Prevalent Supervisory Styles in Primary Schools in a Remote Rural District in Zimbabwe: Strategies for Reconciling them with Teacher Preferred Supervisory Styles

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ABSTRACT This study set out to identify supervisory styles prevalent in Bulilima district in Zimbabwe, solicit teachers' views on the supervisory styles and find ways of reconciling teacher-supervisor differences. The sample comprised twenty primary school teachers and ten School Heads. The research used the descriptive survey design and a semi structured questionnaire with both closed questions, where they chose from a set of predetermined responses and open ended questions for data collection. Quantitative data was presented in tables and frequencies and analysed while for qualitative data emerging themes were identified through content analysis. The study showed that supervision offered lacked relevance to instructional improvement. Teachers also felt that supervision offered lacked meaningful feedback. The study recommends that School Heads should offer practical assistance to teachers in the form of demonstration lessons. Teachers need to be involved in the supervisory process.

INTRODUCTION

The supervision of instruction is an important activity in promoting effective teaching in schools. Various models of supervision have evolved over the years and this study refers to some of them which include scientific supervision, human relations supervision, human resources supervision, clinical supervision (Sergiovanni and Starrat 2006; Thobega and Miller 2008; Farley 2010; Mhlanga et al. 2012). Alongside these models various supervisory styles have emerged and these styles have different effects on the teacher and improvement of instruction. Eya and Chukwu (2012) see supervision as any programme which helps teachers achieve both qualitative and quantitative instructional delivery. This is corroborated by Burton et al. (2011: 27) who take supervision to include, "efforts taken by the principal to support teachers and provide resources, including professional development, to facilitate teacher improvement."

From the foregoing definitions it is apparent that supervision consists of all those activities leading to the improvement of instruction. It is the process through which teachers and supervisors work together to remove any obstacles to student learning in the classroom. Such improvement and development rely on a supervisory system that is dedicated to helping teachers be successful in their classrooms. Its emphasis is on the development or improvement of professional techniques and procedures.

The Purpose of Supervision

The primary purpose of supervision according to Behlol et al. (2011: 29) is to help the teachers to improve the teaching learning process in the classroom. "It is not only visiting the classroom and writing some lines in the logbook about the efficiency of the teachers, and just checking whether the work has been done according to the set plan or not. It is the process of counseling, sharing and supporting teachers to improve their performance in the classroom." The improvement of instruction as the ultimate purpose of supervision is also emphasised in other research work on instructional supervision (Sergiovanni and Starrat 2006; Sidhu and Fook 2010; Wadesango 2011). Kutsyuruba (2003) sees the overarching purpose of supervision as to enhance teachers' professional growth by providing them with feedback regarding effective classroom practices. In a study cited in Gaziel (2007) principals in higher achieving schools spent more time than their counterparts in low achieving schools in direct classroom supervision and in working with teachers to coordinate the school's instructional program. A good supervision programme therefore demands supervisors who are continually striving to improve by growing with their teachers.

Models of Supervision

Scientific Supervision

Scientific supervision is one of the early models of supervision which is based on control, accountability and efficiency. According to Mhlanga et al. (2012: 216), "In this model, the focus is on teacher rating, objective measurements in teaching, use of standardized tests, scientific methods of teaching as well as relying heavily on examinations to determine outputs." Behlol et al. (2011) write that the proponents of this inspectional model, "believe in the authority of the supervisor who visits schools to investigate whether work is done according to the set rules or not. He does not provide opportunity to give their opinions but straight away delineates the policy, and demands its implementation. The teachers have to follow him without questioning."

While the strength of the model lies in its emphasis on efficiency in the system, this seems to be outweighed by its weaknesses. The fact that the teachers have no say and are used as mere tools means they will not have any real commitment to the organizational goals. In addition it means even if teachers had problems in their work they have no opportunity to seek assistance from the supervisor as he/she does not give them opportunities for discussion.

Human Relations Supervision

This supervisory model emphasises human relationships. As Mhlanga et al. (2012) show "Supervisors work to create a feeling of satisfaction among teachers by showing interest in them as people. It assumes that a satisfied worker or staff would work harder and would be easier to work with." The underlying principle of this model is that people who are satisfied increase productivity and it is easier to lead, control and work with individuals who are satisfied.

