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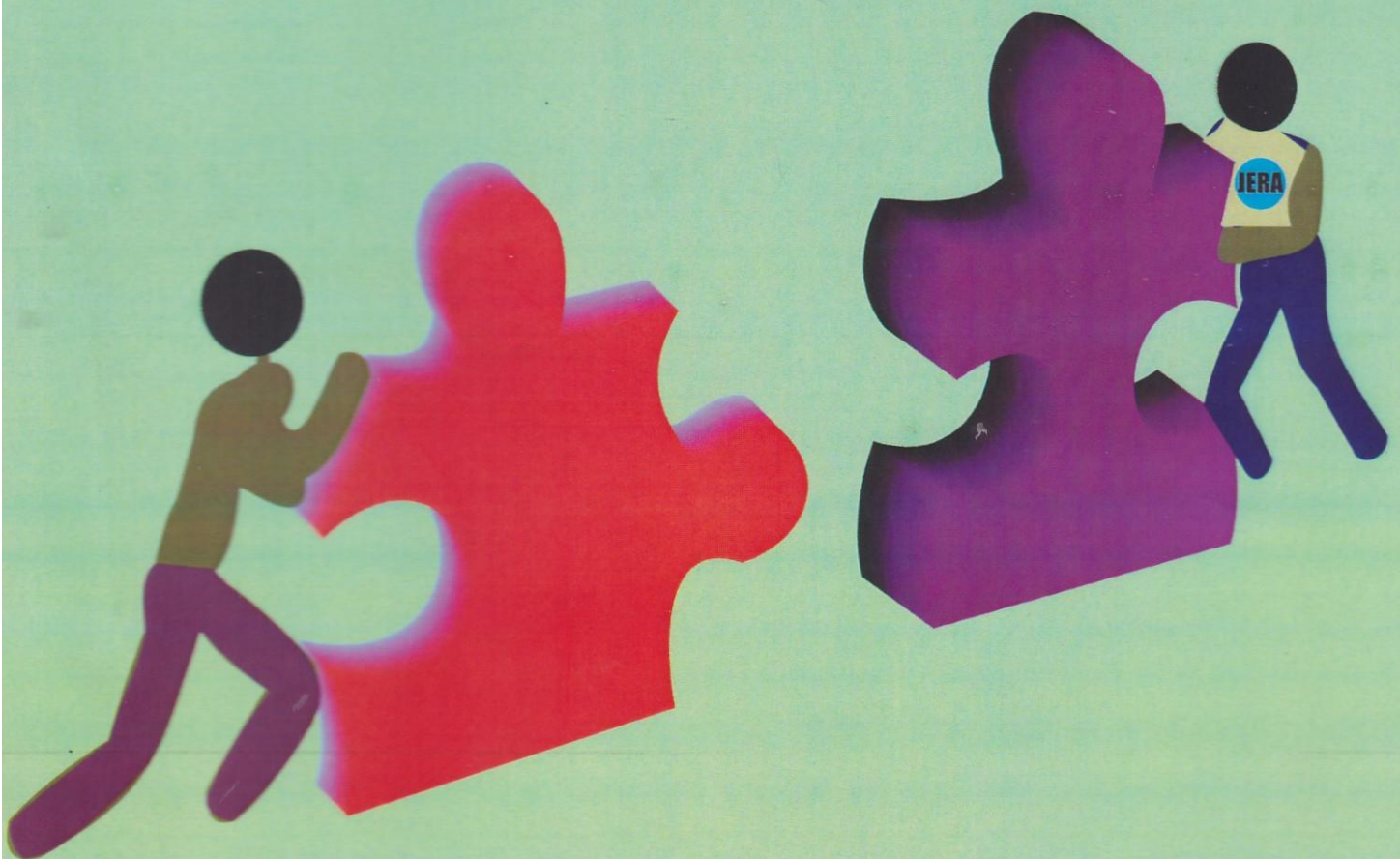
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Curriculum Supervision and Teachers' Classroom Practices at Lower Basic Education Level in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined "Classroom Supervision and Classroom Practices at lower basic education level in Uyo Local Government Area Of Akwa Ibom State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The design of the study was the survey design. The total population used for the study was 1500. Random sampling technique was used to select 150 pupils for the study. The instruments used for the study was researchers developed instrument titled "Curriculum Supervision and Classroom Practices Questionnaire" which was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Curriculum Studies and one from Department of Educational Foundations, University of Uyo. Cronbach Alpha statistics was used to determine the reliability coefficient of 0.78 for the instrument. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer research questions. Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The results showed that there is significant difference in classroom practices based on curriculum supervision. Findings showed that teachers with positive classroom practices had better curriculum supervision compared teachers with negative classroom practices.

