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Supervision of Universal Basic Education Centers in Anambra State, Nigeria: Concept, Challenges and Prospects

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INTRODUCTION

Supervision of schools in the UBE programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria is an aspect of quality control. It is bound with the efficiency of learning and improvement of the teaching/ learning services. Quality control of Basic Education centers is closely associated with a vital component of education (Monitoring & Evaluation). Today, 'Quality Control' is used more or less as a synonym for supervision or inspection which is within the comprehension of the wider segment of the educated publics. Instructional supervision in Nigeria began as a process of external inspection. In the 18th century, supervision was characterized by inspection for control and was carried out by laymen (Onoyase, 1991). Supervisors were appointed who were clergies and had little or no background on educational administration and management. The priest was made a supervisor of school on the basis of the priesthood belonging. Supervisors were inexperienced in the act of supervision. They had little or no formal training of the ethics, concept and practice of supervision. Until the control of schools by government in 1967, school supervision was left in the hands of the missionaries.

Supervision as a field of educational management did not fall from the sky, fully formed. This study is not aimed at tracing the historical origin of school supervision. As claimed, supervision emerged as a distinct practice. Supervision of schools in Nigeria is a formal activity exercised by educational administrators. The school lecturer in the tertiary institution supervising students work and teaching practice in the field, the chief inspector of education in the inspectorate division supervising teacher's work, the educational secretaries supervising the teachers in the local Government amongst others. Supervision has been defined by different researchers in the field of educational administration. Neter and Krey (1971) in Egwunyenga (2005) defined supervision the phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of the appropriate instructional expectations of the educational system. Supervision is a critical examination and evaluation of a school as a designated place of learning so as to make it possible for necessary advice to be given for the purpose of school improvement. Egwunyenga (2005) perceives supervision as an action taken to improve teaching and learning situation for children. School supervision is a flexible process of education. It is not a fixed system. Its context and contents varies from place to place. It is situational modified. The task of supervision in the introduced Universal Basic Education System introduced by the Obasanajo led government in 1999 which aims at providing un-altered access to 9 years of formal Basic education, provision of free, universal education for every Nigerian child of school going age, and reducing drastically the incidence of drop out from the formal school system through improved quality and efficiency (FGN, 1999) is to monitor and be the watch dog of improved education system in Nigeria. It is geared towards the improvement, observation, modification, correction of teachers, the school system and the improvement of teaching and learning.

Supervision forms the part of the overall quality monitoring and improvement system which includes devices such as examinations, test, supervision of instruction, supervision of attendance and performance of the pupils/students to the overall(six years duration for primary segment and three

years of junior secondary) is prayed as the answer to ignorance and servitude.

The thirty-six states of Nigeria have key implementers of the nation's Universal Basic Education Board. The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is the commission charged with the implementation of the UBE scheme in Nigeria headed by an Executive Secretary. The state Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB), are charged with the responsibilities of implementing, coordinating, Directing, administration and overseeing of the policies of the UBE in their respective states. Teaching and learning process headed by an Executive Chairman.

Much have been adjudged and debated widely of failed educational policies in Nigeria. It is widely believed that, poor financing of the education sector of the nation has been discussed as the bane of failed policies designed and implemented in Nigeria with inclusion of the 1955 comprehensive education law of western Nigeria and Universal primary Education (UPE) of 1976. Akpotu (2006) the issue or problem of inadequate financing appears to be one of the most chronic of all problems, Akinkugbe (1994), the overall aspect of our educational enterprise in Nigeria today is inadequate funding. Ezekwensili (2007) there is no supervision of schools in decades. Lack of supervision of schools in the past has been the bane of failed educational policies. A system not supervised and evaluated is in dire need of collapse. Obinaju (2001) educational supervision is concerned with those particular activities and aspects which maintains and promotes the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools. The supervision of the UBE centers in Anambra state, Nigeria involves the direct and indirect watching and directing of all facets of the school system which would have impacts in the functionality of the UBE scheme. The National Policy on Education (2004) sees supervision as an aspect to ensure quality and continuous monitoring of instruction and other educational services. Many a time in schools in the state, there is lack or poor and ineffective supervision of instruction. This is the reason for full achievement of desired performance in our school system.

