

# Functions and Practices of Curriculum Supervision in Senior High Schools in the Assin North Municipality of Ghana

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## Abstract

This study examined the functions and practices of curriculum supervision among curriculum leaders and teachers in Senior High Schools in the Assin North Municipality of Ghana. Quantitatively, descriptive survey was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling procedure was employed to select 44 curriculum leaders and convenient sampling procedure was employed to select 120 teachers for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data from both curriculum leaders and teachers. Data were analyzed into frequencies and percentages. It was realized that there is a strong consensus among curriculum leaders and teachers on the premise that the major purposes of curriculum supervision include monitoring performance, sharing information and solving problems. It was recommended that the procedure to be used by the supervisors should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisees.

## Keywords

Curriculum, Supervision, Functions, Practices, Curriculum Supervision, Senior High Schools

## 1. Introduction and Background

Supervision can exist in both complex, bureaucratic organizations and very simple formal and informal organizational units. It may exist in industrial outfits with very elaborate administrative and managerial practices, as well as in small informal settings such as in nuclear family environments. Whichever dimensions it tends to take, whether in an institutionalized fashion or incidental to routines, supervision generally has featured and can be very vital to the effective and efficient running of organizations.

Located at the heart of educational administration and management are, generally, school supervision, and more specifically, curriculum supervision. School supervision might be broader in scope than curriculum supervision. It generally seeks to monitor, inspect and attempt to improve upon the quality of academic and non-academic aspects of education delivery. Its tasks may include general appraisal of staff and students' academic and non-academic facilities, logistics, procurements and supplies to schools, among others.

School supervision is therefore aimed at improving conditions within the school climate, as well as teaching and learning in the school.

On the other hand, curriculum supervision is intended to embrace those activities in the school which directly involve the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and appraisal of the school curriculum. Curriculum supervision therefore involves observation of teaching and learning, assisting teachers in their professional development, both in individual and group context, evaluation of teachers, research and revision of the curriculum (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009).

Various issues relating to curriculum supervision have proved quite controversial. The controversy stems from different conceptions about the nature, approaches, importance, and practice of curriculum supervision within different educational delivery settings. As stated by Glanz (2000:70), there are those who have criticized modern concepts of supervision as being bureaucratic, hierarchical, and oppressive. He said, "According to a post-modernist view, supervision stifles individual autonomy, especially that of the teacher". To post-modernists, rational-technical

conceptions of supervision reduce effective supervision to routines which turn supervisors into autocratic lords with the authority to diagnose teachers' pedagogical lapses and impose solutions. On the other hand, Ovando (2000:108-109) compliments effective supervision, and maintains that it "implies that educators, including teachers, curriculum specialists, and supervisors would cooperate in order to improve instruction".

To some curriculum leaders and policy makers, supervision in schools constitutes tasks which build pathways to excellence, or effective data gathering activity for quality assurance. Relevant to this motive is what is today termed as supportive supervision. According to Garubo and Rothstein (1998), supportive curriculum supervision is a method of teaching the staff to act in more conscious ways. Its goal is to provide curriculum implementers and supervisors with more information and deeper insights into what is happening around them. There is therefore an increase in options for teachers to work with students and superiors. A situation of effective collaboration between curriculum leaders as supervisors, and teachers is created as teachers learn to identify and resolve their problems, while supervisors get a better idea about what happens in different classroom environments. To Garubo and Rothstein (1998:1) therefore, "supportive supervision is a learning situation for both teachers and their supervisors". However, to others (mostly staff and students), supervision could lead to some curriculum leaders overstepping their role expectations just to teach one a hard lesson or show where power lies. In this case, curriculum supervision is thought of as a situation where a school/subject head stands in the window to find faults with the content and methods applied by a teacher rather than learning "to trust the eyes and ears of teachers, while teachers have to trust that supervisors will use the information gathered to help teachers help themselves" (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998:1).

Also, very critical to the discourse is the issue of trust from both the supervisor and the supervisee. According to Garubo and Rothstein (1998), trust does allow supervisors, teachers and students to know each other better; it also enhances friendliness and mutual acceptance. On the other hand, lack of trust breeds unfriendliness and suspicion. In their estimation, 'lack of trust is very apparent in public schools, where in general, relationships between administrators and teachers are very poor' (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998: 4).

