

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF SUPERVISION OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION LECTURERS IN ABIA STATE

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Abstract

This study examined the challenges and prospects of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The design of the study was survey research design. The population of the study is 50 respondents. The sample size for the study is 50 respondents from selected universities in Abia State, Nigeria. The researcher adopted census sampling technique for the study. A 27 – items questionnaire was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three (3) experts from Department of Agricultural Education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The instrument was administered by the researchers and two research assistants who were brief for the purpose. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that adequate supervision stimulates lecturers, motivates lecturers to function effectively and assist them to carry out necessary activities as stipulated in the curriculum. It was concluded that supervision of agricultural education lecturers will improve the study of agricultural education. The finding of the study also revealed that there are various solutions to the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State. The study recommended that government should make policies that will regulate the supervision of vocational agricultural education. Also, supervisors of vocational agricultural education should afford themselves the opportunity to attend workshops that will build their capacity in the supervision of vocational agricultural education.

Keyword: Education, Vocational Agricultural Education, Challenges and Supervision

Introduction

Education is a vital and indispensable key to the socio-economic development of any nation. It is an instrument for economic, political and scientific development of a nation. Hence, accelerated development of the nation can be achieved through Education (Uwuanyi, Ocheaja & Amsiudo, 2014). According to Udunya (2018), education can be considered as a major tool for systematic, sustainable human and material development of nations. It is a priority sector in every well-meaning society. Vocational Agricultural Education can be described as the field of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interests, abilities, competencies and the cultural norms of a society by transmitting it to the coming generations so as to enhance perpetual development of the society (Onuoha, 2012). Education can be divided into vocational and science. This work focuses on vocational agricultural education.

Vocational agricultural education involves areas of study that help the learners acquire skills including manipulative and conceptual skills. It is practically oriented. It is geared towards occupational preparation (Onwusa, 2021). Vocational agricultural Education is a form of education designed to imbue

individuals with the right type of knowledge, skill, competencies and attitudes for specific agricultural occupations. Those who undergo vocational agricultural education are assumed to have already chosen their life occupations and thus need all necessary trainings to acquire relevant skills and knowledge to enable them progress and develop in such occupations.

Vocational agricultural education is concerned with the development of skills; knowledge and attitude in the field of agriculture to enable the recipients take up a career in it (Usman & Sulaiman, 2016). It is responsible for preparing individuals in various agricultural occupations such as those concerned with growing crops, rearing animals, providing ornamental horticulture, managing farm business and managing farm resources (Ezeagu & Ezema, 2014). Vocational Agricultural Education deals with the skills necessary for ensuring high-level production of farm products and produce. The use of modern techniques in the area of agricultural mechanization, application of fertilizer and management must clearly be demonstrated and encapsulated within the curriculum of tertiary institutions so as to enable the students develop interest and acquire vocational skills.

Agreeably, the increasing importance that is now being attached to acquisition of vocational and entrepreneurial skills is reflected in the increasing trend in vocationalisation of all levels of education. The challenge of economic meltdown and the drop in oil price has put Nigeria government on their toes on how to divert the economy to agriculture that was hitherto abandoned. According to Amadi and Lazarus (2017), agriculture is the cultivation of the land for the purposes of producing food for man, feed for animals and fiber or raw materials for industries. Denga (2011) opined that agriculture plays an important role in the development of all nations. Agriculture contributes to national development through the provision of food, materials for shelter, materials for clothing, employment for the working population, generation of income for farmers, provision of facilities for recreation and tourism, serves as sources of foreign exchange and generation of revenue. In consonance with this, Amadi and Solomon (2018) asserted that agriculture provides food for the growing population of the world, feed for animals, and fiber for industries, employment and foreign exchange. Therefore, agricultural education could be regarded as a vehicle for national development.

Basically, agricultural skills ought to be transmitted from one generation to the other through the educational system. Accordingly, the transfer of these skills and competencies to students rest on the Agricultural education lecturers. Baliyan and Nenty (2015) observed that most agricultural education teachers need to show positive dedication in teaching the subject. Unfortunately, these responsibilities are scarcely achieved due to observable lapses. Some stay on the job to seek for a better job outside the profession. Gordon (2015) argued that school educators put up a totally unwholesome and non-professional behavior, such as absenteeism, lateness, malingering, trading and general low level of commitment to duties which can invariably affect the achievement of educational goals. Therefore, the need for supervision cannot be overemphasized.

