The Place of Supervision in Teacher Professional Development: A Case Study of Supervisory Practices of Education Officers in Ekiti State Primary Schools

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Abstract: *Supervision is connected to teacher professional development. However, as it is currently practiced in Ekiti State primary schools in Nigeria, it does not appear that this process is effectively contributing to teacher professional development. This is because the existing supervisory practice of Education Officers is hierarchical and authoritarian and does not promote the autonomy of the teacher as a professional. My research looks at current supervisory practices and the prevailing notion of professional development.*

The study is qualitative and it employs the case study method of inquiry. Participants in the study comprised of four selected Education Officers and twelve teachers from four different Local Government Education Authorities, of Ekiti State Universal Basic Education Board. Initial findings revealed that due to poor supervisory practices teachers are often excluded from decision making when it comes to issues relating to their professional growth. The research suggests that a more democratic process which sees the teacher as a reflective practitioner will usher in an authentic conception of teacher professional development. The significance of this study relates to the fact that proper educational supervision for teacher professional development would enhance the overall goal of instructional delivery.

Keywords: Supervision, professional Development, Education Officers, Primary School Teachers.

Introduction

The place of supervision in teacher professional development towards the attainment of enhanced instructional delivery cannot be over emphasized. The process of improving the quality of the teacher and her work has a lot to do with the type of supervision available to the teacher within the educational system. When properly understood and practiced, supervision is capable of harmonizing all variables that connect to effective instruction delivery. Zepeda (2007, 29) posited that the aim of instructional supervision is "to promote growth, development, interaction, fault free problem solving and a commitment to building capacity in teachers".

The problem which this paper examines is that in Ekiti State of Nigeria, supervision and teacher professional development have been ill defined in such a way that there is hardly any alignment between supervision and teacher professional development. Supervision has been seen as a fault finding activity which places the supervisor much over the supervisee. The consequence of this conception of supervision is that teachers have been stifled by the hierarchical way they have been socialized in their growth as professionals. This has made it difficult for them to develop into autonomous professionals.

The paper examines the existing supervisory practices of Education Officers in Ekiti State primary schools and argues that based on its authoritarian and hierarchical nature, they cannot promote effective teacher professional development. Professional development in the paper is conceived as on-going reflective practices that ensue through the use and adaptations of effective supervisory processes agreed on by both supervisors and supervisees.

The research questions which this paper will attempt to respond to are the following:

(1) How do Education Officers conduct supervision in Ekiti State Primary Schools?

(2) How do Education Officers see their roles as supervisors of primary school teachers?

(3) How do Primary School teachers experience supervision by Education Officers?

(4) How do school teachers understand the work of Education Officers with respect to their professional development?

It is the qualitative approach to inquiry that informs the methodology of the paper. The form of inquiry that is employed is the case study while interpretive (constructivist) and symbolic interaction are research paradigms.

Purposeful sampling procedure, which is the selection of subject in accordance to research interest was used to select the population for the study. Participants in the study comprised of selected Education Officers all of who are in the rank of Chief Education Officer from four different Local Government Education Authorities. The choice of schools and selection of primary school teachers were based on zoning and the advice of both Education Officers and the Head teachers of the selected schools. The Director of School Services at the Ekiti State Universal Education Board, the Permanent Secretary and the Executive Chairman, Ekiti State Universal Basic Education Board were also interviewed.

The types of interview that were used are the semi structured and informal interview. In using the semi-structured method, the researcher made use of guided questions to interview respondents. The informal or unstructured interview was also used to make it more conversational.

The paper finds out that the existing supervisory practices which are authoritarian and hierarchical tend to intimidate teachers and as such their autonomy as professionals is eroded. The paper suggests that an authentic teacher professional development can only evolve if supervisory practices are democratic and collegial.

Conceptual Framework

The need for a conceptual framework is informed by Becker's (1993) observation that a research work cannot take off if we do not have an implicit theory of knowledge. The conceptual framework draws upon the concepts, terms, definitions, model, and theories of a particular literature based on disciplinary orientation.

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS INFORMING THE CONCEMPTUAL FRAMEWORK INCLUDE:
Subjectivity as a construct of social reality, Case Study as a research genre, Interpretivism and Symbolic interaction as philosophical and sociological underpinnings, while the research design is Inductive.

