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**HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT IN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION: WINDOW OF HOPE OR WOE?**

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**ABSTRACT**

*In a rapidly changing and increasingly globalized world, the success of nations, communities and individuals may be linked, now more than ever before, to how they adapt to change, learn and share knowledge. From a very broad perspective, one can look at why there is the need for development of instructional supervisors in assuring quality teaching and learning. This paper considers the human as an economic agent for society; it looks at the belief system that characterizes supervision in Ghana. After a careful review of some selected literature it concludes the study with a discussion of analysis of data gathered by means of survey instruments using structured interviews administered on some experienced persons in the field of education with emphasis on instructional supervision and leadership. The findings points to the fact that it is worthwhile to develop the human capital of instructional supervisors. The study consequently recommended that the state and the individual are the principal funders of such capacity building avenues and as such an agreed framework should be built for it.*

**KEYWORDS**

Development, Economic growth, Human Capital & Instructional Supervision.

**BACKGROUND**

The relationship between human capital and economic growth is conditioned by the quality and the distribution of education in the labour force; and the economic structures of nations. Investing in more and better-distributed education in the labour force helps to create conditions that could lead to higher productivity and higher economic growth. This is however not sufficient. It is also necessary to adopt policies that lead to the creation of diversified, dynamic, and competitive sectors capable of absorbing the more educated labour force so as to translate the human capital (instructional supervisor who is trained to function as such) into higher economic growth (effective supervision). There is the view that countries that combine both functions do better on the average than those that do only one function (Psacharopoulos & Layard, 1979). Investment in the training of instructional supervisors has link to developing human capital in the field of instructional supervisory leadership.

Research studies have established that the relationship between higher education and training and performance (or returns to productivity) in developed and developing countries is high (Mincer, 1974; Becker, 1975 and Blaug, 1970). These studies confirm the assumption that training of instructional supervisors increase productivity of instructional supervisors. Theory has shown that either leaders (supervisors) are born or they are made; but the camps of orientation of the various researches differ (Glickman, Gordon & Rose-Gordon, 2007). Therefore, the implications for the two views are that; if supervisors are born then they should be given the appropriate platform to operate and if they are otherwise made, then much time should be devoted to developing them to become the best they can be in the field of instructional supervision. It is worth not to lose sight of the fact that if even leaders are born they can change their orientation (job affiliation) because of change in the environment, economic conditions, ill health and a host of other plausible factors. This is all possible because the labour market is not perfect so changes are always expected in the recruitment and retention of instructional supervisors (Woodhall, 2004).

Investments in education in general and development of instructional supervisors in particular come with three clear cut expectations. These are: super profit (benefit that education brings is higher than the cost of education), normal profit (break even point; when cost and benefit of education are the same) and loss (when the cost of education is higher than the benefit or returns to education) according to Woodhall (2004). The three expectations are influenced by input conditions and environmental factors. Therefore, investment in development of instructional supervisors by means of financing their training is assumed to assure supervision of instruction. The human capital is a powerful tool in the development of the educational system (Becker, Murphy and Tamura, 1990). Human capital formation has been observed to enhance productivity since the prospective instructional supervisor will be trained to have eyes to observe, ears to listen, emotions to feel and sense of touch to exhibit skills.

Another crucial factor in the decision making process is about how the funds to finance the education programme can be assessed. Generally, social amenities including schools are funded by the state. There are also other sources of finance for education and training which include the private investment, private participants, contributions by philanthropists in society and international cooperation agencies. The opportunity cost to the education and training of the instructional supervisors has been argued by some critics. Holding other essential factors constant, we can view the human capital and social capital component as factors which affect classroom supervision in a positive direction. Activities and processes involved in the instructional supervision process are collectively needed to project essential future outcome of the schooling system of which supervision is a part.

There is growing consensus among educational reformers that professional development of individuals within the retrainable age brackets to be trained to acquire the appropriate skills and competencies to enable them function in instructional supervision (Scheerens, 2000; Maglen, Hopkins & Burke, 2001). This is necessitated by sharp edges of educational reforms, new policies, restructuring of education after emergencies and chiefly as a result of instructional improvement.

After years of reforms, states and localities focus on:

- ✓ how to vary the guidance that schools receive on what students should be taught (content standards);
- ✓ altering the structures and processes by which schools are held accountable (student performance standards, assessments, rewards, and penalties); and
- ✓ change in the governance structures by which accountability is defined (site-based management).

