

Instructional Supervision in Botswana Secondary Schools

An Investigation

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine how instructional supervision was carried out in schools. The study begins with a brief outline of the decentralization of the inspection system in Botswana. It proceeds to present a brief global historical background of instructional supervision before findings on instructional supervision are discussed. Evidence from the findings, which were obtained from teachers and headteachers through a structured questionnaire and interview, suggests that the environment in which instructional supervision takes place in schools is rather hostile and intimidating to teachers to make any meaningful impression on the improvement of teaching standards. Instructional supervisors' effectiveness is constrained by the much expanded secondary education system that has seen a massive increase in schools and teachers in a relatively short time. The study concludes with the recommendation that, for instructional supervision to fully benefit schools, it needs restructuring so that the teachers and the headteachers play a more meaningful and effective role.

KEYWORDS *collaboration, instructional supervision, interpersonal relationships, schools inspectorate*

Introduction

Prior to Botswana's independence in 1966 and some 20 years after, the Department of Inspection and Field Services served all schools from a central location. The department was, ostensibly mandated 'to establish, maintain and continually raise standards of academic performance and professionalism within departmental and field operational institutions' (School Inspectors Handbook, 2005: 8–9). Owing to the isolation, remoteness and a poor road network, inspectors could not visit the schools frequently. Decisions that directly affected curriculum implementers (teachers) were therefore taken far away at headquarters without their input. A two-way exchange between inspectors and teachers needed to be created 'so that classroom teachers do not feel abandoned or that their contribution is unimportant' (Education for Kagisano, 1977: 133).

The 1977 National Commission on Education recommended 'Strengthening of the supervisory services to maintain much closer links between serving teachers and inspectors and to bring more frequent help and professional stimulation to the teacher in the classroom' (Education for Kagisano, 1977: 134).

Between 1980 and 2004, the number of government secondary schools increased from 23 to 233 (Education Statistics, 1980: 5, 2004: 7). Today the secondary school teaching force stands at more than 11000 teachers (Education Statistics, 2004: 7). The quantitative growth in the secondary education and the distance between schools has meant that visits to schools by inspectors could no longer be sustained from a central office at headquarters and this necessitated the decentralization of the inspection office. The decentralization of the Inspection and Field Services from headquarters to the regions was therefore influenced, in the main, by the expansion secondary education. This decentralization placed education officers in the regions while the principal education officers remained at head office. Both regional and principal education officers are subject specialists whose principal function is 'to keep constant touch with schools and conduct their inspection activities in a designated region' (School Inspectors Handbook, 2005: 89). Essentially, the regional education officers (field officers) are responsible for undertaking instructional supervision in schools. Their roles are tied to schools. They make regular supervisory visits to schools, monitor performance and other issues pertaining to the discharge of good quality education. They not only ensure the maintenance of academic standards but also assist in developing national policies on inspection, raise issues identified during inspection with the deputy director and also assist teachers to improve instructional delivery through workshops (Department of Secondary Education 1992: 7). Although decentralization was intended to ensure that these officers would make more visits to schools, this has not been the case because of the continued increase in the number of schools. This has imposed a limit on the amount of time the officers can spend in each school.

Headteachers of schools are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the curriculum (Teaching Service Management Directive No. 4, 1994: 4, 7). This responsibility does not oblige them to conduct instructional supervision at their schools. The need to do so may come from the individual headteacher's professional optional obligation rather than as law. Headteachers cannot be sanctioned if they decide not to implement instructional supervision in their individual schools. Conversely, in some states in the USA, for example, instructional supervision is an integral part of curriculum implementation and headteachers can be held liable if they fail to implement such supervision according to the requirement (Teacher Performance Evaluation Handbook, 1997-1998: 103).

The hierarchical command of the instructional supervision process in the Botswana education system places the deputy director (secondary education) at the head of the school inspectorate. The field officers, who deal directly with schools, report to the deputy director. The field officers' role, as mentioned earlier, is to make certain that schools under their supervision implement the

curriculum according to policy (Department of Secondary Education, 1994: 10). Owing to the accountability dimension of their role, they inspect and advise schools on best practice, whereas the headteachers have a general oversight of curriculum implementation.

