

Place of Instructional Supervision in Enhancing Primary School Teachers 'Professional Growth

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Abstract

The study examined the place of instructional supervision in enhancing teachers effectiveness at Mzilikazi District primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province . Six research questions were formulated to guide the study . Qualitative method with case study was adopted for the study . The population consists of 70 participants made up of 15 school heads ,15 Teachers – In – Charge and 40 primary school teachers in 8 primary schools in the area of study . Purposive sampling was used to select 70 participants from 8 primary schools chosen for the study . A guided interview and open – ended questionnaire were used for data collection . The data collected were analyzed using the content analysis and findings were presented in a narrative form . Major findings of the study include ; that instructional supervision help teachers to improve their professional growth , use relevant instructional material , improve their teaching methods and evaluate learners learning outcome appropriately . The recommendations that government should recruit adequate qualified supervisors , provide adequate funds for supervisors support as well as for organizing workshops . seminars and conferences for teachers .The study utilized Paul Freire's humanistic approach to supervision ,which pointed out the collaborative process of instructional supervision . Above all , teachers ' professional growth should be enhanced .

Keywords: Instructional Supervision; School heads ;Teaching and Learning.

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1.0 Introduction

The gesture of the government was received with enthusiasm by parents as the number of children were enrolled into primary schools increased without the corresponding number of teachers. The authors in [23,24] outlined that Zimbabwean government is in bid to tackle this problem of adverse teacher ; learner ratio as well as increasing the role of school supervisors in order not to compromise quality of education. The importance of teachers in determining the quality of every level of education can not be taken for granted since it is obvious that that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. The authors in [12,21] observed that teacher professional growth was the key to improved educational outcome. and suggested that the quality of teachers can be improved through effective instructional programs. Practically, Instructional supervision develop a community of professional learners in which teachers work collaboratively, establishing expectations for quality learners work and quality teaching. This was supported by authors in [23,24] who pointed out that one way of improving the school and Head teacher relationships is through Instructional supervisor training. Lack of training related to modern methods of instructional supervision and also related to the new curriculum attribute to adverse results. Authors in [23,24] noted that school Heads have limited knowledge of instructional supervision. The evidence on the ground revealed that school Heads do not apply clinical supervision skills to their instructional supervision activities, they are using spot –checks or inspection. School Heads use prescribed instruments which do not promote teacher creativity. The importance of instructional supervision in the education system cannot be over emphasized, especially faced with the changes in the education system. The authors in [12,22] noted that experience has shown that many people are not always willing to do what they are expected to do without external control or monitoring in the form of supervision ..

1.1 Literature Review

An analytical framework situated the research within the context of the topic I am researching. The theory which informs this study is humanistic approach developed by Paul Freire is the famous Brazilian educator who had worked with impoverished people in his homeland, and after being expelled from Brazil, developed a theory for the educating of the adults. He came to the theory through his own life experiences. This theory stems from the process of reflection on activities performed by active subjects during transformation. Thus, Freire's theory is based on people –centred community practice.

The goal of humanistic supervision is to assist the supervisee to work flexible. The authors in [1,2] indicated that, humanistic – oriented supervision cultivate a supervisee's ability to be in contact with the present moment. The concept of humanistic theory in instructional supervision is a process of liberation from the oppressive system and raise awareness of the critical processes centred on educators and learners as subjects in the process of teaching and learning. Humanistic approach is revealed through behaviour, both as individual actions and as an interaction with others. Behaviour should be interpreted, understood and dealt with in such a manner that the supervisee is able to understand him/herself and use the strengths and weaknesses as positive builders in his/her development. In instructional supervision, supervisees are able to think critically about their situation, can be trusted to take control of their lives and collectively transform their views of the world and how they relate to it.

Therefore, this study adopted the humanistic approach to personality focusing on mental capabilities that set humans self awareness ,creativity ,planning, decision making and responsibility. Human behaviour is viewed as motivated mainly by an innate drive towards growth that prompt to individuals to fulfil unique potential and thus creating an ideal condition known as self –actualisation .Humanistic theory is also based on the body of knowledge concerning human culture, handling cognitive problems concerning intellectual and artistic problems aimed at understanding its referents and using primarily heuristic methods.Author in [1] concluded that the humanistic theory is a unifying force that synthesizes the fields of behaviour and psycho analysis as separate.