The Existing Supervisory practice in Ekiti State	**My vision of supervision**
Hierarchical	Egalitarian
Authoritarian	Democratic
Judgmental	Non-Judgmental
Superior/Subordinate Relationship	Collegial
Traditional view of Supervision	Contemporary supervisory processes
Professional development as Seminars, conferences and workshops	self-assessment, ongoing reflection, school based professional development
Organizational motivated professional development	Self-motivated professional development
Socio-cultural differentiation	Particularize in universalism

Rationale for change is influenced by
UNESCO/ ILO Stance
Improve Quality of Teaching
Policy Issue- Professionalization of teaching
Nigeria National Policy on Education.
Teacher Registration Council
Theoretical Issue- Global Thinking

Figure 1 above consequently puts forward the following positions:

The Existing Structure

The existing structure of supervisory practice sees the supervisor as an inspector of schools and teachers as the persons to be subjected to inspection without prior notification (Pawlas & Oliva, 2008; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002). The supervisor is seen as the ultimate and custodian of knowledge while the teacher is seen as subservient to the supervisor (Education Officer). Even when the supervisor is assumed to occupy a higher status, Education Officers have failed to manage the relationship in such a way that the teacher will not feel alienated in the supervision process. Professional development is also seen as a process by which the teacher improves

himself/herself through the process of formal education, attendance at seminars, workshops and conferences.

The need for a re-think of the existing culture of superior /subordinate relationship between Education Officers and primary school teachers has become so important, given the contemporary model of supervision and the positive impacts that it has on professional development of teachers. Thus, the research will revisit the existing supervisory practice in Ekiti State against the contemporary practice of school supervision in the literature. The new model of supervision which is collegial rather than authoritarian will enable Education Officers to adopt a more democratic approach to school supervision by allowing teachers to be part of the supervisory process.

Need for Change

Teachers and supervisors need to be aware of the current situation about their jobs and their relationship with one another and to other stake holders in the educational system. Teachers and supervisors need to be aware of their duties and how these duties relate to the enhancement of instructional delivery which is the overall goal of teaching and supervision. Thus supervisors are expected to work democratically with the teacher to achieve collective goals of education at local, national and international levels.

My Vision

My vision of supervision sees strong connection between supervision and teacher professional development, which is explained by reorienting the minds of both Education Officers and teachers about their understanding and conception of supervision and professional development. One important way of doing this is to sensitize the Education Officers and teachers to be aware of their professional and social identities. It is hoped that this awareness will result in the change of perception of the act of supervision and the notion of teacher professional development. The meaning making of some vital concepts involved in effective supervisory practices should involve a sort of social interaction and improve communication that will promote a collegial and collaborative interaction between Education Officers and teachers which will ultimately fulfill the goal of effective instructional delivery in the classroom.

Pedagogical strategies That Suit Authentic Supervision and Teacher Professional Development

Supervision as Democratic and Collegial

The Concept of Supervision

Beach and Reinhartz (2000, p. 7) observed that one of the earliest definitions of supervision links the term with the word “oversee” or “has oversight of”. The dictionary definitions expand on this early meaning indicating that to supervise translates into directing or managing the work of others. Taking a clue from this and bearing in mind that the concept of supervision is dynamic, different authors at different times have come up with different definitions of supervision.

As it relates to educational supervision, the two authors gave a brief synopsis of the history of supervision. According to them, in the early 1930s when supervisory roles and responsibilities were emerging, the leaders in the National Education Association (1931) defined supervision as leading effort to improve teaching, observing in classrooms, and conferencing with teachers. By the late 1950, supervision was viewed as an activity that helped teachers do their jobs better and improve the learning situation of children (Wiles & Bondi, 1980). During the 1980s, supervision was seen as a change process (Harris & Bessent, 1969). Over the last two decades various authors have defined educational supervision in relation to their different philosophical perspectives. These include supervision as instruction (Oliva & Pawlas, 1997); supervision as organizational Wiles & Bondi, 1986) and supervision as people oriented (Wiles & Lovell, 1975).

