

Instructional Supervision Practice and Effective Teaching in Ugandan Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This paper examines the effect of instructional supervision practice on effective teaching in Ugandan secondary schools. Local research in this area is scarce and this paper draws on available literature to examine the notion of effective teaching in secondary schools in Uganda. Specifically, the paper examines existing instructional supervision practices derived from robust research that could be employed to improve teaching and students' learning outcomes in schools. Scoping review design was used for this study. Electronic databases and gray literature from organization websites, regulatory bodies (Government reports/Acts) and conference abstracts were searched to extract relevant information. Findings revealed that instructional supervision practice significantly improves teachers' professional competence thus making them effective for the benefit of learners. The study concluded that learners' attainment is determined by the quality of teaching that depends on the effectiveness of instructional supervision provided by the Head teacher. Finally, it is recommended that instructional supervision should be on going, focused on teacher support, learners' needs and in accordance with NCDC's guidelines.

Keywords: Instructional Supervision Practice, Head teachers, Effective Teaching, Students' learning outcomes.

1.0 Background

Secondary school education in Uganda has been rapidly expanding for more than two decades. Among the factors responsible for this trend are national priorities to provide equitable access to education, education liberalization, and provision of education to all eligible individuals (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013). Various international declarations and conventions, such as

Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have also accelerated the need to expand secondary education, both locally in Uganda and globally (Agi, 2020). As a result, Uganda launched the Universal Secondary Education (USE) program in 2007 (Dejaeghere, Williams, and Kyeyune 2009) to achieve this goal and absorb the large number of children who had been promoted from the primary cycle.

To provide universal access to education, the Ugandan government had to build more secondary schools, including in sub-counties where none existed, as well as rehabilitate and expand those that were already there to accommodate additional students (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013). With the attainment of infrastructural expansion and increase in enrolment realized, it follows that, efficiency and effectiveness of education programs had to be managed. More Head teachers were then hired and mandated to maintain education standards and to ensure effective teaching was conducted in schools (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2010).

In practice however, inappropriate pedagogies that hamper the attainment of effective learning are being employed by teachers in many schools. Yet globally it is recognized that instructional supervision practice of the Head teacher could encourage teachers to apply research-based teaching practices such as lesson planning that has been proven to positively improve students' learning outcomes, Malunda, Onen, Musaazi and Oonyu (2016). Keen evaluation and monitoring of the teaching process by Head teachers of schools is emphasized (Jorge, 2019). Instructional supervision gives constant reminders to teachers of their daily obligations the fact that they are key in sustaining effective teaching. This study was prompted by public concerns over the declining academic standards in secondary schools in Uganda which was attributed to ineffective teaching and low learners' outcomes.

1.1 Historical perspective

Following the introduction of formal education in Uganda in the 1880s, Christian missionaries began to supervise instruction. The supervisory function was delegated to religious leaders at the time. Eventually, the department of education was established at Makerere University in 1925, charged with the responsibility of developing and supervising how the syllabi were being followed in schools (Ssekamwa, 1997). This created a strong higher education sector thus making Uganda popular in producing highly qualified teachers in the Sub-Saharan Africa (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 2010; Malunda et al, 2016). During the 1980s, additional National Teachers' Colleges (NTCs) were established to produce more teachers needed to meet the expanded access, Adotevi & Taylor (2019) and more public and private Universities to train additional secondary school teachers in the country were also put in place (Malunda et al, 2016).

However, evidence on the ground shows that teaching in secondary schools does not conform to the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) and Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) required standards as many teachers do not prepare lesson plans, schemes of work, and practical lessons for learners (Adotevi & Taylor, 2019). The Uganda National Examinations Board (2015) places blame of the downward trend in the performance of students to inefficiency in teaching in spite of supervision by Head teachers. This study aimed at reviewing literature to

examine: (1) the role of Head teachers in ensuring effective teaching and (2) the effect of instructional supervision practice on student learning outcomes in Ugandan secondary schools.