The implication of humanistic theory in instructional supervision is to encourage teachers to encourage learners to think critically and act according to the values of humanity .In this view, it is applied in the process of learning and teaching in order to produce a good learner and critical reality. Humanistic is a modern theory of instructional supervision emphasising the need to develop organisations and staff in a democratic and leadership – oriented environment..The supervisor is sensitive to concerns and problems based on cooperation and solve the problem with the supervisee.A productive relationship between the supervisor and supervisee is necessary a precondition for effective supervision.In terms of the effectiveness of education,its quality and productivity,The authors in [2,21] stated that issues with human relations and productivity are caused by supervisory approach, in which the fear and anxiety predominate. The humanistic approach ,provides instructional supervisors with a culturally responsive ,holistic. Constructed and relational way to assist supervisees in personal and professional growth.The authors in [2,3] used the humanistic literature to propose a theory that represents a more holistic , comprehensive and post modern perspective to humanistic supervision .With that, it is important for supervisors to be prepared to provide instructional supervision that is not only ethical but accounts for professional and personal values in a variety of geographical context. Humanistic theories are seen necessary and foundation elements that are essential for each and every relationship within humanistic supervision..The authors in [5,9] argued that within humanism, relationships are central to human to human alliance as well as the development of each person whether that be the relationship with one’s self, supervisory or day to day relationship.

The ultimate purpose of humanistic approach in instructional supervision is intended for the benefit of humanising mankind. Humanising humans, is to achieve self actualisation, self understanding and self realisation in order for people to develop optimally.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the efforts of various levels of government to provide a qualitative basic education in Zimbabwe , the results of learner performance in Grade 7 public examinations especially in Mzilikazi’ highly populated primary schools are on a steady decline . What this implies is that , when the learner has not learnt, it means the teacher has not taught.If this popular saying is something to go by , then the question one would ask is how can the expected roles of teachers be realized in order to improve their professional competency in primary schools. Given this scenario , the problem of this study can be put in a question form thus; How can school Heads ‘instructional supervision positively influence the teaching and learning situation in highly populated primary schools at Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province ?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the roles of Instructional Supervision in enhancing teachers' professional growth at Mzilikazi District primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. Specifically, the study sought to ;

1. Find out how Instructional Supervision help primary school teachers to improve in their professional growth .
2. Ascertain how instructional supervision help primary school teachers to use relevant instructional material .
3. Examine how instructional supervision help primary school teachers improve their method of teaching.
4. Determine how instructional supervision help primary school teachers in evaluation of learning outcome.

1.4 Scope of the study

The study investigated the roles of instructional supervision in enhancing teachers' effectiveness in Mzilikazi District in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province primary schools .It focused on finding out how instructional supervision help teachers to improve their professional growth, use relevant instructional materials , improve their method of teaching and evaluate learning outcomes .

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions ;

1. How do school Heads , Teachers – In – Charge and Teachers conceptualise instructional supervision ?
2. How is instructional supervision implemented in primary schools ?
3. How does instructional supervision benefit primary school teachers ?
4. How does instructional supervision enhance teachers professional growth and learner performance ?
5. Which challenges affect school Heads and Teachers – In – Charge in carrying out instructional supervision?
6. Which strategies can be used to address challenges affecting school Heads and Teachers –In – Charge in carrying out instructional supervision?

1.6 Limitation of the study

The size of the sample used was too small to come out with information to generalize to other provinces in Zimbabwe .

However ,participants who participated in this study had a teaching experience from outside Bulawayo Metropolitan Province primary schools.Data collection from these participants using interviews was really positive because prticipants were selected based on their expertise and skills.They supplied the researcher with

knowledge that may be generalized in other Zimbabwean provinces and elsewhere in the world .I also provided a detailed explanation of the research methodology and research method to enable replication of the study in other provinces of Zimbabwe and elsewhere in the world if the need arise.