Within the Nigerian context, educationists and scholars have defined supervision in various ways. For example, Ajayi and Ayodele (2002) defines supervision as the process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with people who are working with pupils". On the other hand, Bessong and Ojong (2009), refer to supervisory practice as an interaction between and among people with the prime aim of survival of any organization. According to them, the school system is an organization where people come together for the purpose of learning. For effective teaching and learning there is need for exchange of ideas between teachers and pupils and collaboration between supervisors and teachers.

Two main approaches that have been identified with supervisory practice in education are the authoritarian scientific bureaucratic model and the democratic model. Although the two approaches have become popular as models of educational supervision, over the years other approaches have evolved but with their principles being based on the two approaches identified.

Authoritarian Scientific Bureaucratic Model

This approach has as its proponent Frederick Taylor's (1911- 1947) scientific management and Max Weber's (1864 -1920) bureaucratic approaches. The two approaches have been treated as different but in this paper they are discussed together. This is because they are about control, accountability and efficiency of the worker in what Sergiovanni & Starratt (2002, p. 14) refer to as "an atmosphere of clear-cut manager-subordinate relationships". This approach that points to controls according to Tracy (1995, p. 323) suggests that "teachers were not viewed as professionals but as workers to be directed and monitored". Furthering this argument, Sullivan & Glanz (2005, p. 31) have interpreted this model as "inspectional and 'hierarchical", where "supervisors are experts and teachers are not". For them, to improve instruction," teachers need the supervisors' help since they do not have the expertise and supervisors and teachers are not equal partners". On this approach, the task of a supervisor is "ascertaining that schools complied with set rules and regulations" (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992, p. 32).

Increasing efficiency in organizations is the key word in this model. Similarly, improving teachers' instructional practices is the main focus of instructional supervision. Consequently, the model assumes a superior/ subordinate relationship between the supervisor and the teacher. Thus Mosher & Purpel (1972, p. 117) see instructional supervision as 'teaching teachers how to teach'. This view assumes that the supervisor is superior to the teacher and has more knowledge in teaching than the teacher. For instance, in Ekiti State primary schools, inspection of classroom

teachers takes the form of checking of records, lesson plans, schemes of work, and pupils' progress records.

One of the basic principles in this approach to supervision is the fundamental belief that the main obstacle to efficiency in an organization is failure to work out ways to coordinate and control workers (Evans, 1991). This is seen as management's failure to study workers' method of working. Research is recommended in order to devise job specifications and instructions to carry out the tasks, strict control of work and proper compensation for work done in an effort to make workers happy and work towards the achievement of the organization goals (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Strict organizational structures that determine the social relations are seen as key to achievement of efficiency. Within the bureaucratic organizational structure are leaders who draw their authority from their positions of leadership (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). It is this authority that is used to control workers creating hierarchies in an organization and rules to be obeyed according to ranks (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). On this approach, instructional supervision is the 'best' methods of teaching and it is administered by the supervisor and enforced on teachers (Lucio & McNeil, 1969: 9).

In conclusion, this approach to instructional supervision perceives the supervisor as the expert; hence the teachers act according to supervisors' directions. The existing supervisory practice in Ekiti State Primary schools is modeled along this form of supervision. The existing supervisory practice in Ekiti State Primary schools is aligned with the description of supervision by the Federal Ministry of Education as based on infrastructure and compliance with rules and regulations rather than standards and quality of education learners are receiving in schools. Most head teachers and teachers mistrusted the inspector and most inspection reports were regarded as classified documents and copies were not widely disseminated, (Induction Toolkit for New Education Evaluators (Inspectors, 2010)

Democratic Supervision

The democratic/ humanistic approach is a reaction to the authoritarian scientific bureaucratic approach that is seen to be suppressive and lacking in human relations (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). It stresses the importance of engaging persons in communicative discourse at all levels in an organization. Thus supervisors and supervisees are seen as partners in the decision making process; the supervisor being an informal leader. On this model, supervisors and supervisees respect one another and wide participation in formulation of policies affecting teaching and learning is encouraged. In general, it advocates the use of democratic leadership where “every worker has a voice” (Evans, 1991, p. 83). The main underlying assumption is that “teachers would do their best in a supportive environment” (Tracy, 1995, p. 323). Supervisors are therefore expected to offer the supportive environment by focusing on teachers’ personal satisfaction through established trust.

