



Perception of Teachers on Instructional Supervision at Basic Schools in Hohoe Municipality of Ghana

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Abstract: The study investigated the perception of teachers towards school supervision at the basic school level in the Hohoe Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana. The research question was how teachers in the Hohoe Municipality perceived school supervision as basis for classroom instruction. The study used the descriptive survey design to explore the perception of teachers towards instructional supervision. The proportional sampling, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting 200 respondents for the study, comprising 150 teachers, 40 headteachers and 10 circuit supervisors. The survey covered 20 basic schools in the Hohoe Municipality. A questionnaire was constructed to collect data. Data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The study revealed that some teachers perceived school supervision as a mere fault-finding mission and interference in their duties as well as an opportunity to settle personal scores with supervisees. That notwithstanding, other teachers view supervision as an efficient way of enhancing their professional development and an activity basically pointing to the holistic improvement of teaching and learning process. The study recommended that supervisors should not use supervision as fault finding mission but rather fact finding. Teachers should see supervisors as critical partners who complement their roles. Also workshops and seminars should be organized periodically to sensitize teachers on the usefulness of supervision in an effort to curb the negative impression some of them may have about it.

Keywords: Instructional Supervision, Perception, Circuit Supervisors, Basic Schools

1. Introduction

The success of every organization including the school to a greater extent depends on effective and efficient supervision. In the school situation, the ultimate objective of supervision is to improve on teaching and it is possibly the reason for which the study [1] defines supervision as a consciously planned programme for improvement and consolidation of instruction.

As postulated by the study [2] instructional supervision effectively improves classroom practices and leads to student achievement through professional growth and teacher improvement. [25] As cited by the study [3] supervision of teachers is a critical function of the school which gives opportunity to teachers to improve teaching and learning and

their professional status.

In school supervision, the main objective of the supervisor is to help improve teaching and learning. It is to make teachers and pupils realize the need to make good use of instructional time and for teachers to teach the right curriculum contents. Supervision plays a vital role in selecting materials of curriculum content to facilitate teaching and learning in assessing the whole educational process. Supervision also encourages quality engagement with internal and external monitors in a bid to enhance their continued professional development while on the job [4, 5].

Such improvement and growth relies on a supervisory system dedicated to helping teachers make their lesson deliveries a success [6]. Supervision of teachers by heads, assistant heads and education officers is a common practice

in Ghanaian schools. Previously, the concept of instructional supervision was known as inspection which referred to the specific occasion when the whole school was examined and evaluated at a place of learning [7, 8].

In Ghana today, the Ghana Education Service (GES) has a policy regarding supervision of teaching and learning in our basic schools. Heads of basic schools, Circuit Supervisors, School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations are some of the bodies which have oversight responsibilities to see to the proper and effective management and supervision of schools on daily basis. They do this by putting the right organizational structures and mechanisms in place. They make sure that they monitor and supervise instructional time, co-curricular activities as well as teaching and learning [9]. Irrespective of the significant contributions of supervision in the teaching- learning process, teachers in the Hohoe Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana react to it differently.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of teachers about instructional supervision in the Hohoe Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana.

1.2. Research Questions

The study was guided by this research question; how do teachers perceive supervision as basis for classroom instruction?

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study has contributed to the enrichment of existing literature on school supervision and also provided information for further research in this area. Findings from the study will enable heads of schools and other external supervisors realize the perceptions of teachers towards instructional supervision so that appropriate guidance can be given to them in their lesson delivery. Also, the findings will help erase the erroneous impression that teachers have about instructional supervision. Finally, it would also be beneficial to the Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders as it would help address problems associated with how teachers perceive instructional supervision and the implementation of educational policy and programmes with regard to school supervision.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

School-based instructional supervision aims at improving the overall teaching-learning process through promoting teachers professional development and growth, provides objective feedback to teachers, diagnoses and solves teaching problems, helps teachers develop their strategies and skills and to evaluate teachers for promotions and appointments [10, 11]. Despite the significant role of supervision in the teaching-learning process, teachers in the Hohoe Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana expressed mixed feelings and opinions about it. It is a common practice in

contemporary school supervision within these decades that the field of school instructional supervision has been suffering from unfriendly and unstable relationship between teachers and supervisors. These unfriendly and unstable relationships during school supervision include harassments, settling of personal scores, intimidation and fault finding [12-14]. As a result, the mention of instructional supervision causes fear and panic among some teachers. This implies that teachers' perception about instructional supervision can positively or negatively affect the quality of instruction in the classroom [15]. It is against this background that this study had been carried out to explore the perception of teachers towards instructional supervision.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Supervision

The concept supervision has been defined in different ways by various scholars and academicians. Instructional supervision is mainly about improving schools by helping teachers focus on their activities, learn more about what they are doing and why, and develop professionally [16]. Supervision of instruction is a process of assisting the teacher to improve himself and his instructional abilities so as to enhance effective teaching and learning [17, 18], defined school supervision as all efforts of designated school officials directed towards providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instructional activities, method of teaching and evaluation of instructions. It can be deduced that supervision is giving direction, guidance and control of work force with the view to see that they are working according to plan and keeping time schedule.