The problem of the study stem from the fact that curriculum leadership tasks of supervision and/or inspection are believed by many to be the key factor in the success or failure of the process of implementing, evaluating and reviewing the curriculum. In Ghana for instance, most people allude to the point that students of high achieving schools such as Wesley Girls High School, Mfantshipim School, Archbishop Porter Girls' School, Prempeh College, Achimota School and others excel due to a telepathic agreement among school leadership, staff and students concerning strict supervision of both curricular and co-curricular activities. Also, most Ghanaians apparently hold the view that effective

supervision is a key explanatory factor for the high academic performances of private basic schools in contrast to public basic schools as measured by their Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results. This is buttressed by the findings of a study conducted by Opare (1999) to compare performance of private and public basic school pupils in Ghana which suggest that the monitoring and supervision of teachers' work is crucial to achievement of results.

However, in many school settings, observations tend to show that the issues involving curriculum supervision have proved quite contentious and even acrimonious, sometimes leading to feuds between leadership and the rest of the staff and students. Quite often, teachers and students whose tasks and functions are mostly supervised by school and subject heads tend to complain about how such leaders have become so interested in inspecting and criticizing their work instead of concentrating on sourcing logistics to make work easier or more manageable. The issues enumerated above point to the need to investigate the perceptions held by curriculum leaders and teachers about the functions and practices of curriculum supervision within the school setting.

The paper is aimed at creating awareness about the perception of curriculum supervision held by various players in the education delivery system; especially school heads and heads of subject departments, as well as teachers of Senior High Schools whose functions include or are affected by curriculum supervision. The study was guided by the following questions: What do school heads, heads of subject departments and teachers consider as the purposes of effective curriculum supervision?; and Which practices do school heads, heads of subject departments and teachers perceive to constitute curriculum supervision? The scope of this study is confined to the perceptions and viewpoints of heads of senior high schools, subject departments and teachers about functions and practices of curriculum supervision in schools.

The article has the following structure: firstly, an introduction shows the importance of the theme and the objective of the study; secondly, it presents a review of literature on characteristics of curriculum and historical overview of curriculum supervision; thirdly, a methodology of the research is presented; results and its discussion are presented in the fourth part and finally the conclusions with recommendations of the work are shown.

## **2. Literature on Functions of Curriculum and Historical Overview of Curriculum Supervision**

One's understanding of the curriculum will determine his/her approach to supervising it. Yet, the concept 'curriculum' has numerous definitions which can be slightly confusing. The literature shows that it means different things to different people, different educational institutions and

different parts of educational systems. According to the Education Encyclopaedia (2009), in empirical studies, definitions of curriculum scuttle the scale from those that would have the term represent everything that takes place in a class, to others that restrict its meanings to only topics defined as instructional requirements in the official policy of an educational system. Some definitions even limit the curriculum to only those topics actually taught by teachers.

In what is touted as the premier textbook in curriculum studies, Bobbitt (1918) explains curriculum as the course of deeds and experiences through which children become the adults they should be for success in society. He also thinks of the curriculum to cover the entire scope of formative deed and experience in and out of school, including those unplanned and undirected, as well as intentionally directed experiences for the purposeful formation of adult members of society. Obviously, these postulates form the basis of Bobbitt's philosophy of the curriculum being a social engineering arena.

Since this pioneering attempt by Bobbitt in 1918, there has been several efforts at defining, describing and explaining what a curriculum is about in principle and practices, as well as what goes into determining what the curriculum should cover. Print (1993) describes what constitutes the most commonly held view of curriculum as depiction of subject matter or body of content to be taught to students. This commonly held view, however, would rather suit the description of a syllabus or course outline which tends to be a list of content areas which will be assessed.