Human Resources Supervision

The third model, human resources supervision sought to integrate the positive aspects of both the scientific and human relations perspectives. Human resources advocates realised the need to integrate personal needs and organisational needs (Kasambira 1998). The model emphasises the full utilisation of a person's capacity for continued growth. Human resources supervisors believe in giving the teacher challenging work. Workers would receive maximum satisfaction and enrichment from achievement at work. The workers would then work to reach higher levels of effectiveness because they are committed to organisational goals (Mhlanga et al. 2012). In the human resources model the supervisor's role would be mainly to help teachers develop as total beings with individual talents and competencies. Satisfaction in this model, according to Sergiovanni and Starrat (2006), results from the successful completion of important and meaningful work. The integration of personal needs with organisational needs seems to be a major strength of this model as it strives to meet both personal and organisational needs.

Clinical Supervision: The Underpinning Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the clinical supervision model of instructional leadership. The essential ingredients of clinical supervision as articulated by the architect of this model, Cogan (1973) include the establishment of a healthy supervisory climate, a special mutual supervisory support system called colleagueship and a cycle of supervision comprising conferences, observation of teachers at work and pattern analysis. The supervisor is first and foremost interested in improving instruction and increasing the teacher's personal development. As Abdulkareem (2001: 30) shows, "The advantages of clinical supervision are provision of objective feedback on instruction, diagnosing and solving instructional problems, assisting teachers in developing strategy to promote learning, motivating the students, managing the classroom and helping teachers to develop positive attitudes towards continuous professional development. In this regard, Sidhu and Fook (2010) argue that supervision should be viewed as a process of observing, nurturing and giving feedback on the professional activity of teaching and learning to teachers. Sidhu and Fook (2010) further highlight that effective instructional leadership that postulates formative supervision should exhibit effective and collegial dialogue to encourage teacher reflection and professional growth. Furthermore, Behlol et al.

(2011) note that clinical supervision demands utmost planning on the part of supervisor and supervisee.

Clinical supervision has been criticised as being time consuming. Supervisors with large teacher numbers do not have the luxury of time for such individualised attention. As Abdul-kareem (2001: 38) shows, "This model requires considerable time, which usually is not available for both teachers and supervisors." Notwithstanding this criticism however it remains the author's conviction that as a face to face process it allows supervisors and teachers to spend more time together discussing and analyzing what is occurring in the classroom and to come up with strategies to overcome any teaching problems resulting in improved classroom practice.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to identify prevalent supervisory styles in Bulilima district primary schools, compare these with teacher preferred supervisory styles and to ultimately find ways of reconciling the two and reach common middle ground between teachers and supervisors. The specific objectives were to;
- Identify supervisory styles used by primary School Heads in rural Bulilima district;
- Analyse perceptions of teachers of the prevalent supervisory styles and;
- Find ways of reconciling teacher and supervisor differences for the benefit of better student learning.

METHODOLOGY

Designed with a mixed methods research approach (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), this study adopted the descriptive survey design and used a questionnaire with both structured, and semi-structured open-ended questions to collect data and examine the perceptions and experiences of teachers on prevalent supervisory styles in Bulilima district. Typically surveys gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determining the relationships that exist between specific events. Meanwhile Mathers et al. (2009) justify the use of the survey as a flexible research approach used to investigate a wide range of topics and that surveys are particularly useful for non-experimental descriptive designs that seek to describe reality. As this study sought to describe existing phenomena, that is, prevalent supervisory styles, the descriptive survey was found to be the most appropriate.

Population and Sampling

Primary School Heads and teachers in Bulilima District constituted the defined target population for the purposes of this study. A sample of ten primary schools was randomly selected from the fifty schools in Bulilima in Zimbabwe. Teachers in each school were first placed in two categories with one category comprising teachers with long service, that is, five years and above and the other category of short teaching service of less than five years. One teacher was then selected from each of the two categories from the ten schools using simple random sampling. In addition the school heads from each of the selected ten schools automatically became part of the sample. Thus, the total sample consisted of twenty teachers and ten School Heads.

Data Collection Instruments

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection was employed through the use of semi-structured questionnaires with both closed questions (where they chose a response from a set of predetermined responses) and open-ended questions. The two questionnaires for both School Heads and teachers had a section with opinion statements for the collection of quantitative data and a section with open ended questions for the collection of qualitative data. Ayedirani and Ogunsanmi (2010) laud the questionnaire as probably the single most common research tool that is relatively well understood and has the advantages of simplicity, versatility and low cost. In the same vein, Sibanda et al. (2011) in justifying the use of a semi- structured questionnaire for their study on teachers' perceptions of lesson observations by School Heads in Zimbabwean primary schools cite Maphosa and Mubika (2008) who used a semi-structured questionnaire as the main data collection instrument in an educational study and the questionnaire managed to gather the data quickly and

in a cost effective manner. The questionnaires in this study were physically distributed to all the teachers and School Heads in the sample and this face to face interaction resulted in a hundred percent response rate.

