

Supervision and Supervisory Skills for School Administrators

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Abstract: This study elucidates the critical role of school administrators in effective school supervision. Exploring the concept and functions of administrators, the paper underscores the pivotal importance of supervisory skills for upholding educational standards. Proficient school administrators not only execute their responsibilities with heightened efficiency but also command greater respect from both their peers and subordinates. The acquisition of comprehensive management skills is challenging but imperative. This research delves into the nuances of effective leadership, highlighting key components such as communication, problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking. Additionally, the study examines the qualities of empathy, support, and concern, essential for fostering a positive school culture. The capacity to develop new employees based on their strengths is identified as a key facet of effective leadership. The study also emphasizes the benefits of supervisory skills, their positive impact on teacher performance, student outcomes, and overall educational objectives. In summary, this comprehensive exploration contributes to the overarching goal of fostering educational development.

Key points: Supervision, Supervisory Skills, School Administrators

Introduction

A school administrator is anyone who directs and is responsible for the work of others in the school. School administrators is an individual appointed to manage the affairs of the school through their staff's daily work. Ahaotu and Ogunode (2021) noted that school administrator means different thing to different people. School administrators can be referred to as school leader, school head, head-master, and head-mistress, or or principals. School administrators at the higher institutions include; Provosts for colleges of education, Rectors for the Polytechnics, and Vice-Chancellors for universities. A school leader is a trained and professional person appointed to head the school for the purpose of executing the following functions: planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and supervising the human and materials resources in order to achieve the general objectives of the school. Obemeata (1984) posits that a school head functions as an administrator responsible for the day-to-day operations of a school. Additionally, they bear the responsibility of making policy decisions, overseeing their implementation, and formulating effective strategies to achieve the school's objectives. In a similar vein, Ogunode (2019) defines a school administrator as a leader guiding the school community toward the realization of established goals and objectives within a specified timeframe. Consequently, school administrators can be perceived as executives and directors entrusted with the tasks of planning, organizing, and supervising both human and material resources to implement school programs and achieve institutional objectives. An appointed

individual, the school administrator plays a pivotal role in managing the affairs of the school and ensuring the effective implementation of teaching and learning. Furthermore, they serve as the implementers and organizers of education policies within the school context.

The tasks of school administrators are many. Cranston (2002) identified the responsibilities of the school administrators to include: the demonstration of a variety of management and leadership abilities and, making complex decisions in collaboration with other staff in the school while Fadipe (1990) listed the major functions of the school head to include: interpretation of policy, execution of instructional programmes and the selection, induction and retention of personnel. From the above, the school administrators are also responsible for safety of school and teachers in the school. School administrators functions includes; planning of school calendar, supervision of teachers, supervision of extra-curriculum activities, resources allocation, staff development, ensure security of teachers and students, plant management, community relationship and financial planning.

One of the major function of school administrators is school supervision. Ogunode and Ibrahim (2023); Ogunode and Richard (2021); and Wenzare, (2012) asserted that school administrators play the role of supervisor from time to time by checking the teachers' classroom work and assessing their overall performance based on students' academic achievement. Principals are also charged with the duty of promoting the academic and professional status of teachers by availing them with current curriculum materials and in-service courses. The principals are expected to provide the right motivation and stimulation for staff and students to enhance academic achievement. They are to use supervisor-teacher friendly methods moving away from the traditional method of control and authoritarianism.

In the realm of educational research, Ugboka (2012), Ogunode and Fabiyi (2023), as well as Ogunode, Olatunde-Aiyedun, and Akin-Ibidiran (2021) have underscored the pivotal role of school administrators as the managerial entity entrusted with the responsibility of implementing a diverse array of supervision techniques. Their role extends beyond mere oversight; rather, it involves cultivating an environment where teachers recognize the imperative for change, strategically plan for it, and actively engage in new behaviors to enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning processes. Central to this undertaking is instructional supervision, encompassing a series of deliberate actions aimed at mentoring and monitoring subordinates or teachers. The overarching goal is to foster a supportive and conducive atmosphere conducive to continuous improvement in the instructional process. This involves the systematic and planned monitoring of subordinates, coupled with the provision of professional guidance and assistance. The ultimate objective is to ensure the seamless and successful implementation of both formal and informal curricula within the school setting.