Inspection of schools is the heart of quality assurance in education. Supervision of school instructions is that phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of the UBE scheme. It is the life-wire of the educational system concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme. The UBE blue print sees the monitoring of the UBE scheme as a procedure for checking the extent to which planned contents, inputs, processes and products in the programme UBE, (2000). Supervision is the process of stimulating professional growth and a means of helping teachers to help them grow on the job. In the early years of the introduction of Western Education in Nigeria, supervision concentrated on teacher's activity in school and classroom. Supervisors were faultfinders. They visit schools in order to blame teachers when they erred. It made no attempt at improving the educational system. Teachers had to window dress to impress the supervisors once aware of the visit. The impression people had about supervision during this time was that, the supervisors were responsible for making judgment about the teachers (mostly negative) and not helping the teachers on how to teach and impart knowledge effectively to pupils/students (Onoyase, 1991).

WHAT AND WHY UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) IN NIGERIA?

Nations of the world have been faced with the challenges of providing for all its citizens of school going age, free, universal education by 2015. Denga (2000) asserts that, our memories may be flashed back to 1950 when the universal Declaration of human rights asserted that everyone has a right to education. The right to education for all Nigerian citizens triggered the launch of the UBE. Basic education is the educational foundation of every child. It provides the basic learning and reading skills. It includes the

lower basic Education (primary 1-3), middle basic (primary 4-6) and Upper basic (JSS1-3). In its totality, basic education is the first 9 years of unaltered education of the child. Nigeria as a signatory to the 1990 Jomtien, Thailand declaration of Education For ALL 2000 and also a member of the group of E-9 nations committed to the eradication of illiteracy (UBE, 2000), has statistics to show by 1996 that, only 14.1 million children are enrolled in primary schools out of the 21 million children of school going age. It had a high school dropout rate. The inadequate attention paid to the basic education sub-sector over the years had resulted in the near collapse to the educational system which led to limited access to quality education. The illiteracy rate was on the high side, teachers were poorly trained and poorly motivated and school dropout rate had not abated, while funding of basic education continued to decline (UBEC, 2008). These and other rationale influenced the launch of the Universal Basic Education programme on the 30th day of September 1999 at Sokoto, Nigeria. The UBE is here with us.

The expected outcomes of the UBE as stated by the UBEC which are consistent with the National Policy on Education (2004 revised) and the relevant provisions of extant laws, are to achieve:

- An uninterrupted access to 9 year formal education by providing free, compulsory education for every child of school going age (6-15 years)
- Drastic reduction in incidence of school dropout and enthronement of relevance, quality and efficiency in the sub-system,
- Acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life skills and appropriate values for lifelong education and useful living,
- Removal of distortions and inconsistencies in the delivery of basic education by reinforcing the implementation of the 9-3-4 (formally 6-3-3-4) system of education as provided for in the National Policy on Education and,
- Enhancement of community participation in decision making process in schools with a view to engendering community interest in and eventual ownership of basic education institutions.

STRUCTURE OF THE NEW 9-3-4 UBE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The UBE which prays to offer an uninterrupted 9 year of basic education in Nigeria has witnessed modification and changes in the education system. The 6-3-3-4 system been practiced in the past has been change. The new 9 year curriculum was recently developed by the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) and subsequently approved by the National Council of Education (NCE). The new curriculum has imbedded in the curriculum the objectives of NEEDS (National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy) and the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals). The 9 year school system of continuous schooling is divided into three components parts: Lower Basic, Middle Basic and Upper Basic (UBEC, 2008). The new structure is shown below which aims at providing the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement, inculcating right values for independent thinking and providing opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in the society and to realize his or her full potential (UBEC, 2008).

TABLE 1: the New 9 year Basic curriculum structure.

