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A STUDY ON INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION BY PRINCIPALS IN TYPE 1C AND TYPE 2 SCHOOLS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine how principals' engage in instructional supervision in Type 1C and Type 2 school in Sri Lanka. Three research questions were used to guide the study to a rational conclusion. Mixed Method was adopted in the study in order to triangulate data. Both questionnaire and semi structured interview schedules were used to obtain relevant data from 150 teachers, 10 principals and 10 sectional heads in 10 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 was analyzed by using thematic analysis and answer the research questions. The findings revealed that all the principals in the type 1C and Type 2 schools have positive perception 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 the type 1C and Type 2 schools do not engage in role of instructional supervision due to the major challenge of having engage in general administration roles than the instructional roles. 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, therefore, recommended that, the principals need to carry out an adequate instructional supervision of teachers so as to improve their teaching skills and professional development.

Keywords

Instructional Supervision, Type 1C Schools, Type Two Schools, Perception

1. Introduction

Human resources are very important to an organization than any other resource. Instructional supervision has been identified as the most important mechanism and also a key factor in terms of professional development of teachers. Also it has been found that 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. Instructional supervision has been identified as the most important mechanism and also a key factor in terms of professional development of teachers. 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. 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). According to Kutsyuruba, (2003) there are different approaches in instructional supervision. They have been recognized as clinical supervision, peer coaching, cognitive coaching and mentoring. Implementing different supervisory approaches is essential, not only to help teachers but also to provide alternative to administrators and schools. The widely-used approaches to instructional supervision (formative evaluation) are categorized as clinical supervision, collaborative supervision (peer coaching, cognitive coaching, and mentoring), self-reflection (self-directed development), professional growth plans, and portfolios (Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Clarke, 1995; Poole, 1994; Renihan, 2002; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007; Zepeda, 2007).

According to Zepeda (2007) 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. Similar to this view Anderson et al., (2008) recognized instructional supervision as one of the most important tools that can be used in building effective professional development of teachers. They further emphasized that there is a direct relationship between instructional supervision and professional development of teachers.

Expressing an idea about instructional supervision Sergiovanni (1995) declared the importance of building a dialogue between supervisor and supervisee in order to express their views freely. As emphasized by Sergiovanni (1995) supervision should not be done to find the faults of teachers. It should be focused on providing necessary feedback for teachers in order for them to overcome challenges and weaknesses. Supporting this notion, Anderson and Snyder (1993) highlighted that success of

professional development of teachers depends on the mutual dialogue that supervisor and supervisee build. According to them particularly the mutual dialogue helps the supervisee to present his/her views in regard to instruction. Goldhammer and Cogan's contextual Clinical supervision model (1973) include classroom observation, data collection, analysis strategy, planning conference, post observation conference, and post conference analysis. Accordingly, it is clear that the researchers identify instructional supervision as a valuable tool which can be used to understand classroom realities and thereby achieve high level of educational achievements of students. Principals as effective leaders of the twenty first centuries schools need to maintain good rapport with school stakeholders including teachers in making effective decisions that affect the whole school (Akinbode et, al., 2018). The most recent work by Murphy (2013) emphasized a range of aspects of instructional observation. For example, it offers an opportunity for supervisors to evaluate lesson plan together with objectives, teaching methods and specific techniques, evaluation procedures and classroom management skills.

In this connection school principals can use instructional supervision as an effective tool in terms of enhancing professional development of teachers. As stated by Orbeta et. al.,(2019). educational initiatives such as instructional supervision and observation can be crafted to intensify students' performance. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional supervision of principals' working in Type 1C and Type 2 school in Sri Lanka. This study looks at the instructional supervision role by school principals on the pedagogical practices and professional development of teachers in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka.

2. Statement of the Problem

It is clear that 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. Also it has been found that there is a direct relationship between instructional supervision and professional development of teachers. Researchers believe that principals as instructional leaders in the school be supposed to engage in role of instructional supervision as frequent instructional discussions always help teachers to share their experiences and thus support professional development. Therefore, the principal as an instructional leader of the school should motivate teachers by engaging in instructional supervision, holding post observational conference and providing feedback necessary in order for teachers to enhance skills with regard to classroom teaching. However, there is a growing concern about the little attention to instructional supervision by principals working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka. From the recent pass the continuous poor academic performance of students in Type 1C and Type 2 schools has been a subject of concern to stakeholders

of education in Sri Lanka. The decline in quality of education in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka could be as a result of lack of attention and commitment of the principals' instructional supervision. To date, research into this field in the country has focused more on the process of external supervision rather than on how the principals engage in instructional supervision as an internal instructional supervisor in the school. Therefore, this study focused on investigating the role of instructional supervision of principals' working in Type 1C and Type 2 schools in Sri Lanka.

