

Instructional supervision as a quality assurance mechanism in primary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was informed by the need to investigate the extent to which effective instructional supervision can be employed as a quality assurance mechanism in primary schools in Cross River State. One hundred and eighty primary school teachers from eighteen primary schools randomly selected from the sampled schools from the three senatorial districts of the state. The instrument used for data collection and collation was a structured Lesson Observation Form (LOF) adapted from the federal inspectorate service as a quality assurance instrument. All the teachers were observed and evaluated while teaching. The analysis of data was based on pitched judgments after lesson observation on key issues and their sources of evidence. The findings revealed that most teachers assessed, showed good knowledge and understanding of the subject they taught, while in many cases, lessons were not planned effectively by the teachers, and specific objectives were often not clearly stated, nor shared with learners. It was recommended that since teachers are a critical factor in quality education delivery, the Cross River State Government and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should accord teachers the opportunity for continuous professional development, as most teachers have received no other in-service training after certification, the resultant effect is that many of them are poorly equipped, ill motivated with obsolete instructional delivery skills.

Keywords: Instructional Supervision; Quality; Assurance; Pitched Judgement

1. Introduction/Literature Review

One of the major determinants of quality education is the quality of the teacher. It is the teacher who holds trust for the effective implementation of the curriculum of education. Therefore, what the teacher does not know or does not do properly, reflects adversely on the learners.

The destiny of Cross River State depends on her ability to reverse the trend of poor basic education foundation of her public-school pupils and the need for a quality assurance mechanism to be put in place for effective teaching and learning to occur. In primary schools in Cross River State today, there is a mix of both trained and untrained professionally qualified and unqualified teachers. This uneven combination has not earned the state the desired quality educational standard, unless concerted deliberate efforts are made by all stakeholders in the education enterprises to meet the teaching and learning needs of the teachers and students in primary schools in Cross River State.

The main essence of instructional supervision is to inspire teachers to continually evaluate themselves and their practices by using their teaching effectiveness as a mirror to gauge their strengths and weaknesses. Effective

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instructional supervision should stimulate the teacher to make efforts towards improving on areas of weakness, as a part of general strategy for achieving an overall higher quality of education.

Commenting on the need for effective instructional supervision in schools, (Ibrahim, 2004), surmised that, instructional supervision helps teachers in coordinating, improvising and maintaining high teaching and learning standards in schools, leading to measurable improvements in the achievements of individuals, pupils, the teacher, the school and the goal and expectations of the larger society. For school administrators, instructional supervision is one of the processes used in an attempt to achieve acceptable standards of performance and results.

According to the (Cross River State policy and philosophy of education, 2010), quality assurance is the planned and systematic process of determining and ensuring that acceptable standards in scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced to provide transformation as well as facilitate improvement in the education system. These, therefore, entails monitoring, assessing, evaluating and communicating judgements obtained to all concerned in order to ensure quality with integrity, public accountability and consistent improvement. A quality assurance mechanism is the value added to the overall teaching and learning process in schools, leading to measurable improvements of individual learners, the teachers, the school, as well as meeting the goals and objectives of education. (Uvah, 2005), observed that the term "quality" has been defined differently by different scholars. To some, quality is seen as degree of excellence, while others see quality as the level of value in a product. The chambers super-mini dictionary defined quality as degree of worth, and assurance as that which denotes a feeling of certainty or confidence.

The essence of this study is therefore to gauge the functionality of teachers in the classroom to ascertain the effectiveness or otherwise of their instructional delivery, through a well-designed and practical instructional supervision. This is based on the premise that, there is a significant body of evidence that teachers are the key factor in the provision of quality basic education in Nigeria.

In Cross River State in particular and Nigeria as a whole, teacher education is at a Cross road in the delivery of quality basic education. Most products from our basic education programmes are not well prepared for secondary school level of academic task. There appears a lack of confidence and knowledge base of teachers to effective instructional delivery and hence the need for proper instructional supervision.