Data Analysis

The first stage in the data analysis process involved capturing the data for each question for all the respondents. The second stage involved classifying the data according to research questions. Responses from opinion statements and close ended questions were scored and presented in tables for analysis as shown on Tables 1, 2 and 3 in the results section. For the analysis of qualitative data, substantive themes were deduced and outlined from the data through content analysis. Two phases of data analysis were performed: vertical analysis where responses from each respondent were individually analysed and horizontal analysis; where analysis was conducted across responses from different respondents for similarities and differences (Ndebele et al. 2013). Some of the verbatim responses from open ended questions are quoted in the results section for illustrative purposes.

Ethical Issues

Before conducting the study, permission to conduct research in the schools was sought from both the District Education Office and the School Heads and this was granted. Before issuing the questionnaires to each of the respondents they were assured that anonymity and confidentiality would be upheld and that results would be reported as group data and that their names would not be divulged to any other party. Consent to participate in the study was sought from each of the thirty participants before the questionnaire could be issued out.

RESULTS

School Heads Qualifications

Educational qualifications of the School Heads were collected through the questionnaire to ascertain their qualification for supervision. All School Heads held some teacher training qualifications. Thirty percent had an additional Bachelor of Education degree qualification in Educational Administration. The qualifications of School Heads were in the writers' view generally acceptable for the providing guidance on instructional issues because of their teacher training qualifications. Of concern, however, was that only 30% of the principals had a qualification in educational management and this had implications on the way supervision was conducted as shown in the section on discussion.

Supervisory Styles

The first sub-question in the study sought to identify supervisory styles used by primary School Heads in rural Bulilima. Table 1 shows a summary of the close ended responses of teachers on supervisory styles while Table 2 shows responses of School Heads.

Table 1: Teachers' responses to closed questions on supervisory styles (N =20)

	Yes	Yes (%)	No	No (%)
Does your supervisor sometimes work with you in the actual planning of the lesson to be observed?	4	20	16	80
Does your head inform you in advance of class visits?	15	75	5	25
Are there any instances when the class visits are unannounced and mishandled?	3	15	17	85
Have you ever invited your head to come for lesson observation in your class?	9	45	11	55
Are you aware of your supervisor's expectations before he comes for observation?	10	50	10	50

Table 2: Heads' responses to closed questions on supervisory styles (N=10)

Questions	Yes	Yes (%)	No	No (%)
Do you sometimes work together with your teachers in planning the lesson to be observed?	10	100	0	0
Do you inform your teachers in advance of impending class visits?	10	100	0	0
Do you conduct demonstration lessons at classroom level to show what a good lesson looks like?	6	60	4	40
Do you use the same procedures with all your teachers regardless of experience?	3	30	7	70
Do you use information obtained from class visits for other purposes? (for example, ED94 salary advancement)	9	90	1	10

From Table 1 it is noted that according to 80% of the teachers, School Heads had not bothered to assist teachers in actual lesson planning before conducting lesson observations and such School Heads observed lessons from an uninformed position. It is also interesting to note that while 80% of the teachers claimed not to have been assisted, all the heads (100%) indicated that they had assisted teachers in such lesson planning (Table 2). This contradiction could be because School Heads had realised from the questionnaire that they should assist teachers but because they had not done so decided to supply false data. The same contradiction is found in the responses on whether teachers were informed in advance of impending class visits. 25% of the School Heads, according to teachers' responses did not inform teachers of impending class visits although no School Head agreed. Although not necessarily so, the implication appears to be that the main purpose of such School Heads was to catch teachers unaware so that they detected as many faults as possible. It appears that 25% of the School Heads were using the autocratic style while the 75% who informed their teachers could be credited with using the democratic supervisory styles.

An open-ended question in the teachers' questionnaire on whether supervisors had conducted any demonstration lessons highlighted that 25% of the teachers had observed demonstration lessons by their School Heads while 75% had never seen such lessons. On unannounced and mishandled visits (Table 1) the 15% of the teachers who had experienced such visits had their explanations. One teacher wrote,

Being told that she was coming in five minutes, she found me teaching Maths during English. She complained why I did not follow the timetable. My response was that I am flexible at times to benefit the learner, but she could not understand.