Expounding on democratic human supervision, Lucio and McNeil (1969) view supervision in terms of teachers’ emotions where 'teachers had feelings and emotions which were appealed to for action'. Similarly, Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983, p. 3) explain the democratic human relations approach as one where, “teachers were viewed as whole persons rather than packages of needed energy, skills and aptitudes to be used by administrators” to achieve organizational goals.

Supervision under the democratic human approach is associated with guidance that respects human personality and encourages partnership between the supervisor and the supervised (Alfonso, Firth, & Neveille, 1981). It assumes that effective supervision is achieved when teachers and supervisors work together (Lucio & McNeil, 1969; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002). Teachers' professional growth and development are perceived as important functions of supervision under the human democratic approach (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000; Blase & Blase, 2004; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005; Waite, 2000; Wanzare, 2004). The assumption is that as teachers are assisted to grow professionally and improve their skills, the impact will be seen in their performances.

The attributes of democratic human supervision are well summarized by Mosher & Purpel, (1972, p. 117) as the protection of the "integrity of the individual teacher' concern for 'realizing and sustaining the talent of individual teachers". They advocate a warm, friendly relationship between the supervisors and teachers which is portrayed in their shared responsibility. This suggests collaboration and consultation by the parties involved which can only be achieved if good communication is involved (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002).

A recent addition to the human relations approach is the human developmental approach that has been spearheaded by (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007) and also focused on by Sullivan & Glanz, (2005). Although this is treated in many books as a different approach, I see it as an extension of the human relations democratic approach because it gives room for the autonomy of the subject. According to Tracy (1995, p. 324), the approach "combines the concerns for a teacher's personal needs with concern for the productivity of the organization". Clinical supervision, developmental and differentiated models of supervision have their roots in the human democratic approach. Other approaches that are mainly referred to as alternative approaches to existing supervisory practices are peer coaching, peer mentoring, and action research(.Acheson & Gall, 2003; Glickman et al, 2007; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Tanner & Tanner, 1987).

Teacher Professional Development

The trend in our contemporary world is to strive to be recognized as a professional. This is because every occupation wants to be recognized, distinguished and accorded respect in relation to the work they do. However, little effort has been made to address the question about what is a profession, and what is the difference between an occupation and a profession.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2011, p. 1045) defines a profession as "a paid occupation especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification", and Encarta Encyclopedia (2003) defines a profession as occupation requiring extensive education or specialized training.

Supervision and Teacher Professional Development

The main aim of instructional supervision as portrayed by the literature is to help teachers improve their classroom practices and hence improve learning. Embedded in this view is a conception of development of the teacher which can make him/her perform the roles expected of him/her. According to Courtney (2007) supervision aims at upgrading the teachers' skills, the

strategy which seems to be commonly used is professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Day & Sachs, 2004; Flecknoe, 2000; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2007; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992; Norris, 2004).

Wiles and Bondi (1980) advance a convincing relationship between supervision and professional development. They argue that staff development is a pre-requisite to effective supervision as it gives teachers and supervisors' skills and knowledge of instruction. In addition, skills gained during staff development can be refined in supervisory activities. Supervision also helps to identify areas that need to be improved; hence data collected during supervisory activities can be used to plan for staff development activities. In addition, staff development activities can provide a good forum for supervisors to collect crucial data that can be used for improvement of teaching and learning. Both the teacher and the education officers are social being that possess identity that relates to their personal, social and professional lives, understanding of these identities in their relationship with one another is desirable in furtherance of their professional obligations.

Issues Relating to Identity Perception/Construction and Interaction among Supervisors and Teachers

Identity refers to our understanding of who we are, who other people are and who other people think we are (Danielewicz, 2001). Epstein (1998) posits that identity provides a shared set of attributes, values that enable the differentiation of one group from another. Identity is essentially a concept of synthesis, integration and action. Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnston (2005) maintain that in order for teachers to have a better understanding of the processes of teaching and learning, it is important for them to get a clear sense of who they are and what they are assigned to do. Sachs (1999) posits that professional identity is used to refer to a set of externally ascribed attributes that are used to differentiate one group from another. Professional identity thus is a set of attributes that are imposed upon the teaching profession either by outsiders or members of the group itself.