Marsh and Willis (2003) summarize the different viewpoints from the literature as follows: curriculum is such 'permanent subjects as grammar, reading, logic, rhetoric, mathematics, and the greatest books of the western world that best embody essential knowledge; curriculum is those subjects that are most useful for living in contemporary society; curriculum is all planned learning for which the school is responsible; curriculum is all experiences learners have under the guidance of the school; and curriculum is the totality of learning experiences provided to students so that they can attain general skills and knowledge at a variety of learning sites. To view the curriculum as permanent subjects that embody essential knowledge forms reflect espousing of pre-determined content which must be strictly followed. In effect, the curriculum is restricted to only few subjects which are deemed relevant for effective living in contemporary society. This reflects prescriptive ideology premised on idealists philosophy. For the purposes of social acceptability, idealist philosophy puts up definitions of the curriculum which express what 'should be' or 'ought to be', representing carefully selected content materials and modes of instruction which teachers must adopt to teach learners. This also makes the curriculum look like a product intended to be 'consumed' or 'assimilated' religiously, with very little or no regard for the individual learner's actual experiences or aspirations on the programme.

In other jurisdictions, curriculum thought is dominated by the kinds of arrangements and contribution that the school as

an institution of learning makes towards the inculcation of worthwhile knowledge, skills and values. This then suggests that the real curriculum is moulded on the climate and ethos of individual schools within the same educational system. There is no denying the fact that the school system provides an environment within which the learner encounters experiences within and beyond course content areas. The curriculum is therefore viewed as all planned activities which are consciously organized and systematically implemented under careful watch of instructors in the school. In other words, all conditions which yield learning by reason of the structure and organization, as well as peculiar practices of the school within and without the classroom, official timetable or the syllabus are deemed to have greater curricular effects. Practices and activities which may be described as extra-curricular or co-curricular are considered as important as those officially presented in documents. To buttress this, Print (1993) describes the curriculum as learning opportunities offered by the nature of the school organization. For instance, he states "...all the planned learning opportunities offered by the school organization to learners and the experiences learners encounter when the curriculum is implemented" (Print, 1993:3). This includes those activities that educators have devised for learners which are invariably represented in the form of a written document.

In another development, a consideration of the curriculum as all, or totality of learner/learning experiences accords with broad view or generalist perspective of curriculum development. Viewing the curriculum this way depicts all opportunities and avenues created by educational delivery systems through which learners attain knowledge forms, skills, values and attitudes which contribute to effective living, but not necessarily prescribed for certification. It therefore follows that, learners gain experiences and develop, not only through prescribed content, but also through procedures of instructions, modes of enquiry, personal and organized interactions within the social and physical environments of learner. Curriculum experience may, hence, be gained through the planning of field trips, supervised projects, industrial attachments and competitive field games. In classroom scenarios, apart from the prescribed content itself, a wide range of techniques such as experimental procedures, role play, simulations, and group work are vital for total learner development.

Again, one other viewpoint is the consideration of the curriculum as a process. The school plans and facilitates the curriculum as a process of providing personal meaning to learners, placing emphasis on personal growth and self-actualization through experiential learning (Print, 1993). An instance is one of the aims of the social work practicum which develops the student's self-awareness and self-confidence towards professional competence in the world of work. This calls for the need to be abreast with what constitute the functions / purposes of curriculum supervision.

Educational systems and institutional frameworks differ for sure. Nevertheless, with all of their differences, there should be singleness of an ultimate purpose to engender a

sound and functional curriculum delivery. However, there is an obvious lack of professional unity among supervisors and supervisees on acceptable purposes of curriculum supervision, as well as its core functions. According to Holloway (1995), the five functions that supervisors, generally engage in, while interacting with supervisees include: monitoring and evaluation; instructing and advising; modeling; consulting; and supporting and sharing.

She explains further that “The professional responsibility of the supervisor is to oversee the supervisees’ work and provide a formative and summative evaluation” (p. 33), hence, the monitoring and evaluative roles of supervisors. In the case of instructing and advising, communication which is largely controlled by the supervisor emphasizes the hierarchy of the relationship and is marked by considerable interpersonal distance. Also when participants are more equally matched in perceived expert power, decreased amount of advising might result.

Holloway (1995) postulates further that, the supervisor should function as a model of professional behaviour and practice, both implicitly in the supervisory relationship and explicitly by role-playing for the supervisee. This is given credence by bi-directional communication thereby reducing interpersonal distance and making exercise of power a collaborative process. In her estimations, consulting facilitates problem solving of clinical and professional conduct as information and opinion of the supervisee(s) are sought. This, however, requires the trust and respect of the supervisee(s) in order to engage in a more collaborative rather than antagonistic relationship. Again, supporting and sharing functions of the supervisor require empathic attention, encouragement and constructive confrontation with the supervisee(s). To her, “supervisors often support trainees at a deep interpersonal level by sharing their own perceptions of trainees actions, emotions and attitudes” (Holloway, 1995:37).