Background to Instructional Supervision

Instructional supervision in the Western education systems, particularly the USA, has evolved over centuries from an inspection and control model to humanistic and collegial models. The inspection and control model that occupied the greater part of the period between the 17th and 19th centuries emphasized a hierarchical relationship between teachers and formally designated supervisors. During the first part of the 20th century— the age of scientific management— lay persons conducting inspections of teachers and student learning were replaced by professional supervisors who emphasized inspection as an activity that was conducted to assist the teacher to improve student learning. From the 1930s through to the late 1950s, a new approach to supervision came to the fore. The basic premise of this approach was that by improving interpersonal relationships and meeting personal needs, this form of supervision tended to result in high teacher morale (Glickman et al., 2001: 6–7). The latter 20th century (neo-scientific management) saw another shift in instructional supervision that focused more on teacher growth rather than on teacher compliance; teacher participation in instructional activities was encouraged (Pajak, 1993: 2–9). New terms such as: critical friend, developmental, moral leadership, collegiality and coaching entered the literature through this new type of instructional supervision. Instructional supervision is discussed in this article in the context of its humanistic and developmental aspects that are sensitive to the needs of the teachers.

The Problem

Headteachers of secondary schools in Botswana have the responsibility for overseeing curriculum implementation in schools (Teaching Service Management Directive No. 4, 1994: 4, 7), but without a specific policy to guide this responsibility. Curriculum supervision normally requires that the work of teachers in the classroom should be monitored regularly and professional assistance given to those who need it. The concern that instructional supervision in Botswana schools is carried out without a formal structure forms the basis of this study.

Purpose

The study probed the understanding of instructional supervision held by school practitioners and aimed at obtaining their views on its importance and how it can be implemented better to benefit schools. The data obtained from the

respondents was intended to guide headteachers, teachers and education authorities in understanding the importance of instructional supervision as a tool that can improve the teaching and learning processes. Such understanding would give impetus to instructional supervision and accord it special attention in schools. These aims are to be achieved by addressing the following below.

Research Questions

- (1) What is the nature of instructional supervision in schools?
- (2) Why is instructional supervision important in secondary schools?
- (3) What are teachers' and headteachers' perceptions of instructional supervision?
- (4) What is the role of teachers and the headteachers in instructional supervision?

Nature of Instructional Supervision

Although instructional supervision and inspection are often used interchangeably, they do not convey exactly the same meaning. The difference between them can be explained in terms of their purpose. Inspection has more to do with checking whether the aims of the curriculum are being carried out (Moon, 1996: 16; Gurr, 1999: 33–34). Teachers may be admonished for failing to carry out the goals of the curriculum as required in the syllabus. Instructional supervision, in contrast, is more to do with helping teachers improve instruction by directly assisting them (<http://www.psu.edu/celt/observation.html>, accessed 17 September 2004, Glickman et al., 2001: 176–7, 197). Hoy et al. (2000: 9) define instructional supervision as a responsibility, which entails the act of assessing another's performance with a view to assisting that person to examine their own practice.

Glickman et al.'s (2001) and Sergiovanni and Starratt's (2002) definitions of instructional supervision are similar meaning to that of Hoy et al. (2000). Glickman et al. (2001: 10) view instructional supervision as the 'actions that enable teachers the quality to improve instruction for students' and as an act that improves relationships and meets both personal and organizational needs. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002: 6) similarly describe instructional supervision as 'helping increase the opportunity and capacity of teachers and schools to contribute more effectively towards students' academic success'. In the light of the definitions of inspection and instructional supervision, inspection can be said to be an investigatory exercise that emphasizes compliance and the accountability framework of teaching whereas instructional supervision can be said to be more teacher friendly (with instructional supervision teachers can negotiate when they can be observed doing teaching but they cannot with inspection). The role of the field officer in Botswana, though more skewed towards inspection, touches on some developmental aspect of instructional supervision for teachers. Part of their role is to 'assist teachers through school

visits and workshops, with the implementation of the curriculum' (Department of Secondary Education, 1992: 7). The argument of this article focuses on the latter, that is, a collaborative and developmental focus of instructional supervision.

