

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISORS' ROLE AND QUALITY DELIVERY OF EDUCATION IN GHANAIAN BASIC SCHOOLS

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Abstract: *The main focus of the study was to investigate the relationship between supervisor's role and qualitative delivery of education at the basic levels in Ghana. Qualitative research paradigm was adopted for the study. Research instruments comprised observation and in-depth interview of participants with the objective of examining the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and its implication for quality education. Schools and participants for the study were selected via purposive sampling. With the aid of the sampling approach, five public primary schools in Assin South Municipality were selected and 50 teachers with 10 head teachers and their assistants were selected for the study. In all, 60 participants responded to the questionnaire in line with the objectives of the study. Findings revealed that supervisors are saddled with the responsibility of upgrading teachers' professional qualification through practical counseling and sharing of vital information regarding teaching and learning, improving the level of teachers confidence, provide regular progressive report on educational activities of schools under their supervision to the headquarters so as to keep them up-to-date on school needs and success. More importantly, result of the study revealed that supervisors' role is positively related and sine-qua-non to qualitative delivery of education in terms of teachers' professional development and students' achievement academically. It is therefore recommended that supervisors should be provided regular and effective in-service training so as to augment their supervisory skills. Moreover, efforts should be made by supervisor to prioritize supervision of instruction over managerial duties since at the long run supervision hold several benefits in connection with the overall objective of educational institutions especially at the basic level.*

Keywords: *Education, Ghana, Relationships, Role, Schools, Supervisors*

1. INTRODUCTION

As it is in many countries around the world, the process of teaching and learning in the various schools in Ghana occurs within a formal organizational framework with stipulated measures to ensure schools are properly supervised and that there is qualitative delivery of education in all the schools especially at the basic levels (Opoku-Asare, 2006; MoE, 2001).

Teaching and learning, according to Baffour-Awuah (2011), is highly affected by

instructional supervision with the sole aim of ensuring and maintaining quality in resource management, curriculum delivery and educational standards. Barro (2006) posits that national development and economic growth can only be achieved via higher quality of education and De Grauwe (2001) posits that such type of education depend largely on how teachers are trained and supervised in view of their key position in pedagogy. Among other things, De Grauwe stated: “national authorities rely strongly on the school supervision system to monitor both the quality of schools and key measures of its success, such as student achievement (p. 39).

In their study, Sergiovanni and Strarratt (2002) stated that supervision and monitoring of instruction at schools cannot be overemphasized because it develops the expertise of teachers and enhances classroom practices which are crucial to students’ academic achievement in the English language. Sergiovanni and Starratt further indicated that the nature of supervision and monitoring is very contributive to students’ academic achievement because it revolves around a collaborative effort between the supervisors and teachers through effective dialogue with the sole aim of improving classroom instruction.

Opoku-Asare (2006) also stated that supervision and monitoring facilitates the ability of education stakeholders to maintain quality in basic education which is vital to reducing the low completion rates of pupils, of which, World Bank (1988) adduced to factors ranging from poor academic performance and under-education of basic school completers since several completes school without mastering the basic literacy and numeracy skill needed to function effectively within the Ghanaian society. As a result, qualitative delivery of education entails improvement in the standard of basic education in Ghana via effective and improved instructional strategies with the sole aim of attaining the goal of curriculum. This objective is attainable through effective supervision and monitoring, and as Action Aid Ghana (2003) puts it, it will enable the Government of Ghana (GoG) to achieve its goal of improved access to education and qualitative delivery of education at the basic level.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Several studies (Attrams, 2015; MOESS, 2008; Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2005) shows that the provision of education, like most other services delivered by the public sector, suffers several deficiencies including ineffectiveness and quality. While several efforts has been put in place by education stakeholders and the Government of Ghana in an attempt to resolve this perennial problem of poor quality education, it pervades the entire educational system. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) claimed that the poor quality of pupil learning is as a result of poor quality of teaching which is as a result several teachers lacking effective supervision and feedback on their instructional practices.

