

Perceptions of instructional supervision education essay



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INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives a preamble to the whole study. It deals with the problem and the way it is approached. It encloses a brief formulation of background of the study, objective of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study. It also introduces definition of some key terms and the overall organization of the study.

Background of the Study

Teacher education play an important role in promoting the learning and professional growth of teachers. Supervision is one of the functions of education that offers opportunities for schools to be effective and for increasing the professional development of teachers as a means of effectively managing the teaching-learning process (Kutsyuruba, 2003; Arong & Ogbadu, 2010). Supervision has existed in all countries for many decades and occupies a pivotal position in the management of education, which can be understood as an expert technical service most importantly concerned with scientific study and improvement of the conditions that surrounds learning and pupil growth (Alemayehu, 2008). According to Vashist (2004), supervision is leadership and development of leadership within groups, which cooperatively assess educational product in light of accepted educational objectives, studying the teaching-learning situation to determine the antecedents of satisfactory and unsatisfactory pupil growth and achievement, and improving the teaching learning process.

The concept of instructional supervision differs from school inspection in the sense that the former focuses on guidance, support, and continuous

assessment provided to teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching-learning process, whereas the latter gives emphasis on controlling and evaluating the improvement of schools based on stated standards set by external agents outside the school system (Wilcox & Gray, 1996; Tyagi, 2010; Arong & Ogbadu, 2010). Instructional supervision is mainly concerned with improving schools by helping teachers to reflect their practices, to learn more about what they do and why, and to develop professionally (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Various authors stated that instructional supervision has clear connection with professional development (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Zepeda, 2007). Kutsyuruba (2003) defined professional development as follows:

A major component of ongoing teacher education concerned with improving teachers' instructional methods, their ability to adapt instruction to meet students' needs, and their classroom management skills; and with establishing a professional culture that relies on shared beliefs about the importance of teaching and learning and that emphasizes teacher collegiality. (p. 11)

In Ethiopia, the supervisory services began to be carried out since 1941, with constant shift of its names “ Inspection” and “ Supervision”. Currently, supervision is widely practiced in all schools at all levels (Haileselassie, 1997). In the case of Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau (AACAE) has restructured its sub city level supervisory positions from general supervisory approach to subject-area instructional supervisory approach, since the beginning of 2004 (Alemayehu, 2008).

Problem Statement

A research conducted by Alemayehu (2008) in secondary schools of Addis Ababa shows that the subject-area instructional supervision practiced in Addis Ababa City Administration (AACCA) has exposed to multiple problems such as, lack of adequate support to newly deployed (beginner) teachers, less amount of classroom visits and peer coaching by instructional supervisors, focus of supervisors on administrative matters than on academic issues (supporting and helping teachers), and less mutual professional trust between supervisors and teachers. All these and other problems can enable teachers to have a negative perception towards instructional supervision.

According to Oliva (1976), the way teachers perceive supervision in schools and classrooms is an important factor that determines the outcomes of supervision process. In addition, previous research and publications revealed that because of its evaluative approaches; less experienced teachers have more negative perceptions on the practice of supervision than more experienced teachers. They consider supervisors as fault finders; they fear that supervisors will report their weaknesses to the school administrator, and consider supervision as nothing value to offer to them (Blumberg, 1980; Olive, 1976; Zepeda & Ponticell, 1998). However, literature on perception of teachers toward supervisory practices is very limited in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

Therefore, this study was designed to examine beginning teachers' perceptions of the real and ideal supervisory practices and their perceptions on its relationship with professional development in private and government

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secondary schools of Addis Ababa. This study addressed the following basic research questions:

What are the perceptions and preferences of government and private beginning secondary school teachers regarding the actual and ideal supervisory practices?

Is there any difference in perception between beginner and experienced secondary school teachers regarding the actual and ideal supervisory practices?

What is the perceived relationship between the supervisory practices and teachers' professional development?

