

## Investigating Teachers' Competence in Classroom and Instructional Supervision in Public Primary Schools in Nigeria

By

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### Abstract

*The study examined teachers' competence in classroom and attention paid to instructional supervision in public primary schools in Nigeria. These were with a view to providing information on measures of competency among teachers, structure of classroom instructional supervision and what accounts for differences in teachers' competence in the public primary schools. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population for the study consisted of all 2,031 teachers in the existing 219 public primary schools in four Local Government Areas (LGAs) from a State in Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised a total of 225 teachers drawn from 30 public primary schools using simple random and convenient sampling techniques. A self-designed instrument titled "Teachers' Classroom Competence and Instructional Supervision Questionnaire (TCCAIS-Q)" was used for the study to elicit information. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistic to answer the research questions and inferential statistic, specifically, t-test to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that the lesson presentation (37.9%), lesson plan preparation (20.5%) and class management (19.3) were good measures of teachers' competence. The result further showed that the structure of classroom instructional supervision involved greatly the headteachers (100%), SUBEB officials (89.3%) and Head of Sections/Departments (79%). The results revealed differentials in teachers classroom instructional supervision to have been as a result of pedagogical skills (mean -3.53), qualifications (mean - 3.50), knowledge of subject matter (mean - 3.46) and measurement and evaluation technique (mean - 3.44). Finally, the result showed a significant difference in male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision; and that female teachers ( $M = 18.57$ ;  $SD = 4.19$ ) had higher competence than their male counterparts ( $M = 17.22$ ;  $SD = 1.83$ ). The study therefore concluded that classroom instructional supervision needed to take into account the teachers' use of pedagogical skills and teachers' qualification. This is because these factors accounts for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision.*

**Keywords:** Teachers' Competence, Classroom, Instructional Supervision, Primary Schools

## 1.0 Introduction

Primary education plays important roles in the life of every individual as well as the nation as a whole. Some of these roles include the ability to read, write and communicate. The National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) refers to primary education as the education given in formal setting for children aged 6 to 12, since the rest of the education system is built upon it, it becomes the key to the success or failure of the other educational levels. This implies that the knowledge and skills acquired from primary school continues to influence the reading, writing, numeracy; communication and interactive skills of individuals in future. However, the effectiveness of primary education seems to be inhibited by a lot of factors ranging from inadequate instructional materials, inadequate infrastructure, skeletal or partial implementation of policy, inadequate qualified teachers, insufficient monitoring, poor political will and above all inadequate instructional supervision, as one of the most important among other factors (Atanda, Adeyemi & Adebisi, 2014).

Expectantly, a primary school teacher should be that versatile individual who teaches the whole list of subjects of the basic plan. He must have the appropriate ability, desire and readiness to work and improve self to benefit the lots of his/her pupils. Consequently, the diversity of this profession makes serious demands of specialists training. As observed by Salyakhova and Valeeva (2015), the effectiveness of any curriculum implementation depends on teacher's professional skills, thereby ensuring not only mastery of a set of special knowledge and skills, but also the conditions for further development of appropriate methods of activity through instructional supervision. Instructional supervision at primary school level is important because the future of every country is predetermined by the country's investment in the awareness, development, and productivity of its citizens, which is done right from the educational foundations.

Supervision has its origin from Latin word "super video" meaning "to oversee" (Adenaike & Adebajo, 2000). Supervision connotes different meaning to different people. According to Onasanya (2008), it is the act of monitoring the performance of schools' staff, noting their strength and weakness, using befitting and appropriate techniques to improve the flaws and using their strength to increase the school standard in order to achieve the educational goals.

Similarly, James (2009) defines supervision as a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and overseeing teachers in their tasks while Ogunu (2008), sees supervision as the art of overseeing the activities of teachers and other educational workers in a school system to ensure teachers conformity to generally accepted principles and practice of education and the stipulated policies and guidelines of education authority.

In the same vein, Mgbodile (2004), noted that in addition to arranging and organizing for teaching and learning to take place, school heads must undertake to supervise on-going instruction. He pointed out that it is the duty of primary schools' head teachers who serve as internal supervisors to ensure that meaningful learning takes place in all classes by making sure that there is required number of teachers to teach in all the classrooms, and that teachers are teaching what they are expected to teach, and undertake teaching in manners that pupils understand and enjoy their lessons. This is consequent upon the premise that the mission of any school amongst others is to provide adequate teaching and learning, hence, teachers perform many professional functions among, which is instructional supervision; an activity aimed at overseeing and guiding the teaching and learning process within the classrooms.