In a report by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (MOESS, 2008), there was clear indication that the quality of basic education is quite dependent on supervision of instructional practices. However, according to the report, several stakeholders in education perceive supervision to be inconsistent, weak and ineffective. As to whether the quality of education is intimately connected to supervision in the Assin South Municipality is what this study seeks to find.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between supervisor’s role and qualitative delivery of education at the basic levels in Ghana. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. Critically examine supervisors' roles and responsibilities in the provision of quality education in the Assin South Municipality.
- ii. Investigate the impact of supervisors' role on classroom instruction and students' achievement in the Assin South Municipality
- iii. Proffer recommendations on effective execution of supervisors' role and quality of education in the Assin South Municipality.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are supervisors' roles and responsibilities in the provision of quality education in the Assin South Municipality?
2. What is the impact of supervisors' role on classroom instruction and students' achievement in the Assin South Municipality?

1.4 Significance of the study

Pupils of today are leaders of tomorrow both in Ghana and in the world at large. As a result, the Government of Ghana, stakeholders in education and the society in general are highly concerned about this level of education. Findings of the study will assist policy makers in reviewing the state of supervision in relation to its set goals of qualitative delivery of education. Findings of the study will also provide ample explication on the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and how it contributes to the attainment of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of achieving universal basic education.

It is envisaged that the findings of the study will also be relevant to researchers, stakeholders of education, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other individuals and organizations interested in qualitative delivery of education at the basic level in Ghana. Lastly, the results of the study would contribute to literature on supervision and quality education and serve as a reference material for future research in connection with qualitative delivery of education and effective supervision of instruction.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of quality education

The expression quality, according to the International Standard Organization (ISO 9000, 2000), is defined as the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills the requirements, needs or expectations that is stated, generally implied or obligatory. Other scholars and researchers, such as Mikel, Prem, Ofelia and Richard (2010), sees quality as a state of matter in which value entitlement is realized and for the customer and provider in every aspect of the business relationship

In the context of education, Attrams (2015) defined quality as an on-going, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of an educational system, institutions, or programmes. Hence, Keshavarz (2011) indicated that the primary focus of quality education is accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments via an agreed upon and consistent process that is a well-established criteria.

From an economist view, Barrett (2006) sees quality education as comprising three levels. The first level entails acquisition of measurable knowledge and learning skills as well as improved measure to behaviors, attitudes and respect to authorities and an individual's country. The second and third levels, according to Barrett and Beeby (cited in Attrams, 2015), involves the product of quality education and that is such education must serve the economic goals of

the locality in which students live, suggesting that quality is judged by broader social criteria. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) sees quality education from the standpoint of investment in improvement of primary education provision via due consideration of economic and social development. Hence, in their view, quality education comprise: orderly school environment, academic emphasis with higher expectations in relation to pupils' learning, institutional leadership which refers to the qualities of the supervisor (head teacher), acquisition, and the distribution and use of material inputs.

However, humanists such as Hawes and Stephens (1990) see quality education as progressive, on-going and inherently constrained by time. In their study, they proposed three strands of quality education as indicated below:

- i. Goals: Ability to efficiently achieve set goals.
- ii. Environment: Must be relevant to human and environmental needs and condition
- iii. Excellence and human betterment: Must provide something more in connection with the pursuit of excellence and human betterment.

From their perspective, Hawes and Stephens (1990) defined efficiency as making the most of inputs, or the tools that are available so as to accentuate different kinds of standards, of which Kasinath (2012) described as including the standards of attainment in knowledge and learning skills, standards of creativity and critical thinking coupled with the standards of behavior. Relevance of human and environmental needs and condition is dictated, according to humanists, by the present and future contexts of pupils and humanity in general. This means the second strand of quality education has social implication as well as personal emolument for individual learners. The last strand, according to the Hawes and Stephen refers to "that extra quality of inventiveness, stimulation, excitement, concern for others' happiness which could be derived from schools and teachers.

From the perspectives of economists and humanists in relation to quality education, it can be deciphered that both perspectives are central to achieving optimum benefit from school. On their own, each of the perspectives cannot fully satisfy the requirement of quality education. As a result, for the purpose of this study, the two perspectives is seen to entail higher standards of education than only one perspective because the weak link in one perspective is catered for in the other perspective.

