FACTORS AFFECTING PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION PRACTICES

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Abstract

The general objective of this study is to study factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in Basic Education High Schools in Pathein and Thapaung Townships. In this study, sample size of respondents such as thirty-six principals and 216 teachers from Basic Education High Schools were selected by using purposive sampling for principals and equal-size sampling for teachers. The questionnaires and open-ended questions were developed and modified the items by reviewing on Wanjiru's (2015) items, theorical framework and previous related literature to collect the required data. Four-point and five-point Likert-scales were employed to identify the level and extent of principals' instructional supervision practices (Coklar et al., 2016). The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) were 0.87 for principals and 0.96 for teachers. Descriptive statistics, One-way ANOVA, Independent Samples *t*-Test and Multiple Regression were used to analyze the quantitative data. Principals' instructional supervision practices practiced in this study was high (Mean=3.36, SD=.37). There were no significant differences in practices of principal instructional supervision between the groups of gender and administrative experience. There were significant differences in principals' instructional supervision practices between the groups by age, position and school size. According to the results of multiple regression analysis, position, work load and teachers' attitude are the best predictors of factors on principals' instructional supervision practices. As the results of qualitative study, open-ended responses of principals and teachers were consistent with the findings of quantitative study.

Keywords: Principal, instructional supervision, practices

Introduction

Education is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable individual, socio-economic growth and development of the society. It increases people's capacities to transform their visions for the society into reality. The World Bank (2010) contended that systems of supervisions and support to schools are frequent areas of reform employed by world nations to improve their education outcomes and mitigate education challenges associated with global education policies. Reepen and Barr (2010) said that supervision ensures all the staffs who reflect appropriate rules, routine, procedures and regulations to achieve set objectives. In a school setting, the overall supervisor is referred as the principal, the head teacher. Every head teacher's dream as a supervisor is to get his school ranked among the best in national examination and discipline.

The practice of instructional supervision by head teachers is deeply ingrained in the basic education programs in Europe. A survey carried out by the World Bank(2011) found out that the head teachers have been allocated duties by the jurisdictions to undertake specific supervisory roles over the teachers. The head teachers have the privilege of appointing experienced teachers to help them in mentoring and supervising the newly posted and inexperienced teachers. Although principals' instructional supervision practices are vital to improving teaching and learning process in basic education, principals are failing in serving these practices because of the factors that affected on them. Hence, the levels of principals' instructional supervision practices are identified and which factors are prominent in Basic Education High Schools. So that the principals will serve to improve the teaching and learning process and to get the quality education.

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Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to study factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices. The specific objectives are as follow:

1. To identify the levels of principals' instructional supervision practices
2. To investigate the variations in principals' instructional supervision practices regarding to personal factors and school related factors
3. To investigate the extent of principals' instructional supervision practices regarding to institutional factors
4. To find out the prominent factors that affect principals' instructional supervision practices

Research Questions

1. What are the levels of principals' instructional supervision practices?
2. Is there any significant variation in principals' instructional supervision practices regarding to personal factors and school related factors?
3. What is the extent of principals' instructional supervision practices regarding to institutional factors?
4. What are the prominent factors that affect principals' instructional supervision practices?

Definition of the Key Terms

Principal refers to an assignee of the government responsible for overall administration, instructional leadership and coordination of curricular and co-curricular programs of a secondary school (Mbae, 2016).

Instructional supervision refers to constant process that aims at improving teaching and learning through provision of needed services to teachers (Kipngeno, 2014).

Practices refer to doing something repeatedly in order to improve performance through instructional supervision (Ekyaw, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

In this research, the level of principals' instructional supervision practices would be measured by Wanjiru (2015). He asserted that instructional supervision practices in the school organization should analytically examine the following variables closely on the regular basis.

1. Classroom visitation: According to Fischer (2011), classroom visits may include informal walk through and formal class observation. During such visits the teachers' practices are observed and documented.

2. Holding pre-observation and post-observation conferences: The pre-observation discussion helped to develop a rapport between the teacher and the supervisor which enabled the head teacher to give feedback and guidance on the observed classroom teaching (Olembo, Wanga, & Karagu, 1992). A study by Blaise and Blaise (2000) stated that post observation conference involves giving feedback, making purposeful and non-threatening suggestions, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting advice and opinions.

3. Checking teachers' professional documents: Checking teachers' professional records was another important instructional supervision activity asserted by Watene (2011). This included: schemes of work and lesson plans, records of work and mark books, progress records, class attendance register, and students' report forms.

