

The Role of Instructional Supervision in Goal Achievement in Secondary Education

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Abstract

This paper focused on the role of instructional supervision in achieving goals of secondary education in Nigeria. The study examined the concepts of goal achievement, supervision and instruction. The paper highlighted the significance and nature of instructional supervision in Nigerian secondary education. The study distinguished between instruction, which directly impacts students, and supervision, which focuses on teacher support, often conducted by internal or external supervisors. The paper concluded that understanding objectives of instructional supervision in the Nigerian secondary schools can empower teachers and supervisors to develop strategies, to overcome challenges and stay motivated, ultimately achieving educational goals. The paper however suggested that collaborative environment where teachers feel empowered to share their expertise, contribute to decision-making on instructional practices, and collectively solve problems; ultimately enhancing the classroom experience should always be promoted by supervisors.

Key Words: Goal Achievement, Instruction, School Environment, Secondary Education, Supervision

Introduction

Instructional supervision stands as the backbone of effective educational leadership, directly driving goal achievement in secondary education. It functions by guiding and overseeing teachers to enhance their instructional practices, foster student learning and improve overall educational outcomes (Ebirim, 2012). Tracing its roots back to the early 20th century, instructional supervision has continuously evolved, embracing innovative theories, models and practices such as clinical supervision, peer coaching and instructional coaching. Today, its focus lies firmly on teacher professional development, data-driven instruction and student-centred learning, highlighting its adaptability and enduring relevance in modern education.

The significance of instructional supervision stems from its capacity to provide teachers with the necessary support, resources and guidance required to deliver high-quality instruction, tailored to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of students. Effective teachers achieve this by communicating empathetically with students, acknowledging their unique needs, aspirations and interests. In Nigeria's dynamic learning environment, instructional supervision is particularly crucial for attaining secondary educational goals, offering professional leadership and technical expertise that significantly enhances teaching practices (Ogbonna &

Afianmagbon, 2010). This process empowers teachers to deliver effective instruction, which in turn elevates student learning outcomes. Through supervision, teachers receive invaluable support in identifying their strengths and weaknesses, while supervisors facilitate professional growth by actively encouraging participation in training, workshops, seminars and conferences (Mgbodile, 2004).

Both internal supervisors—including school principals, vice principals and deans of studies, and external supervisors, such as officials from the Ministry of Education, play vital roles in improving teaching and learning outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools. Despite the undeniable importance of instructional supervision, the Nigerian secondary education system continues to grapple with significant challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient resources, poorly trained teachers and ineffective supervision itself (Ebirim & Uzochukwu, 2023). Nevertheless, effective instructional supervision offers a powerful mechanism to mitigate these issues by enhancing teaching quality, boosting teacher motivation and improving student outcomes. Building on existing research in educational supervision, teacher effectiveness and school administration, this study aims to provide critical insights into the pivotal role instructional supervision plays in achieving secondary education goals in Nigeria.

Goal Achievement in Secondary Education in Nigeria

Goals are intentional statements that outline desired outcomes which individuals, institutions and governments strive to achieve through specific, measurable and time-bound objectives. These objectives in turn serve as the actionable steps necessary to attain those broader goals. In education, these goals determine the scope and quality of secondary educational tasks, directly influencing the acquisition of academic skills, competencies and values.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), in its National Policy on Education (NPC, 2013), specifically defines the goal of secondary education in Nigeria as equipping individuals for meaningful living within society and preparing them for higher education. Educational goals are comprehensive, encompassing various aspects such as cognitive abilities, physical activities, vocational skills, civic responsibilities and personal qualities (Rottstein & Jacobsen, 2006). To effectively pursue these goals, stakeholders develop objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). These SMART objectives then guide decision-making, resource allocation and policy implementation across all educational levels, including secondary education.

At the secondary education level, goals are typically established to fulfil the specific objectives of secondary schools themselves. These goals also dictate the performance of an instructional supervisor's tasks at any secondary education level. As fundamental values, the goals of secondary education are set to be achieved through the implementation of educational policies and appropriate strategies (Iwuchukwu, 2006). Goal attainment inherently involves the process of accomplishing these specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound objectives.

In secondary education, goal achievement is consistently measured by evaluating performance and improvement towards an identified objective. This process can be influenced by a range of factors, including personnel motivation, self-efficacy, the attitudes of individuals and the government, institutional beliefs and vision, resource availability and utilization, and the level

of support services from the community and society, all while ensuring the safety and security of the system.