In their studies, Opoku-Asare (2006) and Chapman and Adams (2002) posit that all the efforts of both the Government and stakeholders of education could prove abortive if practical and viable structures are not put in place to maintain and sustain quality education. In this regard, Attrams (2015) in consonance with Opoku-Asare and Chapman and Adams indicated that the following can be very instrumental to quality education:

- i. Decentralization of educational structures
- ii. Development of quantifiable indicators
- iii. In-depth understanding and equitable development of all levels of education scheme.

2.1 Concept, Roles and Responsibilities of instructional supervisors

Similarly, through the various administrative structures designed by Ghana Education Service (GES), an inspectorate division organizes circuit supervision in all circuits within an educational district with the sole aim of determining school quality and the implementation of national policies on education. In effect, the inspectorate division is saddled with the

responsibility of coordinating activities within educational enclaves so as to meet stipulated guidelines as expressed below:

- i. Improving the quality of teaching and learning
- ii. Monitoring policy implementation and accountability at the lower level of schools and;
- iii. Engaging in routine administrative tasks to ensure efficiency in schools.

Supervisors are representatives of the ministry are saddled with the responsibility of liaison between the central administration that promulgate or enact policies and its implementation in schools. Supervisors, as agents of the ministry of education are required to monitor classroom instruction especially teachers' performance in the classroom and their professional growth. Supervisors are saddled with the responsibility of providing adequate and consistent guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of trainee's experience. In their studies, Segun (2004) and Bessong and Ojong (2009) explicated that supervision refers to the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, a selection and revision of educational objectives, materials of instruction, methods of teaching, and the evaluation of instruction.

In brief, the expression of various authors shows that supervisors are saddled with the responsibility of:

- i. monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning
- ii. Instructing and Advising teachers with impact on students' achievement
- iii. Setting appropriate example as a model of high standard of education
- iv. Consulting with teachers so as to decipher difficulty with teaching and learning
- v. Supporting and sharing stipulated instructional strategies for effective implementation

Providing insight into the various functions of supervision, Opoku-Asare (2006) and Attrams (2015) posit that supervisors are charged with the responsibility of supervision are required to oversee the work of individual teachers and provide a formative and summative evaluation in fulfilling the first function of supervision. Regarding this function of supervisors, Baffour-Awuah (2011) stated that most teachers and educationist sees supervision as an instrument for controlling teachers in view of the dictionary definition of supervision as "to direct", "to watch-over", and "superintend". Other researchers indicated that because supervision is rooted in the industrial notion of bureaucracy with the intent of increasing production, several teachers view supervision as management means of controlling or manipulating their lives, this has resulted, according to Ingersol (2003), in several teachers recoiling at the mention of supervision. However, the purpose of effective supervision is to facilitate teacher's professional development not to mar it.

In relation to the second function of supervisors - providing teachers practical and timey instruction and advise Cobbold, Eshun, Bordoh and Kofie (2015) indicated that it centers on the hierarchy of the relationship between supervisors and teachers which suggests wide interpersonal gap which may have negative effect on the manner in which advice is given and received. The third function place emphasis on supervisors being a role model in terms of professional behavior and practice, this will facilitate cordial relationship between supervisors and supervisee heightening collaborative efforts between them so as to achieve educational goals and objectives.

In the area of consulting, which forms the fourth function of supervisors, Holloway (1995) posits that, it enhances “problem solving of clinical and professional conduct as information and opinion of the supervisee(s) are sought” (p. 32). Collaborative efforts are still required in this aspect since it will reduce antagonistic behavior (as a result of mistrust) and encourages sympathetic approach to issues (as a result of respect for each other’s role).

With trust and respect existing between supervisor and supervisees, it will be easy for supervisor to support and share pertinent information coupled with encouragement and constructive criticism with the supervisees. This is very important for trainees’ professional development since it will provide an opportunity to give adequate attention to aligning their actions, emotions and attitude to curriculum delivery and achievement of educational goals and objectives.

Considering the several benefit of supervision, Baffour-Awuah (2011) indicated that teachers can greatly improve curriculum delivery by means of supervision with the ultimate goal of improving students’ achievement. Illustrating this point is an empirical study conducted by Brown in connection with supervisor’s role and students’ achievement. Findings of Brown’s study revealed that effective supervision is intimately connected and inseparably interwoven with qualitative delivery of education. By means of his study, he showed that the leadership approaches and responsibilities of ten head-teachers’ had a direct impact on pupils’. This result was also demonstrated by the findings of several studies including Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2003), wherein a table was tabulated to show the connection between supervision and qualitative delivery of education in terms of students’ achievement. Among other things, the table indicated that when head-teacher ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school’s culture, it often enhances teachers’ instructional practices which ultimately improves students’ achievement.

3. METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research paradigm was adopted for the present study. Research instruments comprised observation and in-depth interview of participants with the objective of examining the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and its implication for quality education. Qualitative method of analysis, according to Cresswell (2003) is concerned with seeking out the “why” not the “how” of its topic through analysis of available data. It is used to gain insight into people’s value systems, societal norms and policy formation. Sarantakos (2005) also stated that qualitative method of analysis helps an investigator to study naturally occurring phenomenon in all their complexities.

Giving credence to his expression, Ereat (2011) posits that qualitative analysis allows a researcher to sort and arrange information so as to identify themes, glean insight and develop meaningful conclusions. By means of qualitative analysis, the researcher can gain appropriate insight into the push and pull factors militating against girl-child education and according to Reinard, data were collected in a natural setting as things are occurring, thereby enabling the researcher sort and arrange information so as to arrive at useful conclusions.

Schools and participants for the study were selected via purposive sampling. With the aid of the sampling approach, five public primary schools in Assin South Municipality were selected and 50 teachers with 10 head teachers and their assistants were selected for the study. In all, 60 participants responded to the questionnaire in line with the objectives of the study. Several responses garnered from respondents were analyzed qualitatively so as to reflect the objectives of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are supervisors' roles and responsibilities in the provision of quality education in the Assin South Municipality?

The crux of this research question was to elicit ample information regarding the onerous responsibilities of a supervisor in the management and sustainability of quality education. The sampled opinion of respondents revealed that supervisors, as agent of the ministry of education are saddled with the responsibility of assessing the needs of schools under their supervision, deciding what should be put in place for smooth operation of the school. Supervisors, according to some respondents is also required to plan in-service training in the subjects in which teachers' professional qualifications can be honed. These supervisors are also required to provide effective solutions to problem arising during teaching and learning and also managerial issues. In a bid to keep these supervisors up-to-date with current and practical approach to instruction, supervisors are required to intermittently attend in-service training workshops arrangement and supervised by Ghana Education Service with the aim of honing these supervisors' skills in supervisory and managerial activities.

In response to the question on what is required of supervisors in connection with progress report, majority (89%) of the respondents indicated that at regular intervals when schools are in session, supervisors are required to write and submit periodic reports in relation to the progress of school activities, to be forwarded by their respective Directors of Education to the headquarters via Regional Directors of Education. Most of the respondents were unanimous on identifying the hallmark of supervisors' role as that of assisting and facilitating teachers approaches to classroom instruction, identification of teachers' weak point in connection with teaching and learning and provision of timely and practical counseling so as to improve teachers' efficiency in connection with instructional practices.

Findings from some (73%) of the respondents revealed that several supervisors are lacking in their responsibility due to reason within and beyond their limit. Some of the reasons adduced to these lacks of effective supervision include poor working conditions, poor roads inhibiting accessibility to some schools, poor infrastructure of which some do not have latest school amenities such as computer and related ICT tools. Some (51%) of the respondents also claimed that GES is not recruiting the right caliber of supervisors and when the right caliber of personnel were recruited there is little or no in-service workshops or training to upgrade these supervisors. All these constraints often result in poor supervision with underdeveloped teachers professionally and eventual or concurrent poor delivery of education.

Another reason adduced to inability of supervisors to properly fulfill their supervisory role, according to most (82%) of the respondents was that most of the supervisors are often concerned with teacher attendance, preparation of lesson notes and being punctual at school than upholding the high standards required in teaching and learning. In effect, according to these respondents, some of the supervisors are not really concerned about the quality of education or proper assessment of schools effectiveness and students' knowledge through examinations. In view of this, Opoku-Asare (2006) and Attrams (2015) recommended that efforts should be made by the ministry of education to employ or designate individuals who are in tune with the changing terrain of educational issues in contemporary educational practice and versatile in adequately monitoring and supervising curriculum implementation and qualitative delivery of education.