Basic Education Curriculum Levels	Core Compulsory Subjects	Electives Subjects
Lower basic education curriculum (Primary 1-3)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English studies 2. One major Nigerian language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science and technology 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) 8. Religious Studies (CRS or IS) 9. Physical & Health Education 10. Computer studies /ICT 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic <p>Note: Must offer 1 elective but not more than 2</p>
Middle Basic Education Curriculum (Primary 4-6)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. English studies 2. One major Nigerian language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science and technology 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) 8. Religious Studies (CRS 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic <p>Note: Must offer 1 elective but not more than 2</p>

	or IS) 9. Physical & Health Education 10. Computer studies /ICT 11. French Language	
Upper Basic (JSS1-3)	1. English studies 2. One major Nigerian language (Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa) 3. Mathematics 4. Basic science 5. Social studies 6. Civic education 7. Religious studies (CRS or IS) 8. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) 9. Physical & Health Education 10. French language 11. Basic Technology 12. Computer studies /ICT	1. Agriculture 2. Home Economics 3. Arabic 4. Business Studies Note: Must offer 1 elective but not more than 3

Source: NERDC (2007): The 9-year Basic Education Curriculum at a Glance, Lagos: NERDC Press

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION OF UBE CENTERS

The term “UBE Centers” connotes all public primary and basic secondary schools fully owned, controlled, funded and administered by government (Local, state or federal government) or its statutory established educational bodies like the UBEC, SUBEB, and Ministry of Education, where full educational activities are effectively carried out on a daily basis including but not limited to teaching and learning.

Instructional supervision focuses primarily on the achievement of the appropriate expectations of the educational system in any country including Nigeria. Supervision of schools is geared towards improvement of the quality of education (Quality Assurance). Nakpodia (2006) asserts that,

instructional supervision in the modern era (UBE Era) is therefore to inspect teaching rather than the teacher. The school supervisors' are tasked amongst others to improving instruction in schools during supervisory process.

Instructional supervision of UBE centers is multi-facet. Each method, type or class of supervision is uniquely different from the other as they provide different results at different times in different places. The following methods of supervision of instruction are pertinent to be stated in this study.

1. **CLINICAL SUPERVISION:** This is also called comprehensive school supervision. It is comprehensive in nature which usually last 2 weeks. It is scheduled to undertake an overall supervision of teaching and learning process in schools. Schools records are checked, teachers methodology and lesson note inspected thoroughly , pupils school attendance, classroom management, school plant assessment, school-community relations, implementation of curriculum and the ICTA (Indigenous Communicative Teaching Approach)method of instruction, school head leadership/administration, teachers punctuality amongst others are checked. Generally, comprehensive supervision consists of three stages i. pre supervision (observation) conference ii. The observation or supervision process and iii. The post- supervision conference.

2. **INVESTIGATIVE SUPERVISION:** Investigative supervision as the name suggests is a supervisory practice carried out to undertake special investigation in the school. Supervisors during such visits are pre-equipped with the investigative problem. It may include; investigating poor instruction by teachers; illegal levies; leadership/administration lapses; transfer of teachers, classroom absenteeism by teachers etc.

3. **ON THE SPOT SUPERVISION:** This supervision is usually carried out on the first week of resumption of school term (first, second or third term). It is an on the spot assessment of level of resumption of teachers and pupils/students after the holidays. School attendance, punctuality and the conduction of corridor test (resumption test) and general school assessment. It usually lasts for 1 week. Supervisors spend less time during such visits as 75% of schools are planned for supervising during schools resumption.

4. **EXAMINATION MONITORING:** Examination supervision is conducted by supervisory officers during examinations. All examination conducted in the school system are supervised. It is conducted to check the availability of examination materials (booklets, question papers), readiness of teachers and pupils for such examination, check/prevent examination malpractices and attempt at providing conducive environment for the examination amongst others.

5. **ROUTINE MONITORING:** Routine visits are carried out regularly by the inspectorate or monitoring department as a normal job function to check the day to day activities in schools. Nakpodia (2002) contributing says, these comes by way of inspectors (supervisors) paying short visit to schools.

Other supervisory visits as pointed out by Olele (1995) include; special visits; follow-up supervision; pre-opening of school supervision; sampling and survey and general assessment supervision.

Nakpodia (2006) identified six bases for supervision in UBE centers in Nigeria. These are:

Ø Supervision should be geared towards the improvement of the teaching-learning situation for the

benefits of both the teachers and learners.

Ø Supervision should help in the identification of areas of strength and weaknesses of teachers.

Ø Supervision should be democratically conducted so as to give recognition to the teachers and create a cordial working atmosphere based on good human relations.