The following scenarios exemplify the accountability framework of classroom supervision. In some states in the USA, teachers and administrators are held accountable for the poor academic achievement of their students. If the students are not learning it is the fault of the teachers and not of the students or parents (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002: 3). The accountability framework in Victorian schools (Australia) is the main mechanism through which the performance of schools is monitored. As in the USA, teacher accountability for poor student achievement is encompassed in law in the Victoria. Schools are required to submit annual reports on performance. The policy on performance has tended to put pressure on both teachers and their supervisors to focus more attention on what students are learning in relationship to the requirements of the curriculum (Gurr, 1999: 33). Some positive reporting has been noted in this regard. At least one-third of the schools in Victoria have reported some improvement in students' learning and about half believed that there had been some noticeable improvement in curriculum and teaching strategies as a result of the policy (Gurr, 1999: 33-4). Any education system that is committed to realizing improvement in the teaching and learning processes should therefore always link curriculum to instructional supervision and make headteachers and teachers accountable for its implementation.

If instructional supervision is a teaching and learning improvement strategy, then it should be a continuous assessment tool that involves and provides the opportunity for teachers to continuously expand their capacity to learn and to help others. A more effective way to promote learning, according to Glickman (1985: 6), is to help those who work with students to become more knowledgeable and skilful, sensitive to the needs of students, resourceful, flexible and creative. As Gurr (1999: 36) posits, working with the teachers 'is an important means to improve students' academic achievement'. It is important that as key stakeholders in curriculum implementation, teachers should be in the forefront in the instructional supervision planning process right from the outset. This is because if teachers view supervision as doing something to them and for them but not with them, its potential to improve schools will not be fully realized (Sergiovanni and Starratt 2002: 4).

Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002: 295) emphasize the need teachers to play an active role in instructional supervision: 'when teachers experience meaningfulness, control, and personal responsibility, they are functioning more as 'origins' rather than as 'pawns' . . . origins believe that they can affect events and circumstances . . . in their environment.' Echoing a similar sentiment, Hoy et al. (2000: 33) are of the view that instructional supervision should allow the competent teacher to explore other methods of obtaining what is good for his/her professional development and for the learning achievement of his/her

class. Adding to the debate, Glickman et al. (2001: 10) argue that no assumptions should be made that individuals designated as supervisors are the sole contributors to the improvement of teaching and students' learning. The head-teacher, for example, is not more expert in teaching methodologies than the regular teacher who knows the abilities and inabilities of their classes or individual students (Hart and Bredeson, 1996: 32). To this end there should be no requirement for teachers to conform to the ways favoured by the supervisor in the instructional supervision process. Rather, as Hoy et al. (2000: 37) suggest, designated supervisors should coach, guide and facilitate rather than tell teachers what to do and not to do.

Ideally, the process of instructional supervision should have a pre-observation discussion between the supervisor and the supervised, and a post-observation discussion between the two (<http://www.psu.edu/celt/observation.html>). Dean (1993: 33) argues that this can help promote teamwork, and relationships among staff and management and can create an environment where there is mutual trust, thereby facilitating a frank exchange of ideas between the different interest groups. Sergiovanni and Starratt's (2002), and Glickman et al.'s (2001), collaborative approach to instructional supervision corroborate Beach and Reinhartz's (2000: 144) perspective on mentoring, where the mentors and their protégés can befriend each other in a collegial relationship. Such a relationship can provide a relaxed and supportive environment where the teachers' freedom of expression is not constricted but enabled for them to psychologically prepare their students in advance for the presence of a third person (supervisor) in their class. This is important because the presence of another person in the class may not only cause anxiety to the teacher (Pajak, 1993: 79–80) but can also affect the students' natural responses to the lesson. Involving teachers in a process that is meant to improve their teaching can empower and liberate them and is not necessarily a weakness on the part of the supervisor. Supervisors need to be self-confident people who should not fear empowering their teachers in the instructional supervision exercise (Everard and Morris, 1990: 167; Hoy and Miskel, 1991: 83–4).