On his part, John Dawson (as cited in Kadushin, 1992) identified the functions of supervision thus: administrative functions - the promotion and maintenance of good standards of work, co-ordination of practice with policies of administration, the assurance of an efficient and smooth-running office; educational functions - the educational development of each individual worker on the staff in a manner calculated to evoke her fully to realize her possibilities of usefulness; and supportive functions - the maintenance of harmonious working relationships, the cultivation of esprit-de-corps.

In similar vein, Hawkins and Shohet (1989) describe what they perceive to be the primary focus of supervision which also represents purposes of curriculum supervision. They catalogue them broadly under educational purposes and administrative/supportive purposes.

Within educational purposes of curriculum supervision lie the provision of regular space for supervisees to reflect upon the content and process of their work. There is also the development of understanding and skills, receiving information and other perspective concerning the teacher's work, as well as giving feedback. This is to ensure that the

teacher is validated and supported both as a person and as a teacher, and making sure that as a person and as a worker, the teacher is not left to carry unnecessary difficulties, problems and projections alone.

On administrative/supportive purposes/functions, curriculum supervision enables space to explore and express personal distress, re-stimulation, transference or counter-transference that may be brought up by the work. It is, again, to allow for planning and utilization of the personal and professional resources of teachers better. It also calls for being pro-active, rather than re-active and to ensure quality of work.

Specific references to functions/purposes of curriculum supervision therefore include improvement in classroom teaching and learning, assisting teachers in professional and group development, evaluation of teachers’ work output, research and revision of the curriculum. It is also meant for maintaining standards or benchmarks, meeting delivery targets within timeframes, as well as checking recalcitrance in teachers and learners. This calls for the need to be abreast with what constitute the historical overview of curriculum supervision.

The phenomenon of curriculum supervision evolved over a fairly long period of time and has been variously described simply as school supervision, school inspection, instructional supervision and curriculum monitoring. The interchangeable use of these terms derive from what Adentwi (2005) refers to as broad view definition of the word curriculum as what goes on in schools and other training institutions. Curriculum supervision therefore exists within school supervision, monitoring or even inspection. It must be emphasized that curriculum supervision as a field of educational endeavour with clearly delineated roles and responsibilities has also evolved slowly as a distinct practice, always in relation to the institutional, academic, cultural and professional dynamics that have historically generated the complex agenda of schooling (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009).

To De-Grauwe (2007), the origins of curriculum supervision date back to the birth of public education to forge a common language and culture. Curriculum supervision became the key tool to ensure that all education staff respected the same rules and regulations and followed a similar programme within the nation state. The first public inspection services in France were set up at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Napoleon’s regime. Following after that, other European states followed suit in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and translated same into the colonies to assist in the control of the subjugated masses.

Many European countries set up their curriculum supervision systems which were known widely as inspectorates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. England, for instance, had Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) which was founded in 1834 and became the model for many developing countries (UNESCO, 2007).

In the colony of New England for instance, supervision of institutions began as a process of external inspection. One or more local citizens were appointed to inspect both what the

teachers were teaching and what the students were learning. This means that inspection was to remain firmly enrooted in the practice of supervision (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009).

In the case of British West Africa, including the Gold Coast (now Ghana), some arrangement of supervision in the name of school inspections evolved. According to Antwi (1992), this evolution saw the appointment of Rev. Metcalfe Sunter in the year 1882 as inspector of schools for the entire British West Africa settlements. To Antwi (1992), this marked the first systematic effort by the colonial administration to regulate education within the colonies. He also states that this initial attempt by government to regulate and perhaps supervise the curriculum was given a boost in an Education ordinance of 1882 which also sought to model the educational system at the time on the English pattern. In effect, upon his appointment by Her Majesty, Rev. Sunter (then principal of Fourah Bay College) had jurisdiction across British West Africa and reported to the Queen until his death in 1892 in Lagos. It should be noted however that some sort of supervision managed by missionary elements within mission schools ante-dates the appointment of Rev. Sunter.

