TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF PRINCIPALS' APPLICATION OF SUPERVISORY PRINCIPLES IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH WEST ZONE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated the perception of teachers on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools of North - West zone, Nigeria. Two objectives, one research question and its corresponding hypothesis guided the conduct of the study. Descriptive survey was adopted as the research design. The sample size was Three hundred and eighty - two (382), which comprised two hundred and eight (208) public school teachers and one hundred and seventy - four (174) private school teachers, drawn through proportionate, stratified and random sampling techniques, from a population of 51,577 teachers in the study area. A validated researcher - developed instrument named Principal's Application of Supervisory Principles Assessment Questionnaire (PASPAQ) was used as data collection instrument. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was .888. Descriptive statistics of Mean, Standard deviation, and independent sample t – test were used as statistical tools for data analyses. The results of the analyses indicated that, principals' application of supervisory principles significantly differ between public and private senior secondary schools, with Private schools having higher level of application in north – west zone. Based on this finding, it was concluded that, teachers' effectiveness in private school is more than in public schools due to effective principals' application of supervisory principles. Among the recommendations offered were that; public school principals should always encourage and enhance the professional growth of teachers through various activities that would improve their effectiveness in instructional delivery in the schools, as a means of bridging the disparity gap on teachers' effectiveness between public and private senior secondary schools.

Keywords: Supervisory Principles, Teacher Effectiveness, Students' Learning

DOI: **https://doie.org/10.10318/SER.2026878159**

Introduction

Supervision of school personnel and their activities in the teaching and learning process is central to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the school. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013, p 44) highlighted in precise term, the objectives of educational supervision which is to ensure "uniform standard and quality control of instructional activities in schools, through regular and continuous supervision". The purpose of such supervision is to offer guidance, promote growth and development of the teacher so that he can be competent in self–analysis, self–criticism and self–improvement, and consequently improve his output. This is very instructive to Nigerian senior secondary schools as many teachers are young graduates who have not acquired enough skills and experience to stand on their own. They need to be guided and assisted in the teaching – learning situation for effective service delivery. Akinfolarin and Rufa'i (2017) conceived instructional supervision as "the process of making progress in instructional delivery for better academic achievement". Thus, instructional supervision in schools provides enabling opportunity to improve teacher's abstract thought, efficiency, and a reflection on his pedagogical procedures, (Idris, 2021).

Teachers' instructional effectiveness has been accepted as a multidimensional construct since it measures a variety of different aspects of teaching such as; subject

mastery; effective communication; lesson preparation and presentation. According to Uko, et al. in Nnebedum and Akinfolarin (2017) teacher instructional effectiveness refers to the extent to which teachers are committed to pedagogical delivery and the display of moral uprightness and academic excellence in the teaching profession. Recent studies by Ofojebe, Chukwuma and Onyekwe, (2016) and Idris, (2023) have blamed the low learning achievement that prevails in public secondary schools to poor teachers' instructional effectiveness in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitude to work and poor teaching habits. However, teachers cannot effectively execute their duties without themselves being properly monitored and supervised by the school principal.

Alkrdem (2011) in Idris, (2023) argued that, for teachers to be more receptive to instructional supervision, it must be based on principles which will enable the teachers to see the need for change, plan for change, adapt and practice new teaching behavior for the improvement of teaching and learning in the schools. This is because the effectiveness of the school is largely dependent on the principal's ability to properly apply supervisory principles in counseling teachers, evaluating and remediating their pedagogical work, diagnose educational problems, and work collaboratively to improve teaching and learning in the school. This paper therefore, focused on comparative study of teachers' perception on principal's application of supervisory principles as a variable of teacher instructional effectiveness in public and private senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria.

Literature Review

Instructional supervisory principles are statements of fundamental truth that serve as guidelines to activities which are designed to improve teaching through collaborative, democratic and supportive processes, emphasizing goal-setting, continuous development, positive environments, and constructive feedback to support teachers in enhancing skills, solving problems, and fostering better educational outcomes. Theoretically, instructional supervision has two basic functions which directly impinge on school functioning. First instructional supervision helps "maintain system levels norms". This is important as senior secondary education is one of the critical units of the larger system. While each school may have its own uniqueness and individuality, together they have to follow certain common pattern of organization and functioning. Secondly instructional supervision "promotes change and development " of every aspect of school life, (De-Grauwe in Idris, 2023).