Kochlar (2010) explained that classroom instructional supervision are those activities that are primarily and directly concerned with studying and improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils, and whatever that is needed to be done to improve the teacher's ability to deliver lessons to improve pupils' learning. Eya and Chukwu (2012) describe classroom instructional supervision in schools as a process for teachers' improvement purposes towards the performance of assigned functions.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

Supervision in educational context is the process of enhancing and improving effective teaching and learning in schools. In primary schools' environment, school heads are considered responsible for supervision of not only classroom teachers but also all aspects of schools' administration. Supporting this view, educational theorists agree that supervision exists for the primary purpose of instruction (James, 2009).

Nosiri in Obasi (2009) defined supervision in educational context as an expert technical service primarily aimed at studying and improving cooperatively all factors which affect child growth and development. In her view, James (2009) observed that supervision is all efforts of school officials towards providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in order to improve instruction. Supervision is a way of helping, guiding, stimulating and improving professional growth of teachers to develop appropriate techniques, methods and procedures of teaching in ways that will improve their overall performance or effectiveness (Igwe, 2006).

The process of supervision involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers; selection and revision of educational objectives; materials of instructions, methods of teaching and evaluation of instructions. School supervisors are usually school heads, senior assistants to school head, instructional head teachers, departmental heads, and form masters. Supervision is a leadership instruction where the ultimate aim is to improve classroom instructions (Komoski, 2007). Besides helping to enhance teaching and learning process, it is also seen as a process to ensure that schools' curriculum is implemented in the classroom. More importantly, the supervision process provides teachers with constructive feedback leading to increased teacher motivation. There is no denying the fact that supervision process also helps school heads evaluate teacher-competency in terms of teacher-knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Schools' supervision in the words of Enyi (2009), should be done in a manner that promotes rather than distorts learning. It should be undertaken in a friendly way and in a style that gives courage and hope to teachers. It should not be done in a manner that makes the teacher lose face before his pupils. He noted that all corrections must be done through friendly and mature approach. Supervision must be undertaken for a purpose and not just as mere cosmetic exercise. It could be to familiarize oneself with what goes on in classes; to diagnose teachers or students' needs and problems or, to ascertain teachers' instructional needs. Supervision is the backbone of effective teaching and learning (Enyi, 2009). Also, supervision provides direct assistance to teachers as it continuously focuses on improvement of classroom instruction.

Eya and Chukwu (2012) said instructional supervision is a process for teachers' improvement which include among other things ensuring that teachers perform their assigned functions. Beach and Reinhartz (2008) defined instructional supervision as a complex process that involves working with teachers and other educators in a collegial and collaborative relationship

to enhance the quality of teaching and learning within schools and promotes the career long development of teachers.

Wanzare and Da-Costa (2008), after conducting a survey, concluded that there are many definitions of supervision in the literature, of which each is unique in its focus and purpose ranging from a custodial orientation to a humanistic orientation. From the custodial perspective, supervision can denote overseeing and controlling, managing, administering, evaluating, or any activity in which the school head is undertaken in the process of running the school, Adeel (2010) argues that the custodial orientation is not targeted to help teachers but to discover their weakness; eliminate and isolate them; and replace them with who could do better. However, instructional supervision is a behaviour that is officially designed which directly affects teachers' behaviour in such a way to facilitate student learning and achieve the goals of the school system.

Being a teacher at any level requires a significant amount of knowledge and skill. Paying attention to the core competencies for educators helps to ensure that all teachers and others who work in education are prepared to make school a positive experience for students and their families.

The word 'Competence' is increasingly being used in education circles today. It is a description of one's ability and a measure of one's performance. A person's competencies may be defined in terms of one's knowledge, skills and behaviors. To understand the competencies required of a teacher, the job of a teacher needs to be clearly defined. The task of a teacher is closely tied to the nature of the classroom. Today's classrooms call for teachers to prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills once reserved to only a few (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Researchers and practitioners are becoming increasingly aware that the character of the 21st century classroom differs and thus the demands on both students and teachers are undergoing significant changes.

Accordingly, some of the roles identified include:

- i. nurturing the whole child,
- ii. providing quality learning,
- iii. working with others, and
- iv. developing a strong set of personal values.