Furthermore, Ani (2007) stated that instructional supervision serves as a valuable avenue for supervisees to update their skills and knowledge, enabling them to adapt to innovative instructional delivery methods. Beyond skill enhancement, it establishes a platform for meaningful interaction between the principal (as the supervisor) and the teacher (as the supervisee). Ani emphasizes the importance of involving subject experts during instructional supervision, highlighting the collaborative nature of the process where concepts are discussed, suggestions are made, conclusions are drawn, and decisions are taken.

Supporting this perspective, Okumbe (2003) and Ogunode & Ajape (2021) underscore the critical significance of supervision in schools, asserting that only teachers who are trained, qualified, experienced, and possess high professional integrity are promoted to the role of principals. The instructional supervisory activities undertaken by principals play a crucial role in facilitating individual academic success for every student. The overarching purpose of instructional supervision is to elevate the quality of teaching by enhancing the skills of teachers, subsequently leading to improvements in students' academic performance.

Given their role as agents of the Quality Assurance Standards Officers (QASO), principals are entrusted with instructional supervisory activities. These activities encompass various aspects, including the improvement of teaching and learning, the development of supervisory strategies,

execution of strategies for improvement, maintenance of the school system, enhancement of the curriculum and library materials, evaluation of students' progress, and the establishment of effective timetabling. In this research, we will delve into the multifaceted dimensions of instructional supervision and its far-reaching impact on educational quality and student outcomes.

Supervising means directing and guiding others in an efficient and productive way. Supervisors are responsible for this job. The school administrators needs professional supervisory skills to be able to effectively manage and oversee teachers in the schools as a team. Training Express (2020) defined supervisory skills as skills that are important for managing and supervising others and are necessary for effective leadership. Kawarsky. (2022) viewed supervisory skills are the ability to lead and manage a team effectively. This ability includes setting goals and expectations, providing feedback, motivating employees, and intervening when necessary. Good supervisory skills are essential for ensuring that work gets done efficiently and effectively. From the above, supervisory skills are professional skills adopted by school administrators to supervise teachers in the school. Supervision skills are skills that enable school administrators to guide and coordinate the school well. Supervisory skills are skills employed by school administrators to understand the aspirations of the teachers and professionally guide them to implement teaching programme. Supervision skills are those skills that are needed for effective coordination and organization of human and materials resources. Supervision skills are special skills very critical for the administration and supervision of staff and are critical for effective leadership. Supervision skills are professional skills meant for directing and guiding others in an efficient and productive way. Supervision skills is very important for effective school administration (Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021). Supervisory skill is a combination of multiple soft skills to direct toward accomplishment of school goals. School administrator's effectiveness depends on effective skills such as supervisory skills. Supervision skills enable school administrators to administer the school better. Supervisory skills are very crucial to the tasks of school administrators.

Types of Supervisory Skills

There are many types of supervision skills. Some of them include; communication, collaboration, critical thinking, financial skills, project management, time management, **willingness to learn**, good mentorship, interpersonal skills, sense of diversity, problem-solving, and conflict management.

1. Leadership/Management Skills

Leadership skills are soft skills essential for effective leadership so that supervisors know how to use the talents of their employees. Successful supervisors are careful to 'lead' their subordinates rather than 'boss' them. Accomplished supervisors motivate employees through a positive work climate where employees feel valued, where needed resources are provided, and where realistic goals are set and achieved. Productivity and quality are the results of an effective supervisor. An example of good leadership/management skills would be assigning a group of employees who have been ability-matched to work on a project together. This leader would design the team with a common purpose and empower them to accomplish the task (Honeycutt, 2022).

2. Communication

Communication is the act of passing information from one person to the others within or outside an institutions. Communication is a process that involves systematically conveying an information or revealing something to an individual via the use of letters, telephone, books, conferences and seminars. Communication is the exchange of ideas and information from one person to another person. School administrators need communicative skills to be able to manage the school. Honeycutt, (2022) noted communication skills are soft skills that are crucial to a supervisor's success. Effective communication helps supervisors listen to the needs of both the organization and employees and create a clear, honest, and focused exchange of two-way communication. A good communicator fosters positive connections with employees and builds teamwork through convincing and confident verbal and non-verbal techniques. An example of good communication