This study adopted the psychological theory to instructional supervision explored by Planturroot (2006) in Samoel (2014). According to the theorist, within an organization there is collection of people where at least one person stands out as the leader of the organization. In educational institutions, Planturroot explains, supervisors seek to improve schools, classroom instruction and the growth of the institutional body by using one or more of the three philosophies namely; essentialism (directional), experimentalism (collegial) and existentialism (non- directional). These three philosophies determine the manner in which the principal will direct the school.

Psychological theory is relevant to this study because it lays the foundation of the different principles of the principal's instructional supervisory responsibility that is used for improving classroom instruction to facilitate students' academic achievement. This

study builds on the three philosophies because the strengths of each are useful for the principals' instructional supervisory roles. Furthermore, these philosophies also complement each other in their limitation, therefore bringing in a positive blend for instructional supervision in school.

Akudo (2025) while synthesizing the work of Ramezan and Mistra (2013) has listed the following as the principles of instructional supervision;

It has to be a group service: The supervision must involve person(s) working under daily observation with the intention of improving performance. Education deals with group interaction like the teacher and the students as well as the supervisor. Thus, the school principal should provide professional and instructional guidance so as to achieve the school's predetermined educational goals.

Supervision must be planned: The processes of supervision varies and as such requires careful planning and arrangement for its execution. This suggests that, the principal must be a good planner and organizer of both human and material resources for the best attainment of instructional goals. He/she should continually think through present and future problems, analyze them, set priorities and finally select alternative courses of action.

It is goal driven: This is why the goals of education must be clarified to the staff so as to checkmate the teaching/learning experience moves in the direction of goal achievement. This involves sound assessment of performance, goals and objectives. It also involves keeping of clean records of instructional functions. These records help to prevent rise of bias due to personal opinions.
It has to ensure provision of facilities: For effective supervision to be done; there must be adequate provision of resources for the staff.
Supervision is an educational road map: It guides and directs the school players towards ensuring that the activities move in line with the prescribed standard.
Supervision is eclectic in approach: This implies that there is need for flexibility in the act of supervision. The supervisor should acknowledge and apply this tactic of eclectic approach according to the spur of the moment optimal goal feat. School principals should appreciate other people's criticism, faults and weaknesses. He/she should avoid personal attacks and should give criticism of professional rather than personal nature.

Creativity which entails constructive thinking and problem solving ability. The principal needs to encourage teachers to discover more effective devises and techniques of teaching which in turn gives them self-confidence and stimulates a desire for professional growth.

Integration this entails working together harmoniously, despite personal and professional differences and similarities. Principal should be able to guide through the principle of integration by selecting or organizing materials that are complete and coherent so as to achieve harmony in the school setting.

Community orientation which suggests a good relationship between the school and the community it serves. The community leaders should be utilized in school decision making the process to enhance the achievement of the school's educational goals.

Evaluation entails both formative and summative evaluation based on objective of observation and in relation to educational plans and objectives.

In specific terms, Idris (2023) lending support to Adenaike and Adebanjo (2010) emphasized that for teachers to be more receptive to instructional supervision, the following principles should be adhered to:

Instructional supervision should focus on all elements of teaching - learning situation, not teacher centered;
Instructional supervision should mainly focus on the improvement of learning, hence should be inspirational and instructive rather than repressive;
Instructional supervision should afford each teacher a definite and concrete basis for improvement;
Principal as instructional supervisor should be responsible for rating teachers for what transpires in the classroom and for the instruction in all areas, at all levels;
Principal should help the teacher use various measures of self-evaluation;
The supervision process should make teachers feel free to discuss their problems and to make suggestions, while the supervisor on the other hand must respect the opinions and points of view of the teachers;
Principal should assist in providing suitable enabling environment for teaching and learning activities;
Principal in recommending methods of supervision should consider the individual differences of teachers as to personal, physical, mental and social capabilities; and
Instructional Supervision methods should include preparing, observing, and a follow-up conference (P 38 – 39).

