

Instructional Supervision by Principals in Type 1C and Type 2 Schools in the Gampaha District Sri Lanka

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Abstract: This study examined how principals engage in instructional supervision in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. Three research questions guided the study to a rational conclusion. Mixed-Method was adopted in the study to triangulate data. Both questionnaire and semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect relevant data from 150 teachers, 8 principals and 8 sectional heads in 8 selected Type 1C and Type 2 schools using the simple random sampling techniques. Tables, percentages and graphs were used to analyze quantitative data and the qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that all the principals in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in the Gampaha District have positive perceptions about the role of instructional supervision and have formed an instructional supervisory team including the principal. However, the study revealed that the majority of principals in Type 1C and Type 2 schools do not engage in the role of instructional supervision. The study further revealed that the existing internal supervisory team engage in instructional supervision role rarely and do not conduct post observational discussions which facilitate teachers to identify their strength and the areas that need further improvement. It is recommended that, the principals need to carry out adequate instructional supervision of teachers to improve their pedagogical skills and professional development.

Keywords: Instructional Supervision, Type 1C Schools, Type 2 Schools, Perception.

Introduction

Instructional supervision has been identified as the most important mechanism in terms of the professional development of teachers. The main purpose of instructional supervision is to support teachers to identify their strengths, areas that need improvement and thus improve their teaching skills which directly benefit students' high level of educational performance Zepeda (2007). The success of the school is mostly dependent on the principal's ability to supervise the teachers to explain instructional goals and work as a team to improve classroom instruction. (Blasé, Blasé & Philips, 2010; Smylie, 2010). As stated by Orbeta et. al.,(2019). educational initiatives such as instructional supervision and observation can be crafted to intensify students' performance. Farrell (2011) mentioned that classroom observation is one of the most common ways of reflecting on pedagogical practices which can help teachers evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. In this connection, school principals can use instructional supervision as an effective tool in terms of enhancing the professional development of teachers. Therefore, study focused on investigating the role of instructional supervision of principals working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in the Gampaha District, Sri Lanka. The study examined instructional supervision role by school principals on the pedagogical practices and professional development of teachers in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in the Gampaha District, Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine how principals engage in instructional supervision in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. Therefore the specific objectives of the study were to:

01. Find out how principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools perceive the concept of instructional supervision
02. Find out how principals of Type 1 C and Type 2 schools engage in instructional supervision and
03. Identify problems principals face when engaging in instructional supervision.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methodology. The two phases of the study, a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase was included in the research design.

Study Sample

The following table shows the total number of study samples of the current study

Table No. 1: Study Sample

| School Type | School Sample | Principal Sample | Teacher Sample | Sample of Sectional Heads |
|--------------|---------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Type C | 04 | 04 | 75 | 04 |
| Type 2 | 04 | 04 | 75 | 04 |
| Total | 08 | 08 | 150 | 08 |

Accordingly, the study sample included one hundred and fifty teachers randomly selected from 08 governments Type 1C and Type 2 schools, 8 school principals, and 8 sectional heads.

Data Collection Instruments

Both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the necessary data and information in order to achieve the objectives of this study. Accordingly, the instruments used for data collection were researchers-developed questionnaire for teachers and semi-structured interview schedules for principals and sectional heads. The items selected for the questionnaire and interview in the current study were focused on four main elements related to instructional supervision particularly the concepts such as classroom observation, analysis technique, post-observation conference and post-conference analysis. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 20 items that covered the areas of principals' instructional supervision role as perceived by the teachers. Four-point rating scale with a response mode of A = Always (4 points), S = Sometimes (3 points), R = Rarely (2 points) and N = Never (1 point) was used. The respondents were requested to indicate by ticking (√) in the appropriate boxes, the response applicable to the items. In addition to the questionnaire survey with teachers, interview is also used to collect qualitative data. The semi-structured interview was selected as a data collection technique to obtain data and information from individual principals and sectional heads about principals' instructional supervision roles.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the main data. Gorard (2004) stated that mixed methods research entails a combination of 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' approaches to generate a more accurate and adequate understanding of social phenomena than using only one of these approaches. According to Trochim (2006), one of the common ways to describe a single variable is with a frequency distribution. Therefore, in the current study frequency distributions were shown as tables. Distributions are displayed using percentages of teachers' responses in Type 1C and Type 2 of 8 schools.

Accordingly, the quantitative aspects of the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Daly et. al. (1997) identified thematic analysis as a search for themes that emerge as being important to the description of the data that have been collected. Accordingly, interview data were analyzed thematically.