skills is listening to an employee's ideas or frustrations regarding feelings about a work situation. Training Express (2020) noted a good supervisor has excellent communication skills. He needs to interact with the staff regularly and assign them many tasks as well as guide them. So, he has to be a good communicator in order to pass the information clearly to the team members and make them understand what he wants them to do. Supervising is all about guiding and leading others to make the job done in your desired way. You need to have good communicative skills in the first place to be a good supervisor. HRDQ (2022) noted that communication skills are one of a good supervisor's most important assets. They need to assign projects clearly and communicate important information to staff regularly. Transparency is essential, and supervisors should strive to keep an open door for employees to approach them with their needs or issues.

3. Collaboration

Honeycutt, (2022) remarked that being open-minded and having the ability to communicate, organize, and remain flexible are positive characteristics of collaboration. Good supervisor skills embrace remaining open to new ideas from employees in order to foster a team spirit. This adaptability motivates employees to feel they are trusted and active participants in their work environment. Soliciting input for projects or long-term goals is an example of collaboration.

4. Critical Thinking

Honeycutt, (2022) observed that solving problems through logic and research involves critical thinking. Supervisors with solid critical thinking skills have the ability to develop processes that are streamlined and effective for employees. These skills also help supervisors work through employee disputes, work independently and operate collaboratively when developing long-term goals. Critical thinking also occurs when supervisors need to strategize fix problems in order to make the company consistently productive. Critical thinking is a soft skill that supervisors use in almost every aspect of employee interaction. Training Express (2020) remarked that in the workplace, there can arise many situations where good critical thinking skill can help you a lot. A supervisor has to deal with different people and different responsibilities where he needs to do extensive brainstorming for proper decision making. More responsibilities come with higher positions and he has to ensure effective management of all of those. A good critical thinking capability makes the decision-making process easier for a supervisor.

5. Financial Skills

Honeycutt, (2022) maintained that most of the supervisors' decisions can make or cost a business a lot of money. For this reason, financial skills are identified as hard skills as they usually are developed through education or on-the-job experience. Financial skills enable supervisors to evaluate data to determine effectiveness for production, cost-saving measures, developing or balancing budgets. Most supervisors prepare financial data and reports for upper management to report progress or develop solutions.

6. Project Management

Honeycutt, (2022) submitted that project management involves the process of planning, organizing, and controlling resources in order to achieve a task. This soft skill combines many of the other supervisory skills, such as effective communication and leadership/management skills. In project management, supervisors communicate the vision and mission of a project and use interpersonal skills to develop a compatible team so that a project can be completed in a timely and cost-saving manner. A good example of project management skills would be leading a new group to develop the design of a new car.

The study by Álvarez and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2023) explores the application of project-based learning in the context of renewable and sustainable energy education, using a case study focused on the development of the Electric Vehicle EOLO. Project-based learning is an instructional approach that aligns with Honeycutt's (2022) understanding of project management, emphasizing the collaborative and hands-on aspects of learning. Project-based learning involves students

engaging in complex, real-world projects that require them to apply knowledge and skills from various disciplines. In the case of Álvarez and Olatunde-Aiyedun's study, the project centers around the development of the Electric Vehicle EOLO, linking directly to renewable and sustainable energy education. The study by Álvarez and Olatunde-Aiyedun (2023) likely incorporates the principles of project management, as mentioned by Honeycutt, involving planning, organizing, and controlling resources to achieve a specific task or goal. Project-based learning often requires effective communication and leadership/management skills, as mentioned by Honeycutt, to convey the vision and mission of the project and to foster collaboration within the team.

7. Time Management

Honeycutt, (2022) observed that this skill involves the process of planning, organizing, and controlling resources in order to achieve a task. Planning a project or developing fair employee schedules would require a supervisor to possess this soft skill. With this skill, supervisors are able to recognize effective multi-tasking, effective delegation, plan the length it would take to reach goals, and schedule tasks at the proper pacing. They also know how to streamline procedures in order to reduce waste, cost. Training Express (2020) maintained that timing is one of the most important things for a business. A supervisor needs to do his own tasks simultaneously while supervising others. It can be a severe problem if a deadline is missed while juggling a lot of task at the same time. So, a supervisor always needs to be aware of deadlines. That's why he should have a proper sense of timing to meet the deadlines. Time management skill is important for a supervisor because it helps him structuring and arranging the schedule in a way so that he can accomplish the goals easily. HRDQ (2022) asserted that time management is essential in a business with deadlines and deliverables. Being able to juggle timelines and meet goals regularly means supervisors must be aware of when things need to be completed and how much time it takes to do them – plus getting their team to work on the same timeline.