In essence, principles of instructional supervision enable principals to work with teachers in a non - threatening process, and move interaction from what it is not, to what should be. It also allows for objective feedback, which if given in a timely manner will help to improve results in consideration to the unique individuality of every teacher and the need of every teaching–learning situation.

Statement of the problem

The concern of this study is that, disparity exists in teachers' instructional effectiveness between public and private senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria, which negatively affect students' academic performance. For instance, the five year average students' achievement in NECO's SSCE between 2017 and 2021 of public and private senior secondary schools in North – West zone was 45.17% and 72.83% respectively, (NECO, 2023). Who should be blamed for this disparity? It is clear from the results above that something is wrong with teachers' instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools, which could be attributed to poor application of supervisory principles by the principals since they are responsible for improving teaching and learning in their schools. Thus, the question one raises here is: did principals of public and private senior secondary schools significantly differ in the application of supervisory principles in the schools?

Objectives of the Study

The study was set to;

i. determine teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria;
ii. compare teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria;

Research Question

Is there difference in teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North – West zone of Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean scores of teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles between public and private senior secondary schools in North - West zone of Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population of the study composed of 29,146 and 22,431 teachers in public and private senior secondary schools in North - West, Nigeria totaling 51,577. The sample of the study was 382 teachers based on the recommendation of research advisors (2006) table for determining sample size. The study employed a multi-stage sampling procedure in sampling the respondents. Kano, Katsina and Sokoto states were drawn using simple random sampling technique by balloting without replacement. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to allocate respondents to each selected state in the 2 categories of schools under the study as follows: Kano State – 111 teachers from public schools, and 88 teachers from private schools; Katsina state – 50 teachers from public schools, and 40 teachers from private schools; and Sokoto state – 47 teachers from public schools, and 46 teachers from private schools drawn from 39 sampled schools in the area. The instrument used for data collection was researcher-developed questionnaire titled: 'Principals' Application of Supervisory Principles Assessment Questionnaire (PASPAQ)' designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was structured on four point likert scales of measurement as follows: Very High Extent (VHE) = 4 point, High Extent (HE) = 3 point, Low Extent (LE) = 2 point, and Very Low Extent (VLE) = 1 point. The questionnaire was face and content validated, and a reliability of 0.888 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. Three hundred and sixty – five (365) copies of the instrument were recorded as response rate. Mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research question, while the null hypothesis was subjected to t-test of independent samples.

Result

Research Question: Is there difference in teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North – West zone of Nigeria?

Table 1: Presents the result of Teachers' Perception on Principals' Application of Supervisory Principles in Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools in North –West zone of Nigeria

Variable	SCT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation
Supervisory Principles	Public	197	2.84	.473	0.64	.119
	Private	168	3.48	.332		

Average Mean = 3.07

The result from Table 1 shows that, disparity exists in teachers' perception on principals' application of principles of instructional supervision between public and private senior secondary schools in North – west zone of Nigeria, with private schools having higher level of application as indicated by (M = 3.476 and SD = .353) than what is obtained in public schools, (M = 2.835 and SD = .473) which is less than the average mean set for the study (3.07). The mean difference and standard deviation difference between the two means (M diff. = 0.641 and SD = .119) respectively. This implies that, principals' application of supervisory principles is not frequent in public senior secondary schools.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North -West zone of Nigeria.

Table 2: Independent samples t-test on the difference between the mean scores of teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North – West zone of Nigeria.

SCT	N	Mean	Stand Dev.	Df	t	p	Ho
Public	197	2.835	.473	363	-14.47	.000	Rejected
Private	168	3.476	.353				

0.05

The result from Table 2 reveals that, a significant difference was found (t = -14.47; p = .000), indicating that, principals' application of supervisory principles vary between public and private senior secondary schools in North - west zone of Nigeria. However, descriptive statistics indicates that application of principles of instructional supervision in private senior secondary schools (M = 3.476; SD = .353), more than the application by principals in public senior secondary schools (M = 2.835; SD = .473). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that; there is no significant difference between the mean scores of teachers' perception on principals' application of supervisory Principles in public and private senior secondary schools in North -West zone of Nigeria is hereby rejected. The magnitude of the effect of the difference size between the two means using Cohen's formula is (mean difference = -.641; 95% CL -.726 to -.556) is (eta squared = 0.4).

