

SUPERVISION OF INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GHANA:
TEACHERS' AND HEADTEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

By

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is the account of my own research and that the main content, except to the contrary, is not substantially the same as any other dissertation that has been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Signed:

(Peter Baffour-Awuah)

Abstract

School leaders use instructional supervision to improve teaching and learning by providing practising teachers with on-going support and guidance after their initial teacher training programmes. Public opinion and research studies have questioned the effectiveness of the supervisory process in Ghanaian public primary schools, however. The main purpose of this study is to better understand the practice of instructional supervision in the schools by examining teachers' and headteachers' perspectives about how they experienced and conceptualised instructional supervision. The study also sought to uncover aspects of instructional supervision that teachers and headteachers think should be practised.

A mixed method approach was employed to collect data from multiple sources including questionnaires, interviews, and policy documents on instructional supervision. Items for the questionnaires and interviews were guided by aspects of instructional supervision drawn from the literature and included both traditional practices such as monitoring and evaluating teachers' work as well as more contemporary practices such as coaching and mentoring. The questionnaire included 24 Likert scale items and 4 open-ended items. For each Likert scale item, participants were asked to answer how often they experienced a particular practice as well as the extent to which they agreed that it should be practised.

A municipal education district in Ghana was selected for the study. Two hundred and forty out of 336 teachers and 40 out of 44 heads returned their questionnaires. In addition, 10 teachers, 10 heads and two officers (the district head of supervision and one from headquarters) were interviewed. The Ghana Education Service (GES) policy document on supervision was also analysed.

The study found that the GES policy document on instructional supervision emphasised aspects of instructional supervision that related to monitoring teaching activities and ensuring maximum use of instructional time. Teachers and headteachers in this study practised,

experienced and conceptualised instructional supervision which comprised mainly “traditional” aspects. While the participants were mostly happy about these traditional practices, they also thought that all of the contemporary aspects of instructional supervision that were included on the questionnaire should be practised much more often than they currently experienced. Responses from both the open-ended items and interview showed that some of the GES support systems may negatively impact the conduct of instructional supervision in schools.

This thesis concludes by recommending that education authorities consult with teachers to revise the GES policy guide on instructional supervision to include more contemporary practices, and also plan a long term budgetary allocation to provide sustainable training programmes to teachers and supervision personnel to improve instruction, and ultimately outcomes for students, in Ghanaian primary schools.

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