

## INSPECTION REPORT WRITING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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### **Abstract**

*There is a strong relationship between inspection report writing and educational administration. The importance of inspection report writing on educational administration and the implications cannot be said to have been over-emphasized. This work, which is captioned Inspection Report Writing and its Implications on Educational Administration, considers the meaning of report, report writing, inspection, inspection report and educational administration. It also looked at the relationship between report writing and educational administration, the importance of inspection report on educational administration and the implications of inspection report on educational administration. It gave certain recommendations which included that inspection for faultfinding on educational matters should be discouraged.*

**Keywords:** *Educational Administration, Inspection, Inspection Report, Report, Report Writing*

### **Introduction**

Quality education received by citizens of any nation determines the level of such country. Allison and Allison (2021) posits that quality women education is the harbinger of women empowerment on one hand and both rural and national development on the other hand, unfortunately, the quality of education in most developing countries like Nigeria, is rapidly deteriorating due to insufficient time to complete relevant subjects topics (Allison & Ojedapo, 2011), inadequate funding, acute shortage of qualified teachers, to mention few. Against all odds, the need for the education industry to ensure that standards are not compromised, cannot be over emphasized. To do this, routine, regular and effective checks and balances need to be carried out by the Inspectorate Unit in the Ministry of Education. But of concern is, what happens with the Inspection Report written and submitted to relevant authorities? Are there implications of these written inspection reports on educational administration? If educational administrators fail to implement the recommendations in these inspection reports, what happens?.

Inspection is an old human practice. It is not aimed at destroying but serves as an oversight of tasks given. It is an indispensable aspect of any organization all over the world, whether it is a developed or developing nation. It is a quality control measure put in place to ensure that standards are maintained.

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According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Hornby (2001), inspection (a noun) is from the word, inspect (a verb) which is defined as to carefully examine and to officially visit a school, factor, etc, in order to check that rules are being obeyed and the standards accepted. Olobube and Major (2014) posits that inspection is an organized examination or formal evaluation exercise which involves the measurement, testing and evaluation of certain characteristics of activities in the school system. From the definitions above, inspection can be conceptualized as an official visit to an educational institution to generally examine or evaluate such organization with the primary aim of ascertaining the extent to which it adheres to normal standards, acceptable pattern or other conduct and to make recommendations for advancement or remedial measure. School inspection is a statutory requirement.

The National Policy on Education, NPE (2004) explicitly states in section 12 (Number 114) that "the Federal Government shall prescribe standards of education at all level." It further states that 'government shall establish efficient inspectorate services at federal, state and local government levels for monitoring and maintaining minimum standards at all levels of education below the tertiary level' (Number 116). Two of the goals of inspectorate services as captured in Number 119 are 'set, maintain and improve standards in all aspects of the school system' and 'ensure uniform standards and quality control of instructional activities in schools through regular inspection and continuous supervision'. Inspection is supposed to be carried out in all educational institutions in the country. However, it is done through selection of a representative sample of each category of schools (primary, secondary and technical), due to cost implications, shortage of inspectors and lack of autonomy of the inspectorate unit in the Ministry of Education. It is penitent to mention that there are different types of forms of school inspection. Ololube and Major (2014) gave clinical visits, creative visit, follow-up inspection and full inspections as the different types of school inspection.

According to Okoh and Douglas (2007), report is an oral or written, eye-witnessed account or facts of what is observed, investigated, examined and work down and of factual statements about a situation, project, etc which shows the significance and conclusions arrived at. From this, it is obvious that report can either be in oral or written form. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) gives the meaning of report as giving people information about something that you have heard, seen, done, etc. It further explains that it could be written or spoken. A synthesis of the two meanings clearly reveals some imperative words between the two. Hence, report can be considered as an information, either in written or spoken form, of events or happenings. In most formal organizations, official reports are usually documented, that is, presented in written form.

At the end of an official assignment and engagement, it is expected that you put down in simple and clear terms, your findings/observations, concerns and suggest the way forward. This is called 'report writing'. Report is any account, spoken or written, of matters concerning a particular topic while report writing is a formal style of writing elaborately on a topic with tone that is always formal and the target audience is always thought out. In essence, report writing is documenting or putting down a record for plain reason and to a particular person(s) or office.

