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Extent of principals' implementation of external supervision feedback for quality assurance in public secondary schools in Imo state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the extent of principals' implementation of external supervision feedback for quality assurance in public secondary schools in Imo state. To this end, the study was guided by three research questions and three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. Population consisted 5,758 respondents made up of all the 395 principals and 5,363 teachers in the 285 public secondary schools in Imo state. A sample of 829 respondents comprising 81 principals and 748 teachers was drawn from the population using multi-stage sampling procedure. Data was collected using a questionnaire of 37 items titled Implementation of External Supervision Feedback Questionnaire (IESFQ) which was validated by three experts. Internal consistency reliability index of 0.89 was obtained for the three sections of the instrument using Cronbach's alpha method. Data analysis was done using mean for the research questions and t-test for the hypotheses. The findings revealed among others that external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process, leadership and management and teacher quality in secondary schools in Imo state are implemented to a low extent. The study also found out that the difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process, leadership and management and teacher quality for quality assurance in secondary schools in Imo state was not significant. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended among others that the Imo State Education Board should arrange a continuous professional development training programmes for secondary school teachers on improving their teaching skills. This will help them improve in their implementation of feedback regarding teaching and learning process. Conclusions were drawn, implications of the findings and suggestions for further studies were also made out.

Keywords: Implementation, external supervision, supervision; supervision feedback, quality assurance

Introduction

Education is seen as a crucial tool for national and personal development in every country. This is because the level of a nation's literacy determines her extent of development. In Nigeria, Education is seen as an instrument par excellence for national development (Federal Ministry of Education (FME) 2004) [4]. Therefore, if education in Nigeria would play its role as an instrument par excellence for national development, then it must have quality, that is fitness for purpose.

Quality education can be achieved through a sound, standard and improved educational management shown in effective quality assurance. Quality assurance is a systematic management & evaluation of school administrators, teachers, school environment, students and other educational input and processes against objectives to ensure quality educational output. Freeman (2003) [7], defined quality assurance as a method of checking up on how well the system is being adhered to, a method of correcting mistakes and also a method of changing the system if it has become out of date. Quality assurance in education aims at preventing problems and ensures that the products of the system conform to the expected standards.

One of the mechanisms for quality assurance in secondary education is external supervision. External supervision is the supervision carried out by supervisors outside the school. The focus of external supervision is on evaluating the quality of the various aspects of the school such as the quality of study being carried out by teachers, quality of teachers, teaching

process and school environment.

Most education ministries plan ways and means by which external supervision should function. This function is usually assigned to personnel from the Ministry of Education. According to FME (2010) [3], the external supervision team comprises of a minimum of two people and should not be larger than five people. The number of external supervisors is determined by the size of the school, the number of learners, and the type of supervision needed. The external supervisors judge the quality of the schools through the supervision of the following: overall effectiveness of the school, achievement and standards, learner's personal skills and their participation, the quality of teaching and learning, how well the curriculum meets learners' need, how well learners are cared for, guided and supported, the learning environment, how well the school is led and managed (FME, 2010) [3]. Nwagwu and Iwovi (2014) [11] equally identified the basis of agreed criteria for the supervision which includes: overall functions of the school and ethos, quality of leadership and management, governance and relationships, the quality of pedagogy and staff development, quality of the curriculum content and implementation resources, learners' achievement, safety and security measures, school infrastructure, among others. In this study, attention will be focused on the following indicators of quality assurance in schools such as: teaching and learning processes, leadership and management and teacher quality.

Teaching and learning processes have to do with the various skills possessed by the teacher which will enable him or her manage students' in the classroom properly for effective teaching and learning. These skills may include among others; how well the teacher arranges the classroom, prepares her lesson and uses the instructional materials. Leadership and management on the other hand is concerned with how well the school leadership utilize the available human and material resources, set clear and achievable targets regarding school development and improvement, maintain school facilities and supervise instruction for achieving quality teaching and learning. Teacher quality pertains to such areas as teacher qualification and specialization, instructional skills, temperament, professional improvement, mastery of subject matter among others.

At the end of the supervision of a school, the external supervisors give both verbal and written documents as feedback to the principal for the school describing what was observed from the supervision. Feedback here can be defined as a report which enables one to know how well a school is performing and where improvement is needed. Feedback is an information conveyed in relation to performance to help the receiver to improve future actions. For instance, it is a reaction or response to a particular process or activity and a critical assessment on information produced. Feedback is given for the schools to become aware of what they are doing. It reinforces appropriate behaviour and helps correct deficiencies thereby, encouraging schools to try new skills. Supervision feedback can be defined as both verbal and written documents given by the supervisors, describing what was observed from the supervision which enables one to know how well a school is performing and where improvement is needed. That is to say that quality assurance involves not just the actions of the

external supervisors but also the implementation of feedback given by the supervisors.

