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Strategies for Improving Supervisory Skills for Effective Primary Education in Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

The study's goal is to look into the difficulties that school directors experience in their supervisory positions. In order to evaluate the impact of professional training, management by objectives, motivation, and communication on supervisory roles, four particular objectives were set. The hypotheses investigated revealed that professional training has a favorable influence on supervisory skills, MBO has no significant effect on supervisory skills, motivation has no effect on supervisory skills, and communication and supervisory positions have a negative association. Traditional statistical procedures were used to test the results, as well as the usage of chi-square to evaluate significant levels. The suggestions offered would assist school leaders in Cameroon's primary education system in improving their supervision abilities and competencies.

Key Words: Supervision Of Instructions, Supervisory Skills And Effective School.

Introduction

1.1 Importance of Primary education

Primary education's critical importance in both personal and economic development necessitated the implementation of a variety of educational programs. These initiatives intended to improve professional elementary education in Cameroon and around the world. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) statute of 1996 in Cameroon is an example of such a scheme (Tambo,2003).

The goals of primary education as stated in the 1996 law of education include the following:

a. To inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.

b. Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking

c. Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.

d. Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child.

e. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment.

f. Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity.

g. Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and craft of the locality.

The document went on to say that the primary school curriculum should include, among other things, language (English, French, and environmental language), mathematics, science, physical and health education, religious knowledge, agricultural science, home economics, social studies, citizenship education, cultural and creative arts (Fonkeng, 2005), and so on.

The importance of a well-balanced and result-oriented teaching and learning process, as well as interaction between and among students, teachers, school leaders, and external education officials, is highlighted by careful assessment of the aforementioned aims and curricular content. The supervision of instruction and other important educational activities and school facilities by school heads or other designated officials is one such organized, directed, and structured program (GESP,2008). This duty cannot be left to chance or in the hands of inexperienced, unprepared, or untrained education personnel.

As a result, the purpose of this article is to emphasize the importance of improving the abilities of individuals charged with school supervision in our primary schools in order to assure the quality of instruction required to meet Cameroon's national primary school education objectives.

1.2 Statement of Research problem.

When instructors, supervisors, and resources for achieving educational goals are of high quality, an education system is considered effective. A healthy school is distinguished by the quality of its curriculum, sound teaching, and, most importantly, the supervisors' abilities (Glickma,1999). Titanji(2017)

stated unequivocally that a school with good and clear minded supervisors ensures resource efficiency with no waste. When school leaders are determined to keep the peace and promote educational reforms, they fight for it.

However, the Cameroon education system is beset by issues such as low production, ineffectiveness, a lack of qualifications, and mismanagement. Many supervisors in basic education do not have the professional training and field experience to initiate purposeful direction and coordinated supervisory programs in schools, according to evidence and observations from numerous stakeholders and international scholars during the last 35 years. This issue is most noticeable in private primary schools throughout the country. Because the primary focus is on annual profit, school leaders are given less time to improve themselves. This lowers productivity while also increasing resource waste. The goal of the study is to look into the obstacles to effective supervision in Cameroon's primary schools.

1.3 Research objectives

The main research objective is to investigate the challenges faced by school heads or supervisors in basic education in Cameroon.

The specific research objectives are;

- To assess the effect of managerial skills on effective supervision in basic education
- To evaluate the significant of professional training on supervisors
- To know if there is relationship between communication skills and supervisors' performances
- To evaluate the effect of coordination on supervisors' skills in basic education.

1.4. Research Questions

- How does professional training increase supervisory skills in basic education?
- What is the effect of delegation of responsibilities on supervisory skills in basic education?
- Is there relationship between communication effectiveness and supervisory skills?
- How does coordination affect supervisory skills and competencies?