Objective of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to examine the existing perception of beginning teachers toward instructional supervision and its perceived relationship to professional development in government and private secondary schools of Addis Ababa. Specifically, the study seeks to explore beginning teachers' perception of what the ideal supervision should be and how it has been actually implemented in the schools, and their perceived connection to professional development. In addition, it was aimed to explore what differences existed in the perception of instructional supervision between private and government school teachers and between experienced and less experienced (beginner) teachers.

1. 4 Significance of the Study

Teachers' perception of instructional supervision can positively or negatively affect the quality of education. Teachers differ in their preferences and choices of supervisory approaches (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). 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 (Augustyn, 2001). In this study, an overview of the theoretical frameworks of supervisory approaches (ideal interpretation) and their practical applications (actual interpretation) were presented. The researcher has a belief that identifying the prevailing perceptions of teachers by undertaking this survey and coming up with sound recommendations can have its own role to play in improving the practical supervisory processes and quality of education at large. To this end, this study will bring about the following benefits:

The research findings provided an insight into teachers' perception of supervisory practices and thus determined whether teachers were satisfied with such practices and their influence on professional development.

The study will enable those involved in supervisory practices to identify the underlying negative perceptions of instructional supervision and seek for application of appropriate supervisory approaches based on teachers' preferences and choices.

Since the characteristic of education is its dynamism and capacity to respond to changing needs and challenges, the researcher feels that the study will

contribute an additional source of information in evaluating the achievement gained as a result of practicing instructional supervision.

Finally, the researcher also believes that the study will initiate other researchers to undertake detailed research on the effectiveness of instructional supervision at regional and national levels. In addition, the results of this study may be used to add to the international practices of instructional supervision.

Delimitation of the study

Since Addis Ababa City Administration (AACCA) is wide having a total of 112 government and private secondary schools, it will be unrealistic and impractical to attempt to study teachers' perception of instructional supervision within a given time limit. Therefore, the study is delimited to 20 private and government secondary schools (10 from each) and 200 teachers (100 beginning and 100 experienced). In addition, public secondary schools in Addis Ababa are not included in this study due to the fact that the government has enacted a law to be included under government control and administration. However, by this movement the schools are not totally shifted to government control. They are partially funded by government and partially by the public, but their name and administration are not yet clear.

Limitation of the Study

The study had limitations in that it includes only government and private secondary schools in Addis Ababa. Primary schools are not included in this study due to time and budget constraints. On the other hand, generalizability of this study was limited by the fact that the research was conducted in

secondary schools in one city of Ethiopia. In addition, the study had limitations of all survey type research such as clarity of wording and respondent understanding of some terminologies. Problem of getting recently published books was equally challenging. Therefore, because of these limitations, the study by no means claims to be conclusive. It would rather serve as a spring to study teachers' perceptions in a more detailed and comprehensive way.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms were defined:

Instructional supervision: is a process aimed at providing guidance, support, and continuous assessment to teachers for their professional development and improvement in the teaching-learning process, which relay on the system that is built on trust and collegial culture (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000).

Beginning teacher: refers to a teacher currently in the first or second year of teaching.

Experienced teacher: refers to a teacher who has three or more years of teaching experience.

Secondary school: is a school usually includes grades 9 through 12.

Government secondary school: is a school established and administered by government of Ethiopia.

Private secondary school: is a school established and administered by private foreign or local owners.

Ideal supervisory approaches: are supervisory approaches stated in various literatures which should be implemented in schools.

Real supervisory activities: are those supervisory approaches stated in various literatures which are actually implemented in schools.

Professional development: is a major component of ongoing teacher education concerned with improving teachers' instructional methods, their ability to adapt instruction to meet students' needs, and their classroom management skills, leading to the professional growth of the teacher (Wanzare & Da Costa, 2000).

Sub-city: in Ethiopian case, it refers to the government administrative hierarchy next to city administration. It is locally called " Kifle Ketema".