The study [19] believes that supervision would enhance the professional development of teachers as well as instruction whereas the study [13] perceive supervision as a fault-finding agenda by supervisors. According to the study [16], when a school's instructional capacity improves, teaching improves leading to improvement in students' learning outcome.

2.2. History of Supervision in Ghana

With the beginning of the 15th century, supervision of instruction in schools started in Ghana with visits by inspectors. The reports by these inspectors were used to enforce what was then known as payments by results.

Schools were considered to be doing well on the results of inspectors' examination of schools which were carried out in the following subject areas: reading, writing, arithmetic and optional subjects like history, geography, and needle work for girls. Government grants to the schools depended on the number of pupils in each class who passed in the various subjects in the examination conducted by the school and supervised by the inspectors. The promotion of teachers and increase in their pay were tied to their performance [20]. This practice to a large extent improved the quality of teaching

and increased the standard of education in the country at that time.

The study [21] noted that inspection during the colonial era was characterized by fear among teachers and pupils as well as hatred by teachers for the inspectors since the latter tried to find faults with the former.

The study [21] further indicates that inspectors gave unfair criticism of teachers' work and more often than not failed to give teachers the ideas and practical demonstration, which could help them improve upon their teaching. There were occasions when inspectors were required to pack their cars far away and tip toed unannounced to schools for inspection. Some inspectors also went on weekends and on holidays to check schools and wrote their supervision reports. [20] According to the study [22] the fear of a visit of an inspector kept teachers on their toes, though this practice is unacceptable. According to the study [23], the system of school and teacher supervision was re-organized after independence in 1957 into what has since 1961 become the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education, and currently, a division of the Ghana Education Service. The responsibility of the Inspectorate Division of GES remains the same: supervision and monitoring of standards in pre-tertiary Institutions.

Currently, supervision of instruction in basic schools in Ghana has generally been the responsibility of Circuit Supervisors and other officers from Ghana Education Service and personnel within the schools. External supervisors (those located outside the schools) include the Deputy Director of Education responsible for supervision (DD Supervision) and circuit supervisors at the district offices, regional inspectors and headquarters inspectors in the Ghana Education Service. At the primary and Junior High school levels, inspectors (or circuit supervisors) from the district education offices inspect school facilities and provide assistance and support to teachers and headteachers while inspectors at the regional offices and headquarters normally conduct supervision at the second cycle institutions [24].

2.3. How Teachers Perceive Instructional Supervision

The studies [25, 16, 26] are of the view that the perception of teachers towards instructional supervision depend largely on a harmonious teacher-supervisor relationship as well as mutual trust, respect and collaboration among supervisees and supervisors. The absence of these cordiality creates fear and disaffection for school supervisors. [14] As cited by the study [27] asserted that schoolteachers have a common challenge in providing high quality education to their students. Those challenges can be linked to instructional supervision as completion of paperwork and a fault-finding mechanism rather than a process which will improve teacher performances. According to the study [28], the way teachers perceive supervision in schools and classrooms is an important factor that determines the outcomes of supervision process. When teachers see supervision as a tool to enhance their professional development, they show commitment to it. On the other hand, when they view it as a way to attack and

criticize their performance, they resist it. Teachers differ in their preferences and choices of supervisory approaches [15]. Though there are some teachers who would like to work alone without additional support, there are other teachers who would appreciate comments about their teaching from their colleagues, supervisors, or school administrators [29].

According to the studies [30, 31] the process of supervision for learning offers both teachers and their supervisors the opportunity to work together to improve student learning.

In a study conducted by the study [32] which aimed at examining the perception of teachers, principals and supervisors in American school, the researchers found that over 80% of the teacher respondents reported no observation or conferences with supervisors. Of those conferences and observations reported, over 93% lasted between one and thirty minutes. Sixty-nine percent of teachers surveyed reported the observation was not disruptive, whereas 31% saw the observation as disruptive.

