



The Role of Teachers' Supervision and Inclusive Education in Enhancing Secondary School System Effectiveness

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Abstract

Enhancing secondary school system effectiveness remains a vital concern in educational discourse, as it significantly influences learners' academic achievement, character development, and future opportunities. This study examined the role of teachers' supervision and inclusive education in enhancing the effectiveness of public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and covered the entire population of 303 principals across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state, using a census approach. Data were collected with three structured instruments—the Teachers' Supervision Questionnaire, Inclusive Education Questionnaire, and Secondary School System Effectiveness Questionnaire (TSIESSEQ)—all validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. The instruments had reliability indices ranging from .81 to .83, determined using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was carried out using mean and standard deviation at the 0.05 level of significance, with 2.50 as the decision benchmark. Findings revealed that teachers' supervision as a management strategy for promoting system effectiveness was generally low, while inclusive education was not extensively practiced in public secondary schools Cross River State. The study concluded that teachers' supervision and inclusive education are crucial strategies for enhancing system effectiveness, but their implementation is hindered by inadequate instructional materials, shortage of skilled teachers, poor incentives, and insufficient facilities. It was recommended that schools adopt inclusive policies that actively prevent discrimination and provide equal opportunities for all learners, irrespective of background or ability.

Keywords: Teachers' supervision, Inclusive education, System effectiveness, Public secondary schools, Cross River State

1. Introduction

A functional and effective secondary school system is crucial not only for enhancing academic achievement but also for preparing young people for vocational and professional opportunities. Secondary education serves as the link between basic and tertiary education. Strengthening the effectiveness of the secondary school system has become a major concern in contemporary educational discourse, as it equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for personal growth, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning (Odo *et al.*, 2025; Obona *et al.*, 2025; Uzu *et al.*, 2025) ^[30, 28, 42]. Secondary school effectiveness refers to the extent to which schools achieve their stated educational goals and objectives. According to Obona *et al.* (2024) ^[17], school effectiveness is the ability to create a structured learning environment, respond to diverse learning needs, foster positive relationships, and remain committed to continuous professional development. Similarly, Difoni *et al.* (2025, p. 136) ^[9], describe it as the capacity of schools to fulfill their teaching responsibilities in ways that enhance student learning and holistic development.

School Effectiveness can be assessed through quality teaching, efficient management, prudent resource utilization, positive student outcomes, and societal contributions. Beyond the school environment, effectiveness also reflects in the broader impact of secondary education on societal progress, where graduates contribute to economic growth, social cohesion, and sustainable development. Scholars such as Ngene *et al.* (2024) ^[20], Olofinkua *et al.* (2025) ^[34], and Owan *et al.* (2019) ^[4], highlight indicators such as clear vision, informed decision-making, effective resource management, strong academic performance, and societal engagement. Bassey *et al.* (2019) ^[5], further noted that school effectiveness is measured through the combined performance of both staff and students.

Despite the importance of a functional secondary school system, ensuring administrative and instructional effectiveness remains a pressing challenge. Studies (Obona *et al.*, 2024; Ngene *et al.*, 2024; Edim *et al.*, 2024; Nwannunu *et al.*, 2024; Odoh *et al.*, 2025; Nwokonko *et al.*, 2024; Obona *et al.*, 2025; Madukwe *et al.*, 2024) ^[17, 33, 11, 22, 29, 23, 28, 18], have shown declining effectiveness in secondary schools, raising concerns among parents and stakeholders. The situation is especially more troubling in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This decline is evident in staff negligence, poor attitudes to work, and students' weak academic outcomes. Schools are expected to provide effective leadership, which requires collective commitment from administrators, teaching, and non-teaching staff. However, many principals appear indifferent to school activities, while some staff devote more time to personal businesses than their official duties.

Teachers, who should play a central role in shaping students' learning and character, often show poor commitment. Issues such as lateness, absenteeism, poor record-keeping, weak instructional delivery, ineffective classroom management, and inadequate learner guidance are common. Consequently, many students perform poorly in both internal and external examinations, leading parents to withdraw their children to private schools. This ineffectiveness partly explains why many secondary school graduates struggle to pass the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) to gain admission into higher institutions.

The government of Cross River State has attempted to address these challenges by employing more teachers and ensuring salary payments. Several studies have also examined related variables, including school-community relationships, personnel management practices, school characteristics, innovative management strategies, support services, teacher motivation, discipline techniques, participatory leadership, classroom management, and record-keeping (Oluwole & Dondo, 2015; Owan & Ekpe, 2018; Owan, 2018; Ekaette *et al.*, 2019; Owan *et al.*, 2019; Owan, 2019; Obona *et al.*, 2024; Difoni *et al.*, 2024; Madukwe *et al.*, 2024) ^[26, 39, 37, 8, 18]. Yet, these problems persist. Since secondary education is the bridge between basic and higher education, its effectiveness directly influences the quality of skills, values, and competencies acquired for lifelong learning and national growth. Against this background, this study focuses on teachers' supervision and inclusive education as key factors in enhancing system effectiveness.