Findings

The findings of the study are presented in Tables 2-4. In this section, data presentation, analysis interpretations and discussion of findings are presented. In terms of the responses obtained to the question “How frequently does your principal observe your instruction” irrespective of school type more than 74% of teachers from the entire sample responded ‘Never’. Compared to this, the percentages of teachers who had responded ‘Sometimes’ were less amounting to 10%.

This situation has been shown in Table 2 below.

Table No. 2: Teacher Response to the Statement of how frequently does your principal observe your instruction

| School Type | Teacher Responses | | | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Always | | Sometimes | | Rarely | | Never | | No | % |
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | | |
| Type 1C | 02 | 2.66 | 4 | 5.33 | 10 | 13.33 | 59 | 78.66 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Type 2 | 04 | 5.33 | 7 | 9.33 | 12 | 16.00 | 52 | 69.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Total | 06 | 4.00 | 11 | 7.33 | 22 | 14.66 | 111 | 74.00 | 150 | 100.00 |

This position has been further depicted in figure 1 below

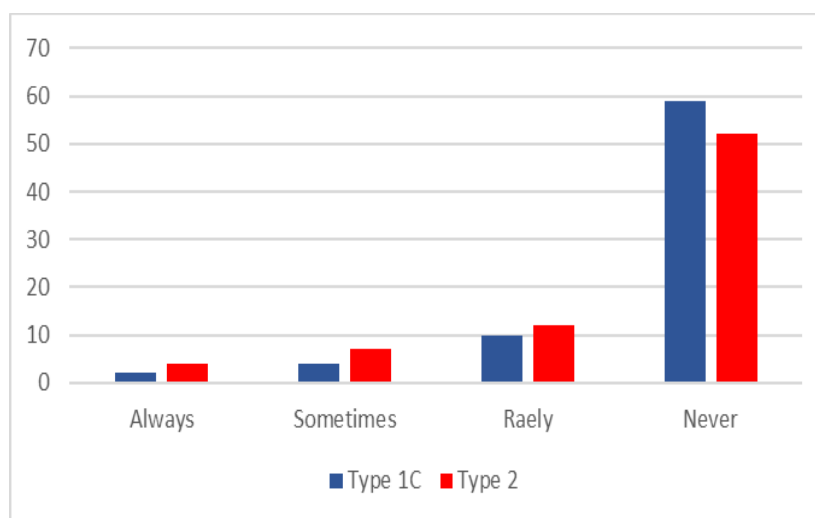


Figure 1: Teacher response to the statement of how frequently does your principal observe your instruction

Sectional heads’ interviews in all 8 schools of Type 1C and Type 2 schools also gave strong evidence that principals never engage in the observation of instruction. Sectional head 1 from Type 2 school highlighted the importance of direct engagement in instructional supervision by school principals. Also, she further mentioned the unsatisfactory situation they have in terms of instructional supervision and observation. According to her,

“I think Pedagogical supervision is one of the most important tasks and this is the most effective method that the principals can use to identify strengths and weaknesses of instructional process and it supports teachers to prepare for teaching-learning process. However, unfortunate thing is that

the principals in our schools do not engage in instructional observation....”
(Sectional head 1 from Type 2 school)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, Sectional head 3 from Type 1C school said,

“Instructional supervision has been recognized as an effective tool that can be used to enhance the professional development of teachers. However, I should say that principals in our schools find it very difficult to directly engage in this role and hence teachers in our schools do not have an opportunity to get feedback about the instructional process that”
(Sectional head 3 from Type 1C school)

Concerning the responses obtained to the question “How frequently does your principal engage in the post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving instruction” irrespective of school type 78.66% of teachers from the entire sample responded ‘Never’. This situation has been shown in Table 3 below.

Table No. 3: Teacher Response to the Statement of how frequently does your principal engage in the post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving instruction

| School Type | Teacher Responses | | | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-----------|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Always | | Sometimes | | Rarely | | Never | | No | % |
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | | |
| Type 1C | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 14 | 18.66 | 61 | 81.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Type 2 | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 0.00 | 18 | 24.00 | 57 | 76.00 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Total | 0 | 0.00 | 0 | 00 | 32 | 21.33 | 118 | 78.66 | 150 | 100.00 |

