCOM for secondary schools and SUBEB for primary schools in the six zones of the state as well as individual school authorities. However, funds and shortage of personnel have rendered supervision rather ineffective in the school system. These are the areas to which proper attention must be directed to for effective supervision of education in the state.

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