1.2 Theoretical perspective

The study was premised on Theory X and Theory Y of motivation and management by McGregor. According to theory X, supervisors will treat their employees depending on what they think motivates them to work (McGregor, 1960). The theory X supervisor, for example, assumes that his employees dislike work, lack motivation and responsibility, and will always try to avoid it. As a result, workers need to be closely supervised if they are to effectively perform the desired roles. Theory X therefore demands that Head teachers supervise instruction, lack of which leads to inefficiency in the performance of teaching roles.

Theory Y supervisors according to McGregor assume that employees naturally like to work without being forced to do so. They are self-motivated and are willing to take responsibility of what they are doing and therefore, there is no need to closely supervise employees. Theory Y encourages Head teachers to use an inclusive style of management where every teacher is involved in decision making to motivate them to work.

The study therefore assumed that Head teachers of secondary schools will supervise instruction depending on what they think about their teachers. For example, in schools where Head teachers feel their teachers are unmotivated, lazy and do not like to work, close supervision and monitoring of teaching takes place. If Head teachers think their teachers love to work and find pride in taking responsibility in what they are doing, limited supervision takes place. Realizing effective teaching in schools would therefore depend on the level of supervision that takes place as determined by the character of teachers one is dealing with.

1.3 Definition and conceptualization

This paper examined two main notions: instructional supervision practice and effective teaching. According to Oyewole and Ethinola (2014), instructional supervision is a collaborative process of cooperating and relating well with teachers in order to improve teaching. Instructional supervision, on the other hand, is defined by Ekundayo and Oyerinde (2013) as a behavior that is officially intended to improve teachers' job performance by facilitating students' learning. Anike, Eyiene and Mercy (2015) observe that instructional supervision practices include: classroom observations, scrutinizing schemes of work, lesson plans, learners note books, attendance of teachers to lessons, conferencing with teachers before, during and after they have taught and carrying out quality assessment of learners. These practices are in corroboration with Charles, Chris and Kasgei (2012) who emphasize that teachers should be observed regularly to ensure that they: plan for lessons early, effectively use teaching aids, relate well with students and ensure strict adherence to the curriculum.

In a school system, the Head teacher may delegate some of the instructional supervision roles to heads of department and other assigned administrators to ensure effective teaching takes place (Tesfaw and Hofman, 2014). Delegation is vital because some instructional supervision practices

such as classroom observations and conferencing or discussion with teachers require an administrator to physically interact with the supervisee. This may not be possible for the Head teacher alone to handle. Teachers also require immediate feedback after the observation process and at all phases of conferencing to determine whether they understand and agree to the follow up targets of the lesson. Ekaette and Eno (2016) advise that giving constructive feedback to teachers requires Head teachers to possess the relevant knowledge and capacity to enforce and mobilize their teachers for the exercise.

Effective teaching is one aimed at promoting students' learning through application of professional skills in the instructional process (Devlin and Samarawickrema 2010). However, students' achievement is often hampered by unprofessional practices always used by teachers that cause inefficiency in the learning process. Malunda et al (2016) observes that many teachers have abandoned the use of recommended pedagogical practices like lesson planning and scheming associating this to Head teachers' lack of instructional supervision. Yet Head teachers are responsible for ensuring that teachers apply sound teaching practices that are effective in improving students learning outcomes.

The government of Uganda has instituted policy guidelines on instructional supervision challenging Head teachers to be custodians of good education and high standards, effective implementors of the national curriculum, monitors of adequate syllabus coverage and quality teaching/learning in schools in order to achieve the national objectives of education (The Republic of Uganda, 2002; The Republic of Uganda, 2008; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). If Head teachers fail to meet the required standards and expectations in the management of instruction, the objective of providing equitable access to quality education for citizens will not be realized. This will result in wastage of resources that have been devoted to expand the secondary education sector. As a result, the study sought to examine how Head teachers' instructional supervision practice affects teaching in Ugandan secondary schools.

1.4 Purpose of study

To examine how Head teachers' instructional supervision practices result in effective teaching in Ugandan secondary schools.