Another limitation was access to the organizations. My research involved interviewing participants in the schools .I faced the problem of having limited access to these respondents because some schools were struck by COVID-19. Therefore, I was denied access to these schools due to the pandemic. Schools attendance was limited, with some schools alternating sessions. In some schools, participants were only available during certain periods and unavailable in periods .I had deadlines for submitting findings to the university . Due to this limitation access . I designed the method of interviewing and communicating with those few participants online. I ended up restructuring some questions to be sure that my findings were still valid despite this limitation. I was able to ask why participants ‘conceptualisation was so in order to increase the accuracy of their answers., leaving no room for bias. Online communication was fast , easy but it was expensive.

I had to revisit other schools and then funds in terms of transport costs were also running out. Some participants were reluctant to give information and uncooperative to provide data for the study. I made sure that responses from participants were kept privacy and anonymity of their identity . This was done to overcome this limitation and assure participants of confidentiality of their response.

Qualitative methodology with case study was adopted for the study because data were collected from a sample of the entire population of the study and the results of the findings generalised as the true characteristics of the target population .The population of the study consists of 280 primary school teachers , school Heads and Teachers –In – Charge in Mzilikazi District primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province . Purposive sampling was used to select participants .The instruments used for data collection was a guided interview for school Heads and Teachers –In- Charge and open ended questionnaires for primary school teachers .

The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the participants and collected same after completion . This ensured 100 percent return of the questionnaire administered . The data collected was analysed using the content analysis and findings were presented in a narrative form

Table 1: Responses on how school Heads , Teachers – In –Charge and teachers conceptualise instructional supervision ? N (10).

SR	ITEM DESCRIPTION	SA	A	SD	D
1	Instructional supervision is designed to enhance teachers’ professional growth	4	3	1	2
2	Instructional supervision is a form of staff development program	3	2	1	4
3	Instructional supervision is designed to bring low achieving teachers close to the standards.	6	2	0	2
4	Instructional supervision is a teacher development strategy.	3	4	1	2

2.0 Results

Findings revealed that Instructional supervision involves instructional sessions to correcting the errors and guide newly qualified teachers on areas that have not been understood or have been missed out during training at colleges.

Very few participants defined Instructional supervision as a planned teaching and learning activity which attempts to improve teachers teaching skills or assist teachers with new methods of teaching as well as supervision of the implementation of new subjects introduced in the Competency Based curriculum. Majority of participants would not look forward to instructional supervision as a teacher development process because they felt that it was an unpleasant experience.

Participants revealed that, there is no dialogue with the teacher during lesson observation, it is only the supervisor who sets his time for supervision and gives feedback at the end of the process commenting only on the stipulation.

Table 2: Responses of teachers on how instructional supervision is implemented in primary schools.

SR	Item Description	SA	A	SD	D
1	School Heads inform teachers on dates of visits	2	2	2	4
2	School Heads visit classrooms during lesson delivery	2	4	1	2
3	School Heads check and ensure the preparation of schemes of work.	6	2	1	\\ 1
4	School Heads share various issues affecting learning during supervision	3	3	2	2
5	Instructional supervision carried out by school Heads is done collaboratively	2	1	5	2

Participants agreed that, school Heads are always busy with most current and pressing administrative duties like financial management, sporting and grounds development at the expense of instructional supervision .These duties are prioritized .

During supervision,school Heads do not give themselves time to share needy issues affecting teachers and learners in teaching and learning situation.Participants agreed that ,school Heads do on spot checks especially checking and ensuring the preparation of schemes of work and checking the preparation and use of lesson plans.

These were most common instructional supervision practices in order to keep teachers on track.Classroom visitation during lesson progress was rarely practised.

The objective of supervision, to enhance teachers'professional growth is not realized.Of course, learners exercise books are checked and stamped and a few comments written but.time for feedback is very limited.

Table 3: Responses of participants on benefits of Instructional supervision in the teaching and learning situation at primary schools in Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

SR	Item Description	SA	A	SD	D
1	School Heads work collaboratively with teachers during Instructional supervision	2	2	4	2
2	Instructional supervision is a communication tool for school Heads and teachers	4	4	0	2
3	School Heads provide feedback after instructional supervision	2	2	3	3
4	Teachers use feedback from supervisors to improve their methods of teaching.	2	1	5	2

A good number of participants confirmed that, Instructional supervision that schools routinely use, bring collaboration and team work in the school.