Another teacher wrote,

It is when you have maybe promised yourself that you will give a test for three lessons then the Head comes in carrying a clipboard demanding a lesson immediately.

Such supervisory practices by School Heads benefit neither the teacher nor the pupil.

There was a question on school climate and the freedom of teachers to invite their School Heads to observe them teach (Table 1). It was found that only 45% of the teachers had ever invited their School Heads to their classrooms while the majority (55%) had never done so. The reasons given by teachers for not inviting School Heads revealed supervisory styles used by School Heads. Some respondents thought this would be translated to mean challenging the School Head's authority, while yet still others equated this with inviting trouble. One respondent had this to say,

If I were to invite him, many faults would be found. He is not an easy man to satisfy. It will mean that during the forthcoming meeting I will be the discussion and the whole term I will be the target.

Surely such autocratic, fault finding supervisory styles by School Heads need to be changed as they hinder teachers from seeking supervisory assistance when they have problems with their work.

Table 1 also shows that half of the teachers were aware of their supervisors' expectations before being observed while another half was not aware. Those who knew of their school Heads' expectations had got such information from staff meetings, School Heads' circulars, staff development sessions and morning school assemblies. What is evident from the responses is that in half of the cases School Heads conduct blind supervision without explaining the rationale for and purposes of their visits to teachers. Such supervisors need to consider the consultative and collaborative styles.

A question in the School Heads' questionnaire sought to establish whether School Heads varied their supervisory techniques to cater for individual differences. 70% showed that they indeed varied their procedures. One School Head wrote,

New teachers, weak teachers and probationers need more visits in order to assist them. There were also those who felt they should treat everyone equally regardless of experience. One such respondent wrote,

Supervision should be done according to laid down procedures regardless of qualifications.

90% of the supervisors consented that they used information obtained from supervision for other purposes other than the improvement of instruction. They used the information for such purposes as salary advancement and promotion. When supervision is no longer used to assist the teacher but to determine his or her destiny then it will always be viewed with suspicion and

scepticism by the teachers and colleagueship which is essential in supervision will never be attained.

Questions were asked in both questionnaires on whether any discussions were held between the supervisor and teacher after a class visit. It was heartening to note that both categories of respondents agreed that in 80 % of the cases School Heads always discussed the lessons observed with teachers. Such School Heads can be said to be using the participatory style in which a mutual agreement is reached on the outcome of the lesson and the way forward. While all School Heads indicated that they had discussed lessons with teachers, 5% of the teachers indicated that their School Head had never discussed observed lessons with them. Although this number appears negligible it is cause for concern, as it could be interpreted to mean that 5% of the teachers in Bulilima never receive feedback on lesson observation from their supervisors.

Another question in both questionnaires sought to find out if supervisors made any follow ups to check on recommendations for improvement suggested during previous supervision. On this question, School Heads and teachers' responses could not converge. While 80% of the School Heads indicated that they always made follow ups, only 25% of the teachers agreed that they had follow ups always made on their observed lessons. The author is tempted to conclude that most School Heads provided acceptable responses as it is their responsibility to make follow ups. Although it cannot be ruled out that teachers also provided false information, the author does not find any reasons why the teachers would lie.

Teachers' Opinions on supervisory Styles The following opinion statements were included in the teachers' questionnaire concerning supervisory styles; a) My School Head always tells me exactly what to do and how to do it, b) My School Head always tells me why we are making changes and c) Supervisors are fault finders. 35% of the teachers either strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisors dictated to them how to work while 65% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or merely disagreed. It can be derived from the above that the majority of School Heads do not dictate but accommodate teachers' suggestions as in the democratic supervisory style. 45% of the teachers felt su-

pervisors were fault finders while 50% disagreed and 5% was undecided. If such a huge number of teachers (9 out of 20) are visited merely on fault finding missions when School Heads should be assisting teachers to improve their practice, then it means a lot of teachers are not benefiting at all from current supervisory practices.

Opinion statements were also included in the School Heads questionnaire as follows; a) One should ignore certain faults in subordinates in order not to discourage them. b) I try to tell my subordinates exactly what to do and how they are to do it. c) If anyone finds any fault at all with my work I would rather he told me to my face and d) I know enough about supervision to be able to make most decisions without consulting teachers.

