

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SUPERVISORY ROLES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN OSUN STATE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was on supervisory roles as perceived by primary school teachers in Osun State of Nigeria. Stratified random sampling method was used to select 330 teachers who responded to 'Supervisory Role Perception Inventory'. The t-test statistic was used to analyse the data collected on the three hypotheses that were formulated in the study. It was found that male and female teachers tend to have a similar perception of supervisory roles; that perception of supervisory roles tends to be different between experienced and less experienced teachers; and that, teachers in urban and rural schools tend to be different in their perception of supervisory roles. Conclusion was that supervisory role perception among primary school teachers was influenced by the teachers' years of experience and location of schools. Recommendations included regular conferences, seminar and workshops for teachers and supervisors in order to encourage positive perception and foster good relationship among them.

Keywords: Role perception, supervisors, primary schools, urban and rural schools

INTRODUCTION

Supervision in education is a specific occasion for examining a school as place of learning. It is also a continuous process of guidance which is focused on different aspects of the school (Musaaazi, 1982). In a similar vein, Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) see it as a process of guiding and coordinating the work of teachers and all people connected with a school in such a way that educational objectives are achieved. These definitions show that the act of supervising involves either an occasional or a regular visit by an educational supervisor, whereby attention is focused on different aspects of the school organization with a view to assisting teachers.

A supervisor is somebody who guides and coordinates the activities of teachers and other school personnel towards the realization of educational objectives. He mediates between people and school programmes in order to ensure that the processes of teaching and learning are improved (Ogunsaju, 1983a).

Although personnel within a school do perform supervisory duties, supervisors from the ministry of education are the focus in this study. These officials are also referred to as school inspectors (Ogunnu, 2002). Heads of schools, heads of departments and class teachers who perform supervisory assignments in schools are basically teachers.

Supervisory roles are the functions which a supervisor performs in schools. The Government, the society and the teachers have expectations on what a supervisor should do. These are the roles the supervisor is expected to play towards the realization of educational objectives. For example, the supervisor is assigned to a school in order to assist teachers in solving educational problems, serve as

a link between the teacher and the government and contribute to teachers' improvement on the job (Olagboye, 2004).

Before Nigeria attained independence in 1960 and shortly after, school supervisors acted as government agents. They assessed teachers and gave instructions on what must be done in the schools. Ajayi (1985), noted that supervision was focused on teachers' personalities purposely to find faults, judge and criticize. He stated further that a master-servant relationship existed between the supervisor and the supervisees. However, modern concept of supervision focuses on improvement of teaching and learning in school. Supervisors are supposed to complement the efforts of various educational agencies in providing guidance, evaluation, co-ordination and information services to teachers. They are also expected to contribute to growth, development and stability of the education system (Lambo & Ihebuzor, 1990). Similarly, the Government stated that the responsibility of school supervisors includes giving information to teachers on instructional materials and effective teaching methods; serving as a link between teachers and appropriate authorities; and, monitoring the overall quality of education in schools (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). As observed by Chike-Okoli (2006), supervision has been transformed from one conducted by an 'all-knowing' official called 'inspector' to the present-day democratic and co-operative interchange between the supervisor and the supervisee.

As in other states of Nigeria, teachers in Osun State primary schools have certain differences which could affect their job performance. They differ in years of experience, location of working place and level of competence. A supervisor has many roles to play in order to assist the teachers in their different categories. According to Ogunsaju (1983b), new teachers need proper orientation on performance of their duties; old teachers need to be exposed to innovations in the education system, while incompetent teachers need improvement on their areas of incompetency.

Therefore, the supervisors are to play complementary roles with the teachers in order to ensure a qualitative education for the nation. However, either the supervisor or the teacher could perceive their roles differently as a result of individual differences in needs, values, interests, family background and past experiences. As observed by Ukeje et al. (1992), perceptual difference could lead to perceptual distortion whereby teachers would have wrong impressions about the supervisors who are supposed to be their partners in the education system. This could impact negatively on the achievement of educational objectives.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Primary schools are the institutions for providing basic knowledge and skills to pupils between the ages of 6 and 11. Both teachers and school supervisors have the responsibilities of ensuring a solid foundation in which subsequent knowledge and skill acquisition would be built. The need for positive role perception and good relationship among them cannot be overemphasized. The concern in this study, therefore, is whether or not there is significant difference in perception of supervisory roles among primary school teachers in Osun State of Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES

- H₀₁:** There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between male and female teachers.
- H₀₂:** There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between experienced and less experienced teachers.
- H₀₃:** There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between teachers in urban and rural schools.

METHODOLOGY

The design for this study was a descriptive survey carried out 'ex-post facto'. The instrument 'Supervisory Role Perception Inventory' (SRPI) designed by the investigator was used for data collection. The literature review on supervision and supervisory roles showed that a supervisor plays many roles in a school. Four major roles were identified as common to all supervisors. They were guidance, evaluation, coordination and information. Under each major role, six specific roles were identified, making twenty four items in all.