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

4. Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to direct this study.

01. How do principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools perceive the concept of instructional supervision?
02. How do principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools engage in instructional supervision? and
03. What type of problems/Challenges principals face when engaging in instructional supervision?

5. Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey in which both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were applied. Accordingly the mixed methodology was employed in this study. As explained by Newby (2010) mixed methods research is becoming an increasingly popular approach in the fields of sociology, psychology, education and health sciences. Supporting this Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone can provide. As explained by Tashakkori & Teddlie, (1998) combining quantitative and qualitative approaches within different stages of the research process is possible. Accordingly two phases of the

study, a quantitative phase, followed by a qualitative phase was included in to the research design. The following diagram shows the research design of the current study.

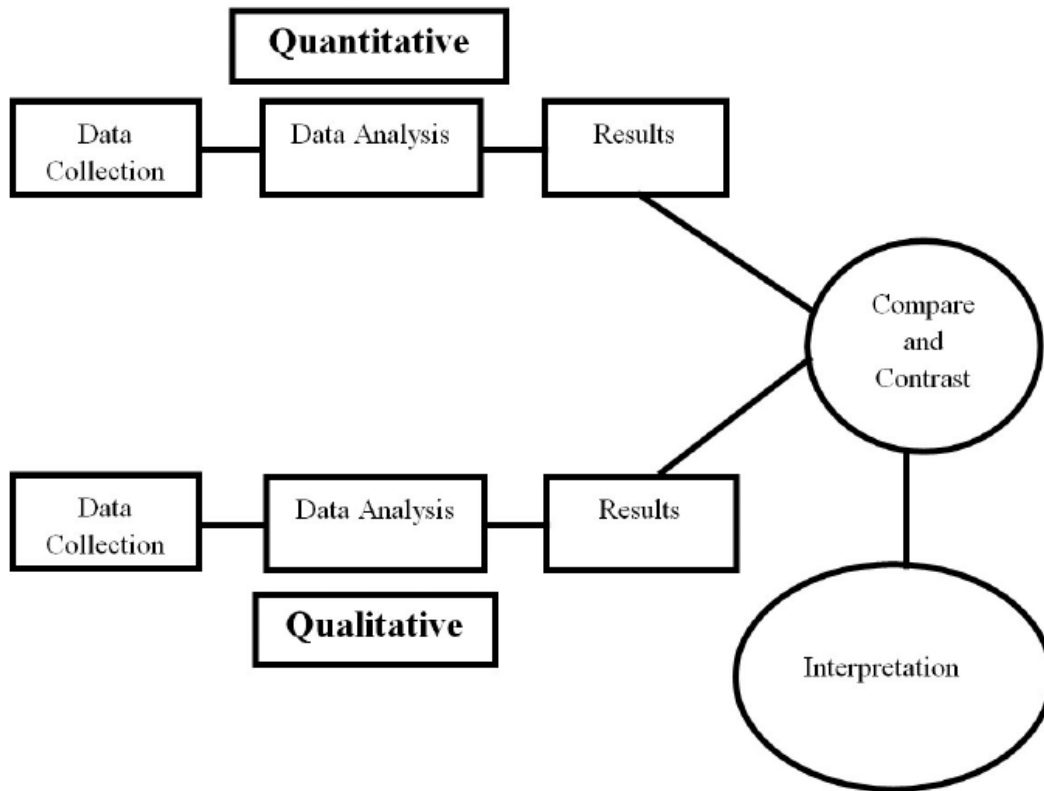


Figure 1: Mixed Method Research Design approach – Adopted from Creswell 2012

Study Sample

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

Table 1: Study Sample

School Type	School Sample	Principal Sample	Teacher Sample	Sample of Sectional Heads
Type 1C	05	05	75	05
Type 2	05	05	75	05
Total	10	10	150	10

Accordingly, the study sample included one hundred and fifty teachers randomly selected from 10 government Type 1C and Type 2 secondary schools, 10 school principals, and 10 sectional heads.