1. 8 Organization of the Study

This study comprises five chapters. The first chapter deals with the problem and the way it is approached. It encloses a brief formulation of background of the study, objective of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study, and definition of some key terms. The second chapter reviews some of the current literature pertaining to the area of instructional supervision, different approaches to supervisory process, and their connection with professional development. The third chapter details the research methodology, description of the study area, data sources, samples and sampling techniques, data gathering instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, procedure of data collection, and analysis of the data. Analysis and interpretation of the research findings are presented in the fourth

chapter. Lastly, a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter a review of related literature on instructional supervision and its relationship with professional development is provided. The chapter is divided in to four parts as to enable the reader to follow a logical sequence that includes: history of school supervision, overview of supervision approaches, teachers' perception of supervisory processes, and the relationship between supervision and professional development.

2. 1 History of School Supervision

In many developed countries, such as United Kingdom (UK) and United States, much more attention has been given to inspection than school supervision (Lee, Dig & Song, 2008). The Inspectorate of Education had originated from France under Napoleon's Regime at the end of the 18th century, and other European counties followed the idea in the 19th century (Grauwe, 2007). For example, in UK, the first two inspectors of schools were appointed in 1883 (Shaw, Newton, Aitkin & Darnell, 2003) and in the Netherlands it was started in 1801 (Dutch Education Inspectorate, 2008). The terms " inspector" and " inspection" are still being used in various developed and developing countries , including United Kingdom (UK), United States, European countries and some African countries such as Lesotho, Senegal, Tanzania and Nigeria (Grauwe, 2007).

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Traditionally, inspection and supervision were used as important tools to ensure efficiency and accountability in the education system. Later adherents of the terminologies of inspection and supervision are used by different countries in different ways. As outlined by Tyagi (2010), inspection is a top-down approach focused on the assessment and evaluation of school improvement based in stated standards, where as supervision focus on providing guidance, support and continuous assessment to teachers for their professional development and improvement in their teaching- learning process. Nevertheless, since the demand of teachers for guidance and support rendered from supervisors has increased from time to time, some countries changed the terminology and preferring the term “ supervisor” over that of “ inspector”. According to Grawue (2007), some countries have recently developed more specific terminologies: Malawi, uses “ education methods advisor”, and Uganda “ teacher development advisor”.

The concepts of “ supervision” and “ inspection” have been changed frequently in Ethiopian education system and the reason was not clearly pedagogical (Haileselassie, 2001). In 19 42, educational inspection was practiced for the first time, then it was changed to supervision in the late 1960s , again to inspection in mid 1970s and for the fourth time it shifted to supervision in 1994 (Haileselassie, 2001). Haileselassie stated that:

Apart from perhaps political decisions, one could not come up with any sound educational and pedagogical rationale to justify the continuous shift made in the name. With the name changes made we do not notice any significant changes in either the content or purpose and functions.

(Haileselassie, 2001, p. 11-12)

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From 1994 onwards, supervision has been practiced in Ethiopia decentralized educational management. According to the Education and Training Policy (1994), educational supervision is recognized at the center (Ministry of Education), Regional, Zonal, District (Woreda) and School levels. Instructional supervision at school level is practiced by principals, deputy principals, department head, and senior teachers.

According to Haileselassie (1997), the functional and true sense of educational supervision depends on the supervisory operation made at the grassroots level, i. e. School level. In this regard, subject-area instructional supervision has practiced in all schools of Addis Ababa since the beginning of 2004. The major responsibilities of subject-area instructional supervisors in Addis Ababa include: (1) examining and reporting the programs, organization and management of the teaching-learning activities; (2) developing and presenting alternative methods used to improve instructional programs; (3) guiding and monitoring schools and teachers; (4) preparing and organizing professional trainings, workshops, seminars, etc.; (5) monitoring and supporting the mentoring (induction) programs for beginner teachers; and (6) providing direct assistance and perform instructional and managerial activities in schools with teachers and principals by organizing and implementing clinical, collegial, peer coaching and cognitive coaching techniques of instructional supervision, etc (Alemayehu, 2008).