Thus, every trained teacher should have the following core competencies which are classified into three broad performance dimensions:

1. **Professional practice:** A competent teacher seizes every opportunity to encourage learning, believing that all students can learn. And learning isn't limited to the classroom. To this end, the teacher takes every opportunity to improve on his or her own professional practice, in order to provide quality learning.
2. **Leadership and management:** A competent teacher is a leader who wins the hearts and minds of the students. Such a teacher sees the value in developing and working with others, including parents and colleagues, and actively seeks out opportunities for professional collaboration within and beyond the school.
3. **Personal effectiveness:** A good teacher understands the importance of developing oneself before he or she is able to provide support for others. As a professional, this teacher

maintains high standards of personal and professional integrity when carrying out all duties and responsibilities (NIE, 2010)

### **Essential Prerequisites for Teacher Competence**

Good teaching does not occur in a vacuum. Every competent teacher needs to possess a strong set of the following:

- a. **Values:** The NIE team identified three key values that are important for the 21st century teaching professional: learner-centeredness, teacher identity, and service to the profession and community. These values guide the application of relevant skills and knowledge on a day-to-day basis.
- b. **Skills:** Teachers today need to develop a holistic array of skills – for teaching and thinking, administration and management; and
- c. **Knowledge:** of self and pupils, community and pedagogy, among many others.

However, not all teachers will have the same level of competence in all areas from the outset. To develop competence, teachers need to progress from awareness *to* capacity building. Teachers can identify the competencies they need and continue to build on them throughout their teaching career, through practice and professional development. Some practical ways of bringing up awareness-level competencies to capacity building is through induction and mentoring within the school, professional development courses or learning with more experienced teachers through professional learning communities.

### **3.0 Statement of the Problem**

In spite of the effort being made to improve the quality and standard of education through classroom instructional supervision of teachers for effective management and task performance, the quality of students' academic performance seems to be relatively low considering results from the placement test conducted by the State Examination Boards. Some observers have accused the teachers of professional laxity while others presumed it was a result of poor instructional supervision. This situation has become a matter of concern to stakeholders both in academics and the society at large. Based on the aforementioned, this study is set out to empirically investigate teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary schools in Nigeria.

### **4.0 Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the indicators for measuring primary school teachers' instructional competence in Public Primary Schools?
2. What are the structures associated with classroom instructional supervision in public primary schools?
3. What account for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary school?

## 5.0 Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary school.

## 6.0 Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in a State using four Local Government Areas namely: A, B, C and D. The population was 2,031 teachers in the existing 219 schools within the chosen LGAs of a State. A total of 225 teachers were sampled from 30 primary schools in the LGAs. The researchers adopted simple random and convenient sampling techniques for the selection of teachers; hence, 15 percent of the population was drawn from the four (4) Local Government Areas in the State. The justification for this sample size was to be able to get a more reliable and accurate data. A self-designed questionnaire titled: "Teacher Competence in Classroom Instructional Supervision Questionnaire (TCCIS-Q)". To ascertain face and content validity of the instrument, the research instrument was given to experts in test construction to determine if the items would actually serve the purpose it was designed. They reviewed the items in terms of their clarity, appropriateness of language and expressions. In order to test the reliability of the instrument for this study, the researchers administered 20 copies of the instrument on respondents at Local Authority Primary School, outside the study area in the same State so as to find out the consistency of the instrument. Data obtained after the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach Alpha, which gave coefficient value of 0.71. The data were analysed using frequency distribution, percentages, bar chart and mean to answer the research questions. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistic at 0.5 level of significance.

## 7.0 Results

### Research Question 1

What are the indicators for measuring primary school teachers' competence in public primary school? To answer this question, respondents' responses were analysed using percentage. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Indicators for Measuring Primary School Teachers' Competence**

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Lesson plan preparation	592	20.5%
Lesson presentation	1,092	37.9%
Class management	558	19.3%
Pupils evaluation	345	11.9%
Comportment/dressing	294	10.2%

Table 1 revealed five parameters for measuring teachers' competence in public primary school. Out of all the skills, teachers' lesson presentation ranked the best (37.9%) followed by ability to prepare lesson plan. Class management, pupils' evaluation and good comportment/dressing followed respectively.

## Research Question 2

What are the structures associated with classroom instructional supervision in public primary school? To answer the question, respondents' responses were analysed using percentage. The results are presented Table 2.