60% of the School Heads agreed that certain faults could be ignored with some specifying that only the minor faults could be ignored. The authoritarian supervisory style emerged when 60% of the School Heads either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they told their subordinates exactly what to do and how they wanted it done. This, in my view, gave teachers no room for initiative.

It is worth noting from the data that 90% of the 10 School Heads knew that they were not "know-alls" and needed to consult their members of staff on matters affecting the school. 25% of the teachers however as already shown, contradicted the School Heads' responses as they had not been told in advance or their input sought before certain changes were introduced.

Teacher Perceptions of the Benefits of the Prevalent Supervisory Styles

Questions on Teacher Perceptions of the School Heads' Prevalent Supervisory Styles Two closed questions on teachers' perceptions on the benefits of the supervisory styles used were included in the questionnaire. These sought to find out whether teachers were free to object to supervisory reports and whether or not the supervisory process helped them to grow as teachers. 55% of the respondents, the majority, indicated that they never objected to their supervisors' comments and suggestions. One wonders whether such teachers feared their supervisors so much that they dared not challenge them. The 45% that did object to supervisors' sugges-

tions provided an insight on their views towards supervision. One respondent wrote that, *It would seem like if comments are made they are there to stand and cannot be changed for any reason even if an explanation to that may be made*.

Another respondent echoed,

*The supervisor's reaction has been that I do not want to take responsibility for certain issues, that is, making sure that books are covere*d. It can be deduced from the responses that their supervisors are inflexible and autocratic. Some supervisors were however said to have responded positively to objections as shown by the following comment from one of the questionnaires,

They are usually keen to know why I have objected and after discussion we come to a consensus.

35% of the teachers felt that they were neither benefiting from class visits being conducted nor having their needs for growth as professionals addressed by the prevalent supervisory practices. 55% of the teachers claimed to be benefiting from the class visits and simultaneously had their needs for growth as professionals addressed by the prevalent supervisory practices.

Those who felt there were no benefits from the supervisory practices had their defence as shown below. One teacher fumed,

My supervisor has been a head for more than twenty five years and I don't think he really knows what the modern teacher faces in the classroom.

Another commented,

At times when you try to use modern ideas of applying things you will be discouraged as one who does not listen because the supervisor would want you to follow his old way of doing things.

Yet another concurred,

I feel that some Heads need to be forced to join the B.Ed programme so that they can change their attitudes towards current supervisory practices.

The B.Ed programme referred to is a Bachelor of Education Degree in Educational Ad-

ministration, Planning and Policy Studies. Some of those who did not benefit from current supervisory practice indicated that in their schools the School Head did supervision as a routine exercise only with very little professional benefit. Others thought the supervisors were rather more fault finding than helping.

Opinion statements were included in the teachers' questionnaire on teacher views towards current supervisory practices and yielded responses on Table 3. 30% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their supervisors had enough knowledge and it was unnecessary to be consulted on the running of the school. Interestingly a similar question in the School Heads' questionnaire showed that no supervisor claimed to be knowledgeable enough to run schools single handedly. The teachers also showed that while some of them had not been benefiting at all from lesson observation, this did not mean lesson observation was not good for assisting teachers. All the teachers as shown on Table 3 either strongly agreed or agreed that classroom observation if properly carried out could promote the professional growth of teachers.

It makes quite emotive reading to note that 45% of the teachers (Table 3) felt morale on teachers was low because the School Head as supervisor was not supportive. While the other 55% felt their atmosphere was supportive, the figure of 45% is quite alarming and School Heads need to take administrative courses on organisational climate to reverse the scenario.

The teachers' questionnaire had open ended questions which sought information on the teachers' views towards supervision. 65% of the teachers viewed instructional supervision in their schools in a negative manner. The following extracts from the questionnaires sum up most teachers' views;

While its frequency is adequate, I sometimes feel that it is a routine exercise carried out only in compliance with requirements.

I feel that after the supervision, the supervisor should be prepared to listen to my views

Table 3: Teacher views towards supervision: Opinion statements (N =20)

Opinion statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	SA+A%
My head knows enough about supervision to be able to make most decisions without having to seek the views of teachers	4	2	3	5	6	30
Classroom observation may promote the professional growth of teachers.	10	10	0	0	0	100
Morale at my school is low because the head is not supportive.	2	7	2	6	3	45

and the reasons why I am doing certain things - not to impose things on me as this creates friction.

