Staff Supervision and Service Delivery at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi-Nigeria

[1]Oravee Aule & [2]Aboki Sallah Bambur
[1]*Department of Business Administration*
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, P.M.B. 2373, Makurdi, Benue State
[2]*Federal University Wukari, Taraba State*

Abstract

Staff supervision is a phase of administration that is aimed at maintaining the efforts of personnel in line with goals of an organization. As a forum of rubbing minds on ways of improving service delivery in organizations, ineffective supervision could therefore contribute in no small measure to the non-realization of educational goals and objectives. The study examined the influence of staff supervision on service delivery in Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM). The research specifically verified if vetting (review) of examination questions, undergraduate students' project defense, punctuality of staff to official functions, and supervision of examination invigilation led to service delivery in the University. Data for the paper was generated through primary (questionnaire, oral interview and observation) and secondary (text books, official documents) sources. The study revealed that the above stated specific objectives positively influenced service delivery in the University during the study period. The paper therefore recommended, among others that Management of the University/Staff on supervision exercise should cooperate with their colleagues during the exercise and see the administrative process as a way of developing them (the lecturers/teachers), the students, and the wider society, staff/lecturers on supervision exercise should use the forum to correct their colleagues' mistakes and not for fault finding/witch-hunting; and staff/lecturers who are found wanting on their jobs should be motivated by sending them on refresher courses/conferences/workshops to improve their skills for service delivery in the University.

Keywords: *Administration, Service, Supervision, Teaching, University*

Corresponding Author: Oravee Aule

Background to the Study

Supervision of staff is a personnel function that generally cannot be waved aside in any organization because it is a process of seeing that the methods, principles and polices that are needed for effective administrations are being implemented to achieve the set goals. The administrative process ensures that expert knowledge and experience are used to oversee, educate and improve the teaching-learning process of those concerned. As a result of the importance attached to supervision of workers, management of all organizations world over ensure that work activities are broken into sections and units, each headed by a superior officer who delegates, or directly supervise the carriage of assigned responsibilities to achieve the desired goals and objectives of same.

Staff supervision is indeed an activity through which individuals or group of individual's advice and stimulate interest in lecturers (teachers) and students so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning situations in the school (Aniah, 2005). Adewumi (2000) sees supervision as a process of bringing about improvement in instructions by working with teachers who are with students. He added that supervision of teachers has been in the school system from time immemorial. During the colonial era, inspectors of education were deployed to oversee and inspect schools to see that money (grants) meant for schools were spent judiciously on school activities. Similarly, governments in the present times oversees school activities to ensure that they operate according to specifications and standards so as to assist in the achievement of national objectives of imparting knowledge to the society.

The Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) has evolved staff supervision measures such as vetting of examination questions, staff punctuality to office and academic (lecturing) functions, undergraduate students' project defense, annual appraisal of staff, postgraduate students' project peer review, and supervision of examination invigilation, among others using standing committees to ensure that service delivery (knowledge dissemination) is successfully achieved in same. These supervision activities are thus seen as an expedient way of giving encouragement, advice and assistance to those in the field to justify the human and material resources being spent on any administrative setups. However, as a result of the explosion of the university administration in the late 19"th Century culminating in high employment/enrolment of staff and students, the supervision of its academic activities using the afore-mentioned supervision measures for efficient and effective service delivery has left much to be desired. This is because, there appears to be decline in service delivery (knowledge transfer) and wastages in the University community. The study is therefore meant to verify the gap and proffer possible solutions. The major objective of the study is to determine if supervision of lecturers has positively influenced service delivery in JOSTUM; and the specific objectives are to verify if vetting (review) of examination questions, undergraduate students' project defense, punctuality of staff to official functions, and supervision of examination invigilation led to service delivery in the sampled Colleges of the University during the study period -2010 to 2020.

Information for the study was obtained through primary and secondary sources. The secondary information were sourced from textbooks, journal publications, and official

records from the 3 Colleges of the University. The primary data were however, gotten through field survey using observation, interview and questionnaire administered to the 158 lecturers in the 3, out of 10 Colleges of the University sampled for the study; and they are Colleges of: Engineering (40 Lecturers), Management Sciences (52 Lecturers); and Science (66 Lecturers). The primary data gotten from the 147 sets of questionnaire returned during the field survey were presented and analyzed using tables and simple percentages. The questionnaire which comprised of a set of multiple choice as well as Likert scale questions is divided into section 'A' and section 'B'. The section 'A' sought information on bio-data of the respondents, while section 'B' elicited respondent's information on how the afore-mentioned measures of staff supervision enhanced service delivery in the three Colleges under study.

