

School Inspectors' Supervisory Behaviour and Teachers' Instructional Practices in Public Primary Schools in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined primary school teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour and the perceived effects of such behaviour on teachers' instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A sample of 200 teachers was selected from 20 public primary schools in the study area, with 10 teachers selected from each sampled school. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled School Inspectors' Supervisory Behaviour and Teachers' Instructional Practices Questionnaire (SISBTIPQ). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two experts, while its internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.78. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation, with a criterion mean of 2.50. The findings revealed that teachers had an unfavourable perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour, as indicated by a grand mean of 1.87. Similarly, teachers did not perceive inspectors' supervisory behaviour as making a substantial positive contribution to their instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes, with a grand mean of 1.86. The factors examined in relation to teachers' perceptions also recorded a grand mean of 1.99, indicating that none was strongly endorsed based on the criterion mean. The study concludes that school inspection in the study area needs to place greater emphasis on constructive feedback, professional communication, collaboration, teacher development and follow-up support. It is recommended that school inspectors adopt more supportive and developmental approaches to supervision to enhance teachers' instructional practices and the quality of primary education.

Keywords: School Inspectors, Supervisory Behaviour, Teachers' Instructional Practices

Introduction

School supervision is an important component of educational administration and management because it provides a mechanism for monitoring instructional activities, supporting teachers and ensuring that educational standards are maintained. In primary education, effective supervision is particularly important because the quality of teachers' instructional practices contributes to pupils' acquisition of foundational knowledge, skills and attitudes. School inspectors are therefore expected to monitor teaching and learning activities, provide professional guidance, identify areas requiring improvement and promote compliance with established educational standards. Traditionally, school inspection has been associated with monitoring, evaluation and accountability. Contemporary approaches to educational supervision, however, increasingly emphasise professional support, constructive feedback, collaboration and teacher development. Effective supervisory behaviour should therefore extend beyond the identification of weaknesses to include practical guidance that enables teachers to understand their strengths and areas requiring improvement. Teachers' perceptions of supervision are important because the manner in which supervisory activities are conducted may influence teachers' willingness to accept feedback and implement recommendations. Supervisory practices perceived as punitive, fault-finding or unfair may generate resistance, whereas supportive and constructive supervision may encourage professional development and improvement in teaching practices. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of instructional supervision in maintaining educational standards and improving teaching effectiveness.

Previous studies have examined supervisory practices, the maintenance of educational standards through effective supervision, and the relationship between supervision and instructional outcomes; these are reviewed in detail in the Literature Review. Despite the recognised importance of school inspection, there is a need to examine how teachers in specific educational contexts perceive inspectors' supervisory behaviour. Teachers' perceptions provide useful information about whether supervisory practices are experienced as supportive, developmental and professionally beneficial. The present study therefore examined primary school teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

School inspection is intended to contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning by monitoring instructional practices, identifying areas of weakness and providing professional guidance. However, the effectiveness of inspection may depend substantially on how supervisory activities are conducted and perceived by teachers. Where teachers perceive inspectors as primarily concerned with fault-finding, criticism and judgement, inspection may be viewed as punitive rather than developmental. Such perceptions may limit teachers' willingness to accept

supervisory recommendations and may reduce the potential contribution of inspection to instructional improvement. The concern addressed by this study is therefore not simply whether school inspectors visit schools, but how teachers perceive their supervisory behaviour and whether they perceive such behaviour as contributing to improvements in teaching and learning. The study consequently investigated teachers' perceptions of supervisory behaviour, the perceived effects of supervision on instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes, and factors that teachers considered in forming their perceptions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine primary school teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour in public primary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area, Osun State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour;
2. determine teachers' perceived effects of inspectors' supervisory behaviour on instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes and
3. examine factors perceived by teachers as influencing their perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the perception of primary school teachers in Osogbo Local Government Area regarding the supervisory behaviour of school inspectors?
2. What are the perceived effects of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour on teachers' instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes?
3. What factors do primary school teachers perceive as influencing their perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour?

