

An analysis of secondary school heads' perception of their supervisory role in Nyanga District: Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this paper is an analysis of heads' perception of their supervisory roles in the context of rural day secondary schools. A survey research design was used to describe the variables. Heads are seen as head teachers, heads of departments, deputy head teachers and senior teachers who are involved in supervision. The paper argues that supervisors in day secondary schools are usually relatively young and overburdened with work. There is role conflict between teaching and supervision and as a result there is a low pass rate. There is a need for establishing other causes of ineffective supervision which are crippling the supervisory system. The investigation seeks to provide solutions to facilitate supervision and improve pass rates. The paper views the concept of supervision from a more recent perspective - the human resources approach. The study reveals that most supervisors are overburdened with administrative work. Nevertheless, they have a positive perception of their roles despite the confounding constraints at a rural day secondary school.

Keywords: supervision, perception, rural day secondary schools, heads of departments, vice principals

INTRODUCTION

The destiny of individuals in particular and for a country at large is shaped in the classrooms through education. It is a process of human capital development (Ayeni, 2014) and espoused as a fundamental human right of all citizens in the 1948 United Nations Human Rights Act. UNESCO (2015) placed a great value on quality assurance in education to the international community.

The ordinary level and advanced level pass rates in Zimbabwe's day secondary schools across the country are usually below 50% compared to boarding and urban secondary schools. Although most rural day secondary schools are not adequately resourced to produce good results, several other factors contribute towards the poor results; one of which may be inadequate supervision. It seems many supervisory activities have been assigned, at least, in the titular sense, to people who already have administrative responsibilities. Such overburdened administrators tend to give cursory attention to new responsibilities. While there could be other reasons influencing inadequate supervision, central to it is the supervisor's perception of his/her supervisory roles.

Supervisory roles of heads involve managing the school curriculum, defining vision and mission, and promoting teaching-learning processes. Boissiere (2004) views quality as being at the core of the motivating forces for supervision in education through strategic improvement plans. The roles include those activities directly concerned with improving the conditions which surround the learning and growth of pupils. According to Ogakwu (2010) supervision stimulates professional growth; revision of educational objectives; development of teachers; and selection of instructional materials.

A role is a set of societal responsibilities or expectations of behaviour that is based on situations one encounters. These expectations of behaviour are fulfilled by people often with many conflicting demands apart from their time. These conflicts manifest in many facets of life stemming from work-related issues, family matters, religious expectations, and personal beliefs. Supervision in education is one potential cause of role conflicts especially coupled with another full-time occupation like teaching.

Teaching and supervision can include multiple expectations or responsibilities for a role that may create stress, or conflict. In the school set up and the world of work, expectations are often incompatible for multiple roles and that scenario defines role conflict (Millslagle & Morley, 2004). Role conflict can affect the head/supervisor adversely in either role and creates what

is known as role retreatism (Austell, 2010). This is a condition in which a role player (head) makes one role dominate over other roles in a bid to relieve role conflict (Millslagle & Morley, 2004). Ryan (2008) observes that, the pressure that full-time head teachers/supervisors face has frequently been researched in an attempt to identify the underlying causes of stress between the two roles of teacher and supervisor.

BACKGROUND TO SUPERVISION IN EDUCATION

Teachers tend to associate instructional supervision with fault-finding and therefore become resentful of the process as instructional supervision was known as inspection when the whole school was examined and evaluated as a place of learning (Tshabalala, 2013). Experienced teachers, student teachers, newly qualified and the under-qualified teachers may not have mastered sufficient skills for effective teaching, hence, the need for instructional supervision.

Kadziya and Katanha (2014) note that the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture had to put in place a Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe (BSPZ) as a way to improve supervision skills in schools. However, Monyatsi, Kamper and Kamper (2006) argue that the literature on teacher appraisal shows that it can be very complex and either impedes or supports teacher effectiveness. Supervision and appraisal in schools are continuing to receive attention globally to ensure relevance and appropriateness to the needs of the youth. Supervision seeks to improve individual performance and motivation. It remains imperative to evaluate effectiveness of supervision, including the perceptions of those who supervise.