1.5 Objectives

- i. To investigate the role of Head teachers in ensuring effective teaching in Ugandan secondary schools.
- ii. To examine the effect of instructional supervision practice on student learning outcomes in Ugandan secondary schools.

2.0 Methods/Design

This study used scoping review approach because it is ideal for determining a wide scope of literature and describing existing literature on a given topic (Munn, Micah, Stern, Tufanaru, McArthur and Aromataris, 2018; Sucharew and Macaluso, 2019). Thus, the researchers found it appropriate in extracting relevant information that was available concerning instructional supervision practice and effective teaching in secondary schools.

A comprehensive search strategy that included electronic databases, hand searches, reference lists as well as gray literature from presentations, regulatory data (government reports or Acts), working papers and conference abstracts was conducted to identify relevant publications or papers for inclusion in the study. Search terms included: 'effective teaching' AND 'instructional supervision practice' AND 'teacher supervision' AND 'teachers' effectiveness' AND 'students' academic performance' OR 'students' learning outcomes.

The criteria for selection included articles published both locally and internationally in English language, irrespective of publication years. Participants comprised Inspectors of schools, Head teachers, teachers and students. The inclusion criteria involved any publication that contained aspects of instructional supervision, effective teaching and students' learning outcomes in schools. Publications that did not meet this selection section criteria were automatically left out of the review process.

3.0 Literature review

3.1 The role of Head teachers in ensuring effective teaching in Ugandan secondary schools

The role of the Head teacher as an instructional supervisor in secondary schools, both locally in Uganda and globally, has become more important than ever before. Omaali, Kalule and Baguwemu (2019); Uganda National Examination Board (2015); Education, Encyclopedia (2020) point out the growing demand for heads of schools to ensure effective teaching results from the ongoing decline in the quality of teaching in schools as evidenced by low grades in the national examinations. Malunda et al (2016) attributes this to teachers' use of ineffective pedagogical practices such as teacher centered teaching approach, teaching without lesson planning or scheming and lack of assessment due to reluctance of Head teachers to supervise instruction.

Scholars suggest that Head teachers take on a variety of instructional supervision roles in order to achieve effective teaching. Mpungu (2018) emphasizes that Head teachers are responsible for: providing direction in the implementation of the approved curriculum in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Sports, ensuring that teachers prepare schemes of work, lesson plans, and teaching-learning aids, checking on pupils' work books, projects, practical lessons, and assignments on a regular basis, and ensuring that learners' exercise books are marked. According to Oyewole and Ethinola (2014), in order to effectively supervise instruction, Head teachers must be competent in the key managerial areas of planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising, directing, and controlling. In agreement, Lydiah and Nasongo (2009) argue that if schools are to make a difference in students' learning outcomes, one of the significant factors that contribute to effective teaching is competence in instructional leadership.

Oyewole et al (2014) contend that conducting regular class visits to scrutinize teachers' work guarantees better performance by teachers. According to Dull (2003), 21st century Head teachers' roles in promoting effective teaching include: regularly visiting and observing teachers while they teach in class, holding meetings either individually or as a group to discuss ways of improving their pedagogical practices, organizing demonstration lessons, inducting newly appointed teachers and

those transferred to the school, and timely availing instructional resources; and promoting professional development of teachers.

Manaseh (2016) agrees with the scholarly viewpoint that the role of the Head teacher is to coordinate the curriculum, monitor teaching activities throughout the school, conduct lesson observation, and participate in curriculum review. Head teachers are responsible for promoting teacher professional development by enhancing their knowledge through classroom observations, communicating high expectations, and ensuring that the school environment is conducive to learning (Wyatt, 2017). Omaali et al. (2019) define the role of the Head teacher in ensuring effective teaching as holding teachers accountable for what they do in class and ensuring better lesson planning and delivery, thereby promoting efficiency in the teachers.

