

**ENSURING CREATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION IN A
COMATOSE ECONOMY THROUGH EFFECTIVE SCHOOL
SUPERVISION**

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Abstract

In Nigeria, education is adopted as an instrument par excellence for national development and thus, it is recognized as a key to economic prosperity, social cohesion and promise of sustainable democracy. The efficiency in exploitation, effectiveness in management and success in dominance of the environment which underlies individuals' ability to become creative, functional, useful and contributing positively to the society at large reflects the quality of instructional service delivery effort of the school and the supervisory system in existence. In other words, the laudable goals of any school in producing a well-educated citizenry for revamping a comatose economy can only be realized through creative and functional education which depends on effective supervision as a veritable tool. It is against this background that this paper examines some conceptual clarifications, aims and objectives, principles, purposes and challenges of school supervision. It concluded that effective supervision is inevitable and necessary for any developing nation. As a way forward, some recommendations were made therein.

Key concepts: School Supervision, Creative and Functional Education.

Globally, it is quite obvious that creative and functional education is a precursor to nation building and its role is best perceived with a holistic look taken through the social, economic, political, cultural, agricultural, industrial and aesthetic perspective. However, the Nigerian educational system is fast retrogressing due to ineffective school supervision. In Nigeria today, the increasing rate of poverty, illiteracy, youth's unemployment and so many other social problems have become worrisome to the governments, and to every well-meaning Nigerian citizen. Hence, there is need for a type of education that would make her graduates/products acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to tackle illiteracy, poverty and unemployment. Thus, creative and functional education becomes imperative.

Despite the imperativeness of creative and functional education in Nigeria, it experiences several bottlenecks as evidenced by the glaring rate of increase in poverty and unemployment today. In other words, there are seemingly issues and challenges in the process of implementation of creative and functional education in Nigeria. In a comatose economy like Nigeria and many other developing countries, education is considered to be the cornerstone and pillar of growth and development. The value desired from education particularly in the socio-political and economic development of any nation has made creative and functional education delivery a major concern in both developed and developing countries. This is why Asuquo (2008)

affirmed that assuring quality in the education process is greatly emphasized so as to obtain a quality outcome. No creative and functional education in any educational system however excellent it may be can be achieved without effective school supervision. There is no gain denying the fact that creative and functional education is an essential requirement needed to propel the engine of development in all sectors of a comatose economy like Nigeria.

Ascertaining the extent to which predetermined objective has been achieved is very crucial in organizational and national development. The need to promptly identify sources and causes of lapses which may inhibit goal attainment and proffer viable solution justify the need for effective supervision of instruction and school in the educational endeavour. It is quite obvious that, a strong educational system is a driving force of economic, source and political prosperity of any nation and hence the question about what makes supervision effective in any educational system is of great importance. It is therefore worthy to note that education is a veritable tool for the revamping, development and sustainability of any nation. Anashie and Mando (2014) opined that what a nation is or becomes is dependent on the type and quality of education provided for her citizenry, because no nation can rise above her educational system.

The increasing rate of unemployment arising from the declining trend in the quality of education and in the performance of teachers and learners in

Nigerian educational system has been partly blamed on lack of effective supervision of schools. For a school to progress academically and make outputs of graduates that can make meaningful contributions to Nigeria, the school, the teachers, the equipment and teaching/learning process as well as facilities must be supervised effectively. This is why Ukeje (1999) as cited by Anashie and Mando (2014) asserted that a school is a mirror of the society and an agent of social change. Anashie and Mando further emphasized that teaching is a process of nation building and the teacher, an instrument of nation building.

The challenges of ensuring the effectiveness of the school in raising educational standards, mobilizing stakeholders' support and providing effective quality control in any educational system depends on adequate school supervision (Asuquo, 2008). Ensuring creative and functional education in schools and improving achievement of students remains a critical priority throughout the world. To ensure creative and functional education in a comatose economy at the national, state and local levels rely much on school supervision as an effective tool for revamping the economy.