The supervisory practice in education is an indispensable vehicle to quality education and an improved pass rate. Professional competence is required for teachers to perform effectively. Supervisory work, both for the purpose of helping and for judging or evaluating is becoming more recognised. According to Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) there is no clear mandate for any particular type of leadership behaviour defined by educational systems. As a result the majority of heads expect their roles to revolve around instructional leadership, but they also perform other roles like being keepers of discipline. In a school situation, the head is expected to have a good grasp of what is known about effective teaching. Teachers are expected to have knowledge about classes they teach and to be ever searching for new materials to enhance teaching. They should constantly be attempting to improve their ability as classroom practitioners.

In any school, if the organisation does not improve its expertise, workers are bound to be redundant. If it is an industrial company, it may soon come to a standstill as the products may become unfashionable compared to similar competitive companies. To enhance professional

growth, school managers should supervise the work done by their subordinates. Fasasi (2011:135) sees a supervisor as

...somebody who guides and coordinates the activities of teachers and other school personnel towards the realization of educational objectives. He mediates between people and school programs in order to ensure that the processes of teaching and learning are improved.

What is seen in some schools is a state of apathy by teachers towards supervision. Supervisors tend to suppress negative judgements, and gloss over problems of those they are supervising. To some teachers there is more of a focus on 'witch hunting' rather than supporting them. Supervisors frown at a teacher with a bad rating rather than to alert the teacher of his/her weaknesses. In Zimbabwe, this seems to be a colonial legacy born out of the old school inspectors. The supervision of schools must be for promoting and developing settings that are favourable for learning and teaching and which eventually improves society (Adu, Akinloye & Olaoye, 2014). Newly appointed heads should be given formal training and induction with respect to their roles (Morrison, 2013).

DEFINITIONS OF SUPERVISION

There appears to be no unifying single definition available in the literature about the concept of 'supervision'. Bernard and Goodyear cited in Adu et al. (2014:269) said:

Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see(s), and serving as a gatekeeper of those who are to enter the particular profession.

Educational supervision can be defined as a collaborative action aimed at developing effective instruction. It is this definition on which this study is focused, and inspired by the Ministry of Education (2010) which defined supervision as the responsibility for evaluating, monitoring, linking and supporting schools. It underscores that, supervisors are not necessarily line managers. School supervision can either be instructional or administrative. This study is more inclined to instructional supervisory roles.

THE STUDY

The researcher studied the day secondary school heads' perception of their supervisory roles in order to recommend improvements on supervision in schools. The study identified constraints in supervision in relation to heads' perceptions and suggested possible remedies.

Statement of the Problem

Supervision in day secondary schools is not being effectively done resulting in poor performance by staff and students.

Sub-problems

1. Administrative tasks are given preference to supervision.
2. There is a low pass rate in local and public examinations.
3. Heads do not understand the concept of 'supervision'.
4. Heads are not clear on their supervisory roles.

Hypotheses

1. There is role conflict between teaching and supervision.
2. Students' exercise books are not being appraised regularly and effectively.
3. Heads are not well informed on the concept of supervision.
4. Heads have a negative perception of their supervisory roles.

Delineation of the Study

The study investigated and analysed the secondary school heads' perception of their supervisory roles in Nyanga district in Zimbabwe. The study was confined to 11 sampled day secondary schools. Fifty-five subjects were studied. The schools represented rural day secondary schools owned by government and local authorities in the district. The study was carried out over a period of six months.

Limitations of the Study

Forty two out of 55 responded to questionnaires. Speculatively, for those who responded, others may not have given true information for fear of victimisation by their superiors in case there is leakage of information; notwithstanding that the researcher guaranteed anonymity.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The teacher-learning process depends on a number of variables that includes teacher attitudes towards supervision and the judicious deployment of resources. The restructuring of these variables help to give insight into what is achievable in a particular context (Kortide &

Yunos, 2015). In a study by Yildirim (2013) in Turkey; metaphors were used to describe the supervisory roles against pre-determined themes like frightening, guiding, controlling, evaluating, criticising, developing and protecting. Interesting metaphors in respect of each theme in that order were 'angel of death', 'shepherd', 'detective', 'sequestrator', 'prosecutor', 'expert', and 'parent'. Beaton (2005) observes that an element of inspection lingers on despite political changes in the 1980s that encouraged supervisors to be human in their approach to teachers in Zimbabwean schools. This observation is confirmed by a study (Mlilo, 2007) in Hwange District on the effectiveness of school heads. Madziyire (2013) argues that there is role conflict of the head as an instructional supervisor and administrator. Supervisory behaviour and administrative behaviour are neither congruent nor complementary since administrative behaviour is derived from bureaucratic authority. Bureaucratic authority is naturally impersonal and confined to principles and procedures. On the contrary, supervision is guided by personal relationships (Beaton, 2005) and a trusting atmosphere. The collegiality in supervision per se does not obtain in the administrators' perceived authority.

Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013: 356) observe:

In the Zimbabwean context, there is no officer in the Ministry of Education, Sport, and Culture who has the obligation and authority to carry out instructional supervision at school level other than the school head.

Departmental heads, deputy heads and senior teachers assist the school head in matters of instructional supervision and inspection especially in secondary schools. In some cases, cluster supervision is also done where supervisors from other schools in the same cluster conduct supervision.

Perspectives of supervision

Supervision models in school management can be briefly classified as traditional scientific management, human relations, and neo-scientific management. The first represents a classical autocratic philosophy which views teachers as appendages of management hired to carry out specific duties to the wishes of management. The atmosphere which prevails is that of a clear boss-subordinate relationship. Vestiges of this brand of supervision can still be found in some Zimbabwean schools though this type is currently not in favour.

Some supervisors perceive their roles as embedded in the second supervisory theory-human relations. According to this theory, teachers are viewed as human beings in their right rather than packages of energy needed by supervisors. This means supervisors work to create a feeling of satisfaction among teachers. It places emphasis on personal feelings and

comfortable relationships. The neo-scientific management theory (also called the behavioural science approach) is a reaction against human relations supervision. The explanation of the results of Hawthorne experiments gave rise to the birth of neo-classic management theory (Celik & Dogan, 2011). It places emphasis on teacher competencies, performance objectives and cost-benefit analysis. It relies heavily on extremely imposed authority, as a result it lacks acceptance from teachers.

A more recent image of supervision is a human resources approach. Motivation theories, communication theories, leadership theories, conflict theories as well as decision theories (Agih, 2015) constitute the human resources approach. Managers should not focus on controlling employees or getting them to accept their decisions, which are the hallmarks of scientific management and human relations. They need to create a working environment that promotes employee creativity and risk taking while tapping into the resources employees bring to the job. A supervisor who employs the human resources approach views satisfaction as a desirable end toward which teachers will work. This satisfaction results from the successful accomplishment of important and meaningful work. It adopts shared decision-making practices to increase school effectiveness which in turn increases teacher satisfaction.

The characteristics of the head's supervisory roles

Perhaps one of the most worrying problems in educational administration is the lack of satisfactory criteria for administrator effectiveness. Some problems are a result of the administrator's negligence of his/ her supervisory roles. Supervisors in education as in other fields ranging from medicine to industry are expected to be experts in the production system in their organisations. Their supervisory roles differ from the more administrative roles by such characteristics as given by Lowise Back in Agih (2015: 69). These are that he/she must:

- adapt at helping young people control themselves and even more at controlling self
- be a good listener and less talker
- be attuned to the needs of others
- be a good counselor
- know how to be fair and firm
- lead without appearing to dominate
- be able to share the process of planning and directing others.

Yavuz cited in Garubo and Rothstein (2010) views an instructional supervisor as one who exhibits a high concern for: developing and evaluating educational encounters, teaching styles, methods, and procedures. One common characteristic of the supervisory role is of

living in two worlds and speaking two languages; the language of the teacher and the language of the administrator. Teachers and supervisors operate from different perspectives. Supervisors have been teachers previously but having been cast into a different arena, they have difficulty in understanding the problems teachers face. Another characteristic involves limitations placed on the supervisor's authority. Supervisors are often considered as high ranked officers rather than mere officers. The difference between the two is more muddled than clear. The human resources perspective views a supervisor as a key member at the school's leadership team who leads without appearing to dominate. This is a normative view of supervisors that prevails in most literature. It is believed by many to be the most effective model of supervision.

The head's perception of his/her role

A role is a set of responsibilities and expectations of behaviour. It is based on a situation which one encounters. Thus, a role is expected behaviour that a society places on a position. The problem that arises is: who defines the head's role? Is it the teacher, the students, the senior administrator, the parents or the community? Each of these groups has its own expectations of the head's supervisory role. These expectations are not often similar and cannot be fulfilled simultaneously. As a result the head suffers from a role conflict. Role conflict occurs when there is incompatibility of perceived expectations for positions or roles in a society (Millslagle & Morley, 2004).