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a qualitative approach to data collection. Its qualitative nature arose from the use of open-ended questions and an interview. The open-ended questionnaires allowed the subjects to answer from their own frame of reference without being restricted by an already arranged short-answer structure (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003: 110). Since the questions asked for participants' perceptions, the resultant responses were in the form of words that described and explained observed situations rather than in number form (Carlson and Ducharme, 1987: 897; Bogdan and Biklen, 1992: 30).

Rationale for the Selection of Subjects

The subjects of the study comprised teachers and headteachers from the existing 233 secondary schools (206 junior and 27 senior). To avoid sampling bias, the target population was stratified by regions. From the 233 secondary schools, 15 were randomly selected (three from each region). Two of the three selected schools from each region were junior secondary schools and the other was a senior secondary school. School instructional supervision as the prefix 'school' suggests, is a school-specific activity that can be undertaken only at a school by designated officers such as field officers including appropriate school staff. Notwithstanding the fact that effective school performance is the aggregation of multiple factors that involve the various stakeholders such as school inspectors, school boards, parents, teachers, students and others, 'at the center of these efforts must be the principal' (Tancredi, 1994: 18). The inclusion of the headteachers in the study partly stems from this perspective.

Further, the involvement of headteachers in the study recognizes their critical role in school improvement. 'In all effective schools, emphasis is laid on consultation, team work and participation, but without exception, the most important single factor of these schools is the quality of the leadership' (Hopkins et al., 1994). The inclusion of headteachers in the study also relates to their obvious role of overseeing curriculum implementation as appears in their job description (Teaching Service Management Directive No. 4, 1994). Teachers, as the direct implementers of curriculum on the other hand, and as the target of instructional supervision, are also critical partners in the activity.

Three subjects were selected from each participating school (headteacher and two teachers). The teacher sample group here refers to teachers from the rank of assistant teacher up to heads of department who have a teaching load. Participants from this group were purposively selected. The researcher preferred the involvement of respondents who are committed to their job and who were likely to provide informed and genuine responses. The headteacher was asked to select such teachers. The researcher was conscious of the potential bias that might arise from selecting subjects who share the headteachers' own views on supervision issues, and the effect this might have on the validity of the data.

The headteachers were requested to select from their staff, one subject from the senior management team (the group of senior teachers and heads of department [HoDs]) and one from the group of assistant teachers. Altogether, 45 respondents (30 teachers and 15 headteachers) were selected for the study. Thirty-eight (25 teachers and 13 headteachers) were selected to participate in the open-ended questionnaire while the remaining seven (five teachers and two headteachers) were to take part in the interview. The interview subjects were randomly selected from their respective sample groups of teachers and HoDs.

Data Collection

Two methods were used to collect data for the study.

Open-ended Questionnaire

A six-item questionnaire was mailed to the respondents from the 15 selected secondary schools in Botswana. In the main, the questions focused on the perceptions of teachers and headteachers about instructional supervision. The researcher took cognizance of the fact that teachers and headteachers are busy people who may not be expected to receive questionnaires and respond to them immediately. The use of this data collecting method (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 277-9) provokes thought and allows respondents the opportunity to express their opinion in greater detail, thereby revealing more information that the researcher may not be aware of.

Interview

The interview was restricted to only seven subjects because of the longer time to needed to conduct interviews. Basically, the same questions for the open-ended schedule were used for the interview. Though the interview strategy targeted a smaller population, it had the advantage of yielding more elaborate and clearer answers resulting from probing responses for clarity and expansion (Kvale, 1996: 56). The dialogue between the researcher and the interviewees yielded a fuller picture of how teachers perceived instructional supervision in their schools.