The recurring deterioration in the learning outcomes at our primary school levels reflects the quality of education on offer and has now become of great concern to warrant a practical investigation into the actual practices in the teaching and learning situation in our primary schools in Cross River State. According to a recent United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) survey, it identifies the primary school as the most effective level of intervention in improving the quality of teaching and learning since it involves teachers and learners.

The quality of our primary school graduates can be measured by how well the pupils have been prepared for secondary education and or service to society. Quality may also be observed on the basis of how good and effective the teachers are, how adequate and accessible are the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning to occur.

(Oshiomu, 2008), contents that effective instructional supervision is an important component of educational leadership and management, as it helps to ensure that teachers are effectively implementing instructional strategies and delivering quality instructions that meets the need of their students. Instructional supervision here refers to the process of observing and providing feedback to teachers and other educators to improve the quality of instruction and enhance students learning outcomes. It typically involves a supervisor(s) or administrator(s) visiting classrooms to observe teaching and provide feedback to teachers and asses students learning outcomes. By proving feedbacks and support to teachers, instructional supervision can enhance teacher effectiveness, improve students' engagement and motivation, and ultimately lead to improved academic achievement of pupils.

Effective instructional supervisors must on the other hand possess strong leadership skills, including the ability to communicate effectively, build trusting relationship with teachers and other staff members and provide constructive feedbacks. They must also have a deep understanding of teaching and learning principles and be knowledgeable about the content and learning standards in schools. They must be able to use data and other evidence-based strategies to identify areas of improvement and develop effective plans for change.

From the above premise, this study will seek to address the questions

- To what extent would effective instructional supervision guarantee quality assurance in primary schools in Cross River State?
- Determine the extent to which effective instructional supervision can be employed as a quality assurance mechanism in primary schools in Cross River State?

There are various models of instructional supervision, some of which according to (Jackson, 2001) includes:

- **Clinical Supervision Model:** This model views instructional supervision as a problem-solving process that focuses on improving instruction by identifying and addressing specific problems and concerns through teacher observations, feedback and collaboration.
- **Developmental Supervision Model:** This model focuses on Improving teacher's performance by identifying teacher's needs and providing specialized support, such as targeted professional development and mentoring.
- **Democratic or Participative Model:** This model emphasis collaboration and shared decision-making between teachers and supervisors, allowing teachers to take an active role in shaping their own professional development.
- **Directive or Authoritarian Model:** This model views instructional supervision as a top-down process in which supervisors give direct orders and feedback to teachers with little opportunity for teacher input or collaboration.
- **Reflective Supervision Model:** This model encourages teachers and supervisors to engage in respective practices to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Supervisors and teachers work together to reflect on teaching practices students' outcomes and other factors that impact teaching and learning.

Each model above has its own strengths and weaknesses and may be more appropriate in different contexts or for different teachers. The most effective instructional supervision model is one that fits the needs, goals, and priorities of the school or educational institution and its consistently applied with the support of strong leadership. All these models place emphasis on keen observation of the teaching and learning process.

Cross River State is a coastal State in South- South Nigeria. It is located in the Niger Delta region of the country. Cross River State occupies 20,156 Square kilometers. It shares boundary with Cameroon Republic and Benue State to the North, Enugu and Abia States to the West and Akwa-Ibom and Atlantic Ocean to the South. Its Capital is Calabar.

Cross River State has a population of 3.8 million with adult literacy rate of 80.78%. It has eighteen (18) Local Government Areas with Three Senatorial District-Northern, Central and Southern Senatorial districts.

Northern Senatorial district has five (5) Local Government councils. Central senatorial district has six (6) Local Government Councils, while Southern senatorial district has seven (7) Local Government Councils.

Cross River State has a total of 1,048 primary schools with 124,447 pupils across the three Senatorial Districts (SUBEB CRS 2021 Statistics).