8. Willingness to Learn

Honeycutt, (2022) submitted that the last trait that supervisors should have is the willingness to learn and grow. While their team is learning, they too should be developing themselves in their careers and trying to learn as much as they can about both their subject matter and about supervising their employees in the best way possible. Training Express (2020) Nobody is absolutely perfect in their way and you should admit it. You should thrive for perfection always. And, without admitting lacking and developing accordingly, you can't chase perfection. A good supervisor is aware of this and he always embraces the opportunity to learn. Continuous learning process pushes you forward to perfection. So, you should have the willingness to learn for being a good supervisor.

9. Good Mentorship

Training Express (2020) a good supervisor is always a good mentor. He always coaches his team members and thrives for extracting the best output from them. As a supervisor, you have to take the responsibilities of the performance of your teammates. So, it is important for you to understand their potential and act accordingly to push them to achieve their best. Hence, mentoring skill is very important for being a good supervisor. Good mentoring skills help you to convey your thoughts to them which ensures more efficient guidance and make them able to understand your guidelines precisely and interpret these in their works. Thus, your mentoring skills lead your teammates to perform better.

10. Interpersonal Skills

Training Express (2020) asserted that interpersonal skills can be considered as another form of communication skills. A supervisor needs to bring together different parts of the organization at a common point. So, he has to develop and maintain a good relationship with others in the workplace. That's why he should have a good interpersonal skill to make effective interaction with others. You need to nurture a strong interpersonal skill in yourself if you want to be a good supervisor. HRDQ (2022) noted that developing and maintaining good relationships with other departments is also

vital. The supervisor wants to ensure both their employees and the organization meet their goals, so they should recognize the importance of working together cohesively.

11. Sense of Diversity

Training Express (2020) noted that school business runs through a diverse condition daily and now every workplace possesses a diversity of work. Diversity is important for modern businesses to always stand out from the crowd. Diversity of products give an extra edge to the business to outrun the competitors in the market. Hence, employees need to go through a diverse working condition every day. Therefore, the supervisor needs to have a good sense of diversity to guide the teammates properly and effectively. HRDQ (2022) Diversity is crucial in organizations today. A great manager recognizes this and encourages their company to continue working on company diversity and inclusion (D&I). The supervisor may even decide to join the team that works on D&I to help with the initiative more.

12. Problem-Solving

HRDQ (2022) observed that when issues in the workplace arise, supervisors should use their skills to handle them. Excellent problem-solving skills help a manager assess the situation at hand and develop an effective plan on how to tackle it. Training Express (2020) concluded that various problems may arise in the workplace. The supervisors have to use their skills to handle the problems properly. Problem-solving skills help the supervisors in this regard. Problem-solving skills help to understand and assess the situations and develop an effective plan to tackle those. Every good supervisor has inherent problem-solving skills.

13. Conflict Management

Training Express (2020) observed that conflict management skill is very important for a good supervisor. A workplace comprises of different people from different backgrounds and with different viewpoints. So, conflict may arise at any time within the team members. A good supervisor recognizes this and creates an effective way to minimize and deal with conflicts when it happens. Conflicts management skills help a supervisor in this regard to know well how to resolve and manage conflicts and ensure a harmonious working environment. HRDQ (2022) agreed that conflict can happen in a work environment. A good manager recognizes this and creates an effective method of minimizing friction and dealing with it when it takes place. Being a good listener and mediator is also vital in tricky situations.

Benefits of Supervisory Skills

Supervisory skills play a pivotal role in organizational success, contributing to various benefits that positively impact both individuals and the overall functioning of the workplace. Proficiency in these essential skills is paramount as it establishes the foundation for effective school administration. Successful school administrators, through the mastery of these proficiencies, can execute their responsibilities with heightened efficiency and garner increased respect from both their peers and subordinates. While acquiring the comprehensive set of management skills necessary for effective leadership poses challenges, it is imperative to underscore key components. A proficient school administrator must possess the ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups both within and outside the organization. This skill is instrumental in facilitating seamless information flow and fostering collaboration within the school community. Furthermore, the adept utilization of problem-solving skills, creativity, and critical thinking is crucial, enabling administrators to navigate complex challenges and make innovative, informed decisions.