Keywords: Curriculum, Curriculum Supervision, Classroom Practices, Inspection, Training and Direction

Introduction

Supervision in education means to inspect, control, evaluate or advice and support school heads and teachers. Some schools of thought define supervision as a way of persuading people to desist from applying wrong procedures in carrying out their jobs (O'Farrel, 2002; Etuk, 2005). Supervision is also described as a process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to achieve excellence in teaching. Curriculum supervision of any school refers to the improvement of the total teaching-learning situation and the conditions that affect them through monitoring and evaluation. It is a socialized function designed to improve instruction by working with the people who are working with the students. Ada (2004) and Ikpe (2005) stated that supervision is a proactive way of promoting quality of teaching at all levels of education endeavour.

This can be achieved through proper supervision of curriculum by Ministry of Education Authorities, administrators, teachers and students in their delegated powers as leaders. Teachers in public and private Schools as supervisors play their role as partners in the classroom learning situation and co-curriculum training. This is done by supervising students in their studies and guiding them by way of checking their works regularly. This demands that the teachers and students must be familiar with new ideas in curriculum

supervision, such that their practices and performances in the school heed greater attention to be able to achieve these objectives (Glanz, Shulman & Sullivan, 2007).

Modern day curriculum supervision should not be considered as mere classroom visits, rating of teachers and writing of reports. According to Zepeda (2000), curriculum supervision has grown to include the curriculum materials for instruction, the school learning environment, and other administrative functions. In view of this, the administrative policies on students' performance, assessment methods of reporting to parents, government's allocation of funds and equipment to schools have been adopted by many education authorities to enhance supervision of curriculum. All these administrative functions affect the teaching/learning process and cannot be ignored in supervision. Supervision of curriculum therefore becomes "an important part of school administration (Woolfok & Hoy 2003).

The scope of curriculum supervision covers instructional supervision, supervision of learning environment and supervision of school management. Supervision of instruction involves the supervision of curriculum materials, methods of teaching employed for different subjects; the time-table; the distribution of work among teachers, the written work of students, teachers' lesson notes, diaries and scheme of work (Mbakwem, 2005).

Another area instructional supervision covers is co-curricular activities. Here the supervisor, supervises the organization of various co-curricular activities keeping in view their need and importance. These curriculum activities are: Games and sports, dramatics, school magazine, library services, educational tours field trips and picnics (Onasanya, 2006). It also includes supervision of records and registers. The supervisor has to supervise all the records and registers of an educational institution or school by examining admission register, attendance register, cash book, log book, stock register and receipt book (Pajak, 2003).

Supervision also covers the school environment. The school environment has a profound role bringing, over an improvement of educational process. For this, the supervisor has to supervise the following aspects of the school environment: Emotional climate of the school; cleanliness of the surroundings; morale of the classroom; hygienic conditions of the toilet, canteen and water supply; beautification of the campus (Efanga, 2013).

Supervision of management is an aspect of supervision in education without which the overall improvement of teaching learning process will never be successful. The supervision includes: co-operation of teachers and community member, the ability of the head teacher to run the school; co-operation, co-ordination and responsibility between teachers and head teachers in organizing any programme; duties, and responsibilities rendered by the teachers as the members of different sub-committees for different programmes; problem with the school (FRN, 2012).