Mulunda et al (2016) categorizes the instructional supervision practices of the Head teacher into two: (1) classroom observations-performed either formally or informally and (2) portfolio supervision. Formal observations involve holding a meeting with a teacher before a lesson starts, sitting in class during the lesson and after the lesson, discussing key aspects of classroom observations and targeting areas of improvement (Ekaette et al, 2016). Informal classroom observations occur when the Head teacher or another administrator pays an impromptu visit to a class to gather information on how teaching is being conducted. Portfolio supervision involves reviewing of teachers' records such as lesson plans, schemes of work, lesson notes among others (Mulunda et al, 2016).

Whereas the role of Head teachers is to ensure effective teaching, literature shows they face a lot of challenges in the implementation of instructional supervision. Manaseh (2016) points out lack of support in acquiring the required skills as a major challenge which hampers Head teachers from performing the supervisory role. Feye (2019) blames instructional supervision challenges on Head teachers themselves. To him heads of schools have always failed to follow work plans and they usually conflict with staff members; they lack transparency and do not collaborate with the surrounding communities for support. Ayeni (2012) on the other hand attributes the challenge to inadequate supply of instructional materials like textbooks coupled with lack of infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and classrooms in schools that try to facilitate effective supervision. Rahim et al (2020) identified internal and external challenges while investigating the challenges faced by practicing Head teachers of secondary schools in Malaysia while implementing the instructional supervision role. According to the study, Internal challenges are a creation of Head teachers' own weaknesses due to lack of knowledge, negative attitude and limited experience in instructional supervision practice. External challenges are those that result from lack of cooperation from parents, resistance by teachers and lack of support from the schools' stakeholders; this hinder effective implementation of instructional supervision.

Wieczorek & Manard (2018) in their study identified difficulty in fitting into the community: time management constraints, uncertainty of roles and limited resources as a common challenge that beginner Head teachers face. They further add that novice Head teachers lack the knowledge to handle policy and curriculum issues including budgeting which are essential in the supervision exercise. Lack of understanding in critical management areas causes confusion and thus affects Head teachers in effective implementation of the instructional supervision program. As a result,

Head teachers are derailed to focus more on fault-finding and negative criticism of teachers instead of assisting them improve in areas they find challenges in (Mulunda. et al, 2016). Okoroma (2015) agrees with other scholars on the challenges that Head teachers face in his study, 'School supervision and teacher effectiveness in secondary schools in River State, Nigeria.' He found out that: insufficient funds (84%), inadequate budgetary provision (90%), lack of professional competence (80%) and inadequate school facilities (88%) accounted for the common challenges that hampered implementation of instructional supervision.

Efforts to promote effective implementation of instructional supervision in secondary schools may not be achieved unless challenges faced by Head teachers are attended to. According to Dejaeghere et al. (2009), there is a need for training that is focused on specific skills such as resource management. They recommend training to address specific skill areas such as: budgeting, overall school management and identification of teachers' needs, working with MoES, education stakeholders and the community. Rahim et al (2020) advises education authorities to regularly arrange workshops and training programs during holidays for Head teachers to enhance their competence and knowledge in implementing instructional supervision in schools.

3.2 The effect of instructional supervision practice on secondary school students' learning outcomes in Uganda

According to studies, instructional supervision is linked to long-term improvements in the quality of learning outcomes, which creates valuable educational opportunities for students' academic progression. Head teachers, according to Norhayati, Mohd Shaladdh, Noor Rohana, and Mohd (2017), are important people in spearheading change by carrying out instructional supervision practices to promote effective teaching. The Ugandan government, through the Ministry of Education, emphasizes the importance of school heads supervising instruction as a strategic goal to improve secondary education quality and efficiency through effective management (Ministry of Education and Sports 2013; The Republic of Uganda, 2008; The Republic of Uganda, 2002).

The MoES, through the Directorate of Education Standards (DES), stipulates in its inspection guidelines that the quality of teaching is linked to the quality of school leadership (Ministry of Education and Sports 2012). This guideline also emphasizes that learners' achievement in classwork and examinations is related to the quality of teaching for which the Head teachers are responsible. For example, if the students' achievement is low, how can the school's leadership be judged to be effective? As a result, it is not possible to rate the teaching and learning process as good. Thus, Malunda et al. (2016) recommend that Head teachers closely supervise the instructional process to ensure that teachers adhere to the standards established by the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC). Only through close monitoring of teaching will Uganda's goals of providing high-quality secondary education be realized.