According to Pickard (n.d.) the American colonies recognised early enough the importance of education, but aside the establishment of colleges, seminaries and universities little was done in a general way towards fostering the interest of popular education. He alludes to the fact that the church organized schools and provided course of study and was dominant in civil affairs. During this period, a gradual process of evolution in matters of control and supervision of schools existed.

In the case of the United States of America, curriculum supervision as a formal activity was piloted by educational administrators within a system of schools in the late 1830s when the formation of the common school emerged (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009). It explains further that during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, population growth in the major cities of the United States necessitated the formation of city school systems, within which superintendents initially inspected schools to ensure that teachers followed prescribed curriculum. The aim of this practice was also to see that students were able to recite their lessons. However, the manipulation of schools soon made this an impossible task for superintendents and so the job was delegated to school principals. In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, the forward march towards scientific management in both industrial and public administration had an influence on schools (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009).

Significant to note is the fact that, much about the same time European educators such as Fredrick Froebel, Johann Herbert and Johann Pestalozzi as well as the America philosopher John Dewey were also affecting the schools with their child-centred experience-based curriculum theories. This state of affairs drew school supervisors between the demand to evaluate teachers scientifically and the simultaneous need to transform teaching from mechanistic repetition of teaching protocols to a diverse repertoire of instructional responses to students' natural curiosity and

diverse levels of readiness (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009). There came to exist, therefore, a kind of tension between supervision as a uniform, scientific approach to instruction and supervision as a flexible process of dialogue between teacher and supervisor characterized by the shared, professional discretion of both for a long time. It is quite obvious then, that different perception came to be held about curriculum supervision and monitoring among curriculum leaders in terms of its functions/purposes and acceptable practices.

However, since then, many changes have occurred and in all countries curriculum supervision services, over space and time, have become complex and intricate systems, playing different roles and assuming different descriptions (UNESCO, 2007). There seem though to be lots of developments in the field of curriculum supervision. Today, what has now become closely identified with various forms of clinical supervision mostly blends elements of objectives and scientific classroom observation, with aspects of collegial coaching, rational planning and a flexible enquiry-based concern with student learning (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009).

In recent times, many countries have attempted to reform their curriculum supervision services to improve educational quality. This desire for reform is more often than not inspired by disappointment or dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of supervision and by the recent trend towards more school autonomy. According to UNESCO (2007), the ability of schools to use their greater autonomy and freedom effectively and responsibly will largely depend on the support services on which many can rely, while supervision may be needed to guide them in their decision-making and use of resources. Whichever way one looks at the issues involved in the reform, the fact remains that there have been mixed successes whose overall analyses allows for profound insight into what can be achieved in specific contexts.

Again, it is worthy of note that, in their specific efforts to reform and innovate curriculum supervision, many countries in recent years have increasingly relied on internal mechanisms of control and support by actors at the school site level (i.e. principals, subject leaders, community members, etc).

### 3. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey to determine the nature of perceptions held by both school leaders and teachers concerning the functions and practices of curriculum supervision.

The population for the study was the membership of the academic staff of Senior High Schools in the Assin North Municipality. These included heads of institutions, heads of subject departments and teachers within the departments. The accessible population, which also happened to be the same as the target population, includes all heads, their assistants, heads of subject departments and all teachers in the five Senior High Schools within the Municipality.

A sample size of 51 curriculum leaders, comprising

headmasters, assistant headmasters/mistresses, and heads of subject departments was selected. This first category of sample was selected through purposive sampling technique. The second category of sample constituted 168 teachers from the selected schools. This is the total number of teachers in the five schools. Since this number can be conveniently handled in a survey, the census technique was adopted.

In consonance with the purpose of the study and issues raised in the research questions, two categories of questionnaires were used. One set for curriculum leaders and the other for teachers were prepared to collect data for the study. Each of the two sets of questionnaires had three sections (A - C). Items under section 'A' sought to obtain information on the personal profile and experience of respondents within the Ghana Education Service (GES). Section 'B' sought to elicit information on respondents' perception on the purposes of curriculum supervision. Section C was designed to obtain data on curriculum supervision practices. The substantive items on curriculum supervision within sections B to C were the same for both leaders and teachers which were all close-ended, likert-type scale items. In all questionnaires were administered to 51 school leaders and 168 teachers from the five Senior High Schools in the Municipality. The reliability of the questionnaire was determined through the use of the split-half reliability method. This yielded a split-half reliability coefficient of .894, indicating the internal consistency of the items on the questionnaire.