This position has been further depicted in figure 2 below

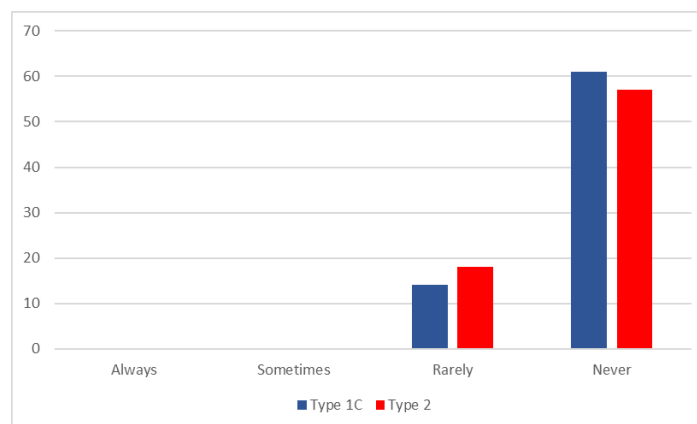


Figure 2: Teacher response to the statement of how frequently does your principal engage in the post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving instruction

Sectional heads’ interviews in Type 1C schools also gave strong evidence that principals never engage in the post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback to improve the quality of instruction and professional development of teachers. Sectional head 3 from Type 1C School stated that,

“Principals in our schools do not have time to observe our lesson and provide feedback as they have to engage in general administration roles rather than roles related to instructions. Therefore I believe that this is one of the main

reasons for the gradual decline of the quality of education and educational achievements of students in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in our country. Further, I think ... ”

(Sectional 3 from Type 1C school)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, Sectional head 1 from Type 2 School said,

“Principals have to engage in general administration roles rather than instructional roles and hence they are very busy. Therefore, principals do not directly engage in instructional supervision roles and do not conduct post observational meetings and”

(Sectional head 1 from Type 2 school)

According to the above extracts of the responses of sectional heads of Type 1C and Type 2 schools, it is clear that the principals working in both categories of schools find it very difficult to engage in instructional supervision roles as they have to play several other general administration roles in their schools. Accordingly, it can be concluded that principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools have not succeeded in managing their time and focused more on the role of instructional supervision.

Concerning the responses obtained to the statement ‘In your school how frequently internal supervisory team functioned’ less than fifty percent (41.33%) of teachers from the entire sample replied ‘Sometimes’ while another considerable percentage (37.33%) of teachers from the entire sample replied ‘Never’. The highest percentage responded to ‘Sometimes’ by type of school at 45.33% was from Type 2 schools while the highest percentage responded to ‘Never’ by Type of school at 45.33% was from Type 1C schools. The results of this analysis are given in Table 4 below.

Table No 4: Teacher Response to the Statement of in your school how frequently internal supervisory team functioned

| School Type | Teacher Responses | | | | | | | | Total | |
|-------------|-------------------|------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| | Always | | Sometimes | | Rarely | | Never | | No | % |
| | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | | |
| Type 1C | 0 | 0.00 | 28 | 37.33 | 13 | 17.33 | 34 | 45.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Type 2 | 0 | 0.00 | 34 | 45.33 | 19 | 25.33 | 22 | 29.33 | 75 | 100.00 |
| Total | 0 | 0.00 | 62 | 41.33 | 32 | 21.33 | 56 | 37.33 | 150 | 100.00 |

This situation is depicted in figure 3 below

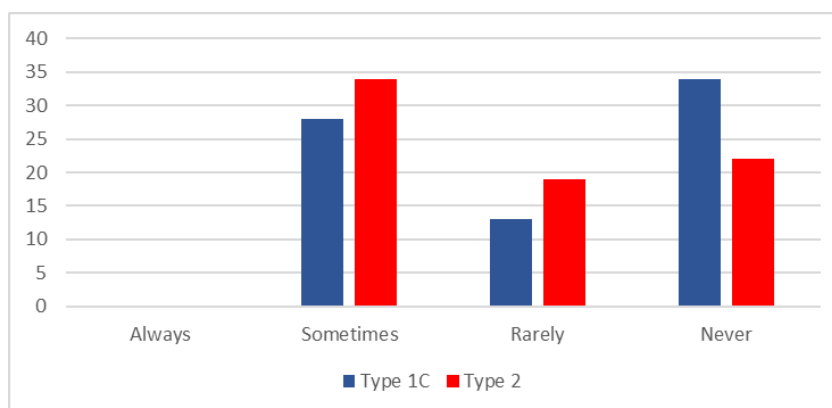


Figure 3: Teacher response to the statement of in your school how frequently internal supervisory team functioned

Principals' interviews in Type 1C and Type 2 schools also gave evidence that principals sometimes engage in instructional supervision and conduct post observational conferences to discuss teachers' strengths and also the areas that need further improvement. As principal 1 from Type 2 school stated,

"It is true that instructional supervision facilitates teachers to improve their pedagogical skills however, I find it very difficult to engage in regular instructional supervision but whenever time permits I engage in instructional supervision that ..."