Procedure

Permission was obtained from the selected secondary schools prior to the collection of data. Participation by school headteachers in the investigation had been granted and they were asked to identify two teachers in their schools (as outlined above) who would take part in the exercise. The questionnaires were tested with a different school to determine their appropriateness and level of difficulty to the respondents. This helped enhance the content validity of the construct. Thirty-eight questionnaires were mailed to the selected schools and returns were made using a pre-paid envelope.

Data Analysis

The study did not involve hypothesis testing or the manipulation of variables. Data were presented in descriptive form using words. The data were sorted and categorized into patterns. The analysis focused on the selection of items from the open-ended questionnaire and the interview schedule that related to specific issues on instructional supervision. The discussion was focused on four themes that are related to the research questions namely: (1) supervision as a

continuous, developmental and corporate undertaking; (2) importance of instructional supervision in secondary schools; (3) instructional supervision as a specialists' area; and (4) the role of headteachers in instructional supervision.

Findings

Responses from the interview and open-ended questions are reported together because the same questions applied to both. One teacher out of the targeted five did not take part in the interview. All the other six (four teachers and two HoDs) were interviewed. Nine of the 38 questionnaires were not returned (seven teachers and two HoDs), representing a 76% response rate.

The majority of the respondents view instructional supervision as an important aspect of curriculum implementation. They argue, similar to Glickman et al. (2001: 10), that it should be an ongoing activity that involves all the concerned parties. However, the manner in which instructional supervision is conducted in the Botswana secondary schools clouds its efficacy as a performance improvement strategy.

Instructional Supervision as a Continuous, Developmental and Corporate Process

Corporate instructional supervision refers to the interaction between the supervisor and the supervisee with each having a recognized input in the process but within a defined individual role. As such, teaching as a group effort towards a group goal should not be prescriptive for teachers (Pajak, 1993). As pointed out by Hoy et al. (2000) teaching methods should be directed by the learning behaviour of the students as a class or as individual members of the class. A significant number of the teachers ($n = 21$) were concerned that supervisors did not involve them in the instructional supervision process. Indicative comments were:

Teachers should be involved in planning for instructional supervision right from the onset since they are the people directly affected by it.

Teachers are critical partners in instructional supervision and therefore their role in it must be viewed in this light.

If instructional supervision is to help the teachers in improving their teaching then they should play an active part in the process and instructional supervision should not be carried only towards the end of the year when teaching has stopped and students are writing examinations.

The teacher's input in instructional supervision is too important to be overlooked.

Dean's (1993: 33) view that instructional supervision be made an integral part of the curriculum so that the process should be continuous and developmental

supports the teachers' demand for a collegial instructional supervision system. The teachers' views on instructional supervision may be borne out of the fact that, in Botswana, instructional supervision is not well structured as there is no clear policy on it. Field officers who are supposed to offer professional guidance to teachers have not been effective in this regard. As indicated earlier, head-teachers may decide not to implement it in their schools. Secondary school teachers are generally sceptical about the efficacy of the present appraisal and inspection systems. Their low regard for the two activities is implied in the statement by one teacher that: 'Instructional supervision should be treated differently from inspection and appraisal.' Both inspection and appraisal are one-off exercises. 'In our schools classroom teacher observation is predictable as it is done only when submissions for appraisals are about due, towards the end of the year' These comments suggest that the approach is summative, emphasizing appraisal, rather than one that stresses continuity, collegiality and a developmental approach. In the researcher's view, such an approach would allow teachers feelings of ownership of the instructional supervision process and this might change their attitudes about supervision for the better.

Twenty-six teachers believe that supervisors (headteachers) conduct instructional supervision for the wrong reasons. They saw the way the exercise was being conducted as serving only the individual headteachers' interests rather than it being a selfless service that ought to benefit the school. This claim is made in light of comments such as:

The motive behind instructional supervision is ulterior.

It is a witch-hunting exercise used by school heads to punish those who oppose the way they run schools.

Supervisors use it to settle scores between them and the teachers.