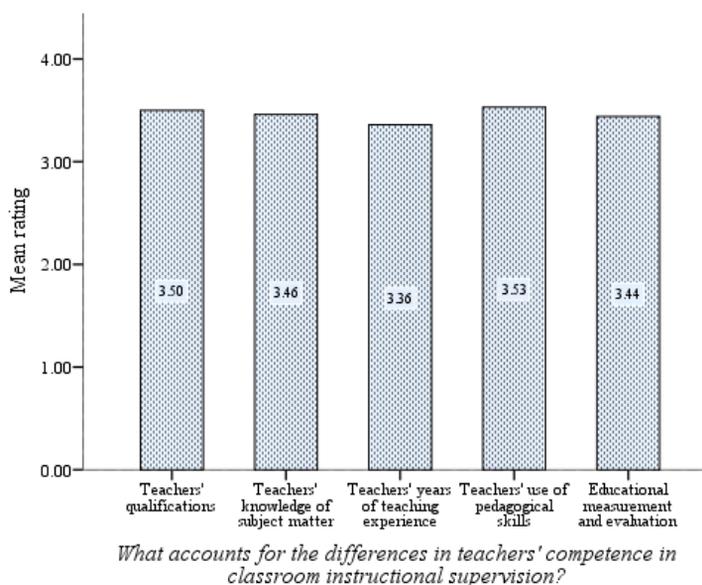
**Table 2: Structure of Classroom Instructional Supervision in Primary Schools**

S/N	Supervisors	Summary of Responses				Total	Percentage Response
		SA	A	D	SD		
1	SUBEB Officials	201	-	24	-	225	89.3%
2	Experienced Teachers	20	-	183	22	225	8.9%
3	Head of Sections	63	115	47	-	225	79%
4	Head Teachers	216	9	-	-	225	100%
5	Subject Heads	-	14	211	-	225	6.2%

Table 2 shows the nature of classroom instructional supervision in primary schools. Summary of responses indicated that the head teachers and their assistants perform instructional supervision (100%) while officials of the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) also visit schools on a regular basis (89.3%) to supervise teachers. Head of sections (middle level managers) to a very large extent (79%) also participate in instructional supervision while experienced teachers and subject teachers were lagging behind.

## Research Question 3

What accounts for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary school? To answer this question, respondents' responses were analysed using mean and presented in a bar chart. The results are presented in Figure 1.



### Figure 1: Differences in Teachers' Competence in Classroom Instructional Supervision

Figure 1 identifies teachers' qualification; knowledge of subject matter; years of teaching experience; use of pedagogical skills; and measurement and evaluation skills as the five major

factors responsible for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary schools. The mean response (of 3.53) revealed that teachers' use of pedagogical skills is the major factor responsible for differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision. Teachers' qualification (mean= 3.50) also played a significant role to differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision, followed by teachers' knowledge of subject matter (mean= 3.46), teachers' measurement and evaluation skills (mean= 3.44), and teachers' years of teaching experience (mean= 3.36).

### Hypothesis Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision. To test this, the t-test statistical tool was used. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: T-test Difference in Male and Female Teachers' Competence in Classroom Instructional Supervision**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Male	64	17.22	1.83	-	223	.014	-1.353	.54401	Reject H01
Female	161	18.57	4.19	2.49					

Table 3 reveals the descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and standard error mean difference of male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary schools. The mean scores suggested that female teachers ( $n = 161$ ;  $M = 18.57$ ;  $SD = 4.19$ ) had higher competence in classroom instructional supervision than male teachers ( $n = 64$ ;  $M = 17.22$ ;  $SD = 1.83$ ). The standard deviation,  $SD$  indicates that female teachers had a more widely varied competence in classroom instructional supervision than their male counterparts.