Supervision is a complex service involving the provision of guidance, the coordination of workers and resources towards achieving set goals. It serves as a retrospective mechanism in management and is an integral part of the educational system. Ukeje (2018) asserted that supervision is the element of administrative process, which is concerned with effort to guide the day-to-day activities of the work group by stimulating, directing and coordinating the workers and their efforts, cultivating good working personal relationship so that they all work towards achieving targets.

Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2011) describe supervision as a service activity that exists to help teachers do their job effectively. Supervision according to Modebelu (2018) is a process of assisting, directing, stimulating and motivating teachers to enhance teaching and learning process in educational institution. Supervision is a crucial part of reflective practice and an integral part of educational system. Firz in Ikegbusi *et al.* (2016) identified two types of supervision as internal and external supervision. Internal supervision is carried out by the school administrators (headmaster/assistant headmaster or principal/vice principal), while government and delegated agents conduct the external supervision.

In the context of this study supervision is a process of assisting, directing, stimulating and motivating agricultural education lecturers to enhance teaching and learning of agricultural education in educational institution.

Amadi and Solomon (2018) revealed that supervision helps to stimulate good teaching practice, motivate the teacher for effective use of instructional material among others. Based on the findings, of the researchers above, it was recommended that periodic supervision should be carried out in secondary schools, funding agencies should respond quickly to Supervisors' report and supervisors should be regularly trained for effectiveness to overcome challenges. Challenges refers to those difficult situations which one encounters in course of service delivery or task execution. (Asogwa, 2014). In this study challenges refers to those problems militating against Agricultural Education supervision.

Furthermore, Afolabi *et al.* (2019) revealed that some of the challenges facing agricultural education supervision include pedagogical problems, learners related problems, personal problems and institution-based problems. Based on the findings of Afolabi *et al* the study recommended frequent trainings and seminars for the stake-holders, budgeting of enough time for teaching exercise, provision of relevant instructional materials in schools and adequate funding of schools by stakeholders.

Again, Amadi and Lazarus (2017) revealed that the current issues in agricultural education in tertiary institutions in Nigeria include; low enrollment in vocational agricultural education; lack of funding for vocational agricultural education in tertiary institutions; lack of interest in research work in agricultural education; inadequate personnel in agricultural education and poor provision of infrastructural facilities. It was recommended that there should be re-orientation programme for the benefit of learning and acquiring

practical skills in Agricultural Education programmes, funds should be made available by the state government and input/innovations in Agricultural Education sector in tertiary institutions should meet the world standard.

Chewachong and Hayward (2021) revealed that several challenges were identified facing agricultural education. These includes; inadequate teaching and learning resources, frequent use of Teacher-centred teaching methods and the need to improve on training of teachers. Paulsen and Martin (2014) revealed that Agricultural education teachers indicated that the instructional supervisor should understand and support the teaching and learning processes used in nonformal settings, provide them with resources, and observe them in aspects of their teaching that transcend the traditional classroom. Based on the findings of the study, female agricultural education teachers perceived all non-formal instructional supervisory practices as more important than did male agricultural education teachers. it was recommended that agricultural educators and the principals who supervise them should incorporate the supervision of teaching in the nonformal setting into evaluation protocols.

Evidently, supervision serves a number of benefits to agricultural educators for their efficient functioning. The overall purpose of instructional supervision is to help educators improve on what the educators know, the improvement of teaching skills, as well as teacher's ability to make more informed professional decisions (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2017). It is also seen as an organizational function that seeks the growth of educators and improvement in teaching performance and greater student learning (Tesfaw and Hoffman, 2012).

In other to ensure adequate supervision of vocational agricultural education which will leads to effective national development through the provision of food, materials for shelter, materials for clothing, employment for the working population, generation of income for farmers, provision of facilities for recreation and tourism, serves as sources of foreign exchange and generation of revenue, there ought to be an investigation into issues and challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State. Therefore, this study examines the challenges and prospects of supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine the issues and challenges of supervision of vocational

agricultural education in Abia State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. determine the influence of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State.
- ii. determine the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State.
- iii. find out the ways of resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State

Research Questions

The following research questions were proposed to guide the study:

- (i) What are the influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?
- (ii) What are the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?
- (iii) What are the ways of resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?

Hypothesis of the Study

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference on the mean response of male and female lecturers on the challenges of supervision on vocational agricultural education in Abia State.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A survey design according to Nworgu (2015), is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. Abia State is one of the five states in South Eastern Nigeria. It is one of the oil producing state and state and Federal Universities. It is bounded by Enugu and Ebonyi in the North, Rivers and Bayelsa States in the South, Imo in the West and Akwa Ibom in the East.