According to Lydiah and Nasongo (2009), Head teachers require organizational skills in curriculum management, quality improvement measures, and teamwork to influence high academic achievement of students; additionally, Head teachers' involvement in checking teaching and learning and assisting in the eradication of examination malpractice contribute to teacher

effectiveness, resulting in improved academic performance. To Enock et al (2013), supervision of instruction allows Head teachers to identify the capabilities and challenges of newly hired teachers while also assisting incompetent teachers to improve their job performance. A study by Dangara (2015) on: “**the impact of instructional supervision practice on academic performance of students in Nasarawa state in Nigeria**” reveals that class visitations by Head teachers positively affected academic performance of students because teachers prepared well when they expected a supervisor in class.

In addition to raising awareness about teachers' challenges, supervision helps to shape teachers' behavior in the classroom and identify students' needs by stimulating dialogue between the supervisor and the teacher. When Head teachers are familiar with individual teachers' challenges and behavior, they can identify their instructional needs, ensuring that teachers are performing their duties as required. Teacher competence is thus an important factor in improving classroom delivery because it ensures effective learning in schools. In light of this, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) management guideline recommends that Head teachers supervise teachers in order to professionally develop them and ensure efficiency for quality output in secondary education.

The evidence in the literature shows that the Head teacher's instructional supervisory role in ensuring effective teaching in schools is well documented elsewhere. However, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Sports' Directorate of Education Standards, less than 20% of Head teachers in Uganda's secondary schools supervised instruction, making it difficult to determine whether teaching was being done as required (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2012). Three questions therefore arise: (1) Are Ugandan Head teachers aware of their instructional supervision responsibilities? (2) Is instructional supervision performed by Head teachers? (3) Do the Head teachers have the necessary skills to supervise instruction? With these questions unanswered, the paper intends to create an understanding of effective teaching and how it can be periodically reviewed to ensure transformation of instructional supervision practices to overcome the prevailing challenges arising from the quest to provide universal access to quality secondary education in Uganda and beyond.

4.0 Discussion

The study's findings revealed that instructional supervision practice improves teaching effectiveness and that Head teachers have a variety of instructional roles to fulfill. This is supported by earlier studies of Anike et al (2015); Manaseh (2016); Mpungu (2018) and Dangara (2015) which identified Head teachers instructional practices as: classroom observations, scrutinizing schemes of work, lesson plans, learners note books and attendance of teachers to lessons; conferencing with teachers before, during and after they have taught as well as ensuring quality assessments of learners. Ekaette and Eno (2016) however advise that constructive feedback should be given to teachers regarding what is being assessed or observed; and that it requires relevant knowledge of content on the supervision standards on the side of Head teachers.

This study also found that the quality of instructional supervision provided by the Head teacher determines the quality of teaching and, as a result, influences students' learning outcomes. This is

supported by NCDC and UNEB reports which show that in schools where teachers did not prepare lesson plans or schemes of work or practical lessons, low academic outcomes in performance by students were exhibited compared to those where these practices were performed (UNEB, 2015; Adotevi & Taylor, 2019). The Directorate of Education Standards (DES) confirms this scenario in its report, stating that the quality of teaching in schools is linked to the quality of instructional leadership (Ministry of Education and Sports 2012). It is further confirmed by Dangara (2015) who contends that in schools where Head teachers are reluctant in monitoring teaching activities, ineffective pedagogies are employed which affect the quality of teaching thus leading to poor performance by students.

Findings from this review further revealed that effective instructional supervision practice through classroom observations leads to professional development of teachers thus confirming effective teaching. Wyatt (2017) supports this by stating that Head teachers are responsible for fostering teacher professional growth by: improving their skills through classroom observations, communicating high standards, and ensuring that the school atmosphere is conducive to teaching and learning.