Literature Review

School inspection involves the systematic examination and monitoring of educational activities to determine the extent to which schools and teachers are meeting established educational expectations and standards. Supervision, on the other hand, encompasses professional activities intended to guide, support and improve teaching and learning. Effective inspection should therefore combine accountability with professional support. Rather than focusing exclusively on identifying deficiencies, inspectors can contribute more effectively to school improvement by providing constructive feedback, facilitating professional dialogue and supporting teachers in addressing identified instructional challenges.

Supervisory behaviour refers to the manner in which supervisors interact with teachers and carry out supervisory responsibilities. Important dimensions include communication,

fairness, approachability, professional competence, feedback, interpersonal relationships and follow-up support. Teachers' perception of these behaviours is important because the same supervisory activity may be interpreted differently depending on the approach adopted by the inspector. Supportive communication and constructive feedback may encourage teachers to reflect on their practices, whereas authoritarian or fault-finding approaches may generate anxiety and resistance.

Instructional supervision is intended to improve teaching by helping teachers identify strengths and areas requiring development. Areas that may benefit from effective supervision include lesson planning, lesson delivery, assessment of learning, classroom management, use of innovative teaching methods and responsiveness to diverse learner needs. Where supervisory recommendations are accompanied by meaningful feedback and follow-up support, teachers may be better positioned to implement improvements in classroom practice.

Ajayi (2018) reported concerns regarding supervisory practices that emphasised criticism and identification of teachers' deficiencies. Such an approach may weaken the developmental purpose of supervision. Ijaiya (2022) highlighted the contribution of effective supervision to the maintenance of educational standards. The implication is that the quality of supervisory practice is important to the extent to which inspection contributes to school improvement. Glanz (2021) reported an association between classroom visitations and students' academic performance, suggesting that classroom supervision can potentially contribute to improved educational outcomes. Ogunode and Ibrahim (2023) emphasised aspects such as planning and preparation, lesson presentation and teachers' professional characteristics in instructional supervision. The reviewed literature suggests that effective supervision has the potential to contribute to educational quality. However, the present study focuses specifically on teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour in public primary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to obtain information directly from primary school teachers concerning their perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour and the perceived effects of supervision on instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes. A sample of 200 teachers participated in the study. The teachers were randomly sampled from 20 selected public primary schools in the Local Government. Using simple random sampling technique to select 10 teachers from each of the selected schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled School Inspectors' Supervisory Behaviour and Teachers' Instructional Practices Questionnaire (SISBTIPQ). The questionnaire contained sections addressing respondents' relevant demographic characteristics, teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour,

perceived effects of supervision on instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes and factors associated with teachers' perceptions. Items were measured on a four-point Likert scale as Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4. The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two experts in Educational Management and related fields. Their observations were used to establish the adequacy and relevance of the questionnaire items. A pilot administration was conducted using respondents who were not included in the main study. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's alpha. A reliability coefficient of 0.78 was obtained, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency for the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to the sampled teachers in the selected public primary schools. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were encouraged to provide honest responses. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation. A criterion means of 2.50 was adopted for interpreting the four-point Likert scale. Mean scores from 2.50 to 4.00 were interpreted as agreement, while mean scores from 1.00 to 2.49 were interpreted as disagreement. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded where composite interpretation required scores to be aligned in the same direction. Because the study employed a descriptive survey design, findings concerning instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes were interpreted as perceived effects and not as evidence of causal effects. Participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and assured that information provided would be treated confidentially and used strictly for research purposes. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the perception of primary school teachers in Osogbo Local Government Area regarding the supervisory behaviour of school inspectors?