Research Question Two: What is the impact of supervisors' role on classroom instruction and students' achievement in the Assin South Municipality?

The focus of the second question is to ascertain the impact of supervisory role on classroom instruction and students' achievement. In effect is effective supervision inseparably connected to qualitative delivery of education in terms of improved classroom instruction and students' achievements? Responses of the participants are presented below.

Majority (92%) of the respondents were supportive of the notion that effective supervision of instruction has tremendous influence on classroom practices by teachers. This result tally with the findings of Baffour-Awuah (2011) that supervision is synonymous with facilitating teachers' knowledge towards improvement of diversified curriculum and quality of instructional programme. Sidho (2002) also indicated that with the aid of supervision, head teachers can inspire teachers towards developing optimistic outlook fostering collaborative work within the confines of the school. With this positive function of supervision, Weller (2001) the unwholesome interference of administrative functions, such as managerial duties, which hampers the main objective of supervision of instruction by head teacher is counteracted leading to ample improvement in the level of teachers' approach to educational instruction in the classroom and students' achievement.

Finding of the study also revealed that majority (88%) of the respondents were convinced that supervision of instruction aids attainment of educational goals. Findings of some studies (Anyagre, 2016; Agih, 2015) support the finding of this study that fundamental to supervision of instruction is the attainment of educational goals. Explaining this further, Anyagre posits that attainment of educational goals is possible because supervision improves teachers understanding and acuity pertaining their work in terms of how their students are performing academically, good approaches adopted by colleague teachers in teaching and learning, creation of conducive classroom environments to complement every context, group or individual students learning situation coupled with mobilization of resources to improve classroom instruction and school development. Cobbold et al. (2015) also stated that when teachers improves in their approach to teaching and learning due to effective supervision of instruction, the main objectives or focus of the school is often achieved. In the context of this study, the chief objective of the school is quality education.

Result of the study also revealed that almost (97%) the respondents concurred with the notion that supervision as vital to their professional development and students' achievement because it provides an avenue to receive frequent and regular training. Although few 3% of the respondents disagree with the notion, it could be inferred that most of the teachers valued the training provided them by head teacher or designated supervisor during supervision. Such training according to Glatthorn (2007) facilitates teachers' continual development professionally.

Finding of the study revealed that 91% of the respondents concur with the notion that by means of supervision, teachers build their confidence. Though 9% disagreed with the notion, majority agreed. Commenting on the importance of confidence in approaching any educational task, Davies (2000) stated that there is a well-established relationship between achievement and self-confidence in creative teaching and learning. Moreover, according to Anyagre (2016) proficiency in teaching approaches and strategies reveals the level of confidence a teacher has in his or her ability to successfully perform specific teaching proficiencies, in other words,

teachers are spurred on to greater achievement in relation to students' learning when they have strong conviction in their teaching ability which is achievable via effective supervision. Finding of the study also revealed that majority (78%) of the respondents concurred with the notion that effective supervision provides a superlative means of providing teachers with practical approaches to augment their efforts in improving students' performance. Cobbold et al. (2015) posit that during supervision, teachers' learn new and practical approaches they can employ to enhance students learning. By means of supervision they also become aware of impractical methods they may have been using and can either discard it or improve upon it so as to achieve school target of improving students learning experience. As a result the overall objective of education as stipulated by the inspectorate division of the Ministry of Education is to provide pupils with quality education.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study critically examined the relationship between supervisor's role and qualitative delivery of education at the basic level in Ghanaian schools. Ample explication was made in relation to the various duties, roles and responsibilities of instructional supervisors. Findings revealed that supervisors are saddled with the responsibility of upgrading teachers' professional qualification through practical counseling and sharing of vital information regarding teaching and learning, improving the level of teachers confidence, provide regular progressive report on educational activities of schools under their supervision to the headquarters so as to keep them up-to-date on school needs and success. More importantly, result of the study revealed that supervisors' role is positively related and sine-qua-non to qualitative delivery of education in terms of teachers' professional development and students' achievement academically. It is therefore recommended that supervisors should be provided regular and effective in-service training so as to augment their supervisory skills. Moreover, efforts should be made by supervisor to prioritize supervision of instruction over managerial duties since at the long run supervision hold several benefits in connection with the overall objective of educational institutions especially at the basic level.

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