1.5 Hypothesis of the study

- The hypotheses of the study were stated following the null and alternate perspectives;
- There is no effect of coordination on supervisory skills of supervisors in basic education
- There is effect of communication on supervisory skills
- There is no relationship between professional training and supervisory skills
- There is positive impact of delegation on supervisory skills of supervisors

2.1 Conceptual Review

Definition of Concepts

Let us distinguish between the terms supervision and inspection. There is a need for these notions to be clarified. To inspect implies to look at something, uncover a flaw, and make sure everything is up to par (Glimson,1978). It can also refer to a thorough or critical examination of anything. It could also mean doing an official inspection during a visit to ensure that regulations and standards are being followed. To supervise, on the other hand, means to direct, oversee, guide, or ensure that required standards are fulfilled, according to Igwe (2001). Thus, at a school, supervision refers to the act of ensuring that the concepts, rules, regulations, and techniques established for the purpose of implementing and accomplishing educational goals are followed to the letter. As a result, supervision entails using professional knowledge and experiences to watch, assess, and coordinate the process of enhancing school teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, supervision can be viewed as an interaction involving a pre-existing relationship between and among people, in which people affect one another. A prearranged program of education has a significant impact on such interactions. In this sense, according to Netzer and Kerey (1971), supervision is the systematization of the interaction of individuals who are responsible for operating inside the administrative structure. As a result, the supervisor is expected to undertake many activities in the course of his duties that will result in a successful integration of these two settings, resulting in harmony and contentment.

Skills Required for Supervision

Supervision in schools necessitates a wide range of professional abilities.

According to Olowoye (1989), these abilities can be divided into eight categories, as follows:

1) Pedagogical Skills: These include subject matter expertise, teaching methods, improvisation, content presentation, lesson notes, lesson plans, and units, among other things.

2) Questioning, ongoing assessment, and examination skills are examples of evaluation skills.

3) Disciplinary Skills: These include class management, punishment, the application of rules and regulations, and the upkeep of order.

4) Motivational Skills: The importance of issues such as rewards and reinforcement is stressed.

5) Reportorial Skills: Maintaining records such as report cards, class registers, log books, and attendance books.

6) Managerial Skills: These include time management, effective use of teaching aids, dealing with tough situations, and managing student conduct.

7) Interaction Skills: Establishing rapport, personality and general qualities of the teacher, cooperation, and so on.

8) Analytical Skills: Mathematical competence, statistical computation, and data interpretation, among other things.

The value of developing these skills cannot be left to chance, charlatans, or the mediocre. This highlights the importance of improving the abilities of school supervisors in order to accomplish Cameroon's primary education goals.

Duties of School Supervisors

The following are some of the responsibilities of school supervisors: The following tasks are shared by school heads in Cameroon's basic education system, according to a ministerial statement from 2001. (Gickman,1999).

1. Assisting instructors and encouraging curriculum development

2. Stressing the importance of using the group process with teachers, students, and other school workers.

3. Performing administrative activities solely to assist in-service training.

4. In-service training for instructors to improve instruction.

According to Igwe (2001), supervision entails evaluation, monitoring, and quality control with the goal of improving curriculum and infrastructure. In order to accomplish this, some specific supervisory roles in a modern school have been defined and outlined below:

a) Assisting school principals in better understanding students

b) Assisting teachers and individuals in professional development

 c) Fostering a cooperative spirit for teamwork

d) Improving the use of teaching materials

 e) Improving teaching methods

f) Improving the teacher's assessment of his own standards

g) The teacher's acquisition of creativity inside the commodity.

g) The faculty has devised a plan to improve the curriculum.

The common denominator in the above-mentioned supervisory objectives is to assist teachers in becoming more effective in organizing their classroom work in terms of maximizing the use of textbooks and other fundamental resources and curricular aids, as well as providing direction and evaluation to teachers.

Supervisory Roles

Effective intra-school supervision is focused on recognizing particular criteria areas that, if successfully overseen, can assist improve the quality of Cameroon's primary school education.

Tambo (2007) recognized the following areas, among others:

i. The Characteristics of a Lesson Plan

The lesson plan reflects the teacher's level of preparedness as well as his or her work in acquiring information for the class. As a result, a badly drafted lesson plan reveals not only the teacher's quality, but also his level of devotion to his primary responsibility of teaching. The following elements of the lesson plan must be thoroughly examined by the school head (headmaster): a) The clarity and appropriateness of the learner behavioral objectives

b) The relevancy and adequacy of the lesson notes, c) the selection of relevant teaching aids, and d) the selection of appropriate evaluation methodologies to measure the extent of effectively achieving the goal.