It is against this background that this paper examines some conceptual clarifications, aims and objectives, principles, purposes, problems and challenges of school supervision. It concluded that effective supervision is an indispensable tool for achieving creative and functional education for revamping

Nigerian's economy. As a way forward, some recommendations were made therein, which if strictly implemented, will reverse the current Nigerian's comatose economy to a virile economy.

Concept of Education

Education is globally recognized as the basis for human advancement and civilization. It is a veritable means of bringing about social, cultural, political and economic growth (Williams and Anekwe, 2010). Globally, education is seen and assumed to be the most veritable instrument of change, as any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. Education is the process of inculcating in an individual the right type of values and attitudes for survival, as well as enable him/her acquire appropriate skills, abilities and competencies both mental and physical and equip him/her to live in and positively contribute to the development of his/her society. According to Ainabor (2010), education is a human right instrument upon which the foundation of freedom, democracy, good governance and sustainable human and national development hinges. This implies that education affects the welfare of individuals, communities and nations. Education therefore aims at eliminating ignorance, poverty, diseases and the provision of the requisite knowledge for the empowerment needed for full actualization of human potential. Education therefore plays an important role in the well-being of any nation that

wants to sustain its prominence in the global scene.

Concept of Creative and Functional Education

The term creative connotes the ability to create or invent or develop new ideas and skills that are of practical and immense benefits to an individual and the society at large. While functional connotes being practical and useful, to oneself and to the society at large. Creative is a term derived from the word (verb) to create which means to bring into being, to do something new or to transform something in existence into another entity or format. According to Otuka (2015), creative education is viewed as fizzy ideas that cannot be clarified until it is made into a prototype where you can touch it, see it, test it and show it to others. Creative and functional education therefore refers to education that emanates from the individual's needs and that uses the individual's interest as a mechanism for stimulating him/her towards achieving his/her desirable potentials. The objective is to develop the life of the mind that acts from the wholeness of organic life, with relation to practical life and values in the present and in future (Ogbiji, 2013) Creative and functional education therefore develops the intellectual and moral capacities of the learner as well as inculcates values that are essential for harmonious co-existence as individuals and as nations.

According to Igbemi (2006) as cited by Akpabio, Noah and Anashie (2013:43):

Functional education is the form of education that develops the "youths" and "adolescent" physically, mentally, socially, intellectually and provides skills that make him/her productive and should emphasize, practical, demonstrations, modeling and the acquisition of skills in the use of tools and equipment.

According to Otuka (2015), functional education is the process of training and instruction, design to develop knowledge, insight, attitude, values and skills that are adapted to particular functions or use it in a nation's quest for development. Creative and functional education therefore is one for self-reliance and so, the education process develops an individual for a more effective life by having educational experiences that must be adapted to the individual's local conditions to enable him/her fit well in the society so that he/she can improve his/her standard of living and that of the society.

In the light of the above, it is pertinent to note that any nation that aims at revamping her dwindling economy must improve the quality of her labour force through creative and functional education. Creation of a labour force that acquires the necessary technical/vocational and entrepreneurial skills and ability to adopt to economic socio-political changes will aid in the economic development of the nation.

Concept of Effectiveness

The term effectiveness implies the achievement of objectives through exerted maximum effort or ability of an individual or group of individuals (Peretemode,

2012). In education Emeagwu (1991) as cited by Anashie and Mando (2014) considered supervision-effectiveness to mean supervision being intellectually, socially and emotionally stable and positively disposed towards the profession and also inspiring good quality in school personnel effectively for the overall development and advancement of desired goals.

Concept of School Supervision

The term supervision is derived from the latin word “supervise” (i.e. oversee), supervision from the perspective of the educational evaluator can be likened to monitoring. Monitoring is like a ‘road sign’ which tells us if we are in the right road, how far we have traveled in the right road and how far we still have to travel on the right road to reach our destination (Asim, 2008). School supervision according to Obi Akatchak (2008) is all effort of designated school officials toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction, and it involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection of educational objectives, materials of instruction and methods of teaching and evaluating instructions. Adzamba (2008) viewed supervision as a service-help to teachers or a process of giving and receiving help in an effort to improve instruction. This effort is concerned with what to teach, when it should be taught, to whom, by whom and how.