They pointed out that Instructional supervision is a communicating tool for school Heads to share various issues affecting learning in the classrooms even though strategies that encourage collaboration between the supervisor and supervisee were not practised..Participants agreed that, if Instructional supervision is conducted well, the feedback obtained from visits provides teachers with input issues highlighted as well as congratulates those who have performed as per expectation.

Table 4: Responses on how instructional supervision enhance teacher professional growth as well as learner academic performance?

SR	Item Description	SA	A	SD	D
1	Instructional supervision enhance teacher professional growth	4	3	1	2
2	During Instructional supervision learners academic performance is realized	2	6	0	2
3	Teachers' creativity is taken into consideration during supervision	2	2	4	2
4	School Heads demonstrate to teachers on new methods of teaching	1	1	5	3

Majority of participants , especially primary school teachers from the current study stated that Instructional supervision is an important process for establishing whether learning is taking place.

They said this is done in order to influence learners' performance by checking learners' exercise books and provision of teaching and learning resources .To enhance the performance of teachers in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province in general and ay Mzilikazi District in particular, education managers should remove all stigma attached by engaging teachers in the process of instructional supervision . .

Table 5: Responses on challenges affecting school Heads when conducting instructional supervision ?

SR	Item Description	SA	A	SD	D
1	School Heads have adequate skills of Instructional supervision	2	2	5	1
2	School Heads are aware of modern era strategies of instructional supervision	2	2	6	0
3	Individual learner differences are catered for during instruction	3	2	4	1
4	Adequate teaching and learning resources are always available during supervision	2	1	6	1

Majority of participants , especially public school Heads , from the current study identified Instructional supervision as an inspection (traditional method of supervision which was autocratic).They only write down notes following prescriptions laid down in the Teachers 'Professional Standards supervision instrument . The quality of reports is only descriptive and not analytical as it does not sufficiently project the learners as the primary focus on the school overall mission.Such an atmosphere is riddled with non supportive, suspicious and apathetic tendencies which are not conducive to effective instructional supervision .To make matters worse, when the same administrators take the role of instructional supervision, they are expected to be colleagues, helping teachers to develop and grow professionally. The school Head is the administrator to the teachers and is no way seen as a colleague.

Table 6: Responses of participants on strategies that can be used to address challenges affecting school Heads when carrying out instructional supervision programs ?

SR	Item Description	SA	A	SD	D
1	school Heads carry out Instructional supervision collaboratively	1	2	5	2
2	Teachers negative attitudes are addressed during supervision	1	1	7	1
3	Teachers and learners are motivated to learn more during supervision	3	4	2	1

Challenges can also be permanently dealt with if more schools are built taking into consideration today's designs in order to accommodate learners.Instructional supervision promotes collegiality among members of the staff especially if school Heads conduct the process collaboratively with teachers . School Heads to use time management frameworks and management to help teachers conduct classes on a shift basis as it is the situation in these highly populated primary schools .In the modern era , instructional supervision can promote teacher professional growth if conducted according to reciprocal plans so as to address teachers negative attitudes towards supervision and pave way for teachers and learners motivation .Teachers should also display charts and other learning aids regularly in organizing activities . In the long run Schools Inspectors to organize academic workshops for school supervisors and provide learners with core textbooks as well as the specific grade related

supplementary reading material .

2.1 Discussions

Based on the research questions ,themes emerged. Within each theme are the voices of participants which provide a historical account of the current conduction of instructional supervision in primary schools .Supervision is collaborative , non judgemental and supportive of teachers ‘developing reflective practices to improve instruction . Especially, in its clinical or humanistic version , participants described instructional supervision as a collaborative and non-judgemental with the aim to assist the teacher in examining teaching behavior and practices in the classroom .Participants acknowledged and welcomed the move away from authoritative inspectoral supervision characterized by the early development of supervision towards a much more non – judgemental approach.