Conceptual Clarifications
This part of the study reviewed related studies and opinions of scholars and practitioners on how staff supervision influences service delivery. The review centered on: definition of supervision, methods of supervision, importance of supervision, the concept of service delivery and theoretical framework.

Meaning of Supervision
Supervision of staff in organizations has assumed more importance than before owing to the fact that people are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance attached to the administrative activity. This therefore, explains why scholars and practitioners in school administration have come up with varying definitions of the concept of supervision.

Aniah (2005), define supervision as a process of bringing about improvement in instructions by working with people who are with students. This administrative activity, according to the author is meant to help improve the teaching-learning process that covers the whole educational setting, whether primary, secondary, or tertiary. Supervision, as an administrative activity is thus concerned with maintaining the efforts of teachers in line with the goals of the school. In school administration, staff supervision takes care of teachers' interests and the general provision of materials and facilities that could make their work easier, giving them professional growth through seminars, workshops and refresher courses. Adequate supervision is therefore very necessary so that the nations' aspirations and those of the individuals are met.

Hallinger (1992), on the other hand defines staff supervision as the phase of school administration that focuses primarily on the achievement of appropriate educational system. This definition implies that there are three-fold relationships between supervision and administration as stated below:
    i.   Supervision is a phase of administration,
    ii. Supervision is concerned with the appropriateness of instructional expectation; and
    iii. Supervision is the phase of administration which has particular pertinence (product) of educational system.

Supporting the above views, Jeiyeoba and Ukandu (1998) describes supervision as one of the basic requirements in administration that concerns the tactics of efficiency and proper

management of human and material resources in organizations. Supervision is thus, the "nervous system" of any organization, whether private or public. To this end, Abenga (1995) maintains that for supervision to result to effective performance (service delivery), it should not aim at witch-hunting or fault-finding. It should focus on helping teachers to correct their mistakes and give them guide where there is the need. Thus, certain problems that are likely to affect their performance should be counseled. Effective supervision will in the words of Ogunsaju (1981), lead to improvement of quality of education, conditions of teachers and teaching/learning conditions of students.

Methods of Supervision

There are two schools of thought that describe the methods of supervision that evolved over time: traditional supervision and modern supervision (Mfe, 2009). While traditional supervision focuses on teachers and the classroom situation and assumed that teachers were not properly trained and therefore needed to be supervised regularly, modem supervision school of thought opines that teachers should be assisted in identifying their professional problems for the purpose of improving the teaching/learning situation in their various schools.

Supervision of teachers was at first aimed at improving instructions/programme in schools; but today it has become a skilled and specialized service rendered to teachers (Ntukidem, 2003). It is no more an activity where teachers were visited in the classroom without prior arrangement or notice as many changes have taken place in modern school environments both instructionally and methodologically. Senar (2003), recognized these changes and asserted that in modem supervision programme, stakeholders and designated supervisors serve as skilled resource persons. Persons possessing relevant skills also aid administrators, teachers, parents and students in providing educational programmes which will eventually improve the quality of living in the community which they live and work.

Importance of Supervision

Supervision is concerned with what the school personnel do with their human and material resources for the purpose of maintaining change in the operation of schools in order to direct the attainment of goals. Hence, deficient supervision is detrimental to an organizations' success (Mayhaw, 2014). Supervision plays important role in deciding the nature and content of school curriculum, in selecting the school organizational patterns and learning materials that will enhance educational growth and development of both the students and the teachers. There are several reasons for the conduct of supervision in schools, but the most crucial is to ensure that each individual teacher within the school system is performing the duties for which he/she is scheduled (Aniah, 2005). The author further states that supervision improve the effectiveness of teachers so that they can contribute maximally to effective teaching and learning in schools.