The study [33] opine that even though teacher supervision aims to promote teacher professional development, most teachers are not necessarily convinced of its benefits and consequently do not want to be supervised.

They see supervision as a badly applied way of discarding the bad teachers from the good ones without being able to distinguish between them. They see it as subjective threat to their welfare, some being totally divorced from the concept of growth and professional development.

Supervision itself "has a history of subservience which causes teachers to view supervisors as system executioners" [34]. The study [35] said, many teachers, especially newly qualified student teachers, and underqualified teachers may not have sufficient skills to teach effectively. Hence, the need for instructional supervision.

In a study of supervisory behavior of teachers, the study [36] found that the improvement of the teaching-learning process was dependent upon teacher attitudes towards supervision. According to the study [37] unless teachers view supervision as a process of promoting professional growth and student learning the supervisory exercise would not have the desired effect and appropriate outcome on education.

A research conducted by the study [25] on beginner teachers' perception of instructional supervision revealed that beginning teachers desire more frequent use of instructional supervision that meets their professional needs, promotes trust and collaboration, and the one that provides them with support, advice and help.

According to the study [38], the quality of the human relations between the supervisee (teacher) and instructional supervisor is the most important determinant of the effectiveness of instructional supervision exercise. Human relations skills are those skills that enable the supervisors to understand the teachers and to interact effectively with them.

The opinion expressed by Neagley and Evans (1970) as cited by the study [39] is very common among teachers and has been a strain on the effective cooperation that should exist between the supervisor and the supervisee. If teachers

see supervision as an intrusion in their job, it means most of the new ideas and advancements that might be presented to them would not be applied during teaching. The studies [40, 41] laid emphasis on the fact that supervision should be to foster teacher reflection and autonomy and to facilitate teacher-driven instructional improvement. The supervisor should be concerned with the teacher's self-concept and personal development as well as the teacher's instructional performance. It is critical for the supervisor to establish a relationship with the teacher characterized by openness, trust and acceptance. Writing on beliefs of supervision, the study [42] stated that the purpose of supervision is to monitor teachers to determine if their instruction includes the elements of effective instruction. If those elements are observed, the supervisor should provide reinforcement to ensure that they continue to be included in the teachers' lessons. They went further to explain that if a teacher is not using or is incorrectly using the elements of effective instruction, the supervisor has a responsibility to provide remedial assistance by explaining and demonstrating correct instructional behaviour, setting standards of improvement efforts. In short, the supervisor should have primary responsibility for instructional improvement decisions.

It is also argued that where teachers are aware of the roles of supervision for professional development, they are likely to view the classroom observations positively but where the teachers views on supervision are negative, it is most likely that teachers may view observations as the perfect platform for the supervisor to attack them [43].

The study [44] cited in the study [40] maintained that the purpose of supervision is to engage teachers in mutual inquiry aimed at the improvement of instruction. The supervisor and the teacher should share perception of instructional problems, exchange suggestions for solving those problems and negotiate an improvement plan. The improvement plan becomes a hypothesis to be tested by the teacher with the supervisor's assistance. Thus, Jan believes that supervisors and teachers should share the responsibility for instructional improvement.

According to the study [45] a supervisor should not behave as a fault finder or as a bully or a mere critic, but as an advisor, inspirer, modernizer, authority and helper in every way possible in order to attain the desirable standard in schools and to maintain good relationship. In her study in the US public primary schools on "teacher perspectives about instructional supervision and behaviour that influence pre-school instruction" found out that instructional supervisors in her study who showed respect for staff, families and children and demonstrated caring for children and teachers facilitated classroom instruction. Teacher participants in this study reported that their supervisors did not force them to teach in limited ways, nor were they criticized by instructional leaders for trying out new approaches and teaching strategies. [46] According to the study [47] teachers should accept the supervisors as partners for instructional improvement, rather than considering their visits as intrusion into their private instructional behaviour.

3. Methodology

The issues considered in this section include study design, the population, sample as well as the sampling procedure, the research instruments, data collection and analysis procedures.

3.1. Study Design

The study used the descriptive survey design. This is because of the large size of the population which makes a direct observation a difficult task. In the words of the study [48], descriptive research aims to describe a population, situation, or phenomenon accurately and systematically. The study involved the perception of teachers towards instructional supervision. It is to explore the perception of people on supervision. This can be measured directly through eliciting expressions of what people say [49].