The State is composed of three (3) major Ethnic groups: Efik, Ejagham, and Bekwarra. The Efik speaking people live mainly in the Southern senatorial district. The Yakurr/Agoi/Bahumuno Ethnic groups in Yakurr & Abi, and the Mbembe are predominantly found in the central Senatorial district. While the northern senatorial consist of Ogoja, Obudu, Yala, Obanlike and Bewarra Local Government Areas. The State goals of wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be effectively pursued, attained and Sustained through an efficient, relevant and functional primary education system.

1.1. The Concept of Observation

Observation is the act or process of examining or taking a critical look at certain specified and unspecified behaviors and happenings in being and beings within and outside the classroom environment. In the school system, evaluation is the process of deliberately watching the behaviors of the teacher and the pupils within a classroom situation for the purpose of evaluating performance (UBEC 2023). Observation is therefore the act of looking with intent and it involves activities using all the senses in the process of gathering facts. Observation skills involve measuring, weighing comparison etc and it requires a lot of discipline, tolerance, and communication skills-before a pitched judgment is passed.

1.2. Types of Observation / Observation Techniques:

- **Unobtrusive Observation:** This is where the pupils or cooperating teacher is unaware of the presence of the observer within the classroom setting. This is well demonstrated in role playing and drama. Similarly, during discussions, dialogues and chartings, the technique is very adequate.
- **Obtrusive Observation:** This is where the subject is aware of the presence of the observer within the classroom setting. In this kind of situation, the subject may even be aware of the kind of behavior being measured. It is most commonly used in mentoring, to assess the performance of the teaching and learning situation within the school system
- **Participatory Observation:** This is a situation where the observer contributes to the ongoing exercise, dialogue, offers suggestions and asks questions etc to facilitate and improve the teaching and learning situation in a school setting. This type of observation has the special advantage of enabling the observer to address some observed problems immediately.

1.3. Observation Techniques:

- **Systematic Observation:** It implies the use of techniques where predetermined behaviors are observed and recorded in an organized manner.
- **Anecdotal-Records of Observation (Diary of Behaviors)** In this process of teaching and learning, the observer observes some meaningful incidents or events which he factually describes.
- **Rating Scale Observation:** It Consists of a set of characteristics on qualities to be judged whereby some scales indicating the degree to which each attribute is present.
- **Checklist Observation:** This is similar inform and use to the rating scale but different because it merely allows Yes or No judgment.

2. Methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population for the study consists of all the 1,048 primary schools including 13,131 teachers and 124,447 primary school pupils that cuts across the three senatorial districts of Cross River State.

The purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the samples from primary schools in the three senatorial districts of North, Central and Southern Senatorial District of Cross River State. One hundred and Eight (180) primary schools.

The (18) Eighteen primary schools and (180) One hundred and eighty primary schools' teachers used for this study were purposively selected from the three senatorial districts while the stratified proportionate sampling techniques was used to select the primary school centers used for the lesson observations.

A total of 18 schools were selected for this study, A breakdown of the selected schools from the three senatorial districts, the Numbers of selected primary schools' observation centers are shown on the table 1 below:

Table 1 Selected schools from the three senatorial districts and sample of observed teachers

S/N	List of school used per senatorial districts	No of teachers observed per center per S/D	No. of Senatorial Zone
1	Community P/S Abachor Yala L.G.A	10	North
2	St. Clement P/S Ugboro Bekwarra L.G.A	10	North
3	St. Theresa's P/S Ogoja Ogoja L.G.A	10	North
4	Govt. P/S Indiabeb Obudu L.G.A	10	North
5	Govt. P/S Amunga, Obanliku L.G.A	10	North
TOTAL = 5 L.G.A's		50	
6	Govt. P/S Itigidi, Abi L.G.A.	10	Central
7	St. Julius P/S Nkim Osokom, Boki L.G.A	10	Central