The population for this study is 50 respondents consisting of 46 vocational agricultural education lecturers and 2 Deputy Vice Chancellor academics and 2 Director of Academic planning from selected universities in Abia State, Nigeria. There was no sampling for this study because the population was manageable.

The instrument used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire titled "Issues and Challenges of Supervision of Vocational Agricultural Education (ICSVAE)". The questionnaire comprises of two (2) sections. Section I elicited information on the personal data of the respondents, while section 2 comprises of three (3) clusters of 9 item statements each, making a total of 27 item statements. Cluster A elicited information on the influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in universities in Abia State. Cluster B elicited information on the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education in universities, while Cluster C elicited information on the way forward for resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State. The questionnaire adopts four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with assigned weights of 4, 3, 2 and 1, respectively.

The instrument was subjected to face validation by three (3) experts from the Department of Agricultural Education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. These experts were requested to assess the suitability of language, its clarity, relevance of items to the study and total coverage in addressing the research questions and hypothesis. Their

corrections, amendments and suggestions were reflected in the final copy of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a co-efficient of 0.70. Thus, the instrument was considered reliable.

The researcher administered 50 copies instruments with help of two research assistants so as to ensure that the entire copies of the questionnaire administered and completed were collected from the respondents. Forty-eight copies of the questionnaire was collected which represented 96% return rate

The data collected were analysed using mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test for testing the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Any item in the instrument with a mean of 2.50 and above were considered Agree while any item in the instrument with a mean rating of 2.49 and below were considered disagreed. For the hypothesis tested, when the t-calculated is less than t-critical, the hypothesis was accepted, but if the t-cal is greater than the t-critical the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State

N = 48				
S/N	The influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	Supervision stimulates good lecturing.	2.79	0.86	Agree
2.	Supervision aids agricultural lecturers in content knowledge presentation to meet the diverse needs of all students	2.67	0.79	Agree
3.	Supervision helps to improve the competency of agricultural lecturers	2.97	0.92	Agree
4.	Supervision enlightens lecturers on the objectives of the agricultural programmes	2.81	0.95	Agree
5.	Motivate agricultural lecturers to function effectively in agricultural farm.	2.85	0.93	Agree
6.	Supervision helps to enhance government and funding agencies' intervention to agricultural lecturers' need.	3.32	0.89	Agree
7.	Supervision ascertains the effectiveness of classroom management by agricultural education lecturers.	3.87	0.81	Strongly Agree
8.	Supervision motivates agricultural lecturers to make effective use of instructional materials.	3.59	0.72	Strongly Agree
9.	Supervision assists lecturers to carry out all necessary activities stated in the curriculum content	2.89	0.92	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.08	???	Agree

The result on Table 1 showed that all items had the mean values ranged from 2.67 – 3.87 which are all above the cutoff point of 2.5 and with the grand mean of

3.08. This show they are all influence of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State. The standard deviation of all items ranges from 0.72 –

0.92 which indicates that the responses of the respondents are not far from each other.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State

N = 48				
S/N	challenges of supervision of vocational Agric Edu lecturers	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	*Low enrollment of students in vocational agricultural education	3.11	0.96	Agree
2.	*Inadequate funding	2.96	1.08	Agree
3.	Inadequate personnel in agricultural education	2.46	1.13	Disagree
4.	*Poor Provision of Infrastructural facilities	2.54	0.99	Agree
5.	*Inadequate Setting up and maintenance of facilities	2.93	0.90	Agree
6.	*Attitude of parents and society towards vocational agricultural education	3.08	0.73	Agree
7.	Inadequate trained Supervisors	3.01	0.70	Agree
8.	*Inadequate facilities in teaching vocational agricultural education	2.57	0.98	Agree
9.	Inadequate incentives to supervisors	2.62	1.08	Agree
	Grand Mean	2.81	???	Agree

Table 2 showed that the respondents agree that items 1, 2, 4 - 9 were challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State because their mean ratings are above 2.50 which is the decision level. The grand mean of 2.81 indicates that the respondents agree that supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State

faced various challenges. The standard deviation of all the items ranges from 0.70 – 1.13 which indicated the responses of the respondents were not far to each other.

Research Question 3: What are the ways for resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State?