There are Academic Report, Business Report and Scientific Report. Academic Report is most suitable for this discourse. Academic Report like book reports, reports on historical events and biographies should be formal, clear and concise.

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The structure/pattern of report writing with its subheadings are:

- a. **Title Page:** Official reports often use a title page to keep things organized.
- b. **Introduction:** This is brief premise statement.
- c. **Body of the Report:** Which explains all your major findings broken down into headings and subheading. This is the main aspect of the work.
- d. **Table of Content:** which help in direct assessment of sections and for faster browsing.
- e. **Page Numbering:** To enable orderliness in case of mix-ups and misprints.
- f. **Headings and Subheadings:** To facilitate reading, browsing and scanning.
- g. **Citations and Referencing:** Which involves quoting/citing other sources of information.
- h. **Conclusion:** Where you bring together all life information and make your inputs.
- i. **Works Cited Page:** A bibliography at the end of report writing list credits and legal information for the other sources you got information from.

At the end of any inspection exercise, inspection report is prepared, written and sent with detailed recommendations to the school authorities, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Education and the Secretary of the Teachers Service Commission (Ololube & Major, 2014). Inspection reports vary in terms of scope/size, cost of production, days of completion and submission, etc, from one type of inspection carried out to another. For instance, pastoral visit can be undertaken by an inspector, concluded and the report submitted the same day. This is not the same with full or general inspection which requires about 10 or more independent inspectors with a team leader, who collate and harmonizes into one the various inspection reports from the independent inspectors. Full or general inspection report takes more time, more money, etc, than report from pastoral visit.

It is penitent to emphasize that inspection reports must capture certain variables. For full or general inspection report, the following variables are to be captured:

- a. **School Climate:** Focus is an environmental cleanliness, level of discipline, head teacher/student relationship; staff/student relationship, and student/student relationship.
- b. **Curriculum Delivery:** With particular reference to teacher effectiveness, staff motivation, learner-teacher interaction, pupil-teacher ratio, availability and use of teaching aids.
- c. **Organizational Structures:** At the classroom level, at the school level, at the boarding-house level (where appropriate).
- d. **Information System:** Whether data keeping is adequate or not; availability and effectiveness of channels of communication – between the head and teachers, between the head and the learners and between the school and parents.
- e. **The School's Achievements:** Especially in academics and also, in such co-curricular areas as sports, drama, cultural activities, etc.
- f. **School/Community Relationship:** What usually emerges from the inspection is a profile which reflects the areas in which the school is making progress and those in which, deficiencies have been observed.

Also to be highlighted are detailed recommendations on appropriate remedial measures.

Below is a sample of the subheadings/information and data required in full or general inspection report as developed by the Author:

1. Background Information
2. Support Staff

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3. Student Population
4. Time-table
5. Academic Information
6. Syllabus Coverage
7. Co-Curriculum Activities
8. General Information
9. Essential School Records
10. Textbooks and other Teaching Aids
11. Physical Facilities
12. Board House and Dining Hall (where applicable)
13. Accounts and Stores
14. Library
15. Tone of School
16. Suggestions/Observations/Recommendations
  - a. Criteria for Assessing Head teacher/Principal
  - b. Criteria for Assessing Staff
17. Comments
18. Recommendations
19. Name/Signature of Reporting Officer and Date

List of appendices (attachments) should include:

- i. List of teaching staff
- ii. School time-table
- iii. Daily routine
- iv. Duty roaster
- v. Menu (for boarding schools)

There are different types of inspection report that are written. Below are the titles or headings of the different inspection report sheets:

1. Classroom Observation Sheet
2. Observation Sheet for Teaching
3. Teacher Classroom Performance Rating Scale
4. Full General Inspection
5. Recognition Inspection Guidelines
6. Subject Inspection/Programme Accreditation
7. Operation Inspection
8. Records Examination
9. Format for Writing a Report on Curriculum Overview

Educational Administration can be defined as the systematic arrangement of human and material resources and programmes that are available for education and carefully using them systematically within defined guidelines or policies to achieve educational goals (Nwankwo in Peretomode, 2008). What that implies is that educational administration makes use of the limited available resources in the form of human and material to achieve the aims and objectives of the organization through the rules and regulations governing that organization. Campbell et al., in Peretomode (2008) defined Education Administration as “the management of institutions designed to foster teaching and learning”. From this, it is

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obvious that the major role of educational administration is the effective and efficient implementation of plans, policies and programmes made by educational managers.