Notably, the most potentially frustrating and detrimental source of role conflict to a supervisor is that within the supervisor himself/herself. The conflict between his/her ideal role, that which has been defined for himself/herself and his/her actual role, and that which has been defined by the educational structure. In Zimbabwe this seems to affect supervision in education. Metin and Camgoz (2011) have described this kind of role conflict as cognitive inconsistency or cognitive dissonance. Although there are various conflicting demands on the head, this study examines the particular area of conflict that affects the head's own role definition.

The nature of lesson observation and supervision of records as supervisory roles

Lawyers are familiar with the unreliability of observation by witnesses. Some people pay attention to one aspect of an observation and disregard those that may be more relevant. This is typical of supervisors' failure to report on what they have seen occurring because they are not prepared to observe objectively. As such, rating scales can be constructed. These ratings have an effect of reducing the probability that observers act like unprepared witnesses in a court of law. They focus the attention of the supervisor or observer on specific and relevant aspects of behaviour (Treiblmaier & Filzmoser, 2009). The scales help to quantify observation

and make observation reports more accurate, more objective and less biased. Driscoll (2010: 160) opines that

Observations have led to some of the most scientific discoveries in human history...

Today, social scientists, engineers, educational researchers and many others use observations as a primary research method.

However, observations can be controlled. Controlled observations compel examinees to respond to tasks they perceive as realistic but which are actually staged by the examiner. This is an example of a lesson observation or class visitation. Driscoll (2010) argues that supervisors need to distinguish between observations (recording exactly what they see) and interpretations (making assumptions and judgements of what they see). This means, during lesson observations, focus should only be on events that are directly observable.

To avoid bias in lesson observations, supervisors should separate facts (observations) from their personal feelings and judgements about the observations (facts). The supervisor should be aware of the sources of observational error such as personal values, biases and expectations. Personal values may influence what is seen and reported. For instance, a highly religious individual is more likely to perceive and accept supernatural sciences than a skeptic. Biases are highly emotional and tend to distort observations. Many supervisors are often caught in the web of bias.

The supervisor should check on the teacher's record books and students' exercise books. Mumo, Kimeu and Mutua (2015) found that, supervisory practices like checking on the teacher's record book and students' exercise books by head teachers had a significant relationship on students' academic performance. This was manifested by a p-value of 0 which was less than 0.1. The teachers' records relate to personal information about students. Students' exercise books reflect the academic performance across the whole range of subjects being studied. The school supervisor should check and ensure that all these documents facilitate effective learning.

THE RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

The survey design was used because it uses descriptive methods to establish variables. It was used to establish the following variables; the inadequacies in exercise book checking, the poor supervisory practices and perceptions which attributed to the lack of knowledge on basic supervision. The nature of qualitative research is that it assumes multiple realities which are socially constructed through collective and individual perceptions in the same situation (Creswell, 2013). There is reflexivity and human actions are strongly influenced by the settings

in which they occur. In qualitative research methodology, reflexivity is a central concept widely accepted (Lambert, Jomeen & McSherry, 2010). The design gives an in-depth study by showing the merits and demerits of what is under study (National Science Foundation, 2015).

Sampling

A random selection of day secondary schools' population was done. All the day secondary schools were assigned numbers one up to 19 (1-19). A disk was made and numbered zero to twenty (0-20). At its centre there was a hole through which an axle was put. Its resting point was zero at the top and 20 at the bottom before it was spun. The researcher spun the disk 11 times. Each time the disk was spun the top resting number was considered and the corresponding school recorded. The use of this disk ensured that bias plays no part in the selection process. The participants in these schools were all involved in supervisory practices.

Data collection and analysis

Questionnaires were used to collect data. They were made up of open-ended and closed questions. According to the National Science Foundation (2015) questionnaires enable conversations between respondents and researchers. Questionnaires are also inflexible because they do not allow ideas and comments to be explored in depth. Questionnaires were distributed at various meetings through the meeting organisers.

The instrument was divided into three parts. Part one sought information on the head's profile such as teaching experience and professional qualifications. Part two sought information based on the supervisory roles of heads like methods and follow-up visits as well as frequency of supervision. The last section, part three, was about the heads' perception of their own supervisory roles. The last two items in part three were contingent questions meant to solicit personal views on how supervision can be improved and what problems were being encountered. In order to estimate the reliability of the measuring instrument a pilot test was done at a primary school and the other at a day secondary school.