Ø Supervision should be tailored towards ensuring that the general guidelines as provided in the curriculum are followed by teachers.

Ø There should be follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified areas of teachers' weaknesses.

Ø Supervision should help the teachers in terms of self-discovery particularly in the areas of improvisation and use of modern teaching aids as a basis for improving teaching strategies.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

School supervision although neglected for decade past is the single most important factor in achieving quality assurance in education and the overall success of the UBE programme. Supervision is the road map for a sustainable, effective and productive UBE scheme in Nigeria. This study is therefore sought to examine the current challenges affecting effective supervision of UBE centers in Nigeria and proffer positive working solutions to overcoming the identified challenges.

The following research questions were raised to guide the thrust of the study.

1. What are the current challenges of effective supervision of UBE centers?
2. What are the possible working solutions to overcoming the identified challenges?

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

A total of 524 respondents consisting of public primary teachers, education officers, curriculum planners, school administrators and school supervisors/ inspectors in the 21 LGEAs of Anambra state formed the study population. The population was selected through the use of stratified random sampling technique. A researcher made questionnaire was constructed consisting of 21 items. Each item consisted of the four likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA)- 4 points; Agree (A)- 3 points ; Disagree (D)- 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)- 1 point. Data collected were analyzed using mean scores to analyze the constructed Research questions. An internal scale of 0.05 and mean of 2.60 i.e. $\{0.05 + 2.60\}$. Therefore, any item that received a mean score rating of 2.65 above were regarded as positive (Accepted) while any mean below 2.65 is rejected i.e., negative.

RESULTS

Table 2. Mean Ratings of the Current Challenges of Effective Supervision of UBE Centers (N=524).

S/N	Challenges of Effective Supervision of UBE	SA	A	D	SD	X	DECISION
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	Centers						
1	Supervisors are in-experienced in the field of supervision.	400	159	462	140	2.90	+
2	The period (time allocated) for supervision is inadequate for effective supervision	724	819	52	44	4.03	+
3	Supervisors are ill-equipped with the tools for effective supervision	192	432	486	89	3.00	+
4	Supervisors are fault finders	1284	549	32	4	4.67	+
5	Government neglects / don't implement supervision reports	560	360	388	70	3.45	+
6	The problem of attitudinal change of teachers after supervision post conferences affects effective supervision (Teachers are resistant to positive changes)	804	384	158	116	3.65	+
7	Teachers" window dress for supervisors to impress them.	388	332	286	201	3.01	+
8	Non-uniformity of supervision process by Local, State and federal government Educational supervisors/inspectors	984	597	78	40	4.23	+
9	There is basic lack of appreciation on the implication of	584	384	298	101	3.42	+

	instructional supervision						
10	There is poor funding of the supervisory process	1176	384	166	19	4.36	+
11	The current location of schools (rural areas) makes it inaccessible by supervision for effective supervision	404	288	286	184	2.91	+
12	The teacher/supervision ration in the state is inadequate	732	603	138	71	3.85	+
13	Itineraries (vehicles, snacks, manpower , fuelling etc) are not effectively approved for the supervision process	692	678	164	43	3.94	+

Source: Field Survey. += Accepted; – = Rejected

Research Question One: What are the Current Challenges affecting Effective Supervision of UBE Centers?

Table 2 presents the responses from the study population on the perceived current challenges affecting the effective supervision of UBE centers. The overall means of the constructed 14 items were greater than the agreed mean of 2.65. from the data analysis, it was highly agreed that, the period allocated for supervision is inadequate for effective supervision (4.03); supervisors are fault finders (4.67) which is in agreement with Onoyase (1991); Supervisory services are poorly funded by government at all levels (4.36). There is non-uniformity in supervisory process at the local, state and federal Government Education Authorities (4.23). it was also revealed that, government contribute a major challenge as they neglect supervisory reports and fails to recommend the recommendations from these reports (3.45). Supervisors are not equipped fully for supervisory process (3.00). Teachers are difficult in attitudinal change after corrections and recommendations have been made to improve instruction (3.65). During supervisory process, teachers' window dress to impress supervisors (3.01) which are in agreement with Onoyase (1991), Edho (2009). The distances (location) of some schools make it in-accessible for supervisors to visit such schools (2.91). Rural areas in the state (Ayamelum, Anambra East, Anambra West, Awka North LGEAs) have schools which have not been supervised since inception of such schools. The itineraries for effective supervision are not effectively approved (3.94). Generally, all items constructed in the research questionnaire were accepted by respondents. This proves that, there are amongst the current challenges affecting supervisory processes.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of the Perceived Possible Working Solutions to Overcoming the Identified