### **Fundamental of Principles of Educational Administration**

The principles of educational administration, also known as the principles of administration that are applied in education are general guides to possible action, conduct and practice in specific situation. The principles act as a guide to the organization and control of educational practices. Henri Fayol (1841-1925) who was regarded as the founder of classic management school, formulated what is called Fayol's Fourteen Principles of Management.

Fayol's Fourteen Principles of Management in Lunenburg and Ornestein (2008), called the Principles of Educational Administration are as follows:

1. **Division of Work:** This is to improve efficiency through reduction of waste, increase output and make training on the job, simple.
2. **Authority:** This is the right to give order and power to exact obedience. Authority leads to responsibility which the obligation to carry out assigned duties.
3. **Discipline:** This implies the respect for the rules that govern the organization. Clear statements of agreements between the organization and its employees, also known as rule of engagement are necessary and quality discipline is expected from leadership and subordinates.
4. **Unity of Command:** An employee should receive orders from only one superior at a time. Adherence to this principle avoids breakdown in authority and discipline.
5. **Unity of Direction:** Similar activities that are directed toward a singular goal should be grouped together under a head/leader.
6. **Subordination of Individual Interest:** The interest of individuals and groups within an organization should not take precedence over the interests of the organization as a whole.
7. **Remuneration:** Compensation should be fair and satisfactory to both employees and the organization.
8. **Centralization:** Managers must retain final responsibility but should give enough authority to subordinates to do the task successfully. Centralization varies depends on circumstances.
9. **Scalar Chain:** This is also chain of command. This is the chain of supervisions from top to bottom. The exact lines of authority should be clear and followed at all times.
10. **Order:** Human and material resources should be coordinated to be at the right place at the right time.
11. **Equity:** A desire for equity and equality of treatment are aspirations managed (administrators as in the case) should take into account in dealing with employees.
12. **Stability of Personnel:** Successful organization need a stable workforce managerial practices should encourage long-term employees.
13. **Initiative:** Employees should be encouraged to develop and carry out plans for improvement.
14. **Esprit de Corps:** Managers should foster and maintain teamwork, team spirit and a sense of unity and togetherness among employees.

Jaiyeoba in Babalola and Ayeni (2008) considers these fundamental principles of management as principles of educational administration. It usefulness we equally gives:

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1. They give greater insight to educational administrators into the methods used of getting thing done cooperatively;
2. They help administrators in effective performance of their administrative functions;
3. They serve as guidelines which educational leaders and to apply in their day-to-day administrative chores;
4. They serve as guides to thinking and practice in administration'
5. They assist educational administrators to have basis of leadership devoid of bias;
6. They help in the development of subordinate personnel and management generally;
7. They provide the basis for further research in administrative management studies.

Educational administrators are enjoined to make use of these principles with caution where necessary, as strict adherence or rigid application can sometimes adversely affect the organization, deter the process of change, affect taking necessary decision in emergency situation, affect practitioners from aspiring fear growth on the job necessitated new innovation and strict or rigid adherence may lead to goal displacement. It is on this premise that this paper is presented

### **Relationship Between Inspection Report Writing and Educational Administration**

Two things are said to have relationship if there are certain connectivity (connections) between them. In this regard, there are connections (connectivity) between Inspection Report Writing and Educational Administration. Inspection report writing is carried out in synergy with educational administration (administrator, teachers). Where the latter (captured as educational administration (administrators/teachers) completely refuses or partially provide the needed resources in the form of humans and materials, inspection report writing, will be truncated or delayed. Also, inspection report writing with detailed recommendations which is prepared, written and sent by inspectors can only be effectively implemented by the willingness and cooperation of educational administration. This means that inspection report writing must relate or connect with educational administration for a result oriented exercise. This is true for those who are in the education sector.

### **Importance of Inspection Report on Educational Administration**

The importance of inspection report on educational administration is conceptualized as the influence or effect of inspection report on educational administration. According to Olele in Peretomode (2009), the six most important purpose of inspection among practitioners of education (educational administration) are:

- a) to make sure that minimum standards are adhered to;
- b) to provide a forum through which purposeful and constructive advice can be rendered for the sake of improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools through improvement of educational facilities;
- c) to make sure that prudence is maintained in the way and manner that public funds are spent in running the schools;
- d) to make available to the appropriate authorities, the true position of human and material resources as they concern the schools through inspection reports;
- e) to stimulate and provide guidance in the display of desirable educational practices while noting the various negative educational practices and

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- f) to provide a verifiable foundation upon which various courses of action can be initiated by the teachers and principle locally within the school, the inspector and the Government on a larger scale.