5.1 Data Collection Instruments

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, both questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect the necessary data and information. Accordingly the instruments used for data collection were researchers-developed questionnaire for teachers and semi structured interview schedule for principals and sectional heads. As mentioned by Cohen et al., (2008) the questionnaire is one of the most important data collection instruments as it plays a significant role in terms of collecting a wide range of data from a large sample unit. They further mentioned that there are different types of questionnaires such as close ended, open ended, structured and unstructured and the researchers can use any types of questionnaire depending on the aim and nature of the study.

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 had two sections. Section A contained items regarding the respondent's profile while section B had two sub-sections designed to identify principals' instructional supervisory role. The teacher questionnaire consisted of 20 items which covers the areas of principals' instructional supervision role as perceived by the teachers. A four point 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 to measure the item responses. The respondents to teacher questionnaire 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 in order to collect qualitative data. The interview can be identified as one of the most popular data collection instruments among researchers. Kvale et al., (1996) identified interviews as an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of interest. As they explain interviews help create knowledge through exchanging ideas and views on the topic or issue being studied. Presenting an idea about interviews Opie (2004) stated that more useful information in regard to an issue being studied can be gathered through interviews. According to Creswell (2003) semi-structured interview is deemed the most appropriate way to obtain in-depth information about the experience of individuals. Therefore, 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. Hence semi structured interview was held with principals and sectional heads. Altogether 10 questions were included into the interview schedule of principals and sectional heads.

The instruments were pilot tested in order to make sure about the validity and reliability. Two research assistants were trained in administering the questionnaire. The consent of the principals of

selected 10 schools of Type 1C and Type 2 was given and questionnaire was administered to the teachers in the schools. The principals and sectional heads were interviewed by the researcher herself. Respondents were properly guided to avoid misunderstanding of the purpose of the study. The exercise was completed within three weeks.

5.2 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the main data. Gorard (2004) stated that mixed methods research entail a combination of ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’ approaches with the intention of generating 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 10 schools. In addition, a chi-square (X^2) statistics have also been calculated where appropriate to investigate whether there is a significant difference among the responses of different categories of the secondary schools. In particular, the significant difference was considered between actual value (the actual number represent how often principals engage in ten instructional supervision roles) and expected value (expected value is the value obtained based on contingency table according to the sample of 150 teachers) given by teachers for ten instructional supervision roles. Therefore, ten Chi-Square tests have been conducted to find out whether there is a significant difference in the respond rates.

The results are evaluated based on “P” values. For example, if the P value is less than 5% it indicates that there is a significant difference between actual value and expected value. The Chi value was calculated using the following equation.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

X^2 = Chi Value

O = Observed Value

E = Expected Value

Accordingly, the quantitative aspects of the questionnaire were analysed 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.

6. Findings

Findings of the study are presented in Tables 1-3. 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 96% of teachers from the entire sample responded ‘Never’. Compared to this the percentages of teachers who had responded ‘Rarely’ were less amounting 4%. Further a chi-square calculation also indicated that there was no significant difference between school type and principals instructional supervision as the P value is more than 5%. This situation has been shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Teacher Response to the Statement of How Frequently does your Principal Observe your Instruction

This position has been further depicted in figure 2 below

School Type	Teacher Responses								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
1- C	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	2.66	73	97.33	75	100.00
Type 2	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	4.00	72	96.00	75	100.00
Total	0	0.00	0	00	05	3.33	145	96.66	150	100

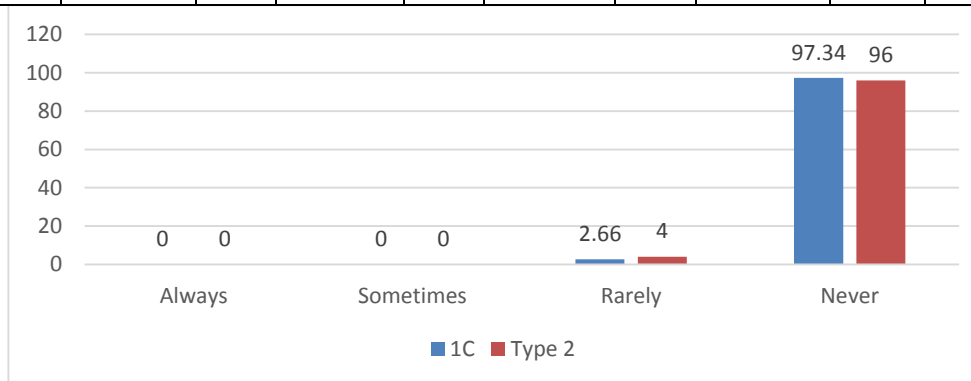


Figure 2: Teacher Response to the Statement of How Frequently does your Principal Observe your Instruction