2. 2 Overview of Supervisory Approaches

According to Blasé and Blasé (1998), although many supervisory approaches are collaborative in nature, for long time, supervisory of instruction has been viewed exclusively as an inspection issue. Sergiovanni (1992) described <https://assignbuster.com/perceptions-of-instructional-supervision-education-essay/>

supervision as a “ ritual they [supervisors and teachers] participate according to well established scripts without much consequence” (p. 203). This author continued that “ today, supervision as inspection can be regarded as an artifact of the past, a function that is no longer tenable or prevalent in contemporary education” (p. 204). He explained that though functioned for a considerable span of time, this type of supervision caused negative stereotypes among teachers, where they viewed as subordinates whose professional performance was controlled. Supporting this idea, Anderson and Snyder (1993) stated, “ because of this, teachers are unaccustomed to the sort of mutual dialogue for which terms like mentoring, peer coaching collegial assistance are coming in to use” (p. 1).

It should be clear, however, that traditional supervisory approaches should not be removed completely because supervisory authority and control are essential for professional development. Mitchell and Sackney (2000) explained this as “ much of past practice is educationally sound and should not be discarded” (p. 37). Having said this, it is important to differentiate instructional supervision from evaluation. Authors described the former as a formative approach and the later as a summative approach (Poole, 1994; Zepeda, 2007). Poole (1994) stated that “ instructional supervision is a formative process that emphasizes collegial examination of teaching and learning” (p. 305). In this regard, participants in the supervision process plan and implement a range of professional growth opportunities designed to meet teacher’s professional growth and educational goals and objectives at different levels. Teacher evaluation, on the other hand, is “ a summative process that focus on assessing the competence of teachers, which involves

a formal, written appraisal or judgment of an individual's professional competence at specific time" (Poole, 1994, p. 305). The supervisory (formative) and evaluative (summative) processes should go hand in hand (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). While supervision is essential for teachers' professional growth, evaluation is essential to determine this growth and teacher effectiveness (Kutsyuruba, 2003; Wareing, 1990).

The widely used approaches to evaluation are administrative monitoring, report writing, checklists, and self-assessment. On the other hand, approaches to supervision are categorized as clinical supervision, peer coaching, cognitive coaching, mentoring, self-reflection, professional growth plans, and portfolios (Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Clarke, 1995; Poole, 1994; Reninan, 2002; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Zepeda, 2007). Implementing different supervisory approaches is essential not only to give choices to teachers; it is also important to provide choices to the administrators and schools (Kutsyuruba, 2003). Each component of supervisory approaches are discussed as follows.

Clinical Supervision

According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), clinical supervision is a " face-to-face contract with teachers with the intent of improving instruction and increasing professional growth" (p. 23). It is a sequential, cyclic and systematic supervisory process which involves face-to-face interaction between teachers and supervisors designed to improve the teacher's classroom instructions (Kutsyuruba, 2003). The purpose of clinical supervision according to Snow-Gerono (2008) is " to provide support to teachers (to assist) and gradually to increase teachers' abilities to be self-

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supervising” (p. 1511). Clinical supervision is a “ specific cycle or pattern of working with teachers” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993, p. 222). It is a partnership in inquiry where by the person assuming the role of supervisor functions more as an individual with experience and insight than as an expert who determines what is right and wrong (Harris, 1985). Goldhammer, Anderson and Karjewski (1980) described the structure of clinical supervision that includes pre-observation conference, class room observation, analysis and strategy, supervision conference, and post-conference analysis. Clinical supervision is officially applicable with: inexperienced beginning teachers, teachers are experiencing difficulties, and experienced teachers who are in need of improving their instructional performance.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) stated that clinical supervision is typically formative than summative in its evaluative approach in order to enable beginning teaches “ collaborate to research their practices and improve their teaching and learning” (p. 233). As a result of this, the writers further described that the focus of clinical supervision is not on quality control, rather on the professional improvement of the teacher that guarantees quality of teaching and students’ performance (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