The supervisor from the Ministry of Education is not only to supervise but also to guide the head teachers and teachers in their effort for ensuring qualitative improvement of education. For this, supervision includes the following things in its jurisdiction: innovations in teaching; remedial instruction; community mobilization and support; conducting seminars, conferences, meetings and workshops to discuss about problems and their solution (Wren, 2003).

Types of supervision considered in this article include: inspection, training and direction and compulsion supervision. Inspection is the first function of supervision. Here the classes are to be inspected by the inspecting officers. It may be the head teacher of the school concerned or school inspector. During inspection the teacher becomes alert about his duties and responsibilities after being that his duties can be inspected all of a sudden when he is in the classroom. So this type of supervision motivates the teacher to have proper



readiness to deliver good teaching classroom. At times, there are teachers who do not discharge their duties properly after all these things and are usually penalized for not taking their responsibilities seriously. On contrary, the sincere teachers are rewarded for rendering proper duties and responsibilities. This type of supervision is acceptable in almost all the developed countries of the world till now because of its balanced and positive effect on all the elements which are closely associated with it (Oleforo, 2012).

Training and direction in this type of supervision is appreciated in the modern educational system because of its positive and lasting impact on the teaching performance of teachers. In this type of supervision, the teachers should be given in-service training on the latest developed methods of teaching for different subjects; after that, the supervision work should be done. This type of supervision develops a great deal of interest, self-confidence and creativity among teachers to teach their subjects and to improve their classroom practices without much interference.

Compulsion type of supervision is an autocratic type of supervision which goes to the inspecting personnel. It means as the supervision is meant for the teachers in relation to their teaching performance and it is desirable for him to deliver, their teaching performance in a lucid manner. For this, they have to act in accordance to the rules and regulations of the modern principles of teaching. But it is a matter of great regret that in this type of supervision the teacher 'has to teach in accordance to guidelines prescribed by the inspecting officers.

In the view of Koskomski (2000), it was explained that inspecting officers who have their own principles of teaching which are not suitable compel the teachers to teach accordingly. As a result of this, the teacher loses his freedom, dignity, originality in this regard. Besides, he becomes 'afraid, frustrated and incomplete in his teaching, this type of supervision leads to creation of misunderstanding in human relationship between inspecting person and the teacher. But it can be seriously said that the inspecting officers who are good and humble in nature and having balanced personality don't exercise their autocratic attitude in supervision. This tendency among good inspecting officers enables the teacher to teach properly.

Curriculum Supervision and Classroom Practices

The major function of curriculum supervision is to improve classroom practices such as teachers' classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation techniques and communication skills. Classroom practice as a process, involves multiple agents and their interaction within the classroom as a system. The process can be manifested in diverse formats and structures, and its effectiveness can be influenced by numerous factors both internal and external to the classroom. All staff consistently implement effective classroom practices to provide an engaging, predictable and safe learning environment for all students.

Classroom practices determine to a large extent how far the educational goals of any can be achieved. Talking about the achievement of educational goals at any level, a teacher is the principal factor. This is because what goes on in the classroom on daily basis is manned and directed by the teacher. Moreover, the teacher is the one directly involved with the implementation of educational policies and programmes. The teacher is the one that translates educational philosophy and objective into knowledge and skill and transfers them to students in the classroom (Edem & Okon, 2008).

Classroom practices include preventative and responsive approaches that may be effectively implemented with all students in a classroom and intensified to support small groups or a few individual students. Classroom practices strategies are important tools to



decrease disruptions, increase instructional time, and improve student social behaviour and academic outcomes which is critical as schools are held to greater accountability for student outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Aronson, 2000). Classroom practices include the following: communication skills, teaching methods, classroom management and teachers evaluation techniques.