## 4. Discussion

This study was conducted purposely to find out the extent to which curriculum leaders and teachers perceive the functions and practices of curriculum supervision in the senior high schools. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, data was collected on three key issues. This section, therefore, presents the results and discusses the following: demographic characteristics of respondents; functions/purposes of effective curriculum supervision; and curriculum supervision practices.

### 4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The first section presents the demographic characteristics of respondents used for the study. This is informed by the fact that data relating to work experience, pre-service and in-service orientations and leadership positions, among others, have strong bearing on their perceptions and for that matter their approach to issues of curriculum supervision.

The number of years spent by the curriculum leaders and teachers in the GES were of interest. They were therefore asked to indicate it in a range of years provided for them. The data on number of years of teaching experience revealed that 12 (28%) curriculum leaders who responded have spent 11 - 15 years, 11 (25%) have spent 6 - 10 years, eight (18.2%) have spent between 16 - 20 years, 6 (14%) have spent over 20 years, while 6 (14%) of curriculum leaders are barely 5

years in the service. On the part of teachers, 34 (28.3%) have spent between 1 to 5 years, 24 (20.0%) have spent 6 - 10 years, 21 (17.5%) have spent 11 - 15 years while 14 (12.8%) have spent 16 - 20 years. This clearly indicated that majority of the respondents are highly experience. This brings to the fore in having a fair assessment of the functions and practices of curriculum supervision perceived by curriculum leaders and teachers.

The data on curriculum leadership positions indicated that 5 (11.4%) respondent are Heads of School, 7 (15.9%) Assistant heads while 26 (59.1%) are Heads of Departments. With the years of experience in curriculum leadership, the data indicated that majority of leaders, that is 22 (50.0%) have been curriculum leaders under 5 years. Question on whether orientation on leadership were done before assuming current leadership position, revealed that 23 (52%) of the leaders had no orientation at all on curriculum leadership before assuming their leadership positions. This confirms the assertion of the Education Encyclopaedia (2009) that unfortunately, curriculum leaders and other professionals, more often than not, carry on their supervisory work without having any professional preparation for it, finding by trial and error what seems to work for them.

### 4.2. Functions of Curriculum Leaders and Teachers for Effective Curriculum Supervision

The functions of curriculum supervision differ from one supervisor to another. This section was meant to solicit from the respondents the functions/purposes of effective curriculum supervision. They therefore had to respond thus: Very Relevant (VR), Relevant (R), Undecided (U), Less Relevant (LR) or Not Relevant (NR). The outcome is shown on Table 1.

Table 1 indicates that there was agreement between curriculum leaders and teachers with regard to the purpose of curriculum supervision. Forty-four representing 100% of curriculum leaders thought curriculum supervision was relevant for the purpose of monitoring performance. This was not different from the views of the teachers. One hundred and sixteen (96%) teachers representing 97% thought it was relevant for the purposes of monitoring performance. In support of this, Holloway (1995) stated that one basic purpose of curriculum supervision is monitoring performance.

Table 1 also revealed that both curriculum leaders and teachers shared common views with regard to "sharing information" as a purpose of curriculum supervision. This represents 44 (100%) of curriculum leaders and 109 (91%) of teachers. This confirms the view of Holloway (1995) who cited a number of purposes of curriculum supervision including sharing information. She went on to state that communication which is largely controlled by the supervisor emphasizes the hierarchy of the relationship and is marked by considerable interpersonal distance.

It is further indicated in Table 1 that curriculum leaders and teachers believed that the purposes of curriculum supervision also included: solving problems, 44 (100%) of

curriculum leaders and 114 (94%) of teachers; professional development, 44 (100%) of curriculum leaders and 103 (88%) of teachers.