Moreover, the t-test analysis of the difference between male and female public primary school teachers' competence mean scores in classroom instructional supervision revealed significant difference between the mean scores. Therefore, the hypothesis which states, there is no significant difference between male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision is rejected. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision between male and female public primary school teachers in ( $t(223) = -2.49$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

### 8.0 Discussion of Findings

This study examined teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary school, Nigeria. Answers to research question one which sought to find out the area of teachers' competence in instructional supervision in public primary schools showed that, teachers were very competent in curriculum and learning management, ethics and integrity, and use of pedagogical skills. Educational measurement and evaluation; and the ability, desire and readiness to work and improve were other two areas; and that teachers proved competence in maintaining instructional supervision in the classroom. This finding corroborates the findings of Salyakhova & Valeeva (2015); Zededa (2009); and James (2009), that quality improvement measure in education identifies teacher at the central role to show key competence in areas of curriculum evaluation, professional ethics and teaching pedagogy. The effectiveness of any curriculum implementation depends on teacher's professional skills, thereby ensuring not only

mastery of a set of special knowledge and skills, but also the conditions for further development of appropriate methods of activity. Curriculum and learning management call for the supervision of classrooms' instruction, which is the process whereby school personnel work with teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Moreover, the finding has shown that curriculum and learning management, and maintaining the professional ethics of a teacher are the most important teachers' competencies in school instructional supervision. This result lends more weight to the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) ambition in empowering the teaching workforce to improve the teachers' skills in managing the classroom and learning environment in lower basic education schools.

The structure of classroom instructional supervision as raised in research question 2 showed the active involvement of head teachers, assistant head teachers, SUBEB officials as well as head of sections. This corroborates Eya and Chukwu (2012) that the functions of instructional supervision in schools are essentially the prerogative of senior teachers. Even though the study showed an active participation of officials from SUBEB, it is quite unlikely that those categories of staff are experienced trained teachers.

The results obtained for research question three which sought to account for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision revealed that, teachers' use of pedagogical skills and teachers' qualification are the major factors. Other contributory factors to teachers' competence differential in classroom instructional supervision are teachers' knowledge of subject matter, teachers' measurement and evaluation skills, and teachers' years of teaching experience. This finding is in line with the findings of Atanda, Adeniyi and Adebisi (2014) who observed and reiterated that pedagogical skills are necessary component of effective teaching and classroom instructional supervision. Similarly, findings from this study corroborates the positions of NIE (2010), that good teaching does not occur in a vacuum and that every competent teacher needs to possess a strong set of key values, skills and knowledge that are important for the 21st century teaching professional: learner-centeredness, teacher identity, and service to the profession and community. To develop competence, teachers need to progress from awareness to capacity building, identify the competencies they need and continue to build on them throughout their teaching career, through practice and professional development. Moreover, the findings support Komoski (2007) observation that supervision is a leadership instruction where the ultimate aim is to improve classroom instructions. That besides helping to enhance teaching and learning process, it is also seen as a process to ensure that schools' curriculum is implemented in the classroom. More importantly, the supervision process provides teachers with constructive feedback leading to increased teacher motivation; while Darling-Hammond (2006) observed that the character of the 21st century classroom differs and thus the demands on both students and teachers are undergoing significant changes.

Analysis of the hypothesis revealed that there was a significant difference between male and female teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision in public primary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not sustained. This test of hypothesis discovered that female teachers are more competent than their male counterparts in classroom instructional supervision. It was expected that when all teachers play their part very well, supervision will be enhanced and teachers are likely to develop a higher positive attitude towards classroom supervision. This finding in a way corroborates Adeel (2010), who discovered that teachers' instructional supervision is influenced by gender difference, and contradicts his submission that male teachers have higher positive attitude than female teachers.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

The study showed the areas of teachers' competence in instructional supervision in public primary schools. Based on the results presented in this study, it was concluded that curriculum and learning management, ethics and integrity, and use of pedagogical skills are teachers' competency areas to nourish classroom instructional supervision in schools. Supervisory activities in public primary schools needs to identify teachers' self-development as key issue associated with classroom instructional supervision. Classroom supervision needs to take into account the teachers' use of pedagogical skills and teachers' qualification. This is because these factors accounts for the differences in teachers' competence in classroom instructional supervision. It can also be concluded that female teachers played significant roles in classroom instructional supervision; since they display competencies more than their male counterparts.

## **10.0 Recommendations**

As evidenced from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Pedagogical programmes of pre-service and in-service training offered by colleges and universities should be investigated to determine to what extent they develop competencies in five key areas identified in this study.
2. For supervision to be successful, teachers need to be actively involved in this process. Informal constructive feedback in the form of discussion should follow the supervisory observations.
3. Innovative programmes channelled towards teachers' self-development should be made attractive by school administrators.
4. Supervision should promote professional growth and effectiveness of teachers hence, professional development activities need to reflect the needs and concerns of teachers.
5. Classroom instructional supervision needs to be a priority in schools and given enough time so that improvement in instruction can occur.

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