Supervision at Secondary Level of Education in Nigeria

Supervision in education is essential for ensuring that school activities are effectively carried out. It primarily involves providing guidance and direction to teachers, a critical function for coordinating and implementing educational activities in secondary schools to achieve instructional objectives. Nwangwu (2008) emphasized that supervision is fundamentally about enhancing instructional quality. Ebirim and Ezenwaji (2025) further elaborated that supervision aims to raise awareness and offer professional support to both teachers and students, making the teaching-learning process more meaningful and effective. Throughout its history in secondary education, supervision has evolved significantly; in earlier times, teachers were often closely monitored through scientific approaches (Basil-Uchegbu, 2024). Presently, effective supervision ensures that secondary education activities are properly executed by fostering teacher awareness, leading to improved instructional outcomes. As an educational activity, supervision is crucial for maintaining and enhancing instructional processes, achieved through collaboration with teachers to positively influence student behaviour (Nnabuo et al., 2006).

The primary goal of supervision in secondary education is to unlock the full potential of both teachers and students, thereby maximizing their contributions to the educational process. Abiahu (2024) highlighted that successful educational supervision is evident when teachers' attitudes and behaviours improve, particularly concerning class attendance, lesson planning, effective teaching, and the development of their abilities and capabilities. Akudo (2007) affirmed that supervision actively promotes professional growth among teachers and educational leaders. Effective supervision guides, directs, assists, and stimulates growth, motivating teachers to continuously enhance instructional processes and delivery (Aguokagbuo, 2002; Firz, 2006; Ofojebe, 2007). By recognizing teachers' potential, supervision seeks to improve their capabilities through collaborative efforts and ensuring better instructional activities for students. Supervisors are instrumental in guiding and encouraging both teachers and students towards achieving secondary education goals. For supervision to be successful within secondary education system in Nigeria, supervisors and teachers must prioritize cooperation, trust, respect, and confidence, cultivating a collaborative environment that drives overall success.

Instruction at Secondary Level of Education in Nigeria

Instruction in secondary education encompasses the core activities of teaching and learning, providing students with valuable experiences under the expert guidance of educators. It involves communicating essential values, attitudes, abilities and skills crucial for students' holistic growth and development. Uketui (2010) clearly states that instruction serves as a technique for transferring worthwhile knowledge to students. To be effective, instruction necessitates a thoughtfully arranged learning environment, employing various media and information to boost student engagement and foster enhanced learning (Sherman, 2002). This process thrives on dynamic communication between teachers and students, initiating and sustaining interactions within the school setting. Instruction is, therefore, a multifaceted

process that integrates the teacher, student and learning environment to achieve meaningful educational outcomes.

As Ebirim and Ezenwaji (2025) confirm, instruction is key to facilitating the teaching-learning process, enabling students to acquire relevant knowledge and experiences under the careful guidance and direction of teachers. Within the Nigerian secondary education system, instruction is a vital functional aspect of schooling, characterized by dynamic interaction between teachers and students to enhance educational activities (Adebola, 2006). It involves a collaborative process in the classroom, specifically designed to facilitate knowledge acquisition and skill development, preparing students for societal survival. This intricate process relies on a system of interaction among teachers, students, and learning tasks (Afe et al., 2004). Effective instruction demands that teachers are well-equipped to provide guidance and support, while students require a favourable environment that genuinely fosters meaningful learning (Onyejekwe, 2006). Teachers act as primary facilitators and students remain the central focus, underscoring the vital need for a truly student-centred approach.

Nature of Instructional Supervision at Secondary Level of Education in Nigeria

Instructional supervision in Nigeria's secondary education system is a collaborative effort, bringing together school administrators, managers and designated officials from the Ministry of Education with teachers and students directly in the classroom. This vital support and guidance for instructional quality can be provided regularly or occasionally, by supervisors from both within and outside the school setting, thus giving instructional supervision its dual nature of internal and external oversight.

Internal instructional supervision occurs when school-based supervisors conduct oversight to ensure better instructional outcomes. As Oku et al. (2008) explain, internal supervision involves monitoring by school administrators or other designated personnel who interact directly with teachers, students and staff to ensure school operations meet prescribed standards and procedures. Conversely, external instructional supervision involves oversight carried out by individuals from outside the school environment to enhance instructional outcomes. Supervision is considered external, according to Ozochi (2009), when the supervisors are not part of the immediate school staff.

In Nigeria's secondary education system, external instructional supervision is typically coordinated by the Ministry of Education at both federal and state levels. The Federal Ministry of Education oversees it at the federal level, with the Federal Inspectorate of Education, a division of the Ministry, coordinating external supervision in federally controlled secondary schools through designated officials. At the state level, the Post Primary or Secondary Education Management Board, operating under the State Ministry of Education, handles external instructional supervision in state-controlled secondary schools, also through designated officials.