1.1 The Role of Teachers' Supervision in Enhancing School System Effectiveness

Teachers' supervision is the systematic process by which

school leaders (principals, head teachers, or inspectors) guide, monitor, and support teachers to improve instructional practices, classroom management, and professional growth. Obona *et al.* (2024) ^[17], describe supervision as a process that fosters professional development, improves curriculum implementation, and strengthens teaching techniques. It involves observing classroom practices, providing constructive feedback, identifying areas of weakness, and offering training opportunities to enhance teacher effectiveness. Madukwe *et al.* (2024) ^[18], also emphasize that supervision is a critical tool for achieving school goals and objectives. Through supervision, administrators ensure instructional quality, proper classroom management, and adherence to curriculum standards. It promotes accountability, motivates teachers, and aligns teaching practices with learners' needs. Effective supervision encourages professional growth through mentoring, continuous training, and constructive evaluation, thereby improving student outcomes, resource utilization, and overall school performance.

Empirical studies support this link between supervision and school effectiveness. For instance, Obona and Sampson (2019) ^[25], Madukwe *et al.* (2024) ^[18], and Okafor *et al.* (2024) ^[33], observed significant connections between supervision and teacher commitment, productivity, quality assurance, and accountability. Wokocha *et al.* (2017) ^[43], found that supervision influenced business studies teachers' performance, while Arop *et al.* (2019) ^[4], reported that supervision significantly affected teachers' work attitudes ($t = 7.171$, $B = .164$). Okafor *et al.* (2024) ^[33], also concluded that supervision motivates teachers to reflect on and improve their methods. Nadesh *et al.* (2025) revealed a positive relationship between classroom visitation, professional development, and teachers' effectiveness, while Madukwe *et al.* (2024) ^[18], found a significant association between staff supervision and service delivery. On the contrary, Chidi and Victor (2017) ^[7], observed that while principals frequently conduct classroom visits, follow-up through structured feedback and professional support is often weak or inconsistent. Similarly, Animba *et al.* (2021) ^[3], emphasized that although instructional supervision is meant to provide guidance, support, and continuous assessment for teacher development, challenges such as inadequate instructional materials and strained teacher-supervisor relationships hinder its effectiveness. Ikediugwu (2022) ^[14], also noted that the impact of classroom visitation on teacher professional learning remains weak unless principals deliberately connect observations with coaching and support strategies. Likewise, Jonah (2024) ^[15], highlighted contextual barriers—including insufficient supervisor training, lack of supervision materials, and logistical or security constraints—that reduce the quality and frequency of supervision across Nigerian secondary schools.

1.2 The Role of Inclusive Education in Enhancing School System Effectiveness

Inclusive education is a teaching approach that ensures all learners, regardless of their abilities, disabilities, or backgrounds, are provided equal opportunities to participate fully in classroom activities. Difoni *et al.* (2024) ^[9], describe it as offering equitable, high-quality learning experiences to all students. Similarly, Sambo and Gambo (2015) ^[41], view inclusive education as integrating learners with and without special needs into the same classrooms, giving them equal

opportunities to learn. Okwudire and Okechukwu (2008) ^[35], emphasize that inclusion ensures every child, regardless of ability, becomes a valued member of the school community. This approach removes barriers to learning by adapting teaching methods and providing support such as differentiated instruction and assistive technologies.