The SRPI was then pilot-tested in two Local Government Areas in Osun State, outside the sample but within the population. As a result, 4 of the original 24 items were dropped leaving 20 items for the inventory.

In order to ensure content and face validity of the inventory, each of the twenty items was thoroughly examined by the researcher. The inventory was also given to specialists in educational supervision for scrutiny. In the process some of the items were restructured while others were retained. Reliability of the Inventory was determined through the use of Kuder-Richardson formula 20. The resulting reliability co-efficient was 0.74. Responses to the SRPI were sought on a four-point Likert scale as follows: Very Often (V.O) =4; Often (O) =3;

Rarely (R) = 2

Very Rarely (V.R) = 1

Out of the 30 Local Government Areas in Osun State, 10 were randomly sampled for this study. In each of the sampled Local Government Areas, four primary schools were selected using stratified random sampling technique to ensure that schools from each of the three Senatorial Districts in the state were adequately represented. In each of the schools, 10 teachers were selected by stratified random sampling method to include male and female teachers, experienced and less experienced teachers from schools located in urban and rural areas.

Of the 400 inventories administered, 330 were the usable returns. This represented 82.6% of the number administered. Analysis of data was done, using a t-test statistical method to determine the significant difference between the variables under investigation. The research hypotheses were tested at 0.5 probability level.

RESULTS

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between male and female teachers.

Table 1. Supervisory Role Perception of Male and Female Teachers

Sex	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	p	Critical Value	Remarks
Male	134	28	17				
Female	196	32	31	1.48	.05	1.96	NS

N.B. 1.48 < 1.96
Degree of freedom = 328
NS = Not Significant

The calculated t value was 1.48. There was no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers in their perception of supervisory roles. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between experience and less experienced teachers.

Table 2. Supervisory Role Perception of Experienced and Less Experienced Teachers

Length of Service	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	p	Critical Value	Remarks
Experienced	171	45	24				
Less Experienced	159	26	36	5.60	.05	1.96	S

N.B. $5.60 > 1.96$

Degree of freedom = 328

S = Significant

The calculated t value was 5.60. This was significant at $p < .05$. Thus, Table 2 revealed that there is a significant difference in supervisors' role perception between experienced and less experienced teachers. The hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implied that the two categories of teachers perceived supervisory roles differently.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in supervisors' role perception between teachers in urban and rural schools.

Table 3. Supervisory Role Perception of Teachers in Urban and Rural Schools

Location	N	\bar{X}	SD	t	p	Critical Value	Remarks
Urban	170	38	22				
Rural	160	21	28	6.12	.05	1.96	S

N.B. $6.12 > 1.96$

Degree of freedom = 328 S = Significant

From Table 3, the calculated t-value is 6.12. This is greater than the critical table value which is 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. The alternative hypothesis which states that there is a significant difference in supervisors' role perception of teachers in urban and rural areas is therefore upheld.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of findings in this study revealed that, in Osun State primary schools, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' perception of supervisory roles. However, experienced and less experienced teacher's expressed a significant difference in their perception of supervisory roles. Similarly, teachers whose schools were located in urban areas expressed a significant difference in supervisory role perception from the teachers whose schools were located in rural area. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that difference in supervisory role perception among primary school teachers in Osun State, may not be attributed to the teachers' sex. It could be concluded that the teachers' years of experience and rural or urban location of schools are probable reasons for their perceptual differences.

Experienced teachers are likely to have a better understanding of supervisory roles. They are likely to have confidence in their profession as a result of many years of teaching. These could have led to the difference in their perception of supervisory roles when compared with the less experienced ones.

Also, schools that are located in urban areas enjoy certain facilities more than the schools in rural areas. Such facilities are easy communication, adequate and relevant teaching-learning materials, qualified personnel and conducive academic environment. These could have enhanced supervisory activities in urban centres and influenced the teachers' perception of supervisory roles in their schools.

In fact, perceptual difference of supervisory roles among teachers makes it imperative on the supervisors to perform their expected duties, which centres on improvement of teaching-learning situations (Chike-Okoli, 2006). More so, the difference seems to have been due to the teachers' experience and school location. Therefore, new teachers and teachers serving in different geographical locations need proper orientation, exposure to innovations and assistance towards better job performance. Supervisory duties could focus on these aspects in order to enhance perception of teacher-supervisor's interdependent roles.

Naturally, there are individual differences. This would affect the perceptual level of individuals. It could also cause perceptual distortion among them (Ukeje, et al 1922). The supervisor therefore has the responsibility of encouraging teachers to have a positive perception of the roles of their supervisors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There should be regular meetings of supervisors and supervisees through workshops and seminars. These could foster positive relationship and better understanding of their interdependent roles.

Teachers of different categories and in different locations should be given adequate assistance by the supervisors. In doing this, supervisors should concentrate on activities that are meant to improve teaching and learning in schools rather than focusing attention on teachers' personalities.

Finally, supervision should be conducted regularly in all schools in order to enhance interaction among teachers and supervisors.

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