School supervision is therefore a mechanism used for achieving quality of effective management and control of education. It is a modern concept which aims at improving teaching and learning process in schools.

To Asemah (2010: 72-73), school supervision can be defined as:

The element of administrative process generally concerned with efforts to provide the day-to-day activities of group by stimulating, directing and coordinating the school workers and their effort, cultivating good working personal relationship so that all work towards a more efficient achievement of the task or goal.

This elucidates the fact that school supervision is aimed towards better performance of learners by guiding and coordinating the work of teachers and school administrators in such a way that pupils/students learning process is facilitated.

Aims and Objectives of School Supervision

Supervision as a function of planning and administration of education as shown in the National Policy on Education NPE (2013:67) section 9(137b) emphasized on “ensuring quality assurance through regular and continuous supervision of instructional and other educational services”. The goals of supervision as a process of Quality Assurance therefore are to:

a. set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the school system.

b. ensure uniform standard and quality control of instructional activities in school through regular inspection and continuous supervision.

c. obtain information on problem and difficulties of teachers and institutions and offer practical solution to them; and

d. encourage dissemination of information on innovation and progressive educational principle and practices in the school system through publication, workshops, meetings, seminars, conferences, etc (NPE, 2013:67-68).

In line with the above, Asemah (2010:74-75) recognized four main guidelines for supervision which when borne in mind would help in achieving the aims of improving quality of instructions and learning. These include:

(a) To offer leadership in the improvement of educational experience for children and the youth.

(b) In supervision, leadership is centered on a group and not on an individual.

(c) The achievement of the supervisory role is the realization of the group expectation through common effort.

(d) To foster leadership in others, cooperative participation of all concerned, utilization of talents and strength of all, that is democratic leadership.

Principles of School Supervision

Principles of instructional supervision are statements of fundamental truth that serve as guide to activities which are designed by designated official to improve instruction and consequently to

facilitate the teaching/learning process at all levels of the school system (Asuquo, 2008:51-53, Asemah, 2010:77-79). These principles include among others the following:

i. Supervision of instruction is directed towards both maintaining and improving the teaching / learning process of the school.

ii. Good instructional supervision is based upon democratic philosophy.

iii. It employs scientific methods and attitudes and utilizes and adapt to specific situations.

iv. The focus is on the setting for learning, not on person or group of persons, as all persons are co-worker aiming at the improvement of a situation.

v. Basing supervision on the assumption that teachers are capable of growth and accepting idiosyncrasies.

vi. It is flexible and adaptive as well as dynamic rather than adhering to a simple technique in supervision.

vii. It is creative and not prescriptive, i.e. provides opportunity for the exercise of originality and the development of unique contribution.

viii. It strives to enhance job satisfaction of teaching and also improve their morale.

ix. Effective supervision is anchored on a healthy rapport among staff members in a give and take atmosphere conducive for consideration of educational theories and issues of the school.

x. Effective supervision should provide honest, accurate and definite report on the supervision and what is observed.

xi. Effective instructional supervisory behaviour system requires authority, prestige and resources to work with teachers in a continuous effort to develop, maintain and evaluate the goals of the teacher/pupil system.

xii. Effective supervision fulfils its objective and contributes to improved teaching and learning.

Purposes of Instructional Supervision

These include among others the following as enumerated by Asemah (2010:78-79) and Schreinar (2013:3-4);

a. to directly influence the behaviours of teachers and the teaching processes employed to promote pupils learning;

b. ensure that each individual teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for which he/she is scheduled;

c. to cooperatively develop favourable climate for effective teaching and learning;

d. to know the performance of teachers employed to teach in the schools;

e. to determine whether the teacher should be transferred, promoted, retained or sacked;

f. to discover the special abilities or qualities possessed by the teachers in the school;

g. to help the incompetent teacher to improve on his teaching skills;

h. to provide guide to staff development;

i. to know the effectiveness of classroom management by the teachers and

j. to assess the tone of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs.