Inclusive education strengthens the effectiveness of secondary schools by ensuring that all learners benefit from supportive environments where diversity is respected. It promotes collaboration, tolerance, and social integration, while challenging teachers to adopt innovative pedagogical strategies. By reducing marginalization and improving access, inclusive education enhances student achievement and contributes to national development goals. According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education is grounded in human rights principles, promoting equality, participation, and diversity. It recognizes that all learners, regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, or other differences, have the right to quality education. Sambo and Gambo (2015) ^[41], further argue that inclusion ensures the presence, participation, and achievement of all learners, including those marginalized due to language, gender, or intellectual ability. Empirical studies reinforce its importance. Bays (2001) ^[6], using a mixed-method design with 34 respondents, found a significant relationship between supervision of inclusive education and teachers' job effectiveness. Alila *et al.* (2015) ^[17], showed that supervision provides both individual and communal support to inclusive teachers. Easley and Rancocas (2017) ^[10] reported a slight but statistically significant negative impact of inclusive classrooms on non-disabled students' performance, while Agunloye and Smith (2015) ^[1], demonstrated positive effects of inclusion on students' performance in Mathematics and English. Kvande *et al.* (2019) ^[16], however, found that special education negatively affected fifth-grade math achievement, showing mixed outcomes. On the contrary, Usen *et al.* (2023) confirmed a low supply of essential physical, human, and financial resources for inclusive education, noting that these gaps significantly hinder implementation. Similarly, Ogbeche and Uzoigwe (2021) ^[32], found that the availability of facilities for inclusive entrepreneurship education was very low, leading to poor uptake of such programmes. Eyam and Iso (2025) ^[13], also revealed that while principals may be philosophically supportive of inclusion, the absence of robust monitoring, environment adaptation, and adequate resourcing fundamentally restricts effective practice.

While numerous studies have examined inclusive education and school effectiveness both locally and internationally, little research has been conducted specifically on public secondary schools in Cross River State. This gap underscores the relevance of the present study in the Nigerian context.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to explore the role of teachers' supervision and inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State. Specifically, this study examined:

- The supervision of teachers and secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State.
- Inclusive education and secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State.

1.4 Research questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

- What is the perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State?
- What is the perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State?

2. Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design and was conducted in Cross River State, Nigeria. The population comprised all 303 principals of public secondary schools across the 18 Local Government Areas of the state. Principals were selected because they serve as the chief instructional leaders, directly responsible for teacher supervision and the implementation and oversight of inclusive education practices. They also possess system-level information on school effectiveness indicators such as teaching quality, student support, resource utilization, and learning outcomes. The study employed a census method, as the researchers considered the population size manageable for complete coverage. Including the entire population ensured a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon across the state and enhanced the generalizability of the findings.

Three instruments were used for data collection including a questionnaire tagged: "Teachers' Supervision", "Inclusive Education", and "Secondary School System Effectiveness Questionnaire (TSIESSEQ)." The questionnaires were structured on a four-point modified Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and these responses were scored 1,2,3,4, as their weights. The questionnaire was face and content validated by three research experts from the department of Educational Management, and from Measurement and Evaluation, faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, University of Calabar. To establish the reliability of the research instrument, a trial test was first carried out on 40 principals selected from public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State which was outside the study area. The reliability was determined through Cronbach alpha technique and the index ranges between .81 to .83. These values exceeded the 0.60 benchmark set by Ogbazi and Okpala (1994) ^[31], who argued that an instrument yielding a reliability co-efficient of 0.60 and above should be considered strong enough for a study. Therefore, statistically, the instruments were considered reliable for data collection. The researchers and 10 trained research assistants engaged in the administration of the questionnaire. The copies of the questionnaire were administered and after some time, the researchers retrieved them back for data analysis. The questionnaire recorded 100% return rate. The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule is that any mean score of 2.50 or above is taken to indicate agreement while any mean score that falls below 2.50 is taken as disagreement.

3. Results

Research question 1: What is the perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State? To provide answer to this research question, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used. Here, a benchmark mean of 2.50 was fixed for acceptance or rejection of a statement. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of principals' responses on the perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State (n = 303)

S/no	Item	Strongly Agree (SA) n (%)	Agree (A) n (%)	Disagree (D) n (%)	Strongly Disagree (SD) n (%)	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Dev. (S.D)	Decision
1.	I regularly observe teachers' classroom lessons to monitor instructional practices.	17 (5.6%)	152 (50.2%)	96 (31.7%)	38 (12.5%)	2.51	0.78	Agree
2.	I provide constructive feedback to teachers after classroom supervision.	55 (18.2%)	101 (33.3%)	107 (35.3%)	40 (13.2%)	2.44	0.93	Disagree
3.	I check teachers' lesson plans before classroom delivery.	41 (13.5%)	118 (38.9%)	112 (37.0%)	32 (10.6%)*	2.45	0.85	Disagree
4.	I ensure that teachers comply with the school curriculum.	56 (18.5%)	121 (39.9%)	92 (30.4%)	34 (11.2%)*	2.34	0.91	Disagree
5.	I supervise teachers' attendance at school.	45 (14.9%)	121 (39.9%)	98 (32.3%)	39 (12.9%)	2.43	0.90	Disagree
6.	I recommend professional development programs based on supervision outcomes.	67 (22.1%)	99 (32.7%)	99 (32.7%)	38 (12.5%)	2.36	0.96	Disagree
Mean of means and Standard Deviation						2.42	0.88	