Table 1. Teachers' perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour (N = 200)

Table 1. Teachers' perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour (N = 200)

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSE									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mea n	SD
		f	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	Inspectors provide constructive feedback that helps improve teaching skills	99	49.5%	94	47.0%	4	2.0%	3	1.5%	1.55	0.62

2	Supervisory behaviour is fair and unbiased	79 39.5%	90 45.0%	28 14.0%	3 1.5%	1.77	0.7 4
3	Inspectors are approachable and open to teachers' suggestions	79 39.5%	86 43.0%	22 11.0%	13 6.5%	1.84	0.8 6
4	Frequency of inspectors' visits is adequate.	37 18.5%	125 62.5%	29 14.5%	9 4.5%	2.05	0.7 1
5	Inspectors focus more on fault-finding than supporting teachers	57 28.5%	58 29.0%	66 33.0%	19 9.5%	2.23	0.9 7
6	Supervisory behaviour has improved teachers' job satisfaction	89 44.5%	88 44.0%	18 9.0%	5 2.5%	1.70	0.7 4
7	Inspectors are knowledgeable about the subjects they supervise	65 32.5%	98 49.0%	22 11.0%	15 7.5%	1.94	0.8 6
Grand Mean						1.87	

Table 1 indicates that the mean scores ranged from 1.55 to 2.23, with a grand mean of 1.87. Since the grand mean is below the criterion mean of 2.50, the findings indicate that teachers generally had an unfavourable perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour.

The lowest mean score was recorded for constructive feedback ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 0.62$), suggesting that respondents generally did not agree that inspectors provided constructive feedback that helped improve their teaching skills. Fairness and unbiased supervision also recorded a relatively low mean ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 0.74$), as did approachability and openness to teachers' suggestions ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 0.86$). The findings therefore suggest that teachers did not generally perceive the supervisory behaviour of school inspectors as sufficiently supportive, constructive or developmental.

Research Question 2

What are the perceived effects of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour on teachers' instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes?

Table 2. Perceived effect of supervisory behaviour on instructional practices and learning outcomes (N = 200)

		RESPONSE									
S/ N	ITEMS	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%		
1	Supervision has helped improve lesson planning and delivery.	79		106		12		3		1.70	0.65
			39.5%		53.0%		6.0%		1.5%		
2	Inspectors' feedback has enabled identification of areas for improvement	91		90		14		5		1.67	0.72
			45.5%		45.0%		7.0%		2.5%		
3	Supervision has increased the use of innovative teaching methods.	79		92		12		17		1.83	0.88
			39.5%		46.0%		6.0%		8.5%		
4	Supervision has a positive effect on pupils' academic performance	59		118		16		7		1.85	0.70
			29.5%		59.0%		8.0%		3.5%		
5	Inspection visits have led to increased stress and anxiety.	33		72		58		37		2.50	0.98
			16.5%		36.0%		29.0%		18.5%		
6	Supervision has helped teachers assess and evaluate pupils' learning outcomes	73		100		16		11		1.82	0.80
			36.5%		50.0%		8.0%		5.5%		
7	Supervision has enhanced teachers' ability to meet diverse pupil needs.	87		98		8		7		1.68	0.72
			43.5%		49.0%		4.0%		3.5%		
Grand Mean										1.86	

Table 2 shows that the mean scores ranged from 1.67 to 2.50, with a grand mean of 1.86. The grand mean is below the criterion mean of 2.50, indicating that teachers generally did not perceive school inspectors' supervisory behaviour as making a substantial positive contribution to their instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes. The lowest mean score was recorded for inspectors' feedback enabling teachers to identify areas for improvement ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.72$), followed by teachers' ability to meet diverse pupil needs ($M = 1.68$, $SD = 0.72$). Lesson planning and delivery recorded a mean of 1.70, while assessment and evaluation of pupils' learning outcomes recorded a mean of 1.82. The item relating to increased stress and anxiety recorded a mean of 2.50 ($SD = 0.98$), which exactly met the criterion mean, marking borderline agreement among teachers that inspection visits increased stress and anxiety. Overall, the findings indicate that respondents did not perceive supervision as making a substantial positive contribution to instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes.

Research Question 3

What factors do primary school teachers perceive as influencing their perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour?

Table 3. Factors associated with teachers' perceptions of supervisory behaviour (N = 200)

S/N	Factors	Mean	SD
1.	Communication style of inspectors	1.75	0.62
2.	Inspectors' subject-matter expertise	2.00	0.91
3.	Frequency and consistency of inspection visits	1.89	0.81
4.	Feedback and follow-up actions	1.86	0.74
5.	Inspectors' attitude and demeanour	2.21	0.98
6.	Knowledge of school context and challenges	2.17	0.85
7.	Support and resources provided by inspectors	2.08	0.87
	Grand Mean	1.99	

Table 3 indicates that the mean scores ranged from 1.75 to 2.21, with a grand mean of 1.99. Since the grand mean is below the criterion mean of 2.50, the respondents did not strongly endorse the listed factors under the decision criterion.