8	St. Francis P/S Obubra, Obubra L.G.A	10	Central
9	St. Stephen's P/S Alok Nnam Ikom Iko L.G.A.	10	Central
10	Holy Cross P/S Ugep, Yakurr L.G.A	10	Central
11	St. Peter's p/s Etomi, Etung L.G.A	10	Central
Total = 6 LGA		60	
12	St. Theresa's P/S Mbarakom, Akamkpa L.G.A.	10	Southern
13	AME Zion P/S Diamond Hill, Cal. Municipality L.G.A	10	Southern
14	Govt. P/S Mayne Avenue, Cal. South L.G.A	10	Southern
15	PCN P/S Etono Central, Biase L.G.A	10	Southern
16	Govt. P/S Anyanganse, Akpabuyo L.G.A	10	Southern
17	St. Theresa's P/S Odukpani L.G.A	10	Southern
18	Govt. p/s Ekpri Ikang, Bakassi	10	Southern
Total = 7 L.G.A'S		70	

The Instrument used for data collection was a structured Lesson Observation Form (LOF) adapted from the Federal Inspectorate Service as a quality assurance Instrument. The instrument was tagged Lesson Observation Form (LOF). This was used to collect and collate all the information observed in the course of teaching and learning in the selected schools.

Information contained in the Lesson Observation Form (LOF) includes: Name of school, Name of observer. Teachers background information includes: Full names, IRCN member, Employment type, Age, Grade level, Highest qualification, Years of teaching experience in present school, Subjects of specialization.

Information demanded for lesson background includes: Class, Subject observed, Date and time, number of learners for Girls/Boys. Aspect of teaching and impact of learning includes: knowledge and understanding of subject matter by teacher, lesson plans with clear learning outcomes and suitable teaching strategies, teaching interest and motivation of learners, teacher's, use of relevant teaching methods. Time management, homework, marking of pupils' notebooks, use of assessment for lesson planning, participation of learners during lesson, instructional materials match learners' level, learners demonstrate new knowledge and acquire new skills.

The scoring for the number of lessons observed (180) was based on a pitched judgment where: 5 = Outstanding, 4 = Very Good, 3 = Good, 2 = Poor, 1 = Very Poor.

The teachers were observed and evaluated using the following descriptors and grades as presented in the table 2 below:

Table 2 Descriptors and grades for evaluating the teachers

Grades		Evaluation (Descriptors)
Grade 5	—————→	Outstanding
Grade 4	—————→	Very good
Grade 3	—————→	Good
Grade 2	—————→	Poor
Grade 1	—————→	Very poor

The question posed was “How effective is teaching and learning?”

The research observers/evaluators considered the extent to which classroom Teachers exhibit the following:

- Show good command of subject’s areas of learning and courses.
- Plan effectively, with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies
- Show interest, encourage and engage learners
- Challenge learners and expect the best from them
- Use methods and resources that enables all learners to learn effectively
- Make effective use of time
- Where appropriate, use homework effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school
- Promote equal opportunities for all learners to participate.
- Assess the quality of learner’s work

To collect sufficient evidence to make professional judgments, the researcher/observers/evaluators considered the following key issues and their sources of evidence. See Table 3 below:

Table 3 Key issues and their sources of evidence

S/N	Key issues	Sources of Evidence
1	Knowledge and understanding of subject matter by teacher	Discussion with staff and learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner’s work.
2	Lesson plans with clear learning outcomes and suitable teaching strategies. Teacher deviates from plans where learners understanding calls for it.	Scrutiny of lesson plan. Discussion with staff and learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learners’ work.
3	Teaching is interesting and motivates learners.	Discussion with learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner’s work.
4	Teaching is challenging to learners and promotes high expectations.	Discuss with learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learners work and result.
5	Teachers use relevant teaching materials and different teaching methods for effective learning	Discuss with learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner’s work.
6	Time is well managed by teachers to help learners make progress.	Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner’s work.
7	Home work is used to extend learning.	Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner’s work.
8	Timely, thorough and constructive marking of work of learners.	Scrutiny of learner’s work.
9	Use of assessment for lesson planning.	Scrutiny of plans. Lesson observation. Discussion with learners.
10	Teaching materials match the learners’ level	Scrutiny of plans.