If there is going to be authentic processes of supervision and teacher professional development, then Education Officers and teachers must have a strong understanding of who they are and what they do respectively. Education Officers and teachers are supposed to undergo pre-service and in-service trainings. However, the content of their training defines who they are and what they do which subsequently affects their relationship in the process of instructional delivery. The process of symbolic interaction is a major disposition to be given consideration if one is to understand the interaction between teachers and Education Officers and vice versa. According to Haralambos, Holborn and Heald (2004) symbolic interaction is a sociological theory of human interaction which focuses on how people give meaning to things around them based on their perceptual conception of ideas which is influenced by their subjective lived in realities

The consistent mode of unannounced visits of Education Officers to schools and classrooms in an attempt to improve teachers' instructional deliveries has made teachers to develop an attitude and disposition to supervision as inspection, developing a culture of getting them what they want to see and not who we are or supposed to be as professionals.

The work of instructional supervision might not actually produce the desired effects on the supervisee based on the understanding of the concept and the interpretative meaning adduced to the concept by both the teachers and the Education Officers depending on the context of operation and actualization of job performance of the supervisee. How supervisee views the meaning and expected outcome of supervision is dictated by the method employed by the supervisor, which is a consequence of the understanding of the notion of supervision and the *modus operandi* of such. We act toward things in terms of their meaning for our plan of actions, or the execution of our plan of every "thing" we encounter. The understanding of the Education Officer about the identity of the teacher both its personal and social identity will be a motivating factor for striving to have a full knowledge of where the responsibilities lie in assisting the teacher to be more responsive and more reflective in the act of teaching.

Education Officers and Teachers as Reflective Practitioners

Reflection was introduced and has been heavily advocated in teacher education since the 1980s as a result of Schon's (1983, 1987) work to promote reflexivity and reflection. Reflection was thought of as a way of steering teachers into new and better ways of thinking, acting and acknowledging the complexity of teacher's work. It was also seen as a way of enhancing teacher's autonomy in the teaching profession (Chitpin, 2011). Dewey's argument posits that we do not learn from experience. We learn from 'reflecting on experiences'. Dewey's argument supports the fact that experience on its own does not translate to learning but to serve as a scaffold for further and improve learning.

Zeichner and Liston (1996) emphasis was on reason for engaging in reflective practice "for in order to understand and direct our educational practice, we need to understand our own beliefs and understanding, so that much of teaching is rooted in who we are and how we perceive the world" (Farrell, 2004, p. 23). Taggart and Wilson (1998) as cited in Farrell definition of reflective practice should have change or self improvement as a final goal. Farrell puts all these definitions together in one sentence that reflective practice is a systematic and structured process in which we look at concrete aspects of teaching and learning with the overall goal of personal change and more effective practice. The awareness brought about through reflection leads to change not only in instructional effectiveness but also growth in practice.

Teacher interaction in the classroom with pupils, colleagues and supervisors should show a clear understanding of what our responsibilities towards them entails by clear assertion and delineations of roles and responsibilities that are bestowed on the teacher as a technician and a display of professional competencies. The concept of reflective practice centers around the idea of lifelong learning in which a practitioner analyzes experiences in order to learn from them, a deliberate attempt to be open- minded, an open perspective, to allow for questioning and rethinking of alternatives by both teachers and education officers. The Education Officers and the teachers need to be encouraged to work up to the level of becoming reflective practitioners in their professional responsibilities. This state of mind relates to examining beliefs, goals and practices, to gain new and deeper understanding that would result into actions that could improve learning for students. The Reflection upon one's experience permits new learning to occur. In its absence one runs the risk of relying on routine teaching/ practice that does not promote growth.

Supervision and Teacher Professional Development: A Case Study of Supervisory Practices of Education Offers in Ekiti State Primary Schools

In this section of the paper, I shall present the initial findings of the data collected from the process of interviewing education officers and teachers in selected primary schools in Ekiti State of Nigeria. All names used throughout this paper as respondents are pseudonym.