Obadara (2005), on the other hand opines that supervision is an activity that change some aspects of a person's concept, self-way of behaviour and attitude in the school and within the school. This, it is argued can assist to improve the quality of education in schools. To Mfe

(2009), supervision helps the teacher to improve himself. It helps the teacher to become competent in self analyses, self-criticism and self-improving which makes him to have confidence in himself as a success in the school system. The importance of supervision of teachers in schools lies in areas of stimulation, appraisal, overseeing of the activities leading to achievement of instructional goals at a specific quality level (Dilley, 2009). The author further adds that teachers should be directed to improve teaching methods and techniques, utilize newly discovered principles, group dynamics, locate and utilize community resources and evaluate their teaching competence.

Oboegbulum (2003), posit that supervision relates to activities and aspects which are intended to maintain and promote the effectiveness of learning. He (Oboegbulum) argues further that, as good teaching promotes good learning, so does good supervision of teachers promote learning. Lack of teaching facilities and personnel (teachers) could hinder good quality education; yet if what is available is properly supervised, the aims and objectives set by an establishment would be realized. Supporting this view, Strange and Tucker (2003) states that supervision is that process/activity which aims at improving classroom instruction. The main activities involved in supervision should therefore be to promote teacher's growth, introduce pilot programme of instructional needs, and evaluation of teaching/learning activities.

Service Delivery
Service delivery relates to the characteristics of the service offered to the target customer or client. It is a component of business or activities that defines the interaction between service providers and customers; where the provider offers a service, whether that is in information or a task, and the client either finds value or loses as a result. Good service delivery provides clients with an increase in value. Since a service system is characterized by the relationships occurring between people, service processes, and physical elements, these dimensions must be considered jointly to effectively plan and conceive the service delivery system.

Service delivery is crucial in organizations especially those that render intangible services. The power to deliver optimal and quality service attracts organizations to competitive advantages among others in the same industry, and many organizations enhance their effectiveness by delivering service to customers to enhance their internal and external operations. To provide quality service to customers, service providers must understand and respect their clients' needs, attitudes and concerns. The client's perceptions are in turn affected by personal, social and cultural factors.

Delivering services of high quality are an important tool for service providers to create and provide value of their operations to customers. Through this, organizations can achieve increased customers' satisfaction, loyalty and therefore long-term patronage/profitability. Thus, service organizations need to plan the delivery of their services and to ensure the successful implementation of the actual plan. Continuous improvement of service procedures also greatly contributes to the optimization of service delivery system and enhances the organizations standard of service. Humphrey (1998) identified the delivery of quality service across the whole range of its activities as an essential task of the public service with a strong focus on processes, an emphasis on work done and maximum value for money.

Anazodo, Okoye and Chukwuemeka (2012), identified the principles of service delivery to include:

i. Specification of the quality of service to be provided by the departments and offices to their customers,
ii. Consultation of, and participation by customers on a structured basis,
iii. Provision of quality information and advice to customers, in relation to the methods of delivery of services,
iv. Integration of public services at local, regional and national levels,
v. Comprehensive system of measuring and assessing customer satisfaction; and
vi. Compliance and redress mechanisms which operate close to the point of delivery.

Service delivery, as discernable from the foregoing therefore indicates "where, when and how" the service or product is delivered to customers in terms of its quality, efficiency and timelines. The quality of service should start from need of the customers and end at customers' expectation (Kotler, 2003). This means that good quality perception is not based on the service provider but on the point of view/perception of the customer.

Customers' perception of services is a comprehensive assessment of a service benefits which consistently meet their needs and desires. Service timeliness refers to the time of work produced; which is how fast, when, or what employee or department, or work unit produced the work. Customers typically appreciate targeted marketing offers due to their personalized nature and alignment with their preferences. However, the timeliness of such offer is as important as their quality and relevance. To best understand how customers fell, their feedback should be solicited regularly (Armstrong, 2009). Service timeliness is thus related to the amount of effort put forward by an employee. The effort entails the amount of physical and mental energy that the individual spends in a specific period of time in the work, in addition to the speed in performance.

Service efficiency entails the ability to avoid wasting materials, energy, efforts, money, and time in doing something or in producing a desired result. It is a measure of the extent to which input is well used for an intended task or function (output). Maphephe (2013), defined efficiency as the allocation of scarce resources that maximizes the achievement of aims. The author stressed that to understand fully the meaning of "efficiency" it is necessary to understand the terms, inputs, outputs (including quality and quantity) production, and level of service.