		Lesson observation. Discussion with learners.
11	Participation of learners during lessons.	Lesson observation.
12	The extent of independent and collaborative learning by learners.	Discussion with learners. Lesson observation. Scrutiny of learner's work.
13	Learners are productively engaged and high standards of behavior is insisted upon.	Lesson observation. Discussion with parents.
14	Learners demonstrate new knowledge and are able to explore new areas of learning	Discussion with staff and learners Lesson observation Scrutiny of learner's work

Table 4 Pitched judgements: For Evaluating Teaching and Learning criteria

1	Outstanding (5)	Teaching is consistently excellent, stimulating, enthusiastic and challenging. As a result, learners make excellent progress. There are excellent relationships in the classroom and teachers handle classroom situation effectively. Homework is always used to extend learning and always marked. Teaching methods are well-selected and time management is very good. Learner's needs and demands are well matched with activities and achievements is extremely high
2	Very Good (4)	Teaching is good. Teacher's knowledge of the curriculum is good and teaching skills is generally effective. Learner's understanding is improved through tasks that are sufficiently challenging. Time is managed well. Classroom relationships are constructive and interactive. Homework is regularly used to extend learning and it is marked. Learners' individual needs sufficiently met and achievements is good.
3	Good (3)	Teaching is satisfactory with learners making appropriate progress. Classroom relationships are appropriate. Homework is sometimes used to extend learning and marked. Achievements are satisfactory.
4	Poor (2)	Teaching is inadequate, too many teachers under perform. Learners make limited progress and some underachieve. Teaching fails to capture learners' interest and enthusiasms. Attention is not paid to some individual learners' needs and some have difficulty coping. Greater effort is expended in managing behaviors' than in developing learning. Homework is rarely used to extend learning and rarely marked. Time management is ineffective. Achievement is unsatisfactory.
5	Very Poor (1)	Teaching is not challenging. Learners previous knowledge is not linked to new knowledge. Teaching methods are inappropriate and classroom and time management are poor. Learners' needs are not met. Home work is not used to extend learning. Many learners are unwilling to work individually and group is unproductive. Achievement is poor.

In rating of teacher overall effectiveness, the evidences collected and collated from the areas of teaching and learning were employed using the score ratings (out of 5) in each of the key issues in teaching and learning that impacts most on learner's achievement and teacher's performance, before arriving at the average grade, where overall strengths and weaknesses in lessons observed are passed.

3. Results

All the 180 teachers from the three (3) senatorial Districts in Cross River State selected for this study were observed while teaching by the researchers and research assistants. The result is presented by senatorial Districts.

Table 5 Schools in Northern Senatorial District of Cross River State Total Number of Lessons Observed = 50

Overall grades	Outstanding (5)	Very good (4)	Good (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)
Number of lessons observed	-	10	25	10	5

Table 6 Schools in Central Senatorial District of Cross State, the Total Number of Lessons Observed = 60

Overall grades	Outstanding (5)	Very good (4)	Good (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)
Number of lessons observed	-	5	30	15	10

Table 7 School in Southern Senatorial District of Cross State: See table below Table Number of Lessons Observed = 70

Overall grades	Outstanding (5)	Very good (4)	Good (3)	Poor (2)	Very poor (1)
Number of lessons observed	2	10	45	5	8

Results from table 5 above shows that fifty (50) primary school teachers from the selected five (5) schools from the Northern senatorial districts of Cross River State were observed while teaching. The results from the observations shows that 60% of the teachers' performance fell within "very good" and "good" evaluation descriptors, while 25% fell within "poor" and "very poor" evaluation descriptor.

Results from table (6) above shows that sixty (60) primary school teachers from the selected six (6) schools from the central senatorial District of Cross River State were observed while teaching. The results from the observations shows that 55% of the teacher's performance fell within "very good" and "good", while 45% fell within the "poor" and "very poor" evaluation descriptors.

Results from table six (7) above shows that seventy (70) primary school teachers from the selected seven (7) schools from the southern senatorial district of Cross River State were observed while teaching.

The results from the observations shows that eighty (80%) of the teacher's performance fell with "outstanding" "very good" and good "evaluation descriptors, while 20% fell within the "poor" and "very poor" evaluation descriptors.