For the analysis of data, simple tables were used. A frequency table for exercise book checking was constructed. The percentage composition of sample by age, experience and qualifications were computed. Exercise book checking by supervisors was correlated with the school pass rate.

Reliability and Validity

Empirical research (National Science Foundation, 2015) has shown that validity and reliability and respondent satisfaction are optimised by labelling all rating scale points with words as

opposed to numbers. This is achieved through a choice of words and phrases bearing meanings that are perceived to be uniformly spaced across the continuum, while the end points are phrased as extremely as possible. NSF suggests that disagree/agree, true/false, and explicit or implicit yes/no questions should be minimised in order to avoid 'acquiescence bias'. The National Science Foundation (2015: 70) argued that

Non-opinion or unsure options should never be offered (to avoid failing to measure real opinions) and that questions asking respondents to recall what they held at prior times or to explain the reasons their thoughts and actions should be avoided (because the answers people give usually lack validity).

In this study, the questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions that were simple and unambiguous for participants to respond with ease. The rating scale points had words, not numbers. This was meant to increase reliability and validity. Further, the pre-testing during the pilot study increased the reliability as some question items were improved and adjusted. The language used was clear, simple and specific to enhance reliability. The researcher used the test-retest method to estimate reliability when the same test was administered to the sample during the pilot study and the actual study.

Validity comes in four main types namely; external validity, internal validity, construct validity and conclusion validity. It deals with generalising conclusions from a sample to a population or to other subject populations. In this case, generalising conclusions to other settings implies other districts in Zimbabwe or in other countries and/or to other time periods. In this research, external validity assumed the degree to which the conclusions would hold for other educators in other places and even at other times.

Ethical Considerations

In conducting meaningful and effective research, ethics are critical. Ethical behaviour of individual researchers is required in both qualitative research and quantitative research (Best & Khan, 2006). Educational researchers have to be sensitive to the integrity of institutional activities. They ought to refrain from use of undue influence to compel others to participate in research. In keeping with these norms, in this study, an assent form to participate in the research was prepared. The form included items such as, title of the study, principal investigator's name, purpose of the research, procedures, benefits, confidentiality, consent, privacy and anonymity, signature of subject and date.

DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND MAIN FINDINGS

The study set out to explore heads' perception of their supervisory roles in selected day secondary schools in Nyanga, a district located in Manicaland province in Zimbabwe. Data analysis is done as the discussion proceeds. The discussion is central to the sub-problems of the research project. Sub-headings given represent restructured sub-problems. Data discussion ensues immediately after data presentation and in some cases precedes it, followed by main findings.

Heads and their supervisory qualifications

The following tables show the data with respect to heads and their supervisory qualifications.

Table 1:

Professional qualifications of subjects (N=42)

Professional Qualifications	Number	Percentage
C.E/Dip. Education	36	85.714
Grad C.E	2	4.762
B.Ed. (Admin)	0	0
B.A. etc.	2	4.762
B.Ed. (Geo. etc.)	2	4.762
Total	42	100

Table 2:

Professional status of subjects (N=42)

Professional Qualifications	Number	Percentage
Acting school head	4	9.524
Head III (small school)	3	7.142
Head II (big school)	4	9.524
Deputy head/HOD/Snr Tr	31	73.81
Total	42	100

Table 1 shows that most respondents had either a Certificate in Education or a Diploma in Education. These qualifications constitute 85.7% of the total number of respondents. Nobody had a completed qualification on educational administration when the study was carried out. This means that heads relied on rudimentary knowledge of supervision acquired from teacher training colleges or in-service courses.

Fifty percent had done a course on supervision either during in-service or staff development, while the other 50% had not done anything on supervision at all.

Role conflict between teaching and supervision

Facts and figures on professional status of respondents (Table 2) show that, 31 (73.81%) respondents were either heads of departments or school heads or senior teachers. These subjects form the bulk of the supervisory team, yet they had teaching loads as well. In the same vein, Table 4 below shows that these supervisors were overburdened with administrative responsibilities, 32 (76%) out of 42.

Table 3:

Administrative responsibilities often take precedence over supervisory roles (N=42)

Precedence over Supervisory Roles	Number	Percentage
Yes	32	76
No	10	24
Total	42	100

Since administrative duties take precedence over supervision, there is not much expected to improve staff and student performance. The result is role conflict. The supervisory role, administrative duties and teaching loads create a kind of role conflict.