3.2. Population and Sampling

The target population for the study consisted of all 1844 teachers and head teachers in the 86 public basic schools and all the 10 circuit supervisors in Hohoe Municipality. Information on the population was collected from the Hohoe Municipal Education Office. The accessible population, however, comprised teachers and head teachers from 20 public schools chosen through the simple random technique.

A total of 200 respondents, comprising 150 teachers, 40 head teachers and 10 circuit supervisors were drawn for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the 150 teachers and 40 head teachers for the study. However, the proportional random sampling technique was used to determine the number of teachers and head teachers to be selected from each of schools sampled. The high degree of disparity that existed among the various institutions in terms of teacher population was considered before selecting the teachers and head teachers from each school. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the 10 circuit supervisors in the Municipality. It was used because the circuit supervisors were few and they worked in the various circuits in the Municipality. They would, therefore, give adequate information on supervision and teaching in the Municipality.

3.3. Instruments for Data Collection

A questionnaire was the instrument used for the collection of data. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items. The likert-type scale was also used. It was used to get specific responses from respondents.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in four basic schools in Jasikan Education District. The testing was important because its purpose was to establish the instrument's face validity and reliability, and to improve questions, format and scales.

3.4. Data Analysis

The responses were edited, coded and scored. The scores were then entered into the computer using the statistical

package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 to derive the frequencies and the percentages for the statistical analysis of results. The frequencies and percentages were used to describe the data and to answer the research questions after

inferences were drawn from the data.

Research Question 1: How do teachers perceive supervision?

Table 1. Teachers' Perception of Supervision.

| Responses in Percentages | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|----------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Perception | Strongly Disagree | | Strongly Agree | | Total |
| | Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Agree | |
| Supervision improves teachers' behaviour, achievement and attitude | 1.0 | 1.0 | 62.0 | 36.0 | 100.0 |
| Supervision monitors teachers to determine if their instruction includes the elements of effective instruction | 0.5 | 2.0 | 28.5 | 69.0 | 100.0 |
| Supervision has primary responsibility for instructional improvement decision | 1.0 | 5.0 | 69.5 | 24.5 | 100.0 |
| One purpose of supervision is to engage teachers in mutual inquiry aimed at the improvement of instruction | 2.0 | 0.5 | 64.0 | 33.5 | 100.0 |
| Supervisors and teachers share the responsibility for instructional improvement during supervision | 6.0 | 5.0 | 52.5 | 36.5 | 100.0 |
| Supervision allows the teacher to identify instructional problems, improve plans and criteria for success | 5.0 | 1.0 | 41.5 | 52.5 | 100.0 |
| Supervision aims at fault finding | 39.0 | 57.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| Teachers see their headteachers and circuit supervisors as partners in education | 3.0 | 2.0 | 49.5 | 45.5 | 100.0 |
| Supervision enables supervisors to witch-hunt and settle scores with teachers | 39.0 | 35.5 | 18.0 | 7.5 | 100.0 |

The first item was "supervision improves teachers' behaviour, achievement and attitude". Thirty-six percent (36%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 62% agreed with the statement. Aggregated percent of respondents who either strongly disagreed or disagreed was 2%. It is evident from the finding that a majority of respondents (98.0%) agreed with the view of the study [36] who believe that supervision plays a crucial role in improving teachers in the Sphere of behaviour, achievement and attitude.

The second item was "supervision monitors teachers to determine if their instruction includes the elements of effective instruction". Sixty-nine percent (69.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 28.5% agreed with the statement, however, 2.5% disagreed with it. It could be deduced from the analysis that an overwhelming majority of respondents (97.5%) supported the proposition that supervision monitors teachers to determine if their instruction includes the elements of effective instruction. The finding is in line with the argument of the studies [42, 18] who observed that supervision monitors teachers to determine if their instruction includes the elements of effective instruction.

The third item was "supervisors have primary responsibility for instructional improvement decisions". Twenty-four-point-five percent (24.5%) and 69.5% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the statement, respectively. However, the aggregated percentage of respondents who either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statements was 6%. The responses show that a very high percentage of respondents (94%) are of the view that for instructional time to be well conducted and improved upon, the supervisors have a fundamental role to play in making decision to that effect. The finding is in line with the observation of the study [44] who suggested that supervisors have primary responsibility for instructional improvement decision.

The fourth item was on the perception that. "One purpose

of supervision is to engage teachers in mutual inquiry to arrive at the improvement of instruction". Thirty-three-point-five percent (33.5%) and 64.0% of respondents strongly agreed and agreed to the statement respectively while 0.5% and 2.0% respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. The finding indicates that almost all (97.5%) were of the opinion that engaging teachers' in mutual inquiry to arrive at improvement of instruction is one purpose of supervision. This finding supports the views of the study [44] who held the view that supervision engages teachers in mutual inquiry to arrive at the improvement of instruction.