Discussion of the Findings

The findings from the analysis of the research question and hypothesis revealed that, the principals' application of supervisory principles is more with private than public senior secondary schools have clearly indicated that, instructional supervision in public

schools is not directed towards supporting, assisting, and guiding teachers in developing their teaching effectiveness, but rather for mere administrative reasons. Consequently, this finding agrees with Ramezan and Mitra (2013) who discovered that, the way teachers perceive supervisory principles employed in the schools is an important factor that determines the outcome of the supervision process. This finding also lend credence to Idris, (2023) who blamed the persistent low learning achievement in public secondary schools to poor teachers' teaching effectiveness as a result of poor principals' instructional supervision.

This evidence signifies a major factor that makes teaching effectiveness in private more efficient than public senior secondary schools especially on the principle of colleagueship (collaboration), where experience teachers in the school help, guide, direct, stimulate and encourage new and inexperience teachers in a collaborative, supportive and cooperative relationship. This principle is very instrumental to Nigerian secondary schools, as the typical teacher education in our faculties and colleges of education cannot provide the pre -service teachers with all they need to know when teaching, nor can they give full - mastery of techniques of instruction. In addition, Principals should encourage creativity and innovations that shall improve effective performance in instructional processes.

These findings implied that, the school principals are essentially organizers and implementers of plans, policies and programs meant to achieve educational objectives, which requires him/her to frequently be innovative, objective, cooperative, dynamic; flexible, and democratic in dealings with teachers and students. Thus, pre-eminent in the principal's role as an instructional supervisor is his/her ability to motivate and inspire teachers with the end goal of exerting a positive influence on instructional practice and ultimately students' achievement. This suggests that, the school principal is a leader, counselor, guider, psychologist and a teacher of teachers which requires him/her to have mission and vision to effectively utilize both human and materials resources at his / her disposal to achieve the expected goals.

The need for effective principal's instructional supervision arose out of the fact that, the structure of the school organization must be coherent to enable all within the system know their positions, roles and expectations hold from them. This pre-supposes that, supervision in schools should be used as an instrument of helping teachers positively to develop their potentials, not as an instrument for witch hunt and punishment. However, when instructional supervision is used as an instrument to issue orders and dogmas, threatened, punished or cut teachers down, it certainly leads to mistrust, disrespect and chaos which consequently reduce the effectiveness of the instructional process. Thus, the study supports the assumptions of psychological theory to instructional supervision which provides the three aspects of instructional supervision of the school principal namely; directional, collegial and non- directional approaches. It is therefore, clear from this exposition that for any learning institution to achieve its educational goals, those given authority must carry out instructional supervision based on its principles.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that, principals of public schools lack a well-planned program of instructional supervision based on principles that emphasized encouragement, motivation, guidance, support, assistance and

improvement of the total teaching - learning process. This implies that, principals of public senior secondary schools are merely concern with administrative services to the detriment of instructional effectiveness of teachers in the schools. The frequency of principals' application of supervisory principles and its bearing on teachers' effectiveness constitutes the leverage plank for instructional improvement, teacher competence and efficiency of the educational system. This is because the success of an educational program especially in the achievement of effective learning depends largely on the effectiveness of the teachers. What they know and can do, can make a great difference, and what they do not know and cannot do or fail to do, can be an irreparable loss to the children.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made as follows;

1. Principals should always encourage and enhance the professional growth of teachers through various activities that would improve their effectiveness in instructional delivery. This presupposes that, principals should regularly engage teachers in several staff development programs to constantly update their conceptual knowledge and skills.
2. Teachers' academic conferences in schools, should always incorporate discussion on teachers' instructional challenges and alternatives ways of solving these challenges be provided.
3. Principals should teach on regular basis to encourage, stimulate and develop teachers' interest in the teaching - learning process, and should keep abreast of new changes and development in education in order to introduce them to their staff.
4. Principals should use different motivational strategies such as praises and delegation of authority to boost the morale of teachers to give their best in teaching - learning process and should be involved in the decision making process of the schools especially in the area of curriculum and program implementation.

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