These comments suggest that instructional supervision in Botswana secondary schools is far from being a continuous, developmental and corporate strategy. The teachers' concerns are in harmony with Pajak (1993: 2-9), Hoy and Miskel (1991: 83-84) and Hart and Bredeson (1996: 32). These authors believe that instructional supervision should have an element of empowerment for the teachers by involving them in the process. Most headteachers also agreed with the teachers that instructional supervision should be made an ongoing activity in schools because 'it adds to the professional growth of teachers'. 'We need in our schools teachers who can be more independent in their work and who can help the younger ones grow as well.' Contrary to the headteachers' view of instructional supervision as a participative process, teachers claim that headteachers do not involve them in the process. This may be a case of the headteachers espousing what they do not practice.

Importance of Instructional Supervision for Secondary Schools

Both headteachers and teachers perceive instructional supervision to serve an important role in improving the academic achievement of students. An indicative comment sums up their thoughts: 'Through guidance and coaching by supervisors, teachers can develop new skills in teaching methods and this can have a positive impact on students' academic achievement'. Beach and Reinhartz (2001: 144), Pajak (1993: 79–80) and Dean (1993: 33) all note that, if teachers are made part of the instructional supervision process, trust and respect between them and their supervisors can be enhanced. However, contrary to the majority teacher view that instructional supervision was important, despite the manner in which it was being practiced in schools, two teachers did not believe that instructional supervision was necessary for teachers since they were already trained professionals. 'Teachers already know how to teach because they are trained. Only the untrained teachers need instructional supervision.' This minority view neglects the fact that the societal needs on which curricula are based are dynamic and not static. As the curriculum changes, teaching methods also need to change. A skills-based curriculum, for example, will need teachers to change their traditional 'talk and chalk' methods of teaching to more student-focused methods.

The general observation that much of the teacher's work is done alone with students in the classroom further justifies the need for regular instructional supervision in schools. As some respondents rightly observed, not all teachers in secondary schools are trained. This further strengthens the need for instructional supervision to assist such teachers in their practice. Although headteachers see instructional supervision as important to schools, they were not as forthcoming as the teachers in their responses. One simply wrote: 'The way it was being conducted could be improved!' Another stated that 'instructional supervision should be made compulsory to all schools as its benefits to education are obvious'. From the evidence given by the majority teachers, there is little doubt that instructional supervision is a vital teaching and learning improvement tool. The practical benefits of instructional supervision for schools can be better realized if, as suggested by the respondents and argued by Gurr (1999: 33), it becomes mandatory. This should ensure a strong and more effective link between the field officers and the schools, based on mutual understanding.

Instructional Supervision is a Specialist Area

Teachers ($n = 29$) view instructional supervision as an area in which they ought to play a more significant part by being 'involved in planning . . . from the onset', a view supported by Sergiovanni and Starratt (2002: 4). They want meaningful involvement as they feel that they have the specialized knowledge and skill required. This feeling emanates from comments made by teachers:

Instructional supervision should be left to the subject specialists.

Geography specialists should supervise geography only and the same with other subject specialists.

This view concurs with that of Hart and Bredeson (1996: 32). It is clear from the teachers' comments that they do not much support the physical presence of headteachers in classroom supervision. The general feeling is that, since headteachers spend most of their time dealing with management and not with teaching issues, they are out of touch with classroom realities. This feeling is characterized by comments such as:

If instructional supervision is meant to assist teachers, which I think it is, then heads are too busy to meaningfully assist.

Heads do not have as much knowledge of the teachers as those who directly supervise the teachers.

However, a few teachers ($n = 6$) held a different view. This group of teachers argued for active classroom supervision by the headteachers because they recommend promotion based on the teachers' observed classroom performance.