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on ways for resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State

N = 48				
S/N	Ways for resolving the challenges confronting the supervision of agric. Edu. lecturers	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	Increase enrollment of students in vocational agricultural education through the award of scholarship.	2.64	1.08	Agree
2.	Provision of adequate funding	2.97	1.14	Agree
3.	Expand training opportunities and facilities	3.07	0.78	Agree
4.	Proper setting up and maintenance of facilities	3.33	0.98	Agree
5.	Provision of resource centers	3.28	0.67	Agree
6.	Proper funding of vocational programs	2.84	0.88	Agree
7.	Adequate training of supervisors	3.37	0.80	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.01		Agree

Result from table 3 revealed that all the items has means ranging from 2.64 – 3.37 and grand mean of 3.01

which are all above the cutoff point of 2.50. This means that they are all ways for resolving the challenges

confronting supervision of Vocational Agricultural Education lecturers in Abia State. The standard deviation of all the items ranges from 0.67 to 1.14 which means the responses of the respondents are not far from each other.

Hypothesis

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean response of lecturers and supervisors on the challenges of supervision on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State.

Table 4: The t-test analysis of the difference between the mean response of lecturers and supervisors on the challenges of supervision on vocational agricultural education in Abia State

Groups	N	Mean	SD	DF	t.cal	P-Value	Dec
Lecturers	46	2.86	0.75	48	-0.990.32	NS	
Supervisors	04	2.78	0.78				

Table 4 showed a P. value of 0.32 which is greater than -0.99 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant difference in the mean response of lecturers and supervisors on the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State, was rejected.

Discussion of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that supervision influences vocational agricultural education lecturers. Such influences includes supervision stimulates good lecturing practice; enlightens and stimulate lecturers on the objectives of the agricultural programmes, Motivate agricultural lecturers to function effectively in agricultural farm, helps to improve the incompetency of agricultural education lecturers, helps to enhance government and funding agencies' intervention to agricultural lecturers needs, motivates agricultural lecturers to make effective use of instructional materials and assist lecturers to carry out all necessary activities stated in the curriculum content. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Amadi and Solomon (2018) who found that supervision helps to stimulate good teaching practice, motivate the teacher for effective use of instructional material among others.

The finding of the study revealed that the challenges confronting the supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State includes low enrolment of students in vocational agricultural education, lack of funding, inadequate personnel in agricultural education, poor provision of infrastructural facilities, inadequate setting up and maintenance of facilities, attitude of parents and society towards vocational agricultural education, lack of trained supervisors, insufficient facilities, lack of training and incentives to staff. This study is in agreement with Afolabi, 2019 who revealed that factors such as lack of

funding, inadequate personnel in agricultural education, poor provision of infrastructural facilities, inadequate setting up and maintenance of facilities, attitude of parents and society towards vocational agricultural education, lack of trained supervisors, and insufficient facilities hindered the supervision of vocational agricultural education were challenges that affected the supervision of vocational agricultural education. Also, the findings of Amadi and Lazarus (2017) agrees with this finding that poor provision of infrastructural facilities, inadequate setting up and maintenance of facilities, attitude of parents and society towards vocational agricultural education, and lack of trained supervisors were issues encountered in supervision of vocational agricultural education. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of lecturers and supervisors on challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia state.

The finding of the study revealed that the way forward to the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State includes development of indigenous curriculum, inclusion of entrepreneurial skills in vocational agricultural education, expand training opportunities and facilities, proper setting up and maintenance of facilities, provision of resource centers, support for small scale enterprises, proper funding of vocational programs, there should be a shift in the mindset of educational institutions regarding vocational education, supervisors should be trained and motivated with incentives. The finding supports the study by Despain and Juarez-Torres (2012). Furthermore, the findings are in line with that of Damina and Saulawa (2012) who posited that proper setting up and maintenance of facilities, provision of resource centers, support for small scale enterprises, proper funding of vocational programs, there should be a shift in the mindset of educational institutions regarding vocational education were the way

forward to the challenges of supervision of vocational agricultural education.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that supervision has influence on vocational agricultural education lecturers in Abia State. Supervision of vocational agricultural education in Abia State is faced with various challenges. The study further concludes that there is no significant difference on the mean response of male and female lecturers on the challenges of supervision on vocational agricultural education in Abia State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation were made:

1. The government should make policies that will regulate the supervision of vocational agricultural education.
2. The supervisors of vocational agricultural education should afford themselves the opportunity to attend workshops that will build their capacity in the supervision of vocational agricultural education.
3. Government should make funds available for agricultural programmes and re-orientation and there should be innovation in agricultural education sector.

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