4. Checking students' note books: There were five tips to make checking students' note books more efficient. These included; institute note books checking days, read no more than three entries per students, limit your feedback, use a rubric and photocopy or scan if you prefer to look at note books at home (Grace, 2014).

5. Organizing staff development programs: Programs that were appropriately linked to the goals of the school will be ineffective if the training is not sound. Nearly all teachers were able to gain mastery of new skills and incorporate those skills in their teaching repertoire if their training provides presentation of the theory supporting the innovation, demonstration, initial practice in the training session, prompt feedback regarding their efforts and coaching until the skill is mastered (Showers, Joyce, & Bennett, 1987).

The affecting factors will be divided into three types, (1) personal factors such as gender, age, position and administrative experience, (2) school related factors such as school size, staffing level, work load and learning facilities and resources and (3) institutional factors such as team work, financial management and teachers' attitude.

Review of Related Literature

Instructional supervision unlike other forms of supervision is school based and therefore, an internal process. It drew its data from actual teaching events and involves face to face interactions between the supervisor and the teacher in the analysis of teaching behavior activity for instructional improvement (Goldhammer et al., 1980).

According to Acheson and Gall (1987), instructional supervision unlike inspection was interactive, democratic and teacher centered. It was a supportive and a friendly encounter where the supervisor and the supervisee engaged in dialogue and consultation with the aim of counseling the teachers while helping them to improve. According to Okumbe (1998), instructional supervision was that dimension of educational administration which was concerned with improving instructional effectiveness. All those activities which were undertaken to help teachers maintain and improve their effectiveness in the classroom characterize instructional supervision.

Instructional supervision is the supervision carried out by the head teacher, subject heads, and other assigned supervisors in a school with the aim of providing guidance and support to teachers (Tesfaw & Hofman, 2014). Therefore, in a bid to ensure improved instructional process, school administrators must guarantee that teachers: planned their lessons promptly; structured their lessons with an interesting beginning; revised previous knowledge and summarized major points at the end of the lesson among others (Onumah, 2016). Instructional supervision was the service provided to help teachers in order to facilitate their own professional development so that the goals of the school might be better attained. However, there were several factors which tend to militate against effective supervision of instruction in schools.

Methodology

Research Method

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect the required data. In quantitative study, questionnaire survey was used and in qualitative study, open-ended questions were used to explain the survey responses.

Population and Sample

There were (36) principals in Basic Education High schools. Principals, were at least 2 service years in that school, were used as sample from all of these schools by census method.

Moreover, a total of (216) teachers were selected as sample from these schools in 6 teachers by proportionate sampling method. The participants were selected 16 (44.4%) principals and 96 (44.4%) teachers from Pathein Township. The participants were selected 20 (55.6%) principals and 120 (55.6%) teachers from Thapaung Towinship.

Validity and Reliability

In order to obtain the content validity of the questionnaire, instrument was reviewed by (8) experts who have sound knowledge and experience from the Department of Educational Theory and Management, Yangon University of Education. To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with (30) teachers and (30) principals in Basic Education Schools. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the instrument for principals was (0.87) for principals and (0.96) for teachers. Therefore, the questionnaire was reliable to use for this study.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from questionnaire survey were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 as it is widely used in quantitative research. Descriptive statistics was used to examine means and standard deviation. Furthermore, independent sample *t*-Test and One-way ANOVA were used to investigate whether there was significant difference between groups. Moreover, multiple regression analysis was also utilized to find out the best predictor of factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices.

Findings

Principals' instructional supervision practices are investigated in five areas such as classroom visitation, holding pre-observation and post-observation conferences, checking teachers' professional documents, checking students' note books and organizing staff development programs.

According to Table 1, the mean value for overall principals' instructional supervision practices was 3.36, principals conducted them in ***high level***. However, principals conducted the area of checking students' note books (mean=3.22) and organizing staff development program (mean=3.18) were in ***moderately high***.

Table 1. Mean Values and Standard Deviations of Levels of Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices (N=252)

No.	Variables	Mean	SD	Level
1	Classroom Visitation	3.27	.47	High
2	Holding Pre-observation and Post-observation Conferences	3.38	.47	High
3	Checking Teachers' Professional Documents	3.67	.42	High
4	Checking Students' Note Books	3.22	.52	Moderately High
5	Organizing Staff Development Programs	3.18	.49	Moderately High
Overall Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices		**3.36**	**.37**	**High**

Scoring Direction: 1.00-1.75=low 1.76-2.50=satisfactory
2.51-3.25=moderately high 3.26-4.00=high

Differences in Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices in terms of the Demographic Data

The differences in principals' instructional supervision practices in terms of gender, age, position and administrative experience were investigated in this study.