Participants also agreed that supervision as a practice , needs greater attention within schools to focus on working with teachers to reflect on instructional practices, whether performed with or without a supervisor ,through peer coaching and so on .However, there are some differences in beliefs regarding the manner in which instructional supervision should be implemented . In regard to the degree to which instructional supervision has changed over time,my analysis indicates a distinct move away from autocratic origins of supervision towards the emergence of democratic approaches.(i.e supervision as a helping , non -evaluative function).Initially,authors in [6,8] ‘s clinical supervision was the vehicle , as to speak, to promulgate such a shift, later other collaborative , humanistic , non – judgemental forms of supervision emerged. This finding is in agreement with previous studies by Paul Freire and others. Ben Harris felt that supervision is an applied field of practice that has array of scientific bases, but enormously important are the interpersonal skills and empathy that are much artistic in nature , for example, he explained the ‘ability to sense when a teacher wants to be listened to ‘ is an artistic skill too many take for granted .Supervision scholars advocated for supervision as helping function , but seems not to emphasise the realities of supervision , where a supervisor enters a classroom to observe and write a report to the teacher highlighting positiveaspects along with a host of suggested improvements known as a fault- finding mechanism to classroom observation . Such practices do not encourage instructional dialogue and reflection in a serious fashion ,as advocated for by study participants.

3.0 Conclusion

The results of the data analyzed revealed that teachers are rarely given opportunities for in – service training and supervisors do not carry out their supervisory roles regularly .It was also observed that the supervisors do not look into relevant instructional material during supervision nor demonstrate appropriate teaching methods , test administration and using projectors and slides during instructional supervision .so as to relay them for correction and above all , teachers are not given opportunities for conferences in order for them to grow in their profession. However , it was observed that , if instructional supervision was carried out effectively , will help teachers grow in their profession , locate and use relevant instructional materials , improve their methods of teaching and evaluation of learners learning outcome . Retraining of instructional supervisors , staffing for instructional supervisors and establishing of instructional supervision centres in primary schools will improve

teacher productivity to a very high level in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province primary schools . The re- training of school Heads , deputy Heads and Teachers – In – Charge in the supervisory functions will go a long way in improving knowledge , pedagogy and skills of supervision and thereby increase these officers’ competency either in their subject field of operation or they will become more effective instructional supervisors and curriculum workers .The long –term goal of developmental instructional supervision is teacher development towards a point in which teachers facilitated by supervisors can assume full responsibility of instructional improvement. Instructional supervision has an effect on teachers ‘teaching and learners learning because school Heads have input to teachers ‘ instruction . Instructional supervision is vital in high density schools in order to enhance teachers ’professional growth and increase learner performance . They accepted teachers’ input in decision making and also teachers respected school Heads ‘advice and feedback .Teachers are the most important resources within the schools , they work tirelessly on learners academic achievement .Instructional supervision fosters teamwork and builds relationship that benefit teachers and learners .

4.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study , the following recommendations were made that ;

1. The government through its agencies should overhaul the units in –charge of supervisors of instruction (QUALITY ASSURANCE) in primary schools so that the desired goals of the system will be achieved.
2. Supervisors should be equipped with necessary materials and logistics that will enable them carry out their duties effectively ; the Ministry of Primary and Secondary as well as the non- formal Organizations should come up with in – service training programs for school Heads on the implementation of instructional supervision.
3. Special funds should be provided by the government for organizing regular teachers’ conferences, workshops , seminars and in-service programs in order to keep abreast of the desired changes in school system .
4. Supervisors and teachers should endeavor to discharge their duties according to their professional demand .
5. Parents should assist in the monitoring of school activities and monitoring of school activities and reporting observed lapse to appropriate authority for necessary action.
6. There is need for great emphasis on providing administrative as well as pedagogical support .
7. There is need to lower the supervisor ; supervisee ratio as well as opportunities for an effective access to education scenario which calls for a favourable teacher ; learner ratio which is 1;40 as stipulated by the Zimbabwe government .
8. Both school Heads and teachers ultimately agreed that in addition to the elements of time and overload of work , class size was also crucial in the academic achievements of learners .
9. The school Heads must allocate time and maintain order first in order to pave way for school improvement issues . Instructional lesson demonstration kind of supervision whereby a teacher delivers his best lesson , having his grade leader and teachers observe and write report and write crits providing feedback is strongly recommended.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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