Inspection report now and again reinforces effective pedagogical methods and proposes appropriate remedial action where professional lapses have been observed. Educational Administration closes up these lapses through appropriate measures. Poorly trained and incompetent teachers whose retention on the job is not helpful are exposed and either mandated to improve or are flushed out. Implementation of which by educational administration will bring about effective and efficient school system. Inspection report gives objective information about the strengths and weaknesses of a school and suggests ways in which identified weaknesses can be removed. This is also helpful to school administration. Reports arising from school inspections make it possible for the quality of education offered is one school and the standard attained to be compared with the quality and standard in a similar school elsewhere in the country. This serves as a reinforcement and motivation for educational administration.

### **Implications of Inspection Report on Educational Administration**

The implications of inspection report on educational administration is conceptualized as the significance of inspection report on educational administration. As posited by Olele in Peretomode (2009), inspection as an educational activity has been in existence as an integral part of formal education in Nigeria for some time now. The possible effect is that the successful implementation of decisions reached or recommendations of an inspection report will enhance educational administration. Hence, educational administrators are obliged to enforce recommendations from inspection reports.

On the other hand, a school system without purposeful and regular inspection may soon degenerate into mere routine establishment where everybody does what he or she likes. Such a situation invariably leads to the fall in general standard of education. In that case, the absence of regular and powerful inspection of schools as is generally known to have been the case for many years now, may be one of the causes of the alleged falling standards of education in Nigeria (Igwe, 2006). Inspection reports are of great significance to heads of schools. They serve as measuring instruments for educational administrators to weigh their level of compliance with observance of education laws and regulations. Arora (2009) has postulated that written inspection instructions help the passing on of information and prevent task being forgotten. He further said that the inspection instructions should be laid down and written so as to be easily understood.

Once inspection reports are forwarded to appropriate authority(ies), directives are usually issued as response. These directives need to be complied with soonest as the appropriate authority(ies) may withdraw recognition or may recommend closure or any other strict penalty for the offenders (Igwe, 2006).

Inspection report as earlier posited reinforces effective pedagogical methods and proposes appropriate remedial action where professional lapses been observed.

### **Conclusion**

This paper considered inspections report writing and its implications on educational administration. It posits that there are different types of inspections like pastoral visit, which

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can be carried out by an inspector alone and in just one day, creative visits, clinical visits, follow-up inspection and full/general inspection which involves more inspectors and more days due to its magnitude. As we have different types of inspections, so are inspection reports. Report writing which is a type of inspection report writing has different structures which are similar. Educational administrations need inspection report for appraisal and improvement. Inspection reports are very essential for the educational administration of any institution. As earlier postulated, any school without purposeful and regular inspection may soon degenerate into mere routing establishment where everybody does what he or she likes. Inspection reports should be written in clear, simple terms and should, as a matter of urgency, be forwarded to the appropriate authority(ies) to avoid it becoming less useful by those concerned with the implementation of recommendations. Directives from the appropriate authority(ies) should be adhered to soonest to avoid sanctions or possible litigation.

### Recommendations

School inspection report writing plays a significant role in educational administration. Quality of education is enhanced if the relevant authorities: school heads/principals, government functionaries, parents/guardians and leaders of host communities where such school is located, all work together in synergy for the implementation of the recommendations as it applies to them. Inspection report writing must capture all variables: pupil, teacher, school climate, school records, etc. Educational administrators should not hide relevant information and records from inspectors as this could affect the type of inspection report written and in turn, impede the administration of such institution later on. The recommendations from inspection report will enhance both the inspectorate unit and educational administration of schools if adhered to. The following are also recommended:

1. The traditional style of school inspection where inspectors were fault-finders and seen as watchdog should be discouraged, as such makes the administrators and teachers never to give the true picture of information sort for. Inspectors should rather be friendly to teachers and heads of schools than being harsh and unfriendly.
2. Inspection of schools should be regular and the recommendations made after such inspection(s) implemented to the latter if they are appropriate and relevant.

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