The responses of teacher participants confirmed the existing practices of supervision where Education Officers (EOs) visit schools unannounced. They believed that they are used to this form of supervision because they have being socialized in that direction. The EOs and administrators also confirmed this, stressing that if visits are announced, there is the tendency for teachers to embark on a form of window dressing, putting things in place merely for the purpose of the visit rather than a well planned programme towards professional growth and enhanced instructional delivery.

The teacher participants may be divided into two-the experienced ones that is those with many years of teaching experience and the "novice", the teachers who have just started to teach. The experienced teachers believed that even though education officers do not give prior notice of visits, they are always prepared, by getting ready all classroom documents usually inspected on classroom visits by the education officers. As Idowu said, "The visits of education officers were regarded as part of the daily routine as a teacher. We have been socialized to expect inspectors in our schools at any period of the school day. We are always prepared by school heads, the Heads of Department, and we in turn prepare the new teachers for such visits."

On the other hand, the new teachers expressed a kind of trepidation towards supervision by education officers. According to them, the visit of the education officers is usually accompanied by fear because the impression created in their minds is that of a situation in which they are being observed for the sake of fault finding. This situation is worsened by the fact that the supervisors carried out this act of intimidation before their own pupils. One new teacher expressed this when she shared, "I felt nervous that I was being watched, not sure my teaching will meet the expectation of the inspectors, I hope I will get used to the system as the days go by."

All the three administrators believed that the school supervision by Education Officers should not be announced. In the words of one of them, "Teachers need not be told of classroom visits to avoid window dressing, teachers are expected to be prepared for classroom inspection at any time of the school day.

These responses made me ask a more probing question. I asked for the opinion of the teachers in relation to improving supervisory practice in the primary schools. The teachers explained that the visits of Education Officers could be more meaningful if teachers are informed in earnest of the day of visits to give the teacher the opportunity of discussing in details with Education Officers their instructional challenges and also the Education Officers could be well prepared to give the needed support on instructional matters. Makinde, with many years of teaching experience and who has risen between the ranks, felt that, "Education Officers have the right to be in the classroom, some of them were teachers before becoming inspectors of schools. We will work better if they make us to be more familiar of their visits." Another teacher,

Bolarinwa shared this view. She explained, “I don’t have a problem with them coming to the classrooms but they may make us feel better when we know their work schedules.”

The above statement is suggestive of the fact that teachers will prefer a more relaxed situation where both teachers and EOs meet to deliberate and agreed on issues to be discussed relating to teacher professional development and effective instructional delivery. This is in line with the description of supervision by Beach & Reinhartz, (2000) as partnership, collegial, coaching and mentoring, the view that supervision should be democratic and collegial.

Another major finding is that teachers are not involved in planning for their own professional development activities. Conferences, seminars and workshops are the most recognized form of teacher’s professional development by teachers and education officers. All the teachers agreed that since the Education Officers work directly with teachers in the classroom and are thus in a position to have firsthand knowledge of what the capabilities of the different classroom teachers they are in the best position to advise the government on developmental programs that are exigent for effective job performance and professional development of the teacher. Thus, it is Education officers that recommend teachers to attend conferences, seminars and workshops. These types of professional development activities are referred to as traditional, short and involve less learning, and collaborative activities and do not provide teachers with effective tools to foster meaningful changes in student learning, (Locks-Horsley et al., 1998). The implication of this position is that the autonomy of the teacher is compromised and this does not allow for an authentic teacher professional development.

Aina, who is an experienced teacher and who has served as an HOD for a number of years, has this to say: “Constant monitoring and supervision of instruction help us to work better and put the lazy teachers on their toes. Instructions on how to improve on teaching practices are given through seminars and workshops.”

Supervisory processes as understood and practiced by Education Officers in Ekiti State seem to be devoid of elements that can inform effective professional development of teachers. This perception of Education Officers of the concept of supervision is revealed in their responses to the question about the reason for engaging in school supervision. Ms. Toyin, one of the education officers stated, “The term Supervision as understood by me is to guiding, directing and making sure that the teacher do what is required to fulfill the primary objectives of teaching, which is pupils effective learning”. The focus of attention is the classroom teacher and her teaching techniques. School supervision includes overseeing the entire activities of the school in conformity with educational policies and also for the purpose of quality assurance.” Mayowa, an Education Officer, gave his own conception of supervision as the ability to impact teachers’ work and make a change.