At the school level, the school principal is expected to ensure that the feedback is implemented. Feedback and its implementation constitute an important and indispensable aspect of quality assurance. Cognizance of the fact that only quality education leads to real development, most nations in the world such as Netherlands, England and Wales have established and are implementing school supervision as an important tool to monitor the quality of education provided by schools (Fekede, 2009) [5]. In Nigeria however, the situation appears to be different. The process seems not to be taken seriously as non-implementation of reports/feedback and lack of follow-up have been reported as problems of supervision in Nigeria (Ige, 2012; Nwagwu, 2001) [9, 12].

According to Ige, (2012) [9], most inspection reports in Nigeria are kept away from teachers and school administrators and even when submitted, are kept in files without actions taken on them. This also appears to be the situation in secondary schools in Imo State as principals in the state have been accused of non-implementation of external supervision feedback. As a result, external supervision has been largely ineffective and unable to improve both teachers and school performance (Gbenue, 2012, Tuoyo, 1999) [8, 15]. These deficiencies may have contributed to the poor performance of the secondary education system at both national and state levels. In Imo state in particular, there are such challenges as: inadequate management in schools, poor teaching-learning processes, poor learning outcomes, and poor learner friendly environment. (Imo State Government, 2010). These problems appear to have emanated from apparent lack of follow-up visits to schools by the supervisors to know whether previous recommendations/reports have been implemented. These situations made it imperative to determine the extent of principals' implementation of supervision feedback for quality assurance.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the extent of principals' implementation of external supervision feedback for quality assurance in secondary schools in Imo state. Specifically, the study investigated:

1. The extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning processes in secondary schools in Imo State.
2. The extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding leadership and management in secondary schools in Imo State.
3. The extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality in secondary schools in Imo State.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the extent of implementation of the external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Imo State?
2. What is the extent of implementation of the external supervision feedback regarding leadership and management in secondary schools in Imo State?

3. What is the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality in secondary schools in Imo State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Imo State?
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding school management in secondary schools in Imo State.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality in secondary schools in Imo State.

Method

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) [6] describe a survey research as one that seeks to collect and analyse data from sample of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect of one or more variables. The study was guided by three research questions. Three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study was carried out in Imo State on a population of 5,758 consisting of 395 principals and 5,363 teachers. A sample of 829 respondents, consisting of 748 teachers and 81 principals was drawn using multistage sampling procedure. Questionnaire instrument titled School Supervision Feedback Questionnaire (SSFQ) was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by three experts. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 and was obtained using Cronbach’s Alpha method. Data collected for the study were analyzed using mean and t-test.

Results

Table 1: Mean ratings of the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process, (n=804).

Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Feedback on teachers showing good command of subject areas	2.47	.54	Low Extent
2. Feedback regarding teachers planning of lessons with clear learning objectives	2.54	.52	High Extent
3. Feedback on teachers use of lesson notes in teaching	2.37	.53	Low Extent
4. Feedback on teachers having a well written and structured lesson note	2.38	.55	Low Extent
5. Feedback on teachers having a lesson plan and using it to teach	2.41	.52	Low Extent
6. Feedback on teachers’ classroom arrangement	2.31	.61	Low Extent
7. Feedback on teachers use of instructional materials in teaching	2.40	.57	Low Extent
8. Feedback on students’ participation in class	2.40	.63	Low Extent
9. Feedback on teachers’ dress-code and appearance in class	2.54	.52	High Extent
10. Feedback on teachers giving and marking students’ assignments	2.52	.57	High Extent
Total Mean	2.43	.56	Low Extent

As shown by the total mean score of 2.43 in Table 1, external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Anambra state is implemented to a low extent. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents rated three items (item 2, 9 and

10) out of the 10 listed items as being implemented to a high extent with their mean ranging from 2.52 to 2.54. The remaining seven items (item 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) with mean ratings ranging from 2.37 to 2.74 were rated by as being implemented to a low extent.

Table 2: Mean ratings of the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding leadership and management, (n=804).