Teachers’ interview in all ten schools of Type 1C and Type 2 schools also gave strong evidence

that principals never engage in the observation of instruction. Teacher 1 from Type 2 school highlighted the importance of direct engagement in instructional supervision by school principals. Also she further mentioned about the unsatisfactory situation they have in terms of instructional supervision and observation. According to her,

“I believe supervision and observation of teaching and learning is one of the most important tasks every principal should engage in. Mainly because, I see this is the most effective method that the principals can use to identify both strengths and weaknesses of classroom teaching and learning and this of course helps teachers to rethink and replan teaching learning process to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, unfortunate thing is that the principals in our schools do not engage in instructional observation....”

(Teacher 1 from Type 2 school)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, Teacher 3 from Type 1C said,

“I see observation and supervision of classroom teaching learning as very important. However, I should say that it is very unfortunate 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”

(Teacher 3 from Type 1C school)

Further a chi-square calculation also indicated that there was no significant difference between school type and principals instructional supervision as the P value is more than 5%.

With regard to the responses obtained to the question “How frequently does your principal engage in post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving of instruction” irrespective of school type 100% of teachers from the entire sample responded ‘Never’. Further a chi-square calculation also indicated that there was no significant difference between school type and principals engage in post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving of instruction as the P value is more than 5%. This situation has been shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Teacher Response to the Statement of how frequently does your principal engage in post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in improving of instruction

School Type	Teacher Responses								Total	
	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		



1- C	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	00.00	75	100.00	75	100.00
Type 2	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	00.00	75	100.00	75	100.00
Total	0	0.00	0	00	0	00.00	150	100.00	150	100

Teachers’ interview in Type 1C schools also gave strong evidence that principals never engage in post-observation conference and provide necessary feedback in order to improve instruction. Teacher 3 from Type 1C School stated that,

“Principals in our schools are very busy persons and they do not have time to observe our lesson and provide feedback. I strongly believe that this is one of the main reasons for gradual decline of the educational achievement of student and quality of education particularly in Type 1C and Type 2 school in our country. Further, I think ...”

(Teacher 3 from Type 1C school)

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

“Principals in our schools are very busy as they have to engage in general administration roles rather than instructional roles. 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 teachers and sectional heads of 1-C 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. According it can be concluded that principals of Type 1C and Type 2 schools have not succeed in managing their time and focused more on the role of instructional supervision.

With regard to the responses obtained to the statement ‘In your school how frequently internal supervisory team functioned’ a considerable percentage (48%) of teachers from the entire sample replied ‘Sometimes’ while another considerable percentage (38.66%) of teachers from the entire sample replied ‘Never’. The highest percentage responded to ‘Sometimes’ by type of school at 49.33% was from Type 1C schools while the highest percentage responded to ‘Never’ by Type of school at 40% was from Type 2 schools. A chi-square calculation also indicated that there was a significant difference between school type and function of internal supervisory team as the P value is less than 5%. Results of this analysis are given in the Table 3 below.

Table 3: 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	%		
1- C	0	0.00	37	49.33	10	13.33	28	37.33	75	100.00
Type 2	0	0.00	35	46.66	10	13.33	30	40.00	75	100.00
Total	0	0.00	72	48.00	20	13.33	58	38.66	150	100