(Principal 1 from Type 2 School)

"This was further supported by the interviews held with sectional heads in Type 1C and Type 2 schools where there was a perception "principals in our schools do not have time to engage in instructional supervision and post observation conference as they are busy engaged in general administrative roles."

(Sectional head 1 and 3 from Type 1C and Type 2 Schools)

According to the above extracts of the responses of principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools, it is clear that whenever time permits they engage in instructional supervision roles and conduct post observational conferences to give feedback for teachers. However, this is at variance with the questions in the questionnaire where a large number of teachers from Type 1C and Type 2 schools responded that principals of their schools 'Never' engage in instructional supervision roles. The results further revealed that the irrespective of school type retention of qualified, experienced teachers has become a major challenge for principals working in both types of schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so-called "1AB schools" in the country.

This finding is important for several reasons. As stated by Cogan (1960) it is important to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the instructional process. According to him, post-observation discussions need to be held soon after the instruction, without any delay as this helps both supervisee and supervisor to remember what has exactly happened during the instructional process and thus paving the way for more constructive feedback. As stated by Cogan in this way school principals can use instructional supervision as an effective tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the schools through raising aspirations of both teachers and students. The results further revealed that the irrespective of school type retention of qualified, experienced teachers has become a major challenge for principals working in both types of schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so-called "1AB schools" in the country.

Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that all the principals in Type 1C and Type 2 schools have positive perceptions of the role of instructional supervision. They identified instructional supervision as one of the most important mechanisms in helping professional development of teachers and hence internal instructional supervisory teams were formed in both types of school including the principal. However, it found from this study that the internal instructional supervisory teams have not functioned satisfactorily in both types of schools. Also, principals in these particular types of schools do not engage in instructional supervision roles due to the major challenge of having engaged in general administration roles than instructional roles. The results could be recognized to the fact that when there is no properly functioning instructional supervision team it could negatively affect the quality of the instructional process and the decline of educational achievements of students. This finding is not different from that of Senevirathna (2011), who found in his investigation that principals are away from observing teaching and learning in schools even though instructional supervision is the most important mechanism by which the instructional supervisor could be of great facilitator in providing the

professional development of teachers. As stated by Cogan (1973) it is important to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the instructional process and post-observation discussions need to be held soon after the instruction, without any delay as this helps both supervisee and supervisor to remember what has exactly happened during the instructional process and thus paving the way for more constructive feedback. As stated by Cogan in this way school principals can use classroom observation as an effective tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning and thus educational achievements of students. The results further revealed that the irrespective of school type retention of qualified, experienced teachers has become a major challenge for principals working in both types of schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so-called “IAB schools” in the country.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that the principals working in both Type 1C and Type 2 schools have a positive perception in terms of instructional supervision and have formed internal supervisory teams within the schools. However, it revealed that principals working in these particular types of schools in the Gampaha district do not directly engage in instructional supervision roles to a satisfactory level as they are compelled to engage in more administrative roles. Also, it was found from this study that the instructional supervisory teams are also not functioned satisfactorily particularly in both types of schools. Therefore, teachers working in both types of schools in Gampaha district do not have an adequate opportunity to identify their strengths and the areas that need to be improved in their pedagogical practices.

Therefore, it is recommended to enhance the pedagogical practices of teachers and their professional development through the implementation of instructional supervision roles by the school principals together with the members of the internal supervisory team.

Further, it is recommended that Principals working in different categories of schools in the Gampaha district should be adequately trained about the instructional supervision strategies through seminars and conferences which may include classroom observation, analysis strategy, post-observation conference and post-conference analysis as this will impact positively the professional development of teachers. Regular in-service training is recommended not only for principals but also for sectional heads and subject heads on how to conduct instructional supervisory programmes. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education organize regular inspection programmes of schools to examine the attitude of principals, sectional heads and subjects heads.

Finally, it is recommended for future researchers to consider the instructional supervision roles by principals working in these particular types of schools covering other educational Zones as this study is limited only to the Type 1C and Type 2 Schools in the Gampaha District, Sri Lanka .

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