In order to progress from reforms of this sort to changes in student performance, one has to assume that changes in policy and organization will result in a different kind of teaching, which will in turn result in a different kind of learning for students. One element that is missing in the above assumption is the *knowledge* required for teachers and administrators to engage in a different kind of teaching and learning. Policies, by themselves, don't impart new knowledge; they create the occasion for educators to seek new knowledge and turn that knowledge into new practice. Hence, professional development is the main link connecting policy to practice (Elmore and Burney, 1997). The message is again clear on this premise that there is the need for supervisors to make clear decisions and tailor them through appropriate strategy that meets the goal of the employer of the teacher. Such an assignment is meant for people appropriately developed to carry them out.

Successful professional development is characterised by the following:

- ✓ it focuses on concrete classroom applications of general ideas;
- ✓ it exposes benefactors to actual practice rather than to descriptions of practice;
- ✓ it involves opportunities for observation, critique, and reflection;
- ✓ it involves opportunities for group support and collaboration; and
- ✓ it involves deliberate evaluation and feedback by skilled practitioners with expertise on good teaching.

Having shared some amount of knowledge on the characteristics of good professional development, there is less discussion on how to organize successful professional development so as to influence practice in large numbers of schools and classrooms (Elmore and Burney, 1997). Of course, that does not form the basis of this paper but is worthwhile to note that there is the urgent need for requisite personnel to command sanity in classrooms with the view to improvement. This explains why there is the need for development of instructional supervisors to fill a goal oriented need in the teaching services by means of measurement, evaluation and monitoring of the efficiency of system through trained and qualified individuals in the field of.

### THE BELIEF SYSTEM

The belief system about what should be considered as supervision will give room to people to see instructional supervision as a professional path or otherwise. Let's begin with the school where the headmaster or the principal has purely 'administrative' functions. This sets the limit as to what other duties that can be performed comprehensively by a professional trained individual; though, at the expense of an opportunity cost. Despite the opportunity cost element here, it is equally important to note the expected level of efficiency and job effectiveness that it brings to the school system. As the level of skills, aptitude and corresponding behavioural patterns change, there is expected positive change in productivity. This is further backed by the research and continuity as the trained professional reports on emerging trends and thereby opening doors for probity and accountability. So what are beliefs at all from literature?

Beliefs about supervision and educational philosophy can be thought of in terms of decision-making responsibilities that school administrators have to handle day-in-day-out. For instance, the idea that principals should serve as instructional leaders—not just as generic managers—in their schools is widely commented on among educators (Hargreaves, 1999). In practice, though, few principals act as genuine instructional leaders. Their days are filled with activities of management, scheduling, reporting, handling relations with parents and community, dealing with multiple crises and special situations that are inevitable in schools. Most principals spend relatively short time in classrooms and even less time analyzing instruction with teachers. They may arrange time for teachers' meetings and professional development, but they rarely provide 'intellectual leadership for growth in teaching skills. It is apparently important to note that even head teachers after all their experience, if they can do the work of instructional supervision effectively then there is need to train them to better qualify.

### DOES EMPLOYER-SPONSORED TRAINING AFFECT PROFITABILITY?

This question could be understood by considering the regression analysis computed between the profitability index and other characteristics of say, a firm (Blandy, Dockery, Hawke & Webster, 2000). All the major variables and indices including (quantity of training, quality of training, market uncertainty, market competition, market concentration, work process, external labour market, relative wage rates, union presence, internal labour market, voluntary labour turnover, involuntary labour turnover, company size, company size squared, other investments) were captured in the Australian CEP survey undertaken for a project at  $R^2 = 0.51$  that was studied by Blandy *et al* (2000). There is no a priori reason why some of these variables should be significant in explaining profitability. They found out that indices for training quantity and training quality are two of the four main explanatory variables of firm profitability. Training quantity is significant at the 20% level and training quality is significant at the 5% level. Both displayed a positive relationship suggesting that higher levels of training are associated with higher firm profitability.

The conclusion drawn by Blandy *et al* (2000) was further confirmed by a t-test at 95% confidence level but the relationship was found to be strong. This implies that in the case where the tax payer's money is used for the purposes of enhancing or developing the instructional supervisors, it leads to good yield to the education sector. The challenge of measuring the benefits on the cost of financing the development of instructional supervisors lies in the inability of evaluators and other stakeholders to measure the net returns to the education system. This is because the best mode of such a measure is clinical than survey.

A relationship between training and productivity is fundamental to the existence of the vocational education and training system (Maglen, Hopkins & Burke, 2001). That study showed that it is feasible and profitable to enhance the productivity and working conditions of organisations through the ongoing learning of their personnel. Training and productivity are concepts which are closely related (Maglen, Hopkins & Burke, 2001). Increasing productivity implies working in a more intelligent manner, but not necessarily harder, then it is understood that it is not possible to increase productivity in enterprises unless training actions are developed for workers in the company. Considering that productivity result from working more intelligently rather than harder, it could be reasoned that the productivity of enterprises could not increase without concomitant training of the workers they employ (Mertens, 2004).