Data analysis in Table 1, which presents the mean and standard deviation of principals' responses on the perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State, shows that respondents agreed only on Item 1 ($\bar{X} = 2.51$), which exceeded the decision benchmark of 2.50. This implies that principals generally affirmed that they regularly observe teachers' classroom lessons to monitor instructional practices. Conversely, Items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 recorded mean scores below the cut-off point (\bar{X} ranging from 2.34 to 2.45), indicating that principals disagreed on practices such as providing constructive feedback after classroom supervision, checking teachers' lesson plans before delivery, ensuring compliance with the school curriculum, supervising teachers' attendance, and recommending professional development programs. Furthermore, the grand mean of 2.42, which falls below the benchmark mean of 2.50, confirms that the overall

perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State is low. The standard deviation values, ranging between 0.78 and 0.96, indicate a relatively low spread of responses, suggesting that principals were fairly consistent in their views. This consistency further strengthens the conclusion that teachers' supervision, as a management strategy for promoting system effectiveness, is not extensively practiced in the state's public secondary schools.

Research question 2: What is the perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State? To provide answer to this research question, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used. Here, a benchmark mean of 2.50 was fixed for acceptance or rejection of a statement. The result is presented in table 2

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of principals' responses on the perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State (n = 303)

S/no	Item	Strongly Agree (SA) n (%)	Agree (A) n (%)	Disagree (D) n (%)	Strongly Disagree (SD) n (%)	Mean (\bar{X})	Std. Dev. (S.D)	Decision
1.	I ensure that students with different learning needs are not discriminated against in my school.	67 (22.1%)	99 (32.7%)	99 (32.7%)	38 (12.5%)	2.36	0.96	Disagree
2.	I encourage teachers to adapt their teaching methods to meet diverse learners' needs.	14 (4.6%)	149 (49.2%)	104 (34.3%)	36 (11.9%)	2.53	0.76	Agree
3.	I make efforts to provide learning resources that cater to all categories of students.	36 (11.9%)	98 (32.3%)	132 (43.6%)	37 (12.2%)	2.56	0.85	Agree
4.	I promote policies that prevent the exclusion of any student based on background.	35 (11.6%)	106 (35.0%)	120 (39.6%)	42 (13.9%)	2.56	0.87	Agree
5.	I monitor how teachers handle students with special learning needs.	34 (11.2%)	153 (50.5%)	78 (25.7%)	38 (12.5%)	2.40	0.84	Disagree
6.	I ensure that the school environment is supportive to all learners.	55 (18.2%)	110 (36.3%)	112 (37.0%)	26 (8.6%)	2.36	0.88	Disagree
Mean of means and Standard Deviation						2.46	0.86	

Data analysis in Table 2, which presents the mean and standard deviation of principals' responses on the perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State, shows that respondents agreed only on Items 2, 3, and 4 ($\bar{X} = 2.53, 2.56$, and 2.56), which exceeded the decision benchmark of 2.50. This implies that principals generally affirmed that they

encourage teachers to adapt their teaching methods to meet diverse learners' needs, make efforts to provide learning resources that cater to all categories of students, and promote policies that prevent the exclusion of any student based on background. Conversely, Items 1, 5, and 6 recorded mean scores below the cut-off point ($\bar{X} = 2.36-2.40$), indicating disagreement among respondents. This suggests that

principals did not perceive practices such as ensuring that students with different learning needs are not discriminated against, monitoring how teachers handle students with special learning needs, and ensuring that the school environment is supportive to all learners as being carried out to a large extent. Furthermore, the grand mean of 2.46, which falls below the benchmark of 2.50, confirms that the overall perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in public secondary schools in Cross River State is low. The standard deviation values, which range between 0.76 and 0.96, indicate a relatively low spread of responses, suggesting that principals were fairly consistent in their views. This consistency strengthens the conclusion that inclusive education, as a strategy for enhancing secondary school system effectiveness, is not extensively practiced in public secondary schools within the state.

4. Discussion of findings

The analysis presented in Table 1 indicates that principals reported engaging in classroom observation to some extent (Item 1, $\bar{X} = 2.51$). However, they disagreed that follow-up supervisory practices—such as providing constructive feedback, checking lesson plans, ensuring curriculum compliance, supervising attendance, and recommending professional development—are regularly carried out (Items 2–6; $\bar{X} = 2.34$ –2.45). The overall grand mean ($\bar{X} = 2.42$), which falls below the 2.50 benchmark, suggests that the perceived extent of teachers' supervision as a management strategy for promoting system effectiveness, is generally low in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This outcome may be attributed to the fact that supervisory practices requiring significant time, resources, and sustained engagement—such as in-depth lesson plan reviews and structured feedback—are more demanding than brief classroom visits. Principals, who often face heavy administrative workloads and competing responsibilities, may not have sufficient time to engage in these comprehensive supervisory activities. Furthermore, the relative absence of systematic feedback and professional development after classroom observations indicates a weak supervisory culture that is not strongly oriented toward teacher growth and improvement.