First of all, according to the descriptive analysis, it could be analyzed that two groups (male and female) of principals. According to *t*-Test results, there were no significance differences not only in overall principals' instructional supervision practices but also in the dimensions between the group of male and female principals.

To analyze and evaluate whether there is a significant difference between principals' instructional supervision practices and age, one-way ANOVA was used. According the results, there were significant differences in overall principals' instructional supervision practices ($p<0.05$) and in three areas. The results of Table 2 stated that principals grouped by 31-40 years old were significant differences from grouped by 41-50 years old and 51 years old and above in these dimensions and overall principals' instructional supervision practices.

Table 2. Games-Howell Results Showing Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices Grouped by Age (N=252)

Dependent Variable	(I) age	(J) age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	*p*
Holding Pre-observation and Post-observation Conferences	31-40years	41-50 years	-.25526*	.08517	.01*
		51 and above	-.24770*	.08918	.02*
Checking Teachers' Professional Documents	31-40years	41-50years	-.17766*	.07215	.04*
Organizing Staff Development Programs	31-40years	51 and above	-.23546*	.08019	.01*
Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices	31-40years	41-50years	-.17427*	.05924	.01*
		51 and above	-.18117*	.06643	.02*

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ns=no significance

Then, principals were categorized into two groups according to position. There were significant differences between middle head and high head in overall principals' instructional supervision practices ($p<0.05$), independent sample *t*-Test was conducted. According to the results, there were significant differences between high head and middle head in the area of checking students' note books ($p<0.05$).

Table 3. Independent Samples *t*-Test Results Showing Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices Grouped by Position (N=252)

Variables	Position	N_1	N_2	Mean	SD	*t*	*df*	*p*
Checking Students' Note Books	Middle-H	24	168	3.27	.48	2.354	140.88	.02*
	High-H	12	84	3.10	.58			
Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices	Middle-H	24	168	3.40	.33	2.259	250	.03*
	High-H	12	84	3.29	.41			

N_1= number of principals N_2= number of participants

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ns=no significance

Scoring Direction: 1.00-1.75=never 1.76-2.50=sometimes 2.51-3.25=often 3.26-4.00=always

Principals were categorized into three groups by total services of administrative experience. To analyze and evaluate whether there is a significant difference between principals' instructional supervision practices and administrative experience, one-way ANOVA was used. According to the results, there were no significant differences not only in overall principals' instructional supervision practices but also in the dimensions of all principals' instructional supervision practices.

Investigating the School Related Factors and Institutional Factors that Affect Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices

School related factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices namely school size, staffing level, workload and learning facilities and resources.

Principals were categorized into three groups by school size. To analyze and evaluate whether there is a significant difference between groups, one-way ANOVA was used. According to results, there were significant differences in overall principals' instructional supervision practices ($p<0.05$) and in two areas. According to Tukey HSD results, principals grouped by school size 500 and below were significantly different from principals grouped by school size 900 and above in the dimensions and overall principals' instructional supervision practices. Moreover, principals grouped by school size between 500 and 899 were significantly different from principals grouped by school size 900 and above in the dimension of checking teachers' professional documents.

Table 4. Tukey HSD Results Showing Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices Grouped by School Size (N=252)

Dependent Variable	(I) SZ	(J) SZ	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	*p*
Checking Teachers' Professional Documents	>500	>900	.26605*	.08365	.005**
	500-899	>900	.28571*	.09279	.007**
Checking Students' Note Books	>500	>900	.27096*	.10394	.026*
Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices	>500	>900	.17996*	.07387	.041*

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001, ns=no significance

According to the mean values and standard deviation of school related factors, it can be said that principals had no suggestion in the factors of staffing level (3.15). However, principals strongly disagreed in the item "under-staffing makes instructional supervision easier" with mean (1.72). Moreover, work load factor was (4.13) and therefore it can be said that they agreed on the affecting principals' instructional supervision practices. Principals had no suggestion in the factors of learning facilities and resources (3.39) in the mean of between 2.61 and 3.40.

Investigating the Institutional Factors Affecting on Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices

Institutional factors affection principals' instructional supervision practices namely teamwork, financial management and teachers' attitude were instigated.

According to the mean values and standard deviation on institutional factors, the mean values of team work (4.20) and financial management (4.06) were between 3.41 and 4.20 therefore it can be said that principals had agree on the affection principals' instructional supervision practices. However, the mean value of teacher's attitude (3.31) was between 2.61 and 3.40, it can be said that they had no suggestion.