ii. Lesson Presentation

When the targeted objectives are met, teaching is considered to be effective. The school principal must pay close attention to the following aspects:

a) The teacher's voice quality, speech, clarity of expression, intelligibility and appropriateness of language, effective use of learning materials such as audio-visual aids and chalkboard, etc., b) The teacher's knowledge of the subject matter in terms of structure and sequence, c) Teacher's knowledge of the subject matter in terms of structure and sequence, d) Use of classroom management techniques including skills in affixing, affixing, affixing, affixing,

iii. Reference Materials

It is impossible to miss the usage of relevant reference materials such as textbooks, schemes of work, and syllabuses. The following issues must be investigated by the principals:

a) The item's or topic's duration.

b) The materials' relevancy and logicalness, c) The order in which the contents are presented, and so on.

d) Using current materials rather than outmoded ones.

iv. The Relationship between Teacher**and Student**

Without a doubt, a positive interpersonal relationship between professors and students may foster learning and help students achieve their educational objectives. In this regard, the administrator must seek true affection and concern, as well as a positive and accepted attitude among instructors and pupils. His ability to adjust or tolerate, as well as, if possible, provide a hand through guidance and counseling services, must be taken into account.

v. Classroom Management

Good classroom management makes the teaching and learning process go more smoothly. The following must be known by the principal or other designated school personnel:

a) The ability to discipline and control students, b) Reward skills to reinforce good performance or conduct, c) The ability to identify cases and causes of students' misbehavior, d) The creation of a conducive classroom climate, e) Student seating arrangements, and f) The physical condition of the classroom (ministerial text 2001)

vi. Personality of the Teacher

Personal features or attributes, emotional status, looks, IQ, physique, leadership skills, communication skills, and so on are all part of a teacher's personality.

Challenges of School Supervision

There are a number of issues that work against efficient instruction supervision in our schools.

Inadequacy of Personnel: In our schools, the number of professionally trained supervisors is far insufficient to meet the demands of an effective and efficient supervision program. Because the school's student population has outgrown the required teacher-to-pupil ratio, most principals' only concern in terms of education is ensuring that there are enough teachers to staff the classrooms.

External supervisors or inspectors are in short supply: External supervisors and inspectors are usually Ministry of Education or Education Board officers who have been assigned to assess the level of conformity of school instructional activities with government-approved standards. Unfortunately, due to the enormous number of government schools and teachers, this group of workers is frequently in short supply. According to Ogunu (2005), as a result of the lack of supervisory personnel, many unprofessional acts are carried out in our schools, often to the disadvantage of the students.

Lack of Time: According to Ogunu (2005), secondary school principals are so swamped with administrative responsibilities that they have little time to visit classrooms and evaluate how instructors are teaching.

We cannot expect children to perform well when principals devote more time to correspondence with the Ministry of Education and its parastatals, community affairs, parents, and a slew of other visitors while neglecting their primary responsibility of overseeing instruction in the schools. Some unethical instructors take advantage of the school principal's lack of monitoring to further their own selfish goals.

Inadequate Basic Instructional Materials: Without instructional materials, there can be no effective oversight of instruction. Most schools, according to experience, lack even the most basic teaching materials and equipment, such as textbooks, chalkboards, and a suitable classroom for students.

Apart from circumstances when there is nothing to monitor, there are others where the supervisor lacks the necessary facilities and tools.

External supervisors (inspectors), for example, frequently lack the necessary transportation and writing supplies to carry out their duties.

Inadequate Instructional Supervision Training and Orientation: Many newly appointed principals do not receive the essential training and orientation to equip them with the skills they need to carry out their instructional supervisory responsibilities. They get by for years without realizing what instructional supervision is or how to go about doing it.

Inadequacy of money: Head teachers are frequently unable to conduct in-house orientation and in-service programs for their staff or to travel to other schools and resource centers to learn about new innovations in curriculum and instruction that may help their schools due to a lack of funding.

If the government's aims for national development are to be met, it must provide appropriate funding and skilled staff for the monitoring of education in our schools.

2.2 Theoretical framework

In this study (Mbua, 2003), numerous ideas linked to supervisory skills will be examined. These theories serve to explain several theories of motivation that aid in improving effective supervisory skills for school leaders. Some of them are discussed farther down.