These findings align with existing studies. For instance, Chidi and Victor (2017) ^[7], observed that while principals frequently conduct classroom visits, follow-up through structured feedback and professional support is often weak or inconsistent. Similarly, Animba *et al.* (2021) ^[3], emphasized that although instructional supervision is meant to provide guidance, support, and continuous assessment for teacher development, challenges such as inadequate instructional materials and strained teacher-supervisor relationships hinder its effectiveness. Ikediugwu (2022) ^[14], also noted that the impact of classroom visitation on teacher professional learning remains weak unless principals deliberately connect observations with coaching and support strategies. Likewise, Jonah (2024) ^[15], highlighted contextual barriers—including insufficient supervisor training, lack of supervision materials, and logistical or security constraints—that reduce the quality and frequency of supervision across Nigerian secondary schools. Collectively, these systemic limitations constrain principals' ability to implement the full range of supervisory practices captured in the instrument. The findings from Table 2, showing mean scores above the 2.50 benchmark only for

Items 2 ($\bar{X} = 2.53$), 3 ($\bar{X} = 2.56$), and 4 ($\bar{X} = 2.56$), indicate that principals in Cross River State largely acknowledge ongoing efforts to differentiate teaching, provide inclusive learning resources, and promote non-exclusionary policies. However, the lower mean scores recorded for Items 1, 5, and 6 ($\bar{X} = 2.36$ –2.40) suggest that essential components—such as preventing discrimination, monitoring teachers' responsiveness to diverse learning needs, and cultivating supportive school environments—are not sufficiently practiced. The overall grand mean of 2.46, alongside relatively close standard deviations (0.76–0.96), reflects a consistent perception among principals that inclusive education as a strategy for enhancing secondary school system effectiveness, is not extensively practiced in public secondary schools within the state.

One possible explanation for these results is the persistent shortage of resources and weak institutional support systems that hinder the full operationalization of inclusive practices. While principals may conceptually support inclusive education, their schools often lack the facilities, teacher training, and monitoring frameworks necessary for consistent implementation. The implication of this finding is that unless these critical gaps are addressed, inclusive education policies will remain more theoretical than practical, thereby limiting equal learning opportunities for students with diverse abilities. By strengthening teacher training, improving resourcing, and instituting stronger monitoring systems, schools in Cross River State can move from mere acknowledgment of inclusive education principles toward their fuller realization. Several studies corroborate the present findings. For instance, Usen *et al.* (2023) confirmed a low supply of essential physical, human, and financial resources for inclusive education, noting that these gaps significantly hinder implementation. Similarly, Ogbeche and Uzoigwe (2021) ^[32], found that the availability of facilities for inclusive entrepreneurship education was very low, leading to poor uptake of such programmes. Eyam and Iso (2025) ^[13], also revealed that while principals may be philosophically supportive of inclusion, the absence of robust monitoring, environment adaptation, and adequate resourcing fundamentally restricts effective practice.

5. Conclusion

This study specifically examined the role of teachers' supervision and inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State. It sought to answer two key questions: What is the perceived extent of teachers' supervision in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State? and What is the perceived extent of inclusive education in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness in Cross River State? The findings revealed that teachers' supervision, as a management strategy for promoting system effectiveness, is generally low in public secondary schools across the state. Similarly, inclusive education, as a strategy for improving system effectiveness, is not extensively practiced in these schools. Based on these findings, the study concluded that teachers' supervision and inclusive education play significant roles in enhancing secondary school system effectiveness. However, their successful implementation is hindered by several challenges, including inadequate instructional materials, shortage of skilled teachers, poor incentives, and insufficient facilities, among others, in public secondary schools within Cross River State.

6. Recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

- The Ministry of Education should provide capacity-building workshops for principals on effective supervisory techniques, with emphasis on feedback, monitoring, and professional development support.
- Schools should adopt policies that actively prevent discrimination and provide equal learning opportunities for all students, irrespective of their backgrounds or learning abilities.
- The state government and stakeholders should invest more in adequate instructional materials, assistive technologies, and infrastructural facilities to support inclusive practices.
- Improved welfare packages and incentives should be provided to enhance teacher commitment and willingness to embrace supervision and inclusive education strategies.

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