Challenges of Effective Supervision of UBE Centers. (N=524)

S/N	Perceived Possible Working Solutions to Overcoming the Identified Challenges of Supervision of UBE Centers.	SA	A	D	SD	X	DECISION
1	Supervisors no matter how qualified/experienced should see themselves as students willing to learn new changes in the field of supervision geared towards improvement of the supervisory process.	972	543	28	86	4.07	+
2	Government should pay more attention on the funding of supervisory process. (Proper legislation.)	1204	357	170	19	4.38	+
3	Training/re-training of supervisors should be regularly organized by relevant educational bodies.	1100	471	126	29	4.32	+
4	Uniformity in supervision processes at the local, state and federal inspectorate division	716	693	86	71	3.90	+
5	School head teachers (Headmasters, principals) should see themselves as the chief internal supervisor of instruction in their respective schools.	816	567	138	62	3.96	+
6	Supervisors should restrain from fault finding missions during supervision process.	1376	131	64	101	4.18	+

7	Government should implement to the latter supervision reports/recommendations	272	159	238	284	2.38	-
8	Supervisors should be well motivated to perform effectively on the job (Increased snack allowances, grants-bicycles, houses, cars or motorcycles loans, gifts, increased recognition and reward-promotion)	1148	429	120	34	4.33	+

Source: Field Survey. += Accepted; – = Rejected

Research Question Two: What are the possible working solutions to overcoming the identified challenges?

Table 3 presents the summary of respondents' responses of the perceived possible solutions to overcoming the identified challenges of supervision of UBE centers. 7 items were accepted as they were greater than the acceptance level of 2.65. One item was rejected which is Government should implement to the latter supervision reports/recommendations which had a mean of 2.38. Other accepted options of improving supervision services accepted include; proper motivation of supervisors (4.33), restriction of supervisors as fault finders during supervisory services (4.18); the uniformity in supervision process in all tiers of government (3.90), training and re-training of supervisors (4.32) and improved funding of the supervisory process (4.38).

DISCUSSION

From analysis of data, the results points to the awareness of educationist of the current challenges affecting effective school supervision. The identified challenges agree with the studies of Onoyase (1991), Nakpodia (2006), Denga (2001), Obinaju (2001) and Ezekwensili (2007). This study has therefore x-rayed the challenges which pictures the UBE heading towards the direction of failure as past sister policies introduced by successive government in Nigeria. The problems currently affecting supervision and the UBE programme in general becomes a cog in the wheel of progress of achieving EFA 2015 and the mission, vision statements of the UBE.

The perceived working solutions which include improved funding, attitudinal change of supervisors and supervisees, training and retraining, proper motivation. Training through seminars, workshops, courses are necessary in improving supervisors' productivity. Lack of training affects poor development of staff which leads to a total lack of professional ability. Ogundele (2001) believes that, employees (supervisors) training and staff development are continuous life processes and are imperative because they add quality to management processes. Also, it was gathered from analysis that, government should be diplomatic in implementation of supervision reports. Not all recommendation by the supervision team submitted to government or its statutory bodies (SUBEB, UBEC) should be

implemented to the latter as possibility of bias may exist or indifferences.

CONCLUSION

It is gathered from the study that they exist a great number of challenges affecting the effective supervision of UBE centers in Nigeria. Evidently, these problems if not checked poses as threat in achieving the noble dreams of the UBE. All hope is not lost as the perceived working solution will attempt at redeeming the hope of Nigerians in achieving accessible, affordable and qualitative education for all Nigerians of school going age by 2015. The UBEC and SUBEB are keeping the dreams alive of the government's UBE programme. Education for All is thus, the responsibility of all. All hands should be on deck to taking Nigerian's educational future to the enviable heights. UBE is working! Let's keep the Dream Alive!

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