Needs are arranged in a hierarchy. Abraham Maslow proposed this idea to define the personal and professional needs that all humans instinctively seek. Physical, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization are the five degrees of human needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, while originally developed in the realm of psychology, has significant implications for comprehending supervisory models and ideas. Hierarchy aids supervisors in comprehending how both educators and learners advance in achieving their life goals based on their various degrees of requirements and fulfillments. Supervisors must make an effort to connect with both students and teachers in order to comprehend their feelings and expectations. This is critical in terms of involving programs for instruction supervision.

The X-Theory Douglas McGregor introduced this notion, claiming that most individuals despise working and only do so because they need money. A supervisory model of theory of x encourages educators to be closely monitored and motivated to accomplish more.

Y is the theory. According to the hypothesis, some employees enjoy working and even look forward to it. These people take pride in their profession and may have personal goals that serve as natural sources of inspiration and motivation. As a supervisory model, the theory proposes that school leaders spend more time looking after their teachers, resulting in a more pleasant and comfortable working atmosphere. Supervisory responsibilities would entail assisting educators and students in achieving successful learning outcomes.

Motivational paradigm based on expectation. Motivating people to perform at a high level at work is critical for a small firm because each employee's function in the organization is important. According to this approach, instruction supervision should focus on both educators' and learners' perceptions of intended outcomes. Teachers and students will be more effective if they understand what inspires them. Three principles are established by the model: the relationship between effort and performance, the relationship between rewards and performance, and the relationship between attractiveness and rewards. Supervisory programs should focus on fostering positive relationships between educators and students (Besong, 2015).

2.3 Contextual Reviews

The concept of supervision has been practiced by both school administrators and other external stakeholders for many years, according to the history of the Cameron education system. Local authorities and people were utilized to support the administration of the schools because the British government in British Cameron could not sustain the cost of administration (Ojong, 2003). In the 1960s, school heads were required to do both inspection and supervision of instruction, while the University of London served as a general supervisory authority for all schools. A British model was used to merge the curriculum and pedagogy. As a result of the federation of Cameroon, the ministry of education now supervises both East and West Cameroon

schools (Fonkeng,2008). In addition, various teacher training colleges have been established to help instructors develop their abilities and professionalism. Through the decentralization of the education system, instruction supervision becomes both governmental and individual responsibility. School heads and other school administrators are assigned the task to supervise instructions in the schools, according to a ministerial text from 2001. (GESP,2005). In Cameroon's educational systems, instruction supervision has evolved into a collaborative endeavor between school leaders and other stakeholders.

3. Methodology of the Research

This section discusses the research methodology used in qualitative and quantitative studies. It covers topics such as targeted respondents, research techniques, research materials, data collection, and data analysis.

Respondents in basic education, such as teachers and supervisors, are the focus of the study. For a population of roughly 5500 school leaders, the sample size is around 1000. Purposive-random sampling was used to pick the respondents. Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. To evaluate significant levels, the data was displayed using frequency distribution tables, pie charts, and other statistical methods, such as regression analysis and chi-square. A pilot system was used to distribute questionnaires. Closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaires, with respondents having the option of agreeing, disagreeing, or remaining undecided. The scale had three numbers: three for agree, one for disagree, and zero for undecided. The null hypothesis is rejected when the coefficient value falls between 0.48 and 0.76, according to the decision rule.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis.

The four variables under investigation were set in both null and alternate hypotheses.

Table 4.1: Presentation of the responses to hypothesis 1.

hypothesis1	Agree		Disagree		Uncertain		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is effect of professional training on supervisory skills	750	75	250	25	0	0	1000	100
TOTAL	3		1		0		4	

Table 4.2: presentation of responses to hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2	Agree		Disagree		Uncertain		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is no significant effect of MBO on supervisory skills	600	60	330	33	70	7	1000	100
TOTAL	3		1		0		4	

Table 4.3: presentation of responses to hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 3	Agree		Disagree		Uncertain		Totals	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is a positive effect of motivation on supervisory skills	350	35	500	50	150	15	1000	100
TOTAL	1		3		0		4	

Table 4.4: Presentation of responses to hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4	Agree		Disagree		UNCERTAIN		Totals	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is a positive relationship between communication and supervisory skills	700	70	300	30	0	0	1000	100
TOTAL	3		1		0		4	

4.2. Testing of hypothesis and findings

Hypothesis 1. The calculated value of 0.143 is greater than the critical value of 0.346. According to the decision rule, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Since the contingent coefficient of .057 lies between 0.48 and 0.76, we agree that there is a significant effect of professional training onsupervisory skills.