Classroom management is a type of classroom practice which involves the arrangement and organization of the classroom facilities and specific routines of handling equipment-orderliness and well regulated atmosphere. The purpose of classroom management is to create an atmosphere of efficiency for both the teachers and learners (Drisscoll, 2005). Good classroom management is one of the key factors in curriculum supervision and differs based on supervision types. Teachers are assessed during teaching on how they are able to organized and control the class during lesson delivery.

It is noted that the teacher is the unifying factor or the link between the learners and the curriculum. He is able to perform this important function through the use of teaching methods. The usefulness of learning is determined by the teaching methods. They constitute the breach between teaching and learning. Teaching methods are any combination of sets of activities carried out in the course of a lesson which can be learnt and applied by any teacher and which can be used in learning of any subject. Any instructional method a teacher uses has advantages, disadvantages, and requires some preliminary preparation (Udosen, 2000).

Another aspect of classroom practices is communication. Communication as defined by Afangdeh (2013) is the ability to pass information to be understood by the recipient. Communication management is one of the most important aspects of teaching. A teacher cannot successfully teach if he or she is not in control. Communication skills expected of a teacher include both coding and encoding skills. Encoding skills refer to the ability to put down ideas, information and skills in forms that can be understood. Decoding skills refer to ability to interpret or understand what was put down by another person; all these skills are acquired through training and practices. Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching, a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all these areas. Teachers with good communication always make teaching easier and understandable. Communication skill is an important verbal interaction instrument used by the teacher. Some teachers have the knowledge but their oral communication is poor. Training and direction as a type of curriculum supervision gives such a teacher an opportunity to upgrade his/her communication skills for a better outcome.

Evaluation is part of the instructional process without which there is no progress or profitability or quality of control in the system. This is the stage where the teacher asks learners questions to test whether the lesson's objectives are achieved. Evaluation can take various forms; it can be oral or written, a demonstration of skill or attitudes or application of knowledge. In the school system, evaluation is the template from which instructional process is assessed (Alking, 2004).

Evaluation is regarded as a process of determining the degree to which changes in learners' behaviours are taking place as a result of their exposure to education. Supervision of teachers' evaluation techniques ensures that teachers employ proper approaches suitable with the topic and contents. With the supervision of evaluation processes, quality feedback on learning is achievable.

Often times these classroom practices are mishandled by the teachers due to poor supervision or complete absence of supervision in the school system. Hence, this paper sought to examine the practices of curriculum supervision and teachers' classroom practices at lower basic education level in Uyo Local Government area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

To achieve this purpose for the study, theory of supervision was chosen to inch this write-up on. Theory X is a model theory of supervision which was developed by social psychologist Douglas McGregor while he was working at MIT Sloan school of management in 1950s and developed further in 1960s. This theory states that most employees innately dislike working, and are unwilling to take responsibility. The theory further explains that an average employee works because he/she wants to earn money, or because it provides some security and helps them feel safe as well. As a supervision model, theory X advocates the close monitoring of employees, saying that managers should constantly adopt a more dictatorial and directional styles on the employee to do better. The theory holds that employees will do as little as possible whenever possible; therefore, managers have to keep employees as motivated and productive as possible.

Statement of the Problem

For quite a long time now, issues of curriculum supervision and classroom practices have continued to remain a matter of serious concern to school administrators and other stakeholders in education. It is believed that the performance of learners is clear indication and pointers to the practices carried out by the teachers in the classroom. A lot of parents attribute the failures of their children to teachers' negative practices in the classroom. Some learners whose performances are below average often link their low grades to teachers' classroom practices while learners with high grades will attribute their success to their hard work.

This poses a serious problem to education stakeholders and school administrators who would resort to curriculum supervision an attempt to find quality in classroom practices and curriculum implementation. On the other hand a personal interaction of the researchers with some learners indicated that most teachers in public schools do teach for a very long time without being supervised whereas private school administrators engage in routine supervision. A very pertinent question to be asked here is, can a teacher who is teaching with the consciousness of being monitored or supervised achieve best classroom practices that will eventually boost the performance in the learners. This study therefore sought to examine differences in classroom practices based on curriculum supervision of lower basic education teachers in Uyo Local Government Area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine curriculum supervision and teachers' classroom practices at lower basic education level. Specifically, the study sought to examine:

1. The difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection?
2. The difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction?
3. The difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction.