Some supervisors tend to concentrate on negative aspects of the lesson neglecting good positive points.

Instructional supervision is not effectively carried out due to the fact that she/he is a teaching School Head and does not give enough time to supervision.

Some respondents felt instructional supervision lacked feedback in the form of face to face discussions, others felt it lacked follow up, while yet still others felt School Heads should be knowledgeable on current supervisory practices. Some teachers, however, viewed instructional supervision in their schools positively as reflected by the following comment, from one teacher's questionnaire *It is well conducted and the fact that there is a notice makes sure that the supervisor comments on the best performance of the teacher rather than the mistakes that can be found where there is no notice.*

The second question in the open ended section was on how teachers felt supervision should be carried out. 15% of the teachers indicated that there was need for trust between the teacher and the head. 35% of the teachers expressed need for advance notification of impending class visits. 20% of teachers advocated for demonstration lessons by School Heads while yet still another 15% felt School Heads should clearly spell out their expectations before conducting class visits. Other responses included the need to delegate supervision to other junior administrators and the need for balanced reporting of class visit findings.

Another question asked teachers how they usually felt when their school heads visited their classrooms for lesson observation. 35% of the teachers felt somehow insecure during class visits. One respondent quipped,

I neither get scared nor resentful but I always worry that the supervisor will always find something wrong about my teaching.

One fence-seater wrote, *Sometimes I feel that the Head wants to get even with me and at other times I feel the Head wants to assist me.*

The 65% of the teachers that felt comfortable during class visits also had their reasons. Some felt relaxed since they would have been notified in advance and already knew supervisors expectations. Others felt this was the School

Head's chance to know their students' progress and problems and to assist in their shortcomings. One interesting respondent wrote that the supervisor's presence changed nothing in him at all and he did not even feel there was a stranger in the room.

Bridging the Gap Between the Teacher and Supervisor

The study also sought to find out ways in which the teacher and supervisor differences could be resolved for the benefit of better student learning. 25% of the teachers felt that the supervisor should present him/herself in a friendly manner to the teacher being supervised and also comment or help teachers in a way they will feel accepted. This would include being supportive and giving praise where it is due. Another 20% of the teachers thought if School Heads changed their practice of using supervision for fault finding then teachers could change their negative attitudes. This was corroborated by one School Head who wrote,

Heads should be open on their supervision schedules, targets, purposes and liaise with teachers beforehand.

Teachers challenged School Heads to stage demonstration lessons with one teacher writing.

Supervisors should stage demonstration lessons and lead by example always. They should practically assist teachers in overcoming their weaknesses.

Another teacher quipped,

Supervisors should not come in with an air of 'I know it all'. Supervisors should come down to the level of the teacher and not act the boss.

Some teachers felt they should have a greater say during the post observation discussion as shown by the following comment,

Supervisors should consider self -evaluation - they should let teachers say their weaknesses and strengths in a lesson, then in the end they discuss together the observation and the performance generally.

One School Head commented on the need to,

Reassure teachers that supervision is not meant to fail or punish a teacher but to assist each other so that we become better teachers.

Other School Heads advocated for a permanent supervisory programme in schools easily identifiable to the School Head, Deputy Head

and the teachers in order to promote transparency in supervisory process.

DISCUSSION

An analysis of the results shows that there is need for a paradigm shift generally in the supervisory practices of School Heads in Bulilima District.Teachers want some form of balanced reporting and positive commenting that would motivate them. Teachers dislike having to defend methods and techniques which they found successful. Teachers object to being told what to do. Similar views are echoed by Mlilo (1997) on a study he conducted on the effectiveness of primary school inspection teams of education officers in Hwange district in Zimbabwe. Mlilo (1997) reveals that a large percentage of teachers would not look forward to supervision as they feel supervision is an unpleasant experience. In the same vein, Sidhu and Fook (2010) report that in their study teachers pointed out that their supervisors were more negative and 'fault-finders' instead of being supportive and that they did not like the whole process as it was more evaluative rather than supportive.