The study further revealed that classroom observation is the most recommended instructional supervision practice by a number of studies: Anike et al (2015); Manaseh (2016); Mpungu (2018) and Dangara (2015); and Mulunda et al (2016) and Charles et al (2012) recommend that teachers should be observed regularly to ensure that they: plan for lessons early, effectively use teaching aids, relate well with students and ensure strict adherence to the curriculum requirements.

In spite of the importance attached to classroom observations, evidence in the literature shows that this is the least performed practice by Head teachers. Mulunda et al (2016) supported this by stressing that Head teachers of Universal Secondary Education schools in Uganda only carried out classroom observation if parents or learners complained about a certain teacher. The MoES's DES also confirms Mulunda's survey findings that less than 20% of Head teachers in Uganda's secondary schools supervised instruction, especially classroom observation, raising concerns about whether teaching was being done in accordance with the curriculum (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2012).

This study also found that, despite schools having qualified Head teachers who are supposed to supervise instruction, the quality of teaching and learning outcomes is low. This challenge is confirmed from studies by Omaali et al (2019); Malunda et al 2016) and Uganda National Examination Board (2015). They advocate for school heads to supervise teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching and the learning outcomes of students in national examinations. This scenario contradicts claims made by Ssekamwa and Lugumba (2010) and Malunda et al (2016) that Uganda has a strong higher education sector that has helped it become popular in Sub-Saharan Africa; reputed for producing highly qualified teachers who teach effectively and produce better learning outcomes in schools. Lydiah and Nasongo (2009) confirm that Head teachers lack organizational skills in curriculum supervision, quality improvement measures, and collaboration in order to influence students' high academic outcomes.

The study revealed that the Ugandan government has made significant efforts to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in providing equitable access to quality education. This is supported by policy guidelines for Head teachers, which include being custodians of good education, aiming for high educational standards, effectively implementing the national curriculum and ensuring adequate syllabus coverage and quality teaching/learning in schools in order to achieve national educational objectives (The Republic of Uganda, 2002; The Republic of Uganda, 2008; Ministry of Education and Sports, 2019). This is further supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports (2010), which mandates Head teachers to maintain high standards through instructional supervision.

In order to achieve the strategic goal of providing quality education, the Ministry of Education and Sports (2013) further mandates Head teachers to promote teacher professional development in order to improve their teaching competencies. On the contrary, Head teachers, who are supposed to champion the cause of providing quality education under policy guidelines, are failing the process, Malunda et al. (2016), as well as a report by the Ministry of Education and Sports (2012). This report stipulates that Head teachers are not carrying out instructional supervision as required. Failure to carry out instructional supervision as required is attributed to several challenges that Head teachers face. Manaseh (2016) points out lack of support to professionally develop Head teachers in acquiring the required supervisory skills as a major challenge. Wieczorek & Manard (2018) place these challenges on Head teachers' failure to fit into the community and manage time well. Besides, the Head teachers face uncertainty of roles and limited resources. On the other hand, Feye (2019) identified lack of work plans, transparency, conflicts with staff members, and collaboration with the community as a cause for Head teachers' failure in implementing instructional supervision. The existence of these challenges is confirmed by Dejaeghere et al (2009) and Rahim et al (2020) who recommend training programs to be designed for Head teachers according to specific skills needed. They further suggest that the programs should also depend on given contextual challenges like school size, available resources and school location.

5.0 Conclusions

Instructional supervision practices as identified in this study are clearly documented and Head teachers are responsible for their adoption and they should ensure adherence in implementation to achieve effective teaching. Furthermore, students' learning outcomes are determined by the quality of teaching that depends on the effectiveness of instructional supervision practice provided by the Head teachers' management.

6.0 Recommendations

MoES should set up a leadership institute that is responsible for training Head teachers on research-based instructional supervision practices so as to enhance their awareness and competence to effectively carry out the supervisory exercise.

Instructional supervision should be on going and focusing on teacher support, learners' needs and should be in accordance with NCDC's guidelines. This should however be conducted with the help of Deputy Head teachers, Directors of Studies and heads of department if the objective of providing universal access to quality secondary education is to be achieved in Uganda.

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