Potential Factors Affecting Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices

There were eleven variables identified as predictors for factors on principals' instructional supervision practices: gender (G), age (A), position (P), administrative experience (AE), school size (SZ), staffing level (SL), work load (WL), learning facilities and resources (LFR), teamwork (TW), financial management (FM) and teachers' attitude (TA).

Simultaneous multiple regression was used to investigate prominent factors on principals' instructional supervision practices. The beta coefficients were presented, position, workload and teachers' attitude significantly predict factors on principals' instructional supervision practices among the eleven variables. The adjusted R squared value was .28. This indicates that 28% of the variance in the factors on principals' instructional supervision practices was explained.

Table 5. Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analysis for Factors Affecting Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices (N=36)

No.	Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)
1	Position (P)	-.242	.119	-.30*
2	Work Load (WL)	.285	.129	.32*
3	Teachers' Attitude (TA)	.250	.121	.31*

R^2=.34, F=5.44, *p<.05

According to the beta weight, teachers' attitude appears to be the first predictor of factors on principals' instructional supervision practices and principals' age appears to be the second predictor of factors on principals' instructional supervision practices.

Qualitative Research Findings

According to the open-ended question (1) **"Describe principals' instructional supervision practices to improve teaching and learning in basic education high schools?"** responded by principals and teachers, principals participated in classroom visitation (69%), holding pre-observation and post-observation conferences (37%), checking teachers' professional documents (53%), checking students' note books (20%) and organizing staff development program (2%).

According to the open-ended question (2) **"What factors can make weaknesses to principals' instructional supervision practices?"** responded by principals and teachers, principals' instructional supervision practices can be made weakness because of school size (5%), staffing level (48%), workload (49%), learning facilities and resources (11%), teamwork (29%), teacher attitude (7%), other factors (2%) and not difficult in supervision (3%).

According to the open-ended question (3) **"How do you solve the weaknesses of instructional supervision practices to convenient in your school?"** responded by principals, they solve the weaknesses of instructional supervision practices to be convenient in their school by providing to attend the courses (17%), fulfilling the teaching with principal (11%), delegating the responsibilities of supervision practices to the subject leaders (8%), collaborating with students, teachers and parents to find the teaching aids (19%) and organizing, coordinating and discussing with the board of study and technical staff (31%).

According to the open-ended question (3) **"What factors can make strength to principals' instructional supervision practices?"** responded by teachers, they wanted to principals of having technical skills (39%), working in time limit and giving the exact direction

(12%), cooperating with teachers, parents and association (31%), having collaborating skills (7%), interesting in teaching and learning process (9%), and learning the teaching forever (6%).

According to the open-ended question (4) **"Recommend the factors that improve the principals' instructional supervision practices?"** responded by principals and teachers, they wanted to fulfill the staffing level in accordance with the number of teachers distribution and the need of relevancy with subject major (32%), to discuss and share the knowledge with the board of study (40%), to provide the desks, chairs, equipment, teaching aids and buildings (21%), to collaborate the students, teachers and parents, furthermore, the parent teacher association (5%), to build the trust and respect (2%).

Discussion and Conclusion

Effective instructional supervision is vital if the government is to achieve its objective of providing quality basic education that is relevant to its development goals. This study is principally aimed at examining the factors that are associated with principals' instructional supervision practices.

Based on the responses of principals' instructional supervision practices, the overall mean value was 3.36. Therefore, principals' instructional supervision practices were at high level in this study.

According to gender and administrative experience as a personal factor, the study found that there were no significant differences in principals' instructional supervision practices between male and female. This finding does not agree with Lowe (2011) who observed that men and women principals differ in leadership behaviors.

There were significant differences between age groups in overall principals' instructional supervision practices and in three areas. This study revealed that principals who were 31 to 40 years old performed in instructional supervision less than principals who were 40 years old and above. The findings imply that the schools in the Townships were headed by older, mature and energetic principals who can handle instructional supervision in schools. Observation of Reyes (1990), majority of head teachers are likely to be committed to administration tasks of which instructional supervision. He argued that age and experience usually bring about self-confidence, self-esteem and high level of responsibility, hence, influencing overall job satisfaction and commitment of teachers to their job.

By comparing the positions, the study found that there were significant differences in overall principals' instructional supervision practices and in the area of checking students' note books between middle head and high head. The findings imply that principals who were middle head position headed in High Schools (Branch), had less workload and tasks than ones in High School. This finding agrees with Kipngeno (2014) who observed that principals could not plan for instructional supervision practices since they spend more time on administrative issues in expense of supervision instructions.