Research Questions

1. What is the difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection?
2. What is difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction?



3. What is the difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on supervision?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection
2. There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction
3. There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on compulsion supervision

Methodology

The survey design was used for this study. The population of the study consisted of all primary 4 pupils at the lower basic education level in Uyo Local Government Area in public. The total population for the study was 1500 pupils. The sample size for this study consisted 150 pupils. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. 31 pupils each were randomly selected from each of the 47 public primary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. The major instrument used in the collection of data was researchers developed instrument titled "Classroom Practices and Instructional Supervision Questionnaire" (CPISQ) designed in line with the objectives of the study, research design and hypotheses. The instrument consisted two sections, sections A and B. Section A, elicited information on classroom practices while section B, elicited information on instructional supervision. The instrument consisted 30-items and elicited information on teachers' classroom management skills, teaching methods and evaluation techniques which made up classroom practices. The instrument for data collection passed through the scrutiny of three experts; two from Department of Curriculum Studies and one from the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Uyo. The instrument was deemed valid after their comments and corrections were incorporated into the final copy of the instrument.

To ensure the internal consistency of the research instrument, a trial testing was conducted on 30 respondents who did not take part in the main study but were representative of the population of the study. The data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha statistics which gave a reliability coefficient index of 0.78, showing a highly reliable instrument. The researchers with the research assistant administered the instrument to respondents in their different schools. The researchers distributed 160 copies of the instrument to the respondents and retrieved 155 copies out of which 5 copies were not completely filled and were considered invalid. Therefore, 150 copies were completed and considered valid for the study. For data analysis, mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Answering of Research Questions

The research questions were answered using Mean and Standard Deviation.

Research Question 1: What is the difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection as curriculum supervision?

Table 1: mean and standard deviation of differences in teachers' classroom practices based on inspection

| Variable | Classroom Practices | N | \bar{X} | SD |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------|------|
| Curriculum supervision (Inspection) | Positive | 97 | 27.37 | 5.14 |
| | Negative | 53 | 23.29 | 5.50 |

Analysis on Table 1 reveals that the mean score of teachers with positive classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) is (27.37) and the mean score of teachers with negative classroom practices is (23.29). This shows that teachers with positive classroom practices had a better curriculum supervision compared to teachers with negative classroom practices. The inference is that curriculum supervision influences teachers' classroom practices.

Research Question 2: What is difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction?

Table 2: mean and standard deviation of differences in teachers' classroom practices teaching method based on training and direction

| Variables | Classroom Practices | n | \bar{X} | SD |
|------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------|------|
| Curriculum Supervision | Positive | 89 | 26.58 | 7.31 |
| | Negative | 61 | 24.0 | 6.54 |

Analysis on Table 2 reveals that the mean score of teachers with positive classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) is (26.58) and the mean score of teachers with negative teaching method is (24.05). This shows that teachers with positive classroom practices had better curriculum supervision compared to teachers with negative classroom practices. The inference is that curriculum supervision influences their classroom practices.

Research Question 3: What is the difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on compulsion supervision?

Table 3: mean and standard deviation of differences in teachers' classroom practices evaluation techniques based on compulsion supervision

| Variables | Classroom Practices | n | \bar{X} | SD |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------|------|
| Curriculum Supervision compulsion | Positive | 82 | 26.67 | 6.91 |
| | Negative | 68 | 23.99 | 6.73 |

Analysis on Table 3 reveals that the mean score of teachers with positive classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) is (26.67) and the mean score of teachers with negative classroom practices is (23.99). This shows that teachers with positive classroom practices had better curriculum supervision compared to teachers with negative classroom practices. The inference is that curriculum supervision influences classroom practices.

Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested using independent t-test at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

Null Hypotheses 1: There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection.

Table 4: Result of Independent t-test analysis of the Difference in Teachers' Classroom Practice Skills Based on Inspection

| Variables | Classroom Practices | n | \bar{X} | SD | df | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------|------|-----|-------|--------|----------|
| Curriculum supervision (Inspection) | Positive | 97 | 27.37 | 5.14 | 148 | 4.01 | 1.98 | Rejected |
| | Negative | 53 | 23.29 | 5.50 | | | | |

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; n = 150

Results in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 4.01 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 given at 0.05 alpha levels with 148 degree of freedom. This reveals that the null hypothesis which speculated that there is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on inspection is rejected and alternative retained. This implies that teachers' classroom practices significantly differ based on inspection.

Hypotheses 2: There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on training and direction.

Table 5: Result of Independent t-test analysis of the Difference in Classroom Practice Based on Curriculum Supervision

| Variables | Classroom Practices | n | \bar{X} | SD | df | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------|------|-----|-------|--------|----------|
| Curriculum supervision (Training and Direction) | Positive | 89 | 26.58 | 7.31 | 148 | 2.11 | 1.98 | Rejected |
| | Negative | 61 | 24.05 | 6.54 | | | | |

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; n = 150

Results in Table 5 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.11 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 given at 0.05 alpha levels with 148 degree of freedom. This revealed that the null hypothesis which speculated that there is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices based on training and direction is rejected and alternative retained. This implies that teachers' classroom practices significantly differ based on training and direction.

Null Hypotheses 3: There is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) based on compulsion supervision.

Table 6: Result of independent t-test analysis of the difference in teachers' classroom practices based on compulsion

| Variables | Classroom Practices | n | \bar{X} | SD | df | t-cal | t-crit | Decision |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------|------|-----|-------|--------|----------|
| Curriculum Supervision (Compulsion) | Positive | 82 | 26.67 | 6.91 | 148 | 2.23 | 1.98 | Rejected |
| | Negative | 68 | 23.99 | 6.73 | | | | |

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 150.

Results in Table 6 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.23 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 given at 0.05 alpha levels with 148 degree of freedom. This revealed that the null hypothesis which speculated that there is no significant difference in teachers' classroom practices (classroom management skills, teaching methods, evaluation skills) is rejected and alternative retained. This implies that teachers' classroom practices significantly differ based on compulsion supervision.

Summary of Findings

The findings are as follows:

1. Teachers' classroom practices differ based on curriculum supervision.
2. There is a significant difference in classroom practices based on inspection.
3. There is a significant difference in classroom practices based on training and direction.
4. There is a significant difference in classroom practices based on compulsion supervision.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the analysis showed that classroom practices significantly differ based on curriculum supervision. This could be due to the fact that teachers tend to show different levels of commitment and enthusiasm depending on how supervision is carried out. Therefore, teachers' who were provided with a better instructional supervision were motivated to exhibit positive classroom management skills than those that were not provided with such motivation.

This finding supports the opinions of Udosen (2001) who established that implementation of supervision determines the effectiveness of teaching methods and Driscoll (2005) who noted that classroom practices differ based on supervision type. This finding supports the theory *X* proposed by Douglas McGregor as a supervision model who advocated that practices differ based on supervision motivation.

Conclusion

It can be deduced from the study that curriculum supervision directly influences the teachers' classroom practices. It can also be concluded that a better curriculum supervision motivates the teachers positively thereby resulting in a positive and appropriate classroom practices. The lack of a better curriculum supervision leads to a low output on the teachers' part related to classroom management, teaching methods, evaluation techniques as well as communication skills.

Finally, the study shows that it is expedient to provide the teachers with a better curriculum supervision as this serves as a motivation in the pedagogy setting.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should be trained and retrained on improved classroom practices.
2. Regular curriculum supervision should be carried out in school to ensure better classroom practices and productivity
3. Curriculum supervision should be done constructively in order to build confidence in teachers.

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