	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Feedback on utilization of human and material resources to improve learners’ outcomes.	2.52	.57	High Extent
2. Feedback on setting clear priorities and targets regarding school development	2.44	.53	Low Extent
3. Feedback on regulation of staff truancy in the school.	2.34	.60	Low Extent
4. Feedback on promotion of well-being of learners	2.35	.54	Low Extent
5. Feedback on teachers’ maintenance of school timetable in teaching	2.34	.56	Low Extent
6. Feedback on promotion of equality of opportunity for learners to achieve as well as they can	2.39	.53	Low Extent
7. Feedback on tackling discrimination among staff	2.38	.59	Low Extent
8. Feedback on delegation of duties to ease workload	2.31	.57	Low Extent
9. Feedback on implementation of new curriculum	2.04	.68	Low Extent
10. Feedback on keeping of statutory records	2.34	.56	Low Extent
11. Feedback on community involvement in school development	2.36	.61	Low Extent
12. Feedback on regular conduct of morning and afternoon assemblies	2.38	.59	Low Extent
13. Feedback on conduct of moral instruction in the school	2.31	.57	Low Extent
Total Mean	2.35	.58	Low Extent

As shown by the total mean score of 2.35 in Table 2, external supervision feedback regarding leadership and management in secondary schools in Anambra state is implemented to a low extent. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents rated only item 1 (mean=2.52)

out of the 13 listed items as being implemented to a high extent. The remaining 12 items (item 2-13) with mean ratings ranging from 2.04 to 2.44 were rated by as being implemented to a low extent.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of the Extent of Implementation of External Supervision Feedback Regarding Teacher Quality, (n=804).

	Mean	SD	Remark
1. Feedback on teachers' qualification	2.31	.51	Low Extent
2. Feedback on teachers' classroom management skill	2.02	.40	Low Extent
3. Feedback on teachers' communication with students	1.96	.32	Low Extent
4. Feedback on teachers' instructional skills to carry out their lessons	2.36	.61	Low Extent
5. Feedback on teachers' mastery of the subject area	2.51	.51	High Extent
6. Feedback on teachers' temperament towards the students	1.99	.30	Low Extent
7. Feedback on teachers' having high level attention span from students	2.53	.57	High Extent
8. Feedback on teachers' ability to co-operate with other people	2.49	.57	Low Extent
9. Feedback on teachers' professional improvement	2.00	.27	Low Extent
Mean of Means	2.24	.45	Low Extent

The total mean score of 2.24 in Table 3 shows that external supervision feedback regarding the teacher quality in secondary schools in Anambra state is implemented to a low extent. The item by item analysis shows that the respondents rated item 5 and 7 (mean=2.51 and 2.53) out of the 9 listed

items as being implemented to a high extent. The remaining seven items (item, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10) with mean ratings ranging from 1.99 to 2.49 were rated by as being implemented to a low extent.

Table 4: T-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality in secondary schools.

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	81	2.46	.19	802	1.08	1.96	Not Sig
Teachers	723	2.43	.26				

The result in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value (1.08) was less than the critical value (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom (DF) 802. This is an indication that

the mean score for principals ($M=2.46$; $SD=.19$) was not significantly less than that of the teachers ($M=2.43$; $SD=.26$). The null hypothesis therefore was not rejected.

Table 5: T-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding school management in secondary schools.

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	81	2.34	.23	802	.40	1.96	Not Sig
Teachers	723	2.35	.36				

The result in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value (.40) was less than the critical value (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom (DF) 802. This is an indication that

the mean score for principals ($M=2.34$; $SD=.23$) was not significantly less than that of the teachers ($M=2.35$; $SD=.36$). The null hypothesis therefore was not rejected.

Table 6: z-test comparison of principals' and teachers' mean ratings of the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality in secondary schools

Source of variation	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Principals	81	2.24	.17	802	.75	1.96	Not Sig
Teachers	723	2.29	.19				

The result in Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value (.75) was less than the critical value (1.96) at alpha level of 0.05 and degree of freedom (DF) 802. This is an indication that the mean score for principals ($M=2.24$; $SD=.17$) was not significantly less than that of the teachers ($M=2.29$; $SD=.19$). The null hypothesis therefore was not rejected.

Discussion

The finding of this study shows that external supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Imo state is implemented to a low extent. Giving quality feedback to schools is a vital component of school supervision that leads to real school improvement. Feedback given by supervisors help schools to improve their performance. The finding of this study agrees with young (2000) [17] who found that majority of school heads have failed to implement school performance feedback because they lack the capacity in terms of resources that will enable them implement most of the

feedback given by external supervisors. According to Berg (2001) [1], implementing performance feedback can help schools improve their performance and help align the school towards achieving stated goals and objectives.

The finding of this study however, disagrees with Ehren (2008) [2, 14] whose study revealed that schools use feedback they receive from inspectors on various areas of the school for improvement. The reason for the disagreement may be because most schools do not understand the importance of implementing school performance feedback, so they fail to take advantage of it to improve various areas of the school that need improvement. It may also be because most external supervisors appear not to give adequate and clear feedback to the schools which will enable easy implementation. In terms of the difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers, the study found no significant difference in the ratings of teachers and principals on the extent of implementation of external

supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process.