Most headteachers ($n = 11$) also want instructional supervision to be carried out by other people in the school because they are too busy with other things to be able to 'do justice to instructional supervision'. One headteacher said: 'In as-much-as it is desirable to carry out instructional supervision, time is not always on our side.' Another one commented: 'I think instructional supervision should be spread among the management team, heads cannot possibly do it alone.' Whereas most headteachers wanted to be relieved of supervisory duties on account of their 'busy schedule', one, like most teachers, argued on the grounds of subject technical knowledge. S/he wrote: 'Teaching is a specialized activity; instructional supervision can only be effectively carried out by people who are knowledgeable in the area of teaching.' However, two headteachers argued that it is their responsibility to supervise classroom teaching because ultimately they are the ones who make decisions on teachers' careers.

Based on the majority view that instructional supervision is a job that can be best performed by the teachers, the most suited for this task are likely to be the mature, more experienced teachers and those with higher qualifications. They should do this under the watchful eye of the headteacher. Such a group would come from the senior teacher and HoDs cadres and expatriate teachers who are on contract, and who because of the policy on localization, do not occupy positions of responsibility. However, the designation of an expatriate teacher who does not have a post of responsibility to lead instructional supervision may not go well with the other teachers. Teachers generally believe that for one to be a supervisor, one has to have been a senior teacher first.

Role of Teachers and Headteachers in Instructional Supervision

As indicated earlier, teachers want to be consulted and involved before classroom supervision is undertaken. Most teacher respondents hold that instructional supervision is a professional activity that should be left to the professionals themselves (teachers). This argument disqualifies headteachers from direct classroom supervision because they are managers and not teachers. Contrary to this view, they have an official role in overseeing the implementation of the broad curriculum in their schools (Teaching Service Management, 1994). Hoy et al.'s (2000), Glickman et al.'s (2001) and Sergiovanni and Starratt's (2002) definitions of instructional supervision is that it is an assessment of someone with a view to helping that person perform better. If headteachers are curriculum overseers who ensure its proper implementation, then in a way they advise teachers. This makes them instructional advisors or supervisors. According to this argument, little difference exists between the headteacher as curriculum overseer or leader and as instructional supervisor in terms of purpose. In both cases s/he offers help for improvement although in curriculum oversight or leadership the purpose is less explicit than in instructional supervision.

Though headteachers have been designated as curriculum overseers, they cannot practically be excluded from instructional supervision. Taking curriculum leadership or oversight to be intricately linked to instructional supervision suggests that headteachers must also have an important role to play in instructional supervision and that this role should be defined and restricted to controlling (because they are accountable for the curriculum), supporting and facilitating the supervisory activities, a view supported by Everard and Morris (1990: 167); Hoy and Miskel, (1991: 83–4) and Hoy et al. (2000: 37). The argument for an important but less direct headteacher role in classroom supervision, based on the findings from both the teachers and the headteachers, is that heads' multiple responsibilities do not allow them to supervise classroom activities regularly and effectively.

The task of classroom supervision, as suggested by the majority of the respondents, can be delegated to the subject supervisors. Delegating this task to their juniors should not be seen as a sign of weakness or an abdication of responsibility on the part of the headteachers, and neither should it diminish their status in the school. They can still maintain their position of respect even if they do not physically appear in the classroom (Tancredi, 1994: 18; Hopkins et al., 1994: 153), as long as each partner is clear about their role. Instructional supervision, as argued by Hart and Bredeson (1996: 137), Hoy and Miskel (1991: 83–4), and Everard and Morris (1990: 167), ought to be a corporate responsibility that empowers others. Attempting to do everything, including supervision, may mean that heads have little to show in terms of real achievement. The idea that teaching is a profession suggests that teachers, and senior teachers in particular, have something to profess in their trade. If that is the case, then they should

be allowed the chance to practice what they know best and grow professionally in the job. The existing structure of HoD and senior teacher grade 1 can be used to good effect in this regard. The senior staff in the school can lead instructional supervision and regularly update the headteacher on progress or lack of it.