When asked why Education Officers engaged in school supervision, Monisola, an Education Officer, was quick to say that, “School supervision is important to learning as it is a way of ensuring that the government huge spending on education is justified. Education Officers are employed to oversee teachers’ and pupils’ instructional practices on behalf of the government and articulate government policies concerning education matters and how they affect the work of teachers.”

Babasola, an experienced Education Officer, said, “Professionally I perform the task of overseeing teachers and pupil’s instructional practices on behalf of the government and articulate government policies concerning education matters and how they affect the work of teachers. Precisely as an education officer I ensured that effective instructional deliveries takes place in the schools”

From these responses, it seems safe to conclude that for these study participants, supervision is related to evaluation and supervision is different from inspection. The conflation of supervision with inspection has been responsible for why supervision is identified with a form of oversight carried out by education officers on teachers. Even when there seems to be awareness that supervision involves collegiality this awareness only comes by accident without both the Education Officers and teachers being aware of the reason why this should be so. Consequently, there is an urgent need to re-orientate the mind of Education Officers to appreciate the need to effect change in the mode of supervising teachers while teachers’ should be open to dialogue that is directed towards qualitative change. This is one of the significance of this study.

The act of linking supervision with government policy shows that supervision is often influenced by certain socio-political factors. Even when supervision has taken a global dimension, the peculiarities of the situation where supervision takes place cannot but influence the conception and practice of supervision.

Education Officers were also asked about how their work is connected to teacher professional development. Adebamigbe, an education officer, aired his views by saying: “teacher professional development is impacted during visitation to the schools - we observe instructional activities of teachers on daily basis by assessment of their teaching, this gives us the opportunity of identifying their areas of weaknesses and strength and as such I do suggest appropriate measure to put the teachers on correct path to growth”. Monisola explained, “I visit teachers in the classroom, taking interest in watching teachers teach and see how the teachers could be encouraged with activity that could help teachers structured instruction to make students more responsive.”

Education Officers feel that they know what is required of teachers for their professional development without engaging them in discussion about their own perception of professional development. None of the supervisory processes which entail pre-observation, conferencing and post-conference procedures was mentioned. This seems to suggest an authoritarian relationship between education officers and teachers an attitude that does not promote the autonomy of the teachers.

Professional development of Education Officers also tends to impact teachers’ professional development. When Education Officers were asked the question of how their supervisory practice can impact teachers’ professional development. Makinde an Education Officer, has this to say teachers’ professional development will occur through improved practice by EOs, I feel EOs must be exposed to seminars, conferences and workshops to upgrade their knowledge about instructional supervision for improved practice. It is also important to provide

monitoring grants and monitoring vehicles to ease the visitation of Education Officers to the schools. There is also the need to ensure conducive work environments that can promote and encourage the Education Officers to engage in research and be connected to the outside world through the latest channels of information technology. Bolarinwa another EO view was also similar when he averred as follows: "I know a lot of effort is required on my own part to ensure that I perform my work efficiently. As much as I love to do so I feel there is need for more support to the Education Officer from the government to place them at advantageous position to work more closely with teachers."

Unfortunately, professional development of Education Officers is not within their control. They have to wait on funding from government and sometimes this funding does not come easily and on time. Therefore, if the development of teachers is based on the development of education officers, which may be affected by certain extenuating circumstances, it follows that the professional development of teachers will be hampered.

CONCLUSION

It is a fact of life that changes are often difficult to come by from a form of life that we have been accustomed to. But it is also often believed that the only thing that is permanent is change. This position applies well to the notions of educational supervision and teacher professional development. In this paper, I have identified the good, the bad and the beautiful in existing notions of supervision and teacher professional development. The paper has suggested that the existing theory and practice in the two processes need revision to bring them in line with the current and global practice that sees the supervisor and supervisees as colleagues in the effort to bring about effective instructional delivery to pupils in the classroom. I have been lucky in this regard because I am both a student and an Educational Officer. This dual identity will definitely bridge the gap between theory and practice, for I will be in a good position to put into use what has been learnt in the formal academic setting to actualize the goal of the supervisory process in the primary educational system, especially in Ekiti State Primary schools of Nigeria.

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