Table 4:

Role perception analyses (N=42)

Item	Positive Perception	Frequency	Negative Perception	Frequency
N	Supervisor	14	Teacher	26
O	Colleague	29	Subordinate	13
P	Rural day school	25	Rural boarding	17
Q	Rural school	29	Urban	11
R	Need arises	9	Always	35
S	False	35	True	7
T	Enjoy	18	Dislike	29
U	Less Experienced	13	All of the above	29
V	True	32	False	10
Total	204		177	

Table 4 item N reveals that heads perceived themselves as more of teachers than supervisors. This is also a manifestation of role conflict. The conflict between the respondent's ideal roles, which he/she has defined for himself/herself, the actual roles and that which has been defined by the organisational structure, creates cognitive dissonance (Metin & Camgoz, 2011). According to these findings, it seems the pervasive influence of cognitive dissonance has paralysed supervisory practices in day secondary schools.

Students pass rate in public examinations

The following numbers represent the number of times a supervisor appraised students' exercise books per term.

Figure 1:

Frequency of students' exercise books checking per term per respondent

2	2	1	1	2	3	5	2	1
2	1	3	2	5	1	2	3	5
1	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	0
4	2	2	3	1	2	5	3	3
3	2	1	3	2	2			

Range: 5

Mode: 2

Mean: 2.33

The mean for exercise books inspection per school term of 2.33 justifies poor performance by students. A student exercise book is an important apparatus. As such, heads should constantly check on the volume of work given to pupils, the quality of work, the comments by teachers and whether the marking is instructional. The frequency should be above three (>3) per term.

Table 5:

Relative frequency of students' exercise books checking (N=42)

Score	Frequency	Relative Frequency
0	1	2.38
1	9	21.43
2	16	38.1
3	11	26.19
4	1	2.38

5	4	9.52
Total	42	100

Table 5 shows a relative frequency of 9.52 for respondents who inspected exercise books five times per term. A relative frequency of 2.38 represents those who never appraised exercise books at all and those who appraised four times per term. An average of 2.33 rate of inspection is obviously not effective if performance is to be improved.

Table 6:

Lesson observation/class per term

Score	1	2	3
Frequency	8	27	7

The table above shows the frequency of lesson observation by heads. The highest frequency indicates that at least each supervisor had class visits twice per term. If this is done for every teacher by all supervisors in the school, performance would improve.

As revealed by data collected only four respondents out of 42 (4/42) had ordinary level passes (school pass rate or subject pass rate) greater than 50% (>50%). One had a pass rate greater than 80% (>80%). The rest had percentage passes below 50% (<50%). A correlation analysis revealed that 32 respondents indicated that they appraised pupils' exercise books twice or more per school term. Surprisingly these respondents indicated a low correlation with the pass rate. The pass rates remain low despite high frequencies of exercise book appraisal. Perhaps the exercise book inspections were not thoroughly and effectively done. This needs to be investigated.

Are heads well informed on the concept of supervision?

As indicated in Table 4 most heads perceived their roles as mere teachers. In this respect, they lack confidence when they engage in supervision. The exercise is perfunctorily done because the supervisors are diffident about their roles. The role perception analysis also reflects that supervisors did not know when to supervise and to some extent how to supervise. They saw supervision as an administrative function which should always be done even when it is not necessary. This is a detrimental approach to supervision as the supervisees would perceive it as being redundant and monotonous.

The information from Table 4 shows that supervisors perceived supervisees as detesting supervision. With that in mind, they fail to enter a collegial relationship before supervision

begins. Thus, the gulf between the head and the teacher is further widened, sacrificing supervision for inspection. In reality, to say supervision is inspection is a misnomer. Perhaps, where teachers dislike supervision it may be an indicator of poor supervisory practices by the supervisors. Needs identification should direct supervisors to the untrained and less experienced teachers. These require more supervision and have no reason to dislike the practice. Maybe, it is misdirected supervision which teachers hate.

Heads' perception of their supervisory roles

Heads' role perception Table 7 below provides an interesting observation. Administrators did not want to be regarded as commanders. It seems this term carries a negative connotation only when referring to the army. To command is to direct with the right to be obeyed. This is an administrative role bestowed on every supervisor who is a head. The last two columns (4 and 5) show that heads were well acquainted with their role definition. The crux of the matter may lie in the ability to execute the duties and responsibilities as opposed to having a negative perception of the supervisory roles.