Inspectors' attitude and demeanour recorded the highest mean ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.98$), followed by knowledge of school context and challenges ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 0.85$) and support and resources provided by inspectors ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.87$). Communication style recorded the lowest mean ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 0.62$).

Discussion of Findings

The empirical findings presented in Tables 1 to 3 provide evidence on primary school teachers' perceptions of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour, the perceived effects of that behaviour on instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes, and the factors associated with those perceptions. Data were evaluated against a criterion mean of 2.50 on the four-point scale, with mean scores below 2.50 interpreted as disagreement. The grand mean for supervisory behaviour ($M = 1.87$) in Table 1, for perceived instructional and learning effects ($M = 1.86$) in Table 2, and for associated factors ($M = 1.99$) in Table 3 all fell below this threshold, indicating a broadly unfavourable perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour among the teachers sampled.

In Table 1, the lowest-rated item was "Inspectors provide constructive feedback that helps improve teaching skills" ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 0.62$), whereas the highest-rated item, "Inspectors focus more on fault-finding than supporting teachers" ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.97$), still fell below the criterion mean, though closer to it than the other items. This pattern suggests that teachers associated inspection visits more closely with the identification of weaknesses than with constructive mentoring. The finding is consistent with Ajayi (2018), who reported concerns regarding supervisory practices dominated by fault-finding, judgement and criticism, and with Quintelier et al. (2020), who found that when teachers perceive inspection feedback as narrowly

compliance-focused, their acceptance of that feedback declines. Al-Hosni (2021) similarly observed that supervisory models oriented toward error identification can lead teachers to regard inspectors as adversaries rather than as pedagogical partners. Related items on fairness ($M = 1.77$, $SD = 0.74$), approachability ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 0.86$) and subject knowledge ($M = 1.94$, $SD = 0.86$) were also rated low, suggesting that respondents questioned inspectors' procedural fairness and subject competence; this aligns with Maldrine and Kiplangat (2020), who argued that effective supervision depends on procedural justice, open dialogue and specialised content knowledge.

Table 2 showed uniformly low mean scores across the instructional indicators, including feedback enabling identification of areas for improvement ($M = 1.67$, $SD = 0.72$), ability to meet diverse pupil needs ($M = 1.68$, $SD = 0.72$) and lesson planning and delivery ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.65$), indicating that respondents did not perceive supervision as making a substantial positive contribution to their instructional practice. This is consistent with Penninckx and Vanhoof (2015), who found that external inspection visits rarely produce sustainable pedagogical improvement unless accompanied by sustained internal support, and with Jones and O'Brien (2025), who reported that inspection visits focused on documentation review rather than live instructional coaching do little to help teachers address classroom challenges such as learner diversity. The finding differs from Glanz (2021), who reported an association between classroom visitations and students' academic performance; the difference may reflect differences in context, population and methodology, since the present study relied on teachers' perceptions rather than an objective measure of pupil performance.

Item 5 of Table 2, "Inspection visits have led to increased stress and anxiety", recorded a mean of 2.50 ($SD = 0.98$), exactly meeting the criterion mean. This represents borderline rather than strong agreement: taken together with the low rating for the job-satisfaction item in Table 1 ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.74$), it suggests that while teachers did not perceive supervision as improving job satisfaction, the perception that inspection contributes to stress and anxiety was not strongly or uniformly held either. The finding nonetheless resonates with Fitzsimons and Smith (2025), who documented that unpredictable, high-stakes inspection regimes can generate chronic stress among educators, and with Perry et al. (2025), who linked punitive inspection environments to occupational anxiety and reduced job satisfaction.