Sixty-five percent of the twenty teachers as reported in the results section viewed instructional supervision in their schools in a negative manner because their supervisors tended to impose their views on teachers and emphasised only the negative aspects of the observed teaching behaviours. Improvement of teaching must start with a respect for the personality of the teacher and the work he/she is doing. Burton et al. (2011) advise that in order for professional growth and teacher improvement to occur, the perceptions of the principal and teacher must merge into a common theme for improvement. If the supervisor believes in everyone's worth he/she must be willing to accept differences and to value each person for his/her special contribution. The supervisor cannot tell teachers when to move. Teachers have to take the initiative. In a study on supervision by Sidhu and Fook (2010: 602) the following were some of the main reasons cited by teachers for resenting supervision:

- The whole teacher evaluation and supervision process was rather threatening as it was hierarchical and autocratic with supervisors being didactic and 'talking down' to teachers.
- Teachers felt the process exposed their weakness and some felt like they were

treated like novices when they were being observed.

Kutsyuruba (2003: 37), notes that, "…teachers have a professional responsibility, collectively and individually, to reflect on what is happening and why, as well as the effectiveness of their current teaching." Teachers cannot be expected to be reflective and creative if the supervisor believes that there is one best method of teaching. If such is the case teachers bend their efforts to discovering and following the method the supervisor accepts.

One finding from the study is that some School Heads conducted blind supervision without explaining the rationale for and purposes of their visits to teachers. Teachers will view such visits with suspicion and may adopt defensive tendencies during the feedback sessions. There is need for open communication and collaboration with teachers to improve the teaching and learning process. In a study to identify concerns of teachers and principals on instructional supervision in three Asian countries by Sharma et al. (2011) the majority of teachers from the three Asian countries showed their concerns on the fact that supervisors didn't involve them in the instructional supervision process. In this regard, Sidhu and Fook (2010) argue that School Heads need to make teachers aware of the benefits of formative supervision so that they do not feel anxious or threatened by formative supervision classroom observations. Collaboration with teachers as shown by Grobler et al. (2012) can lead to the successful implementation of new approaches and techniques that could lead to improved instruction. In the same vein, Abdul-kareem (2001) encourages supervisors to improve their interpersonal communication skills and strive to avoid distorted messages while communicating with teachers.

A significant observation from the study is the use of information obtained from instructional supervision for other purposes other than the improvement of instruction as shown by 90% of the supervisors. They used the information for such purposes as salary advancement and promotion. In this regard, Burton et al. (2011: 27) caution that, "Without understanding the role of supervision versus evaluation, and thus preserving a significant amount of time and energy for supervision, an instructional leader runs the risk of only playing a managerial role in a school". Once their tenure is at stake, in

my view, teachers will no longer see the supervisory process as a developmental process but rather as threat to their careers. Sidhu and Fook (2010: 590) warn that, "School heads need to keep in mind that formative supervision is more than just routine classroom visits and evaluation of the teaching and learning process."

The provision of constructive feedback to teachers seems to be inadequate as evidenced by the claim by 45% of the teachers who felt class visits were merely fault finding missions. As Ayeni (2012) correctly observes, school principals should provide constant and adequate feedback to the teachers on their instructional task performance to ensure periodic review and facilitate further improvement in the teaching-learning process. Meanwhile, Sidhu and Fook (2010: 590) state that, "More importantly the supervisory process should provide teachers with constructive feedback leading to increased teacher motivation."

One worrying finding is the fact that 60% of the supervisors indicated on opinion statements that they told their subordinates exactly what to do and how they wanted it done. This, in the researcher' view, gave teachers no room for initiative. As Abdulkareem (2001: 112) shows, "A way of always keeping teachers aware of and supportive for what is being done for them is to engage them in the different stages of developing and implementing supervisory practices." The fact that the teachers' voices are always absent in planning and implementing the supervisory programs will cause them to view supervision in a negative way. Supervisors should encourage teachers to participate in planning and implementing supervisory activities. Supervisors need to move towards clinical supervision, which as Mhlanga et al. (2012: 216) show, involves planning together with the teacher and making an observation and analysis together which will help improve the teacher's professional growth. This participation would enable teachers and supervisors to come closer to the other's viewpoint and enable the supervisors to understand the teachers' needs and expectations (Abdulkareem 2001). One teacher in this study had this to say,

Supervisors should consider self -evaluation - they should let teachers say their weaknesses and strengths in a lesson, then in the end they discuss together the observation and the performance generally.