Theoretical Framework
Supervision is a leadership function exercised by managers in schools/administrative set-ups. According to Cole (1997), leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group where by one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organizational content, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals. It (leadership) is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to go in a certain direction (Brigman and Campbell, 2003). The important thing to note about instructional leadership is that any person who influences one or more persons in any situation to achieve

the stated goal is playing a leadership role. Thus, the analytical model postulated by McGregor (Theory X and Y) can be used to explain how leaders (managers) or workers operate towards the attainment of organizational goals. He (McGregor) categorized human beings into two: those who fall under theory X have an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it if they can. As such, they must be coerced, controlled, directed and threatened with punishment to work towards achieving the goals of the organization. On the other hand, those persons who fall under theory Y take physical and mental work as play or rest. They do not avoid responsibility but seek same. They exercise imagination, ingenuity and creativity in the solving of organizational problems (Oravee, 2012). The foregoing posits that McGregor's theory X and Y assumptions have implications for supervisory leadership styles. Theory X can be regarded as being the rationale for the autocratic supervisory leadership; while theory Y can be the basis for democratic supervisory leadership. However, both sets of theory X and Y assumptions may be valid for school supervision depending on the circumstance at hand.

Results and Discussions
The data collected for the paper is presented and analyzed in this part of the study using tables and simple percentages. This began with the distribution and return of questionnaire to lecturers in the Colleges under study as seen on Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution and return of Questionnaire

Colleges	Number Distributed	Number Returned	Number not returned
Engineering	40	35	05
Management Scs. CadreCadre	52	50	02
Science	66	62	04
Total	**158**	**147**	**11**

Source: Field survey, 2021

As seen on table 1, 158 sets of questionnaire were distributed during field survey for the paper. Out of these, 147 were returned and 11 were not returned. Analyses in the paper were therefore based on the sets of questionnaire that were properly completed and returned during the field survey in the sampled Colleges of the University. The lecturers in the sampled colleges were asked to say whether or not vetting of examination questions helped in the delivery of their services, and their responses were as presented on table 2.

Table 2: Vetting of Examination Questions Enhances Service Delivery

Responses	Engineering	Management Scs.	Science	Total	% of total Resp.
Agree	09	13	15	37	25.17
S/agree	10	15	19	44	29.93
Undecided	08	07	09	24	16.32
Disagree	05	08	10	23	15.64
S/disagree	03	07	09	19	12.92
Total	**35**	**50**	**62**	**147**	**100 appr**

Source: field survey, 2021.

The information on Table 2 shows that 81 respondents (lecturers) represented by 55.1% agreed/strongly agreed that vetting of examination questions enhances delivery of their services, 24 or 16.32% of the respondents were undecided; and the remaining 42 or 28.56% of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed. In comparing the percentage difference of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly disagreed, it can be inferred that vetting of examination questions enhanced the delivery of services during the period under study. Interacting with lecturers in the Colleges, those at the lower cadre (Lecturers 1 downwards) confessed that opportunities the senior colleagues (Senior Lecturers and Professors) avail them during vetting/review of examination questions had guided/strengthen them in setting standard questions for their students, and hence impacting positively on the delivery of their services during the period under study.

The lecturers in the Colleges were also asked to say if undergraduate students' project defense helped in the delivery of their services or not, and their responses were as contained on Table 3.

Table 3: Undergraduate students' project defense enhances service delivery of lecturers

Responses	Engineering	Management Scs.	Science	Total	% of total resp.
Agree	11	13	16	40	27.21
S/agree	10	13	16	39	26.53
Undecided	09	08	10	27	18.36
Disagree	04	07	10	21	14.28
S/disagree	01	09	10	20	13.60
Total	**35**	**50**	**62**	**147**	**100 appr.**

Source: field survey, 2021

The information on Table 3 shows that 79 respondents represented by 53.74% agreed/strongly agreed that undergraduate students' project defense helped in the delivery of their services, 27 or 18.36% of the respondents were undecided; and the remaining 41 or 27.88% of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed. In comparing the percentage difference of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly disagreed, it was observed that undergraduate project defense enhanced the delivery of lecturers' services during the period under study. As gathered during oral interview with most of the respondents, undergraduate students' project defense enabled them (lecturers) to frame research topics for their supervisees and as well acquaint them with rudiments and essentials of research works in general. Consequently, the delivery of their (lecturers') services were enhanced during the period under study.