On the whole, Anashie and Akpabio (2013:147) described overall purpose of internal school supervision as:

An element of administrative process concerned with the effort of the administrator to guide the daily operations of the school by stimulating, directing and coordinating the subordinate staff and their efforts and cultivating good working personal relations so that all move collectively towards a more efficient performance of all the functions that lead to achievement of organizational (school) goals.

Problems and Challenges of School Supervision in Nigerian Economy

Given the central role of school supervision in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning, it seems logical that the entire educational system be overhauled in such a way that supervision is made to be at the forefront of all activities at all levels of education especially with the current trends of students activism, cultism, examination fraud and dwindling appetite for learning as well as staff indifference and lack of commitment. According to Oluwole (2007), there are however, certain obvious constraints and challenges that tend to inhibit and limit the efficacy of school supervision; some of these are:

- (i) Teachers' poor attitude to work
- (ii) Teachers' lack of interest

- (iii) Teachers' lack of basic knowledge/formal training in teaching
 - (iv) Presence of a large number of untrained and unqualified teachers
 - (v) Poor remuneration of teachers and school inspectors
 - (vi) Poor status accorded to teachers which dampen their morale
 - (vii) Inadequate provision of instructional materials
 - (viii) Lack of transportation facilities for supervision
 - (ix) Supervisors' lack of training in supervisory competence, etc.
- (vii) Prevalence of violence and other secret cult activities in secondary schools in the state.
 - (viii) Some pupils who transit from primary to secondary schools cannot read or write simple English.
 - (ix) Absence of qualified teachers in science, language and technical subjects in rural schools.

In addition to the above, Asemah (2010) also affirmed that the problems affecting school supervision in Nigeria today are many and varied. However, the most pressing ones include: lack of proper training, posting of frustrated education officials to the inspectorate department, lack of mobility, inadequate funding, lack of basic facilities and equipment in schools, inadequacy of school supervisors and poor condition of service of Nigerian teachers.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is obvious that effective supervision focuses on improving performance in schools and is aimed at enhancing the achievement of the academic goals of the school through structural activities. This paper therefore examined the conceptual framework of education, creative and functional education, effectiveness, school supervision, aims and objectives, principles, purposes and constraints of school supervision.

In support of the above view, Obi-Akatchak (2008:129) outlined the following challenges of school supervision in Nigeria:

- (i) Capacity building in the inspectorate department of the State Ministry of Education, Department not equipped for quality control responsibilities.
- (ii) Large scale failure in public examinations.
- (iii) Prevalence of examination malpractices in the state. Indeed some secondary schools have been de-recognized as public examination centres by the West African Examination Council (WAEC).
- (iv) Absenteeism and tardiness amongst teachers and students in primary and secondary schools in the state.
- (v) Fraudulent reporting and other sharp practices by schools' heads in the state.
- (vi) Presence of unqualified teachers in state primary schools.

Recommendations

For supervision to provide the background for target-oriented creative and functional education, quality assurance and quality development, the following are pertinent:

i. Teacher training and retraining on psychometrics and effective school practices should be pursued vigorously. Effective supervision of instruction scrutinizing various techniques and focusing on students' teachers, staff records and the entire school plant is very vital. The expectation is that if inputs and processes are of required standard, quality school graduates would be achieved.

ii. Whatever the strategies, quality assurance mechanism requires (a) a 'vision', (b) standards to express it in operational and measurable terms; (c) contractual arrangement between government and decentralized unit and (d) a variety of assessment and evaluation instruments to measure progress towards the goals and guide diagnostic and corrective decision-making.

iii. Schools supervision must include systematic collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on framework conditions, processes as well as results in relation to the core activities of the school. The focus of the data in terms of content will be determined on the basis of research-based knowledge about the framework conditions and teaching related processes that are essential in order to achieve good results for the pupils/students.

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