The factors examined in Table 3 also fell below the criterion mean (grand mean = 1.99), indicating that none was regarded as strongly characterising inspectors' practice. Inspectors' attitude and demeanour recorded the highest mean ($M = 2.21$, $SD = 0.98$), followed by knowledge of school context and challenges ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 0.85$) and support and resources provided by inspectors ($M = 2.08$, $SD = 0.87$), suggesting that interpersonal and contextual sensitivity were comparatively better regarded than other dimensions of supervisory practice. This is consistent with Quintelier et al. (2020), who found that inspectors' interpersonal approach

and contextual empathy shape teachers' willingness to accept inspection outcomes, and with Zarco (2024), who reported that teachers view supervision more positively when supervisors demonstrate awareness of local constraints. By contrast, communication style recorded the lowest mean overall ($M = 1.75$, $SD = 0.62$), and feedback and follow-up actions ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 0.74$) and subject-matter expertise ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.91$) were also rated low. Gordon (2019) similarly emphasised that supervisor credibility depends on specialised subject expertise, Mendoza and Hife (2020) linked inconsistent supervision schedules to teacher anxiety rather than professional growth, and Pomentel (2024) identified communication style as a critical factor in building trust between teachers and supervisory authorities. Al-Hosni (2021) further noted that the absence of constructive follow-up after inspection leads teachers to regard inspection as a bureaucratic exercise rather than a developmental one. These findings broadly align with Onasanya (2018), who emphasised the importance of supervision and inspection practices grounded in professional relationship-building within public primary schools.

Overall, the findings suggest that teachers in the study area experienced school inspection as oriented more toward monitoring and fault identification than toward constructive, developmental support. Because the study adopted a descriptive survey design and relied on teachers' self-reported perceptions, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of perceived rather than actual or causal effects of inspection on instructional practice or pupil outcomes. They point, nonetheless, to the value of strengthening inspectors' communication, professional attitude, contextual sensitivity and follow-up support as part of a more developmental approach to school inspection.

Conclusion

The study concludes that primary school teachers in Osogbo Local Government Area generally had an unfavourable perception of school inspectors' supervisory behaviour. Teachers did not perceive inspectors' supervisory activities as making a substantial positive contribution to their instructional practices and pupils' learning outcomes. The study further found that the identified factors were not strongly endorsed under the criterion mean used for interpretation. Nevertheless, the findings point to the importance of inspectors' attitudes, communication, contextual understanding, professional competence, feedback and follow-up support in creating a more constructive supervisory environment. Since the study adopted a descriptive survey design and relied on teachers' perceptions, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence of causal effects of inspection on teachers' instructional practices or pupils' academic achievement.

Implications of the Study

The findings have implications for educational administrators, school inspectors and policymakers. School inspection should not be limited to monitoring and accountability.

Inspectors should also function as professional support providers who help teachers identify instructional challenges and develop practical strategies for addressing them.

Educational authorities should therefore consider strengthening inspectors' competencies in communication, mentoring, instructional feedback and collaborative problem-solving. A more developmental approach may improve teachers' acceptance of supervision and increase the usefulness of inspection activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that:

- Constructive feedback should be strengthened. School inspectors should provide specific feedback after inspection visits, identifying teachers' strengths, areas requiring improvement and practical strategies for addressing identified weaknesses.
- Inspection should adopt a more developmental approach. Inspectors should reduce practices that may be perceived as fault-finding and promote professional dialogue, collaboration and problem-solving.
- Follow-up activities should be institutionalised. Recommendations made during inspection should be followed by appropriate professional guidance and subsequent monitoring.
- Inspectors should strengthen communication and interpersonal skills. Respectful and professional interaction with teachers should form an important component of supervisory practice.
- Professional development for inspectors should be enhanced. Educational authorities should provide continuous professional development in instructional supervision, mentoring, communication, feedback and teacher support.

Limitations of the Study

The study was based on teachers' self-reported perceptions and employed a descriptive survey design. Consequently, the findings cannot establish causal relationships between school inspectors' supervisory behaviour and teachers' instructional practices or pupils' academic achievement. In addition, the study focused on public primary schools in Osogbo Local Government Area. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalising the findings to other local government areas or school types.

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