From the evidence given, it is apparent that instructional supervision in Botswana secondary schools is not being conducted effectively. Although the field officers have the official mandate to 'keep constant touch with schools . . .' (School Inspector's Handbook, 2005: 8) the expansion of secondary education and the lack of the field offices, have limited the regularity of instructional supervision in schools. Field officers' visits to schools can best be described as sporadic. A more rational instructional supervision system that ensures the official designation of headteachers, including senior staff, should see improved curriculum implementation. This would also make it possible for both the field officers and school staff to support each other's efforts in instructional supervision with the field officers, being accountable for instructional supervision in schools, playing an advisory role on good practice dissemination. This may also lead to teachers seeing instructional supervision in a more serious light.

Conclusion

The historic role of supervision in Botswana, which emphasized inspection and control, still seems to be influencing the way supervisors conduct instructional supervision. The teachers in this study argue that supervisors do not equate instructional supervision with collegiality and teacher growth. Instead, they carry it out as a self-serving activity with the motive to punish (as evidenced by the use of strong phrases such as 'witch-hunting'; '[the] motive . . . is ulterior; settle scores') rather than to improve performance. This is despite their claims about awareness and knowledge of supervision playing an important role in motivating teachers and improving school performances. This state of affairs has not been helped by the limited support that field officers provide. The perceived equation of supervision with punishment seems to exist because headteachers have been oriented in a system that believes in supervision being important only for the determination of promotion and annual salary increments for teachers. As instructional supervision is meant to benefit schools, those directly involved in curriculum delivery have an important role to play in instructional supervision. The structuring of supervision into a more rational and objective activity, as suggested, would eliminate the existing tension between teachers and supervisors. Two main issues emerge from the study in this regard. First, that headteachers should be legally mandated to enforce a more coordinated instructional supervision structure in their schools. Second, that teachers should be more involved in instructional supervision. Such involvement would help them to develop ownership of the activity and to cooperate better with supervisors during the implementation process.

Three other major recommendations emerge from this study, although not directly from the findings:

- (1) Bureaucracies can be efficient if well monitored. It is not unduly bureaucratic to suggest that the Ministry of Education should extend the role of headteachers as curriculum overseers to include the supervision of instruction in schools and be required to submit annual reports on performance. This would be a starting point to create awareness for all school administrators and teachers of the importance of implementing a national curriculum in a more rational and effective manner. Such a requirement should be enshrined in the official job descriptions of headteachers. This recommendation flows from the observation that instructional supervision in Botswana is not a legal requirement for headteachers as it is in the USA and Australia (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 2002; Gurr, 1999).

Instructional supervision as a process meant to improve the quality of curriculum implementation must of necessity involve all relevant officers at the different levels of education, from education officers down to the teachers. The recommendation to make instructional supervision mandatory even to schools would make its implementation more effective and this would also relieve field officers of their visits to schools. The headteachers would receive reports on instructional supervision from the senior staff in the school. Field officers would similarly receive the same from the headteacher. Delegating senior staff to conduct instructional supervision should, however, not stop headteachers from occasionally conducting their own independent classroom supervision.

- (2) The findings show that teachers want real involvement in the supervision of the classroom activities, so it is recommended that those who have demonstrated competence and ability in certain subjects over a number of years be designated to play the role of supervisors in these subjects on behalf of the headteacher. The choice of teachers should not be limited only to those with posts of responsibility but can be extended to assistant teachers who can be referred to as lead teachers. This recommendation comes from the popular view held by both the teachers and the headteachers that teachers need to play a more significant role in instructional supervision. The recommendation is also consistent with Gurr's (1999) and Sergiovanni and Starratt's (2002) perspective on the correlation between teacher involvement in curriculum decisions and school improvement. This arrangement would serve two purposes. First, the teachers would feel represented in instructional supervision. The findings show that they want such representation. Second, it would ensure that the supervision is carried out more regularly even when the headteachers or field officers are not available.

- (3) The effective implementation of the recommendations above would need guidelines on how instructional supervision should be conducted, particularly for new supervisors. Since these guidelines would set out standard practice, organizational conflicts or animosity between the supervisor and the supervised can be reduced. This would also clarify the guiding role field officers play in instructional supervision. Field officers are well suited to lead the process of formulating the guidelines as this is consistent with their role of 'assisting in developing national policies on inspection'.

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