*Table 1. Functions / purposes of curriculum supervision.*

	Curriculum Leaders										Teachers									
	VR		R		U		LR		NR		VR		R		U		LR		NR	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1) Monitoring performance.	27	61	17	39	-	-	-	-	-	-	68	56	48	40	1	1	2	2	1	1
2) Sharing information.	25	57	19	43	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	44	56	47	6	5	5	4	-	-
3) Solving problems.	28	64	16	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	52	43	62	51	3	3	2	2	1	1
4) Professional development.	22	50	22	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	41	55	47	6	5	8	7	-	-
5) Contributing to teacher professional growth.	29	66	13	30	-	-	2	4	-	-	47	40	55	46	4	3	11	9	2	2
6) Checking the conduct of recalcitrant teachers.	23	52	15	34	1	2	5	12	-	-	44	38	51	44	4	3	11	9	7	6
7) Assessing competence of teachers.	20	45	21	48	2	5	1	2	-	-	44	38	54	46	5	4	12	0	2	2
8) Offering support services to subordinates.	23	53	11	25	5	11	5	11	-	-	30	25	64	53	9	8	10	8	7	6
9) Ensuring strict compliance with rules.	18	48	17	46	1	3	1	3	-	-	30	25	49	41	15	13	17	14	8	7
10) Maintaining harmonious working relationships.	23	52	17	38	2	5	2	5	-	-	43	36	53	45	11	9	8	7	4	3
11) Detecting weaknesses of teachers.	19	47	16	40	2	5	2	5	1	3	20	17	57	48	9	7	19	16	14	12

VR = Very Relevant, R = Relevant, U = Undecided, LR = Less Relevant, NR = Not Relevant

Glatthorn *et al.* (2006) supported the outcome of Table 1 when they stated that other areas of concern to the curriculum supervisor include staff development, individual development, informal observations, rating and staff motivation which are quite critical to effective curriculum supervision. With regard to solving problems, the International Journal of Educational Development (2008) cited building organizational culture, solving implementation problems as other purpose of curriculum supervision.

Other outcomes of Table 1 included: contributing to teacher professional growth, 42 (96%) of curriculum leaders and 102 (86%) of teachers; checking the conduct of recalcitrant teachers, 38(86%) of curriculum leaders and 95 (79%), as well as assessing competence of teachers, 41 (93%) of curriculum leaders and 98 (84%) of teachers. These are in line with the views of Dawson (as cited in Kadushin, 1992). According to Dawson, the functions/purposes of curriculum supervision include improvement in classroom teaching and learning, assisting teachers in professional and group development, evaluation of teachers' work output, research and revision of the curriculum. On their part, Hawkins and Shohet (1989) stated that curriculum supervision is also meant for maintaining standards or benchmarks, meeting delivery targets within timeframes, as well as checking recalcitrance in teachers and learners.

Table 1 finally revealed that both curriculum leaders and teachers believed that other functions/purposes of curriculum supervision included: offering support services to subordinates, 34 (78%) of curriculum leaders and 94 (78%) of teachers; ensuring strict compliance with rules, 35 (94%)

of curriculum leaders and 79 (66%) of teachers; maintaining harmonious working relationships, 40 (90%) of curriculum leaders and 96 (81%) of teachers; and detecting weaknesses of teachers, 35 (87%) of curriculum leaders and 77 (65%). These views are in support of the views of Dawson (as cited in Kadushin, 1992) that the maintenance of harmonious working relationships and the cultivation of esprit de corps are major functions of curriculum development.

#### **4.3. Practices Curriculum Leaders and Teachers Perceive to Constitute Curriculum Supervision**

On the issues of curriculum supervision practices, statements were proposed to which both curriculum leaders and teachers had to respond: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), stay Undecided (U), Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD). The responses have been indicated in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that 38 (87%) of curriculum leaders believed that curriculum supervision schedules should be planned together by both the leader and the led. This was not different from the views of the teachers. While 101 (84%) agreed, 16 (13%) disagreed. This is in line with the views of Glanz and Neville (1997), which has been toward a significant involvement of teachers in peer supervision and programme development. These developments are often included in the larger theme of teacher leadership. This also conforms to democratic [leadership] climate which is characterized by collective decision making. Perspectives are gained from group discussions and technical advice of

leaders. Praise and criticism are, therefore, objectives in such environments.