The issue of the need to train supervisors in the art of supervision comes out strongly in the results with some teachers calling for a compulsory Bachelor of Education degree in educational management as a mandatory requirement for all School Heads. As Ayeni (2012) shows, if the instructional leader lacks adequate knowledge of supervision and does not know how to meet the needs of the teacher, then an unproductive working relationship may be established. In this regard, Behlol et al. (2011: 33) indicate the need for, " an urgent need of the training programme for the supervisors working at Primary level to improve their knowledge, skills and attitude to perform their duties as a facilitator, guide, motivator, helper and the leader of the team." Kareem (2001) concurs when he writes that new supervisors should go through a program for preparing supervisors before they start work as fulltime supervisors. Sudhu and Fook (2010: 605) meanwhile extend the call on training on supervision to include also teachers when they write that, "More importantly, school heads need to include teachers in the loop of training and supervision in order to create cultures of collaboration, inquiry and reflection in order to enhance the teaching and learning process in schools." Fischer (2012) points out that supervision of instruction must be built on the observer's thorough understanding and in-depth knowledge of instructional theory, not on a check list of what should be in a lesson.

On the positive side it is worth noting that some supervisors did work collaboratively with their teachers during the instructional supervision process. It was heartening to note from the findings that in 80 % of the cases School Heads always discussed and shared feedback on the lessons observed with the teachers. This approach by the School Heads resonates with Sidhu and Fook (2010: 604)'s assertion that, "School Heads need to see themselves as the collegial school instructional leaders who are willing and knowledgeable enough to share their experiences and talk frequently about issues in classroom instruction". Furthermore, Burton et al. (2011) assert that, "The purpose of supervision is neither to make judgments about the competence of teachers nor to control them but rather to work informally and cooperatively to improve their teaching".

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion has been drawn from this study: Firstly, most School Heads in Bulilima did not bother to assist teachers in practical terms in the classroom. If 80 % of the teachers had never received assistance on lesson planning from School Heads, when planning is a pre-requisite for effective teaching, then it can be concluded that supervision in Bulilima did not lead to better pupil learning at all. These School Heads had not taken it upon themselves to demonstrate to teachers what good lessons looked like.

Secondly, on supervisory styles it can be concluded that about half of the supervisors were using supervisory styles not acceptable to teachers. Fifty percent of the supervisors were said to be fault finders. Supervisors were found to be generally inflexible and once they reached a decision would not change even if teachers explained themselves out. A third general conclusion is that teachers resented unannounced class visits and viewed these with suspicion. They preferred to be informed in good time so that they could prepare and produce their best in front of the supervisor. After the class visit, teachers would have liked to have face to face post observation discussions with their supervisors. They wanted to have a greater say in the outcome of the lesson through self-reflection.

On a positive note the study concludes that not all is doom and gloom as there were some supervisors, who worked collaboratively with their teachers to improve the teaching and learning processes as shown both in results and discussion sections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above conclusions, the following recommendations are being advanced.

Firstly, School Heads are hereby urged to undertake educational administration courses such as the Bachelor of Education Degree in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies currently offered by the Zimbabwe Open University. Such courses, it is envisaged will arm supervisors with the necessary theoretical background on supervision which they can then marry with practice. This will also ensure that they keep abreast with current supervisory trends.

School Heads should avoid using supervision as a way of fault finding or settling old scores with teachers and should be realistic in their expectations. They should not expect from teachers performance which they would themselves be unable to achieve.

School Heads are being urged to consider more progressive supervisory styles such as the collaborative, participatory and democratic styles.

School Heads should consider self-evaluation in their supervisory processes. They should let their teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses in the lesson before discussing together the lesson observed and chatting the way forward. School Heads as supervisors are urged to assist teachers practically in solving problems they experience in the teaching/learning situation. They are being challenged to conduct demonstration lessons in individual classrooms and to be readily available should teachers invite them to their classrooms for assistance.

School Heads should be open-minded and transparent with their supervision schedules, targets and purposes and liaise with teachers beforehand.

Unannounced class visits should as much as possible be avoided as they create an air of mistrust and suspicion.

Staff development courses should be mounted at school, cluster and district levels to discuss the importance of supervision. Teachers should be included at such induction workshops and should be allowed to freely exchange ideas with their supervisors. Teachers should be reassured at such workshops that supervision is not meant to fail or punish them but to assist them so that they become better teachers.

Finally the paper encourages School Heads to ensure a supportive supervisory climate exists in their schools. This would be where teachers are free to express their views and work together towards achieving set goals, a situation where teachers and School Heads treat each other as equals, as colleagues and are free to learn from each other. Here-in lies my conviction in the clinical supervision model which embraces all the tenets of the recommendations put forward in this section.

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