The fifth item was on whether supervisors and teachers share the responsibility for instructional improvement during supervision. Thirty-six-point five percent (36.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement and (52.5%) of respondents agreed with it. Five percent (5%) of the respondents and another 6% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the statement. The finding shows that a majority (89.0%) of respondents made it clear that for instructional improvement to be made possible during supervision there must be shared responsibility between the teacher and the supervisor, since either of them cannot solely enforce instructional improvement without the help of the other. This finding is in line with the views of the students [40, 41] who opined that mutual collective responsibility greatly ameliorates lesson presentation.

The sixth item was on whether supervision allows the teacher to identify instructional problems, improves plans and criteria for success. Fifty-two-point five percent (52.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 41.5% agreed with the statement, while 1.0% disagreed and 5.0% strongly disagreed with the statement. It can be seen from the responses that most (94%) respondents are of the view that supervision allows the teacher to identify instructional problems, improve plans and criteria for success. This finding agrees with the opinion of the studeis [10, 11] who believed that the teacher

does not embrace all knowledge through effective supervision, his/her weaknesses and strengths are pointed out to him/her to work at for the improvement of instruction.

The seventh item was on the perception of whether supervision aims at fault finding. Thirty-nine percent (39.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 57.0% disagreed with the statement. Only 2.0% of respondents agreed with another 2.0% who also strongly agreed with the statement that supervision aims at fault-finding. This finding implies that a high percentage (96%) of the respondents did not agree with the statement that supervision aims at fault-finding but rather fact-finding geared towards constructive criticism to improve upon the output of teachers. This finding goes contrarily to that of the study [14]. The study [14] found that there is the tendency of supervisors and inspectors often trying to find faults with the work of teachers and making unfair criticism about their work.

The eighth item was on whether teachers see their headteachers and circuit supervisors as partners in education. About 46.0% of respondents strongly agreed with this statement and forty-nine-point-five percent (49.5%) of the respondents agreed to it. Two percent (2.0%) of the respondents and another 3.0% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the statement. It could be deduced from the responses that majority 95% of respondents are of the view that teachers see their headteachers and circuit supervisors as partners in education. This finding agrees with the opinion of the studies [47, 30] who suggested that without the partnering role, education will not achieve its goals in making the teacher and the learner what society expects them to become.

The ninth item was on the issue of whether supervision encourages supervisors to witch-hunt and settles scores with teachers. Thirty-nine percent (39.0%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 35.5% disagreed to the statement. However, 7.5% strongly agreed to the statement and 18.0% also agreed with it. It could be deduced from the finding that a majority (74.5%) of respondents did not agree with the statement that supervision enables supervisors to witch-hunt and settle scores with teachers. This suggests that they do not view supervision from the negative dimension but sees it as vital in every school. The 25.5% who agreed with the assertion probably might have had unpleasant experiences with their supervisors or have been told of such cases in which some of their colleagues might have been involved. Expressing their sentiments on similar issues pertaining to the relationship between teachers and their supervisors. The study [43] believe supervision is a mechanism that is harmful as it interferes with the work of the teacher and may culminate in straining the ties between them. They stated that if teachers should see supervision as an interference in their work then it means most of the new ideas and innovations which might be given them at in-service training courses would not be implemented or if anything at all not well implemented. [31] however decline to this belief and opines that even though there may be a few cases where there are clashes between the teachers and their supervisors, the general perception among teachers (especially

the more experience ones) is that supervisors are more supportive to bring about pedagogical efficiency than being entangled in personal affairs.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study suggest that majority of teachers see supervision as an efficient way of enhancing their own professional development while few others see it as an interference in their work and also as an agenda by supervisors to expose their weaknesses and settle personal scores.

An analysis of the findings of the study reveals that supervisors are perceived as individuals who exhibit both positive and negative traits.

5. Recommendations

Based on the results and analysis of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Supervisors should not use supervision as fault finding rather than fact finding.
2. Teachers should see supervisors as critical friends or partners who complement their roles.
3. In-service training sessions should be organized for supervisors and teachers on supervisor-teacher relationship to remove suspicion that characterize the practice
4. It is also important that supervisors should use supervision for professional reason and not to victimize teachers or to settle old grudges that have nothing to do with the education of the learner.
5. There should be a national policy on school supervision that should be made clear, transparent and understandable to teachers, supervisors and other stakeholders in education.

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