Table 7:

Heads' role perception

Item no	Never 1 (Frequency)	Rarely 2 (Frequency)	Occasionally 3 (Frequency)	Sometimes 4 (Frequency)	Always 5 (Frequency)
1	1	2	11	13	14
2	1	4	9	13	12
3	3	1	8	18	12
4	1	1	4	9	26
5	1	0	1	8	31
6	1	2	10	19	10
7	0	2	12	17	10
8	1	1	11	13	16
9	0	4	6	15	19
10	0	2	4	9	27
11	2	2	6	13	19
12	1	0	4	19	19
13	1	1	2	14	22
14*	7	9	7	11	6
15	1	0	4	14	24
16	0	1	1	18	21
17	1	2	9	13	16
18	0	1	9	12	20

19	0	1	3	14	30
20	0	1	5	16	13
Total	22	37	126	278	367

Main findings

1. Heads had a positive perception of their roles. They only failed to harmonise what they perceived and the actual supervisory role.
2. Heads were overburdened with other work besides supervision. This confirms the theory of role conflict and cognitive dissonance. The situation breeds ineffective supervision.
3. Supervision was not being effectively done because the supervisory practices were entrusted to people who were not well informed about the concept of supervision; young and inexperienced. Probably this happened because senior and seasoned teachers are reluctant to move into rural day secondary schools and prefer staying in urban day schools or boarding schools. This needs to be investigated.
4. Supervisory practices in rural day secondary schools seemed to be based on human relations theory. This places emphasis on social feelings and comfortable relationships as opposed to goal attainment.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary

The investigation showed that supervision of students' work was not done adequately. Thirty seven respondents (37/42) or 88.1% had appraised students' exercise books three times or less per term. In Zimbabwe, a school term has an average of 10 weeks for effective teaching; therefore, exercise book appraisal should be five times or more. Some students deliberately avoid writing corrections; this may often be overlooked by an overburdened teacher, let alone the supervisor. Some students do not write study notes. This can hardly be noticed by supervisors if their frequency of book appraisal is low. Consequently, it adversely affects students' performance.

Findings show that supervisors in day secondary schools were inexperienced and young. Their supervision may not have been very effective because those supervised were almost of their age. 79% were 36 years and below (<36). Despite age, 54.76% were inexperienced. They had experience of less than two years. The foregoing inadequacies have adverse effects

on supervision because the young and inexperienced lack confidence at the expense of supervision.

The investigation revealed that although rather young and inexperienced, heads had a positive perception of supervision. They were however, not well informed on the concept of supervision. Most of them were often preoccupied by either administrative duties or teaching loads. For these reasons supervision was not being effectively done.

Conclusions

The findings are presented in an expository manner. They should be interpreted tentatively because it is a preliminary study. No advanced statistical analyses have been applied either due to the design of the questionnaire or to the results. The results are therefore subject to speculation and may provide incentive for further, more sophisticated investigation.

Recommendations

It appears that the positive perception of the supervisory role held by heads is inconsistent with the pass rate recorded in the schools. The result of this finding is alarming. It is imperative that the basis of the difference be isolated and examined.

School authorities and the public fail to understand the head as a functionary in three social systems, the supervisor, the administrator and the teacher. The pressures of professional expectations and strains of conformity could account for the differences noted. It is the young and inexperienced head who is more affected by this clash of roles. The Ministry of Education authorities must bear a major responsibility for the existence of this condition. They must give headship responsibilities to senior and experienced teachers irrespective of location.

- Heads must acquire proven supervisory and administrative qualifications before appointment.
- A supervisor should have less administrative duties in order to concentrate more on supervision.
- Heads must also harmonise their supervisory roles and teaching roles.
- Heads should highlight the importance of supervision during staff development meetings and emphasise that it is not witch-hunting.
- Schools cluster supervision should be encouraged to supplement external supervision by education officers from the Ministry if any.
- Heads should be more of advisors than inspectors.

Since the study does not deal with the question of how heads in boarding and urban day secondary schools perceive their roles, the main purpose is not to formulate firm conclusions. Rather, it is to point a potentially fruitful line of enquiry in the education system.

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