4. Discussion of the findings

Findings from the study revealed that in the northern senatorial districts, in terms of strength: most teachers showed good knowledge and understanding of subject matter they taught. Learners in these Schools are well managed and high standard of behaviour were insisted upon. It was also observed that most teachers made effective use of time (time management) instructional materials and other teaching and learning resources. Most of the teachers equally encouraged independent learning of the learners. In terms of weakness. The teaching methods used by some teachers do not always enable all learners to learn effectively and in many cases, students learning is not assessed carefully enough.

Findings from schools in the central senatorial districts reveal that most teachers (65%) exhibited good knowledge and understanding of their subject matter and learners were well manage and high standards of behaviour were insisted upon by the teachers. While in some cases (35%) students learning were not assessed carefully enough.

Findings from schools in the southern senatorial districts reveal that (85%) of the teachers show good knowledge and understanding of their subject area and most of the teachers make effective use of time, instructional materials and other resources. Most teachers equally encouraged independent learning by students.

In some isolated cases, (15%) of the teachers observed do not plan their lesson effectively, nor their specific objectives for the lesson clearly stated. For some teachers, the teaching methods used does not always enable all learners to learn effectively.

From the above analysis, the overall strength and weakness in all the one hundred and eighty (180) lessons observed in the eighteen (18) selected schools from the three senatorial districts of Cross River State are summed up as follows:

4.1. Strengths

- Most teachers observed, showed good knowledge and understanding of the subject (s) they taught.
- Most teachers made effective use of time, instructional material and other teaching and learning materials.
- Most learners are encouraged to undertake independent learning.
- Learners are well managed and high standards of behaviour are demanded from them.

4.2. Weaknesses

- In many cases, lessons are not planned effectively by the teachers.
- Specific objectives are often not clearly stated, nor shared with learners.
- In some instance, the teaching methods employed do not always enable all learners to learn effectively.
- Most student learning was not assessed carefully enough.

5. Conclusion

Effective instructional supervision underscores the central position of the teaching and learning process in the school system. For instructional supervision to function as a quality assurance tool in our primary schools in Cross River State, the role of the classroom teacher remains crucial and significant. The classroom teacher must master his subject area, be professionally trained in addition to being original, creative, resourceful, visionary, flexible and proficient. He/she must have the ability to prepare a good lesson plan and note of lesson, produce relevant teaching and learning instructional materials, as well as effectively control and management of the classrooms.

Finally, a good use of mother-tongue as language of the immediate community in early formative years of Primary School Education is advocated, believing that learning is about understanding concepts for subsequent application in life.

Recommendations

- Criteria for measuring instructional effectiveness should be formally documented and provided by the State and Federal Ministries of Education as a guide and benchmark instrument for accurate assessment of teaching and learning in our classrooms.
- Periodic national capacity building training for teachers by UBE & SUBEB is an imperative
- Teachers are a critical factor in qualitative education delivering therefore, for the UBE/SUBEB to achieve its goals, teacher preparation must be pursued assiduously, because of the downturn in Nigerian economy, education like other sectors of the economy has suffered a lot of setbacks.
- Most teachers have received no other in-service training after certification, the resultant effect is that many of them are poorly equipped, ill motivated and with absolute instructional delivery skills.

Effective instructional supervision will bring about a process where classroom teachers will become problem solvers, improvising teaching and learning materials, preparation of acceptable lesson plans and proficiency in classroom management.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

We sincerely declare that all the authors have participated in carrying out the research, evaluation and analysis of the research article and the final version have been approved. Also, there is no form of conflict of interest in connection with this research article and the material is not under consideration for publication elsewhere other than in WJARR.

Statement of informed consent

The study adhered strictly to confidentiality and privacy of respondents/participants information. Consents of the participants that participated in the research were duly obtained and they willingly participated without being forced to do so neither did they take the decision to do on duress. Furthermore, participants rights and dignity were respected and the study was conducted utmost integrity and honesty.

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