On the other hand, internal instructional supervision in Nigerian secondary schools is primarily conducted by school principals. They are supported by delegates such as vice principals, deans of studies, and department heads, who are often assigned specific supervisory roles. Ozochi (2009) notes that these delegates play a crucial part in enhancing instructional activities while

performing their assigned tasks, and they are accountable to the school principals, who in turn report to the Secondary Education Management Board.

Role of Instructional Supervision in Achieving Secondary Education Goal

The role of instructional supervision in achieving educational goals within Nigerian secondary schools is undeniably crucial. It actively fosters positive changes in teacher and student behaviour, thereby significantly enhancing teaching and learning experiences. In the Nigerian secondary education system, supervisors are instrumental in stimulating, encouraging, and assisting teachers and students to improve classroom instruction. This critical support enables teachers to effectively set and achieve educational goals, prepare students for future success, and develop assessments that are well-aligned with learning objectives and curriculum standards. Through cooperative efforts, instructional supervision consistently enhances both teacher potential and student performance. Supervisors specifically encourage teachers to utilize formative assessments to monitor student progress and adjust their instruction accordingly.

According to Ogbonna and Afianmagbon (2010), instructional supervision provides essential professional leadership and technical services designed to facilitate learning. It also actively promotes teacher mentorship, professional growth and collaboration among teachers. Through instructional supervision, secondary school teachers in Nigeria are empowered to share knowledge and best practices, effectively addressing challenges related to instructional strategies, teaching practices and evaluation. Instructional supervisors stimulate and guide teachers in their daily student activities, fostering positive relationships within the school environment. Teachers receive invaluable support in developing effective lesson plans that are aligned with learning objectives, refining classroom management techniques and exploring alternative teaching strategies to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Moreover, instructional supervision enables teachers to plan their tasks efficiently, maximizing the use of textbooks, instructional aides, diverse methods and other essential resources (Oku et al., 2008). Furthermore, it assists teachers in developing differentiated instruction, allowing them to cater to diverse learning needs and helps create a positive learning environment by promoting strong teacher-student relationships and fostering school-community partnerships. Instructional supervision aims to enhance teaching and learning outcomes for both teachers and students. By refining teaching patterns and instructional methods, instructional supervision encourages active student participation in all instructional activities.

This process also empowers teachers to identify and effectively address challenging teaching tasks by selecting the most effective and acceptable solutions. As Chike-Okoli (2004) noted, instructional supervision provides a comprehensive understanding of teachers' activities and the challenges they face, seeking to boost their overall effectiveness. Through collaborative approaches and human-centred relationships, instructional supervision fosters teacher competence and student growth, thereby promoting an environment conducive to optimal learning. This encompasses all activities designed to promote ideal learning conditions and teacher development, directly driving the achievement of educational goals in Nigerian secondary schools.

Conclusion

Instructional supervision is absolutely pivotal to achieving secondary education goals, especially within Nigeria's unique educational landscape. By consistently enhancing both teacher performance and student outcomes through collaborative strategies, instructional supervision cultivates a truly productive learning environment. Aligning supervisory tasks directly with specific educational goals empowers both teachers and supervisors to overcome challenges, maintain motivation and attain desired objectives, thereby unequivocally ensuring the successful achievement of secondary education goals across Nigeria.

Suggestions

Based on the study, the following suggestions were made by the researcher:

1. Regular classroom observations should always be conducted by supervisors to monitor teaching activities and learning outcomes, providing teachers with constructive feedback that highlights strengths, identifies areas of weakness and informs targeted improvements in their teaching methods and instructional strategies.
2. Capacity training programmes in form of seminars, workshops and conferences should be periodically organized for teachers to enhance their instructional skills and efficacy, while also establishing mentorship and coaching programs that pair experienced educators with new teachers, fostering skill development and enhanced instructional practices that drive student learning.
3. Supervisors should always partner with teachers to leverage data-driven instruction, analyzing student performance to inform targeted support and enrichment strategies, and guiding the development of lesson plans that align with specific learning objectives and measurable outcomes.
4. Collaborative environment where teachers feel empowered to share their expertise, contribute to decision-making on instructional practices, and collectively solve problems, ultimately enhancing the classroom experience should always be promoted by supervisors.
5. Strong partnerships with parents and the community should always be established by keeping them informed about student progress, leveraging their involvement in education, and fostering collaborations with community groups to provide students with authentic, real-world learning experiences.
6. Supervisors should always promote the effective integration of technology in instruction, providing teachers with training and support to harness digital tools and resources that enhance student learning, while also monitoring their use to maximize impact and minimize distractions.

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