This situation is depicted in figure 3 below

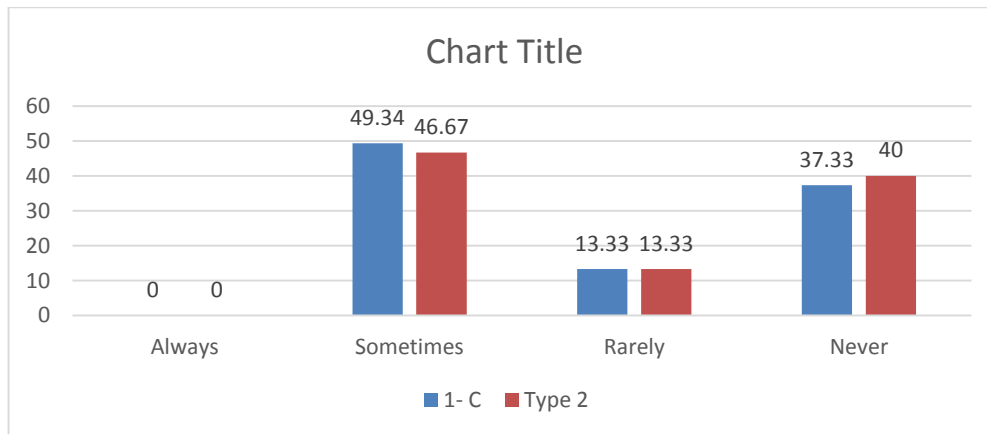


Figure 3: Teacher Response to the Statement of in your School How Frequently Internal Supervisory Team Functioned

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

“I agree that formal regular instructional observation and feedback of course help teachers to improve their teaching skills which in turn enhance the quality of teaching learning process in the schools. However, to be honest I am not in a position to engage in regular instructional supervision in a formal way. However, I should say that I sometimes engage in instructional supervision that ...”

(Principal 1 from Type 2 School)

Expressing a similar view to the above response, principal 3 from Type 1C School stated that,

“I think one of the main factors of school success is supervision and observation of teaching and learning. Therefore, whenever time permits I directly engage in instructional supervision role and conduct post observational conference to provide necessary feedback for teachers instructional improvement. However, I should say that it is very difficult to find time to engage in instructional supervision roles as we principals have to play roles in regard to general administration.

He further highlighted that,

I have formed an internal supervisory team including me and responsibilities have been given to the head of the supervisory team and other experienced teachers in the team. However, most of the times I can see that teachers are not committed to undertake the responsibilities as they try to get transfers to so called IAB schools in our country and this is a big challenge we principals have to face in these particular types of schools”

(Principal 3 from Type 1C 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 as they have to do many administrative work”.

(Sectional head 1 from Type 1C school)

According to the above extracts of the responses of principals of Type 1-C and Type 2 schools, it is clear that whenever time permits they engage in instructional supervision roles and conduct post observational conference 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 type schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so called “IAB schools” in the country.

This finding is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, if principals working in different categories of schools are not engaged in school instructional supervision roles to a satisfactory level it may be seen as not providing necessary facilities and opportunities to improve teaching skills of the teachers who work in same categories of schools and obtain professional development. Secondly, it may be seen as not having proper annual plan within the school in terms of professional development of teachers and school development. As mentioned by Senevirathna et al., (2015) the supervision and observation of the instructional process is very important with regard to the improvement of quality of teaching and learning and also staff development. Also they highlighted how instructional supervision helps principals to identify both strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and thereby introducing and implementing professional development programmes within

the school. 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 classroom observation 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 type schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so called “1AB schools” in the country.

8. Discussion of Findings

Findings of the study revealed that all the principals in the Type 1C and Type 2 schools have positive perception about the role of instructional supervision. They believe that the instructional supervision is one of the most important mechanisms and also a key factor in terms of 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 are not functioned satisfactorily in both types schools. Also, principals in these particular type schools do not engage in instructional supervision roles due to the major challenge of having engage in general administration roles than the 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 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 mentioned by Senevirathna et al., (2015) the supervision and observation of the instructional process is very important with regard to the improvement of quality of teaching and learning and also staff development. Also they highlighted how instructional supervision helps principals and the teachers to identify both strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning and thereby introducing and implementing professional development programmes within the school. As stated by Cogan (1973) it is important to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the instructional process and post observation discussions therefore 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 type schools as teachers of these schools are trying to get transfers to so called “1AB schools” in the country.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, it is evident that the principals working in both 1C and type two schools do not engage in instructional supervision to a satisfactory level. Also it found from this study that the instructional supervisory teams are also not functioned satisfactorily particularly in both 1C and type two schools. Therefore, teachers working in both types schools do not have an adequate opportunity to identify their strength 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 secondary schools 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 on 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 as principals do not consider instructional supervision as a platform to improve professional development of teachers.

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 and also the challenges they face in terms of implementation of instructional supervision of teachers.

Finally it is recommended for future researchers to consider about the instructional supervision roles by principals working in Type 1AB schools covering other educational zones as this study is limited only to the Type 1C and Type 2 Schools in the Colombo Educational Zone.

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