Table 2 indicates that the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding leadership and management in secondary schools in Imo state is low. According to Mathews and Sammon cited in Ehren and Visscher (2008) ^[2, 14], understandable and unequivocal feedback regarding school management is an important input for school development plan that leads to more effective school practices. Feedback implementation helps to initiate dialogue between schools, parents, teachers, students and administrators. The finding of this study disagrees with Regassa, Lemariam, Ferede, Hunde and Lemma (2013) ^[13], that feedback regarding school leadership and management helps administrators to identify, plan and manage school and staff development. It also serves schools to reconsider their strength and weakness so that it would be important input as they develop school policies (Schildkamp & Ehren, 2008) ^[2, 14]. Performance feedback also assists school leadership to identify areas of improvement so that action can be taken once the area is already identified (Schildkamp & Teddlie, 2008) ^[14]. Furthermore, feedback implementation regarding school management can lead to improved practice and teacher development, and may even lead to increased student achievement. Visscher, (2001) ^[16] also argue that when used properly, school management and leadership feedback lead to taking measures to change practices both at school and classroom level which ultimately results in school improvement.

Regarding the hypothesis, the study found no significant difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding school management. This appears to be because both principals and teachers in the state are well informed about the extent to which external supervision feedback regarding school management are implemented.

As displayed in Table 3, this study found that external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality is implemented to a low extent. According to Brimblecombe and Chapman (2001) cited in Ehren and Visscher (2008) ^[14, 2], they stated that teachers give invaluable credit for the feedback they receive from supervisors with the understanding that it urges school improvement process when there is a trust between schools and supervisors. In the same manner, Coe (2002) argued that feedback can have positive effect in improving teacher quality and performance under "the right condition".

According to a study conducted by Regassa, Lemariam, Ferede, Hunde and Lemma (2013) ^[13] participants mentioned the following improvements as a result of supervisory feedback on teacher performance:

1. Teachers are working according to the pace of students (e.g. Providing special tutorial for slow learners and female students)
2. Supporting teaching with instructional aids,
3. Feedback help teachers to change the approach of attendance hence large number of students were coming for the tutorial,
4. Teachers learn from each other, implementing continuous assessment in large class size (teachers from language stream),
5. The discordance regarding what is planned and actually implemented in a class room are minimized as a result

of internal supervision (repeatedly mentioned by participants from different department)

6. Collegial relationship among teachers increased as a result of teachers' accepting each other's comment positively for improvement.
7. Teachers are improving their classroom teaching, lesson plan preparation and utilization of resources.

However, at this juncture it is important to note that simply giving and receiving feedback on school's performance is not sufficient by itself to bring the desired change. Rather schools should translate the feedbacks they receive from the supervisors in to practice in such a way that it improves their function. This is due to the reason that supervision is effective when the recommendations are translated in to action and that action brings improvement on school's performance in general and students' learning in particular. This implies that the effectiveness of supervision is determined by the extent of utilization of supervision feedback.

The findings of the hypothesis indicated that the difference in the mean ratings of principals and teachers on the extent of implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality was not significant.

Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made.

External supervision feedback regarding teaching and learning process are being implemented to a low extent. However, feedback on areas of teaching and learning process such as teachers planning of lesson plan with clear objectives, teachers' dress code and appearance in the class and giving and marking students' assignments are rated to be implemented to a high extent by principals and teachers. The extent of implementation of supervision feedback regarding leadership and management are being implemented to a low extent. Only one area of leadership and management of school which is the utilization of human and material resources to improve learners' outcome is rated to be implemented to a high extent by principals and teachers. The extent of implementation of supervision feedback regarding teacher quality is low. Feedback on areas of teacher quality such as mastery of the subject area, teachers' level of attention span from students, and teacher's ability to cooperate with other people are rated to be implemented to a high extent.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions the following recommendations were given:

1. The Imo State Education Board should arrange well organized Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training for secondary school teachers on improving their teaching skills. This will help them improve in their implementation of feedback regarding teaching and learning process.
2. The Imo State Education Board should also endeavor to employ quality teachers by following the appropriate teacher recruitment processes. With this, the implementation of external supervision feedback regarding teacher quality will be enhanced.
3. Imo State Education Board and the government should provide training programmes for principals in various

areas of school leadership and management. This will help enhance them with management and leadership skills which will help them in the implementation of feedback in this area.

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