Equally vital are the qualities of empathy, support, and concern, which contribute significantly to cultivating a positive and nurturing school culture. Effective school administrators recognize the importance of creating a supportive environment that positively impacts staff morale and student well-being. Additionally, the capacity to develop new employees based on their strengths is a key facet of effective leadership, maximizing individual potential and enhancing overall team dynamics.

The articulation of these principles underscores the significance of supervisory skills, as delineated by Kawarsky (2022) as follows:

1. Builds a Healthy Work Environment

School administrators' job is more than just giving orders. Good supervisors know how to motivate and inspire their employees to do their best work. They create a healthy work environment by setting clear expectations and providing constructive and positive feedback. In addition, they encourage open communication and provide support when needed.

2. Motivates the Team

Management and supervisory skills can also provide clear direction and expectations, allowing supervisors to help team members understand how their contributions fit into the larger picture. In addition, good supervisors offer regular feedback and recognition for a job well done. As a result, team members feel motivated to do their best work and contribute to the success of the team.

3. Boosts Productivity

Supervisory training is important because it can help boost workplace productivity. When employees feel supported and valued, they are more likely to be engaged in their work and determined to do their best. In fact, it's been shown that businesses that invest in developing their supervisors' skills will see a tangible increase in productivity.

4. Teachers' Detainments

Even the most talented teachers will eventually move on to other opportunities if they don't feel like they're being supervised effectively. Poor supervision can lead to low morale, high turnover, and many other problems. That's why it's so important for managers to have the right supervisory management skills. By creating a positive and supportive environment, providing clear direction, and offering regular feedback, managers can encourage their teachers to stay with the school for the long term.

5. Bridges the Gap between Team and Higher Management

Effective supervisory skills are vital for any manager who wants to be successful in today's workplace. The most important role of a supervisor is to bridge the gap between the team and upper management. A supervisor must communicate effectively with both groups and ensure that everyone works together towards the same goal.

6. Improves Problem-Solving

Good problem-solving skills can help school administrators identify problems before they become overly complex or cause too much disruption. They can also help supervisors develop creative solutions that address the root cause of the problem. In addition, good problem-solving skills can improve communication and collaboration among employees. These skills can lead to a more efficient and productive workplace.

7. Encourages Flexibility

Lastly, supervisor leadership skills are important in the workplace because they encourage flexibility and adaptive thinking among employees. In any given work environment, there will always be changes and new challenges to face. Supervisors who can adapt their leadership style to the situation at hand are more likely to be successful in meeting these challenges. From the above, the importance of supervisory skills includes; supervisory skills aid effective implementation of teaching and learning; supervisory skills guarantee quality education, supervisory skills promote a healthy relationship between teachers and school administrators, and supervisory skills ensure effectiveness of school administrators, supervisory skills leads to teachers effectiveness, supervisory skills enables school administrators to understand the teachers, supervisory skills provide room for quality supervision and creates conducive work environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the significance of supervision for school development is unequivocal. Positioned as a vital subsystem in education, supervision plays a crucial role in ensuring the delivery of quality education in academic institutions. School administrators, as key figures, bear the responsibility of effective school supervision. This study underscores the importance of training school administrators in supervision skills and strategies, recognizing them as essential elements for optimizing educational outcomes. The ensuing benefits, as highlighted by Kawarsky (2022), underscore the positive impact of adept supervision on teacher performance, student outcomes, and the overall advancement of educational objectives.

Building on these findings, it is strongly recommended that educational institutions prioritize the training of school administrators in supervision and supervisory skills and effective strategies. This training should encompass communication, problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills. Additionally, fostering qualities such as empathy, support, and concern within administrators should be emphasized to create a positive school culture. Institutions should also encourage the development of new employees based on their strengths, recognizing it as a fundamental aspect of effective leadership. Continuous professional development programs tailored to enhance supervision and supervisory skills will not only benefit individual administrators but will also contribute significantly to the collective success and advancement of the educational institution.

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