Hypothesis 2. The calculated value is 0.345 and the critical value is 0.97. According to the decision rule, we reject the alternate hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis. Since the Contingent coefficient of 0.83 is above 0.76, we accept the null hypothesis that there is no significant effect of MBO on supervisory skills.

Hypothesis 3. The calculated value is 0.512 is lesser than 0.125 critical value. The alternate hypothesis is rejected. Since the Contingent coefficient of 0.79 is above 0.76, we disagree that there is a significant effect of motivation on supervisory sills.

Summary of findings.

The results above show that;

-There is a positive effect of professional training on supervisory skills

- there is no significant effect of MBO on supervisory skills.

-there is no effect of motivation on supervisory skills.

5.1. Policy Recommendations

The above mentioned findings of the study suggest the following recommendations in order to improve supervisory skills for school leaders in basic education in Cameroon.

1. Training and retraining of supervisor: The training of new supervisors, as well as the retraining of existing supervisors, should be prioritized. For this objective, special training centers with experienced and practicing supervisors should be established. This is significant because the use of old or obsolete techniques or methods contradicts the spirit of primary education inspection. Supervisors could be sponsored to attend seminars, workshops, or conferences to keep up to date on modern and appropriate supervisory procedures.

2. Morale Boosting**:** The relationship between motivation and skill performance has been studied extensively. If supervisors are properly motivated with available work materials such as stationery, transportation, a pleasant working environment, and increased salaries and allowances, their morale may improve, affecting their skills.

.**3. Employment of supervisors with higher educational qualifications:** Supervisors with higher educational qualifications are more likely to outperform those with lower qualifications in the sector. Education professionals with greater qualifications, according to Okoro (2004), have more confidence in their workplace. Furthermore, they have easier access to quality information and can adapt to changing occupational conditions than their lower-qualified counterparts, who are typically less prepared and ill-equipped to adapt to modern changes.

4. International and inter-state exchanges**:** It has been proposed that a purposeful and government-sponsored international and interstate exchange of supervisory individuals and experiences could improve supervisory skills. Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Canada, and other countries with similar educational policies could participate in such exchange programs. The goal is to ensure that ideas are cross-pollinated and that different approaches to comparable problems or challenges are explored.

.5. Improved Selection Criteria for Supervisors**:** : Supervision is a technical task that necessitates a thorough, objective evaluation. As a result, persons charged with this task should be carefully chosen from among the available education personnel in schools or state education ministries.

A particular aptitude test could be used to assess candidates' suitability by examining several aspects of their personalities.

According to Obanya (2005), this demanding exercise boosts confidence, which is essential for skill acquisition and performance.

6. Further training programs againstUnprofessional Performance: In order to strengthen the skills of school supervisors, relevant actions should be leveled for supervisors who are not professionalized and who tend to undermine the desired standard. A system in which mediocrity is lauded and standards are abandoned, while supervisors who excel in their assignments should be recognized appropriately, either in kind or in cash, penalizing substandard performance could serve as a deterrent to others.

7. Motivation for good Performance**:** While many forms of incentive have the ability to raise employee morale, they also have the ability to encourage increased performance and the development of high-quality abilities. As a result, supervisors who work well should be paid appropriately in order to preserve and, if feasible, increase their abilities.

Conclusion

The need to attain relevant skills without waste of resources by those charged with supervisory roles to achieving the said goals of primary education cannot be undermined. Consequently, collaborative efforts should be made towards providing improved skills acquisition strategies by concerned stakeholders in the educational sector.

It is hoped that if the content of this paper is given the desired attention, the quality of skills and competencies of head teachers as school supervisors would be improved and the standard of education could be better for it.

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