Collaborative Supervision

Collaboration and collegially are very important in today’s modern schools. According to Burke and Fessler (1983), teachers are the central focuses of collaborative approach to supervision. Collaborative approaches to supervision are mainly designed to help beginning teachers and those who are new to a school or teaching environment with the appropriate support from more experienced colleagues. Thus, these colleagues have an ethical

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and professional responsibility of providing the required type of support upon request (Kutsyuruba, 2003). In this regard, a teacher who needs collegial and collaborative support should realize that “ needs do not exist for professional growth, that feedback from colleagues and other sources should be solicited in order to move toward improvement” (Burke & Fessler, 1983, p. 109). The major components of collaborative approaches to supervision which are especially needed for beginner or novice teachers are: peer coaching, cognitive coaching and mentoring (Showers & Joyce, 1996; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Sullivan & Glanz, 2003; Kutsyuruba, 2003).

Peer coaching

Peer coaching, according to Sullivan and Glanz (2000), is defined as “ teachers helping teachers reflect on and improve teaching practice and/or implement particular teaching skills needed to implement knowledge gained through faculty or curriculum development” (p. 215). The term coaching is introduced to characterize practice and feedback following staff development sessions. According to Singhal (1996), supervision is more effective if the supervisor follows the team approach. This would mean that the supervisor should have a clear interaction with teachers and group of teachers, provide an open, but supportive atmosphere for efficient communication, and involve them in decision making. The goal of coaching as described by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007), is to develop communities within which “ teachers collaborate to honor a very simple value- when we learn together, we learn more, and when we learn more, we will more effectively serve our students” (p. 251). Thus, peer coaching provides possible opportunities to beginner teachers to refine teaching skills through collaborative relationships,

participatory decision making, and immediate feedback (Bowman & McCormick, 2000; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000). In this regard, research findings showed that beginning teachers rated experienced teachers who coached than as highly competent and the process itself as very necessary (Kutsyuruba, 2003).

Cognitive coaching

According to Costa and Garmston (1994), cognitive coaching refers to “ a nonjudgmental process built around a planning conference, observation, and a reflecting conference” (p. 2). Cognitive coaching differs from peer coaching in that peer coaching focuses on innovations in curriculum and instructions, where as cognitive coaching is aimed at improving existing practices (Showers & Joyce, 1996). As Beach and Reinhartz (2000) described, cognitive coaching pairs teacher with teacher, teacher with supervisor, or supervisor with supervisor, however, when two educators are in similar roles or positions, the process is referred as peer supervision. The writers further identified three components of cognitive coaching: planning, lesson observation, and reflection.

Costa and Garmston (1994) described three basic purposes of cognitive coaching, namely: (1) developing and maintaining trusting relationship; (2) fostering growth toward both autonomous and independent behavior; and (3) promoting learning. In a cognitive coaching process, teachers learn each other, built mutual trust, and encouraged to reach at a higher level of autonomy- the ability to self-monitor, self-evaluate, and self-analyze (Garmston, Linder & Whitaker, 1993).