On the other hand, principals were categorized into three groups by their school size. This study revealed that principals who were in 900 and above school size performed in instructional supervision less than principals who were in less than 900 school size. The findings imply that principals in large school size cannot perform instructional supervision very well. It leads to increase workload amongst the principals and the available staff. This finding agrees with Violet (2015) who observed that the principals' workload becomes heavy as they have to focus more time on school management issues because of the result of large classes.

According to staffing level, the study found that principals had no suggestion in the factors of staffing level. However, principals strongly disagreed with "under-staffing makes instructional supervision easier". And principals and teachers said that the number of teachers in their schools is not enough and they required the teachers per subjects. The findings imply that staffing shortfalls in the schools forced principals to undertake more teaching duties. Moreover, since there are less teachers, the available teachers have to take in more lessons meaning that they have to forego adequate lesson preparation and thus principals have to take up lessons themselves. The findings are in agreement with Rotich (2014) who observed that schools were understaffed and as a result the quality of teaching and learning is low since head teachers rarely engage in meaningful instructional supervision practices.

Studying on workload, principals agreed on the affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in the factors of workload. It could also probably be due to shortage of teachers in schools which forces head teachers to teach more lessons than outlined by the government. The findings therefore, imply that teaching duties impact negatively on head teachers' instructional supervision practices. The majority of principals found chairing staff, committee meetings and participating in community activities as the least demanding activities. This could also be attributed to principals' ability to delegate these activities to other members of staff. The findings are in agreement with Kiamba (2011) who observed that teaching load significantly influenced head teachers' ability to observe teachers in class, give feedback after classroom observation and check the teaching aids used by teachers as a result of understaffing in schools.

In learning facilities and resources, the study found that principals had no suggestion in the factors of learning facilities and resources. However, principals disagreed with "providing to teach ICT for every class". The findings imply that learning facilities and resources were not enough in their schools. Most of respondents wanted to fulfill the staffing level in accordance with the number of teachers distribution and the need of relevancy with subject major. This finding shows that the relevant academic levels expected to equip them with adequate knowledge on academic matters and instructional supervision practices. Fajoyomi (2007) argued that success of any educational enterprise depended largely on availability of professional teachers.

An institutional factor, teamwork, is found that principals had agree with various statements of affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in the institutions. Moreover, most of respondents wanted to collaborate with students, parents and associations for improving teaching and learning processes. The findings agree with Opudo (2015) who observed that the principals must motivate and provide the team so that each person performs well individually and as a team to a great extent.

According to financial management, the study found that principals had agreement with various statements of affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in the institutions. Therefore, principals needed to be prepared to manage the finance effectively and to reduce the use of most funds for construction and furniture. They should use the funds for teaching and learning resources. The findings agree with Opudo (2015) who observed that the principals needed sound financial management skills to achieve their plans as a curriculum leader to a great extent.

Principals had no suggestion on the affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in the teachers' attitude. Because, principals agreed that teachers viewed principal's instructional supervision as a fault-finding mission. Some respondents suggested to build the trust and respect from teachers and parents and to obey the instruction of principals. These

findings agreed with Marwanga (2004) who indicated that teachers' negative attitude towards supervision posed a challenge to head teaches' frequency of instructional supervision in schools.

In this study, there were eleven variables identified as predictors for factors on principals' instructional supervision practices: gender, age, position, administrative experience, school size, staffing level, work load, learning facilities and resources, teamwork, financial management and teachers' attitude. Work load appears to be the first predictor, teachers' attitude appears to be the second predictor and position appears to be the third predictor of factors on principals' instructional supervision practices.

The aim of this study is to study factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices in Basic Education High Schools. The results in this study show that work load, teachers' attitude and position are the best predictors that affect on principals' instructional supervision practices and thus a great demand for instructional supervision strategies and techniques which give supporting to teachers' professional development and teaching-learning processes. Therefore, Ministry of Education should ensure that adequate training is offered to principals before they are posted to schools and a follow-up should be provided on a systematic program of supervision. So that, all teachers are actively involved in supervision exercise and can be changed their attitude by their good managed. Moreover, Department of Education should consider to fulfill the staffing level in accordance with the number of teachers distribution and the need of relevancy with subject major.

Recommendation for Further Study

This study analyzed the factors affecting principals' instructional supervision practices at Basic Education High Schools in Pathein and Thapaung Townships. Then investigating how primary school principals and middle school principals performed their instructional supervision practices will need to be done as further research. Next studies can be made by including variables such as educational background of the principals, their teaching experience, educational background of teachers and geographical location of the schools. Further researcher could be done to investigate the strategies for instructional supervision of principals and head/senior teachers and the relationship between these practices and teachers' professional development.

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