Staff supervision is expedient in all organizations as it helps in the actualization of set targets. In finding out if punctuality to official functions enhanced service delivery among lecturers in the Colleges studied, the understated responses were analyzed as contained on table 4.

Table 4: Punctuality to official functions enhances service delivery

Responses	Engineering	Management Scs.	Science	Total	% of total resp.
Agree	11	14	16	41	27.89
S/agree	12	12	14	38	25.85
Undecided	06	07	10	23	15.64
Disagree	04	08	12	24	16.32
S/disagree	02	09	10	21	14.28
Total	**35**	**50**	**62**	**147**	**100 appr**

Source: field survey, 2021

The information on Table 4 shows that 79 respondents represented by 53.74% agreed/strongly agreed that punctuality to official functions enhances service delivery, and 30.6% of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed, while 23 (15.64%) of the respondents were neutral. In comparing the percentage difference of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly disagreed, it can be seen that punctuality to official functions enhanced service delivery during the period under study. As gathered during oral interview with most of the respondents, punctuality to official functions helped in the delivery of lecturers' services during the period under study.

The lecturers in the Colleges were further asked to say if supervision of examination invigilation helped in the delivery of their services or not, and their responses were as contained on Table 5.

Table 5: Supervision of examination invigilation helped in the delivery of services

Responses	Engineering	Management Scs..	Science	Total	% of total Resp.
Agree	13	15	16	44	29.93
S/agree	13	16	16	45	30.61
Undecided	02	05	08	15	10.20
Disagree	04	10	12	26	16.32
S/disagree	03	04	10	17	14.28
Total	**35**	**50**	**62**	**147**	**100 appr.**

Source: field survey, 2021

The information on Table 5 shows that 89 respondents represented by 60.54% agreed/strongly agreed that supervision of examination invigilation enhances service delivery, 15 respondents (10.20%) were undecided and the remaining 43 respondents (30.6%) disagreed/strongly disagreed. In comparing the percentage difference of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed with those who disagreed/strongly disagreed, it can be seen that the drift was more towards the assertion that supervision of examination invigilation enhances service delivery during the period under study. Responding to questions during interviews, most of the respondents okay supervision exercise and said it check absenteeism of lecturers and examination misconducts during invigilation exercises. This consequently influenced their (lecturers') service delivery during the period of the study.

Summary of Findings

i.   Staff supervision promotes teaching; just as good teaching promotes learning. It (supervision) gives encouragement, advice and assistants to those in the field and as well takes care of their interest and general provision of materials and facilitates to ease their work.

ii. Staff supervision enhanced service delivery of lecturers in JOSTUM during the period of the study.

iii. Some staff /lecturers displayed lukewarm attitudes (carelessness/punctuality during teaching/project supervision, and examination invigilation.

iv. Some staff/lecturers were found indulging in unethical behaviours (absenteeism, examination misconducts,) during the carriage of their official assignments.

Conclusion

Staff supervision as a management function promotes teaching, just as good teaching promotes learning. It helps in stimulating and overseeing teaching or organizational activities towards the realization of set goals.

Recommendations

In the light of the foregoing findings, the study recommended that:

i.   Staff/Lecturers/teachers should cooperate with their colleagues during supervision exercises. They should see them as partners in the process of developing them (the lecturers/teachers), the students, and the wider society.

ii. Staff/Lecturers/teachers on supervision exercise should not use the forum for fault finding/witch-hunting. Rather, they should use it to rub minds on ways of improving academic performance/service delivery in the studied Colleges and to correct their colleagues' mistakes.

iii. The staff/Lecturers who are found wanting on their jobs should be motivated by sending them on refresher courses/conferences/workshops to improve their skills. Where this, it is hoped that they will live up their expectations.

iv. The Colleges should ensure that corrective/disciplinary measures matted on erring staff/lecturers and students are observed/ad-held to in order to build a spirit of seriousness in the supervision activities/exercises.

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