Mentoring

Mentoring as defined by Sullivan and Glanz (2000) is “ a process that facilitates instructional improvement wherein an experienced educator agrees to provide assistance, support, and recommendations to another staff member” (p. 213). Mentoring is a form of collaborative (peer) supervision focused on helping new teachers or beginning teachers successfully learn their roles, establish their self images as teachers figure out the school and its culture, and understand how teaching unfolds in real class rooms (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). Sullivan and Glanz (2000) stated the works of mentors as:

The mentor can work with a novice or less experienced teacher collaboratively, nonjudgmentally studying and deliberating on ways instruction in the class room may be improved, or the mentor can share expertise in a specific area with other educators. Mentors are not judges or critics, but facilitators of instructional improvement. All interactions and recommendations between the mentor and staff members are confidential. (p. 213)

Research projects and publications revealed that mentoring has clear connections with supervision and professional development which serve to augment the succession planning and professional development of teachers (Reiman & Thies-Sprinthall, 1998). In addition, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) described that the emphasis of mentoring on helping new or beginner teachers is typically useful for mentors as well. By helping a colleague (beginner teacher), mentors able to see their problems more clearly and

learn ways to overcome them. As a result, mentoring is the kind of relationship in which learning benefits everyone involved.

Self-Reflection

As the context of education is ever changing, teachers should have a professional and ethical responsibility to reflect on what is happening in response to changing circumstances. Thus, they can participate in collective reflection practices such as peer coaching, cognitive coaching, or mentoring, as well as self-assessment reflective practices (Kutsyuruba, 2003). According to Glatthorn (1990), self-directed development is a process by which a teacher systematically plans for his or her own professional growth in teaching. Glatthorn further described that self-directed approaches are mostly ideal for teachers who prefer to work alone or who, because of scheduling or other difficulties, are unable to work cooperatively with other teachers. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) considered this option to be efficient in use of time, less costly, and less demanding in its reliance on others. Thus, the writers indicated that in self-directed supervision “ teachers work alone by assuming responsibility for their own professional development” (p. 276).

Furthermore, Glatthorn (1990) suggested that self-development is “ an option provided for teachers that enable them to set their own professional growth goals, find the resources needed to achieve those goals, and undertake the steps needed to accomplish those outcomes” (p. 200). In addition, this approach is particularly suited to competent and experienced teachers who are able to manage their time well (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007).

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Portfolios

As teachers want to be actively participated in their own development and supervision, they need to take ownership of the evaluation process (Kutsyuruba, 2003). The best way for teachers to actively involve in such practices is the teaching portfolio (Painter, 2001). A teaching portfolio is defined as a process of supervision with teacher compiled collection of artifacts, reproductions, testimonials, and student work that represents the teachers' professional growth and abilities (Riggs & Sandlin, 2000).

A portfolio, according to Zepeda (2007), is “ an individualized, ongoing record of growth that provides the opportunity for teachers to collect artifacts over an extended period of time” (p. 85). Similarly, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) stated that the intent of portfolio development is to establish a file or collection of artifacts, records, photo essays, cassettes, and other materials designed to represent some aspect of the class room program and teaching activities. As Sullivan and Glanz (2000) stated portfolio documents not only innovative and effective practices of teachers, but also it is a central road for teachers professional growth “ through self-reflection, analysis, and sharing with colleagues through discussion and writing” (p. 215). The writers further described that portfolio can be used to support and enrich mentoring and coaching relationships.

Professional Growth Plans

Professional growth plans are defined as “ individual goal-setting activities, long term projects teachers develop and carry out relating to the teaching” (Brandt, 1996, p. 31). This means that teachers reflect on their instructional and professional goals by setting intended outcomes and plans for achieving
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these goals. In professional growth plans as part of instructional supervisory approach, teachers select the skills they wish to improve, place their plan in writing including the source of knowledge, the type of workshop to be attended, the books and articles to read, and practice activities to be set. In this regard, Fenwick (2001) stated that professional growth plans “ could produce transformative effects in teaching practice, greater staff collaboration, decreased teacher anxiety, and increased focus and commitment to learning” (p. 422).

Summative Evaluation

There is a clear link among instructional supervision, professional development and teacher evaluation (Zepeda, 2007). Teacher evaluation involves two distinct components: formative evaluation and summative evaluation (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007). The writers differentiated formative teacher evaluation as an approach intended to increase the effectiveness of ongoing