The outcome of Table 2 also revealed that 35 (80%) of curriculum leaders agreed that the procedure to be used by the supervisor should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisee. The teachers also shared similar views with the curriculum leaders. This represents 91 (76%) of the teachers although 23 (19%) disagreed. Both curriculum leaders and teachers also supported the view that curriculum supervision should involve unannounced classroom visits. They held that when such visits are made, the real practices in the classroom would be revealed. This represents 29 (66%) and 62 (55%) of curriculum leaders and teachers respectively. This supports the views of Glatthorn et al. (2006), that such informal observations can serve several purposes. For instance, it is a useful way of making the curriculum supervisor more visible, thus reducing the isolation that most

teachers feel. They contend further that it can result in catching the teacher, either doing something right/praiseworthy or something needing correction/reprimand.

With regard to informal observations being frequent and numerous in curriculum supervision, 33 (75%) of curriculum leaders and 77 (64%) of teachers were in support. This implies that in order to ensure effective curriculum supervision, curriculum supervisors need to undertake regular informal observation. The respondents also held that informal observation should be the ideal tool for conducting curriculum supervision. This represents 31 (71%) of curriculum leaders and 69 (58%) of teachers. This is in sync with the opinion of some successful principals and supervisors which is re-echoed by Glatthorn et al. (2006), that informal observation should be frequent and numerous, without necessarily interrupting lessons.

Table 2. Curriculum supervision practices.

	Curriculum Leaders										Teachers									
	SA		A		U		D		SD		SA		A		U		D		SD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1) Curriculum supervision schedules should be planned together by both the leader and the led.	17	39	21	48	1	2	5	11	-	-	47	39	54	45	3	3	16	13	-	-
2) The procedure to be used by the supervisor should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisee.	14	32	21	48	1	2	8	18	-	-	41	34	50	42	6	5	18	15	5	4
3) Informal observation should be the ideal tool for conducting curriculum supervision.	7	16	24	55	1	2	9	20	3	7	21	18	48	40	19	16	29	24	2	2
4) Informal observations should be frequent and numerous in order to make the desired impact.	14	32	19	43	3	7	8	18	-	-	28	23	49	41	17	14	21	18	5	4
5) Curriculum supervision should be mostly unannounced classroom visits.	13	30	16	36	1	2	13	30	1	3	23	20	39	35	12	11	34	30	4	4
6) Effective curriculum supervision tasks require special orientation.	20	46	22	50	1	2	1	2	-	-	47	39	63	53	9	7	1	1	-	-

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 finally revealed that respondents believed that in order to ensure effective curriculum supervision, supervisors should be given orientation on what they should supervise and how to supervise those aspects of the curriculum. This represents 42 (96%) of curriculum leaders and 110 (92%) of teachers. In a similar view, Garubo and Rothstein (1998), state that supervisors have to commit themselves to a lifelong learning experience if they are to deliver to teachers (and students) the help they need in identifying and solving their own problems. They will have to gain a greater self-awareness and an ability to use them in more conscious ways.

### 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. It can be concluded that the major purposes of

- curriculum supervision include monitoring performance, sharing information and solving problems.
- 2. With regard to curriculum supervision practices it can be concluded that :
  - i. curriculum supervision schedules should be planned together by both the leader and the led.
  - ii. the procedure to be used by the supervisor should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisee.
  - iii. curriculum supervision should involve unannounced classroom visits so that real practices in the classroom would be revealed.
  - iv. the curriculum supervisor should appear more visible, thus reducing the isolation that most teachers feel.
  - v. informal observations should be frequent and numerous in curriculum supervision, without necessarily interrupting lessons.
  - vi. supervisors should be given orientation on what they



should supervise and how to supervise those aspects of the curriculum.

Supervisors have to develop better interpersonal relationships with those they serve, helping them to see that problem solving can only work well in a friendly and trusted school environment.

It is therefore recommended that, ensuring compliance with the rules governing institutions should be considered as a major purpose of curriculum supervision. This would enable curriculum implementers to follow what have been stipulated in the guidelines for curriculum implementation. Also, with regard to the curriculum supervision practices, it is recommended that the procedure to be used by the supervisors should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisees.

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