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pre-service teachers are taught how to monitor and evaluate lessons; they are however not taught how to evaluate teaching. The colleges of education curriculum have a three credit hour course in assessment in schools. The fact that pre-service teacher who are taught a course on assessment in school and another in school administration is not replete enough for the school supervision function needs of the pre-service who eventually becomes an in-service teacher. More so, the fact that student teacher take courses in college does not make the content of the course a core mandate for their practice. The activities and processes that the teacher uses to achieve his/her goals are set apart from the role of instruction. The structure and models of supervision are many and varied and because of that they assume the role quite intricate and confusing and it takes only the trained persons to handle the issues and keep them in perspective. This makes the instructional supervisor's role a professional endeavour set apart from the role of head teachers and teachers. The reforms and new programmes that come require personnel with expertise to handle and guide classroom teachers. Consequently, this study investigated the economic usefulness of investing in the development of instructional supervisors.

### METHOD

This aspect deals with the research questions, discusses the research design, population, sample and sample techniques. The process for data analysis and reporting strategies has also been captured under this subheading. The descriptive survey design was used for the study because it involved the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe the current status, assess current practices and conditions, the existing phenomenon and to make intelligent plans to improve upon them (Ekuri, 1997; Van Dalen, 1979).

On the basis of the identified problem for study in this paper the following research questions were stated to guide the course of the study. They include:

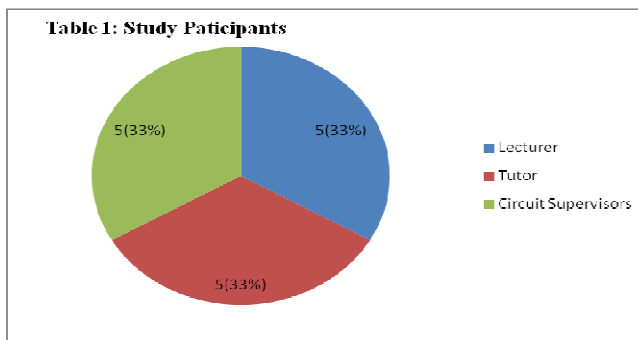
1. What are the perceptions of respondent about instructional supervisors?
2. How worthwhile is it to train instructional supervisors?
3. Which possible routes can be used to develop instructional supervisors?

The research participants were drawn from Cape Coast metropolitan area. The sampled units were people who are associated with the teaching workforce. This include young and old; experienced and less experienced ones in the population. These include five (5) teaching staff of the University of Cape Coast and five from OLA Teachers Training College, Cape Coast and five (5) officers from the Metropolitan Education Office – Circuit Supervisors. Sampling was strictly by convenience. Information was sought from management of these institutions about officers who have stayed in the teaching and learning enterprise for a long time with least base year of five.

The Table 1 below shows the proportion of respondents who took part in responding to the interviews and their corresponding job titles.

Interview guide was designed and used by the researcher for the study. The items were pre-tested on some selected research and teaching staff of the Institute of Education, University of Cape Coast, mainly to elicit expert and peer review comments.



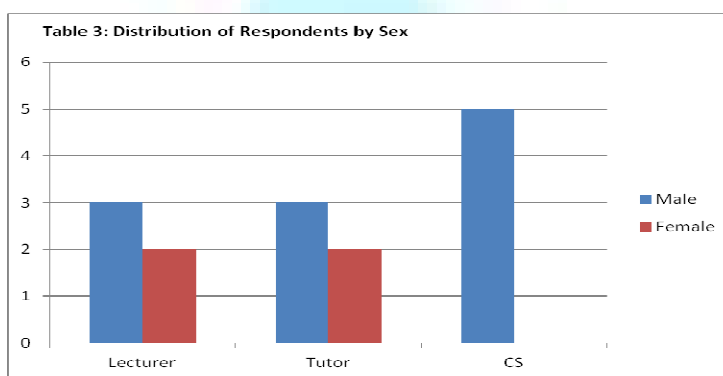


An even proportion of respondents were chosen from the University, College of Education and District Education offices. The Table 2 shows the age distributions of respondents as shown below:

TABLE 2: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

| Name of Category of Respondent | Minimum Age of Respondent | Maximum Age of Respondent | Mean Age (N=5 each) | Standard Deviation |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| University Faculty             | 41                        | 58                        | 50.00               | 7.65               |
| College Tutor                  | 36                        | 55                        | 45.00               | 6.96               |
| Circuit Supervisor             | 33                        | 51                        | 42.40               | 6.77               |

N=15



The items had three major parts:

- ✓ the first part was on demographic characteristics of the respondents
- ✓ the second part was on the conceptual understanding and the belief system that respondents have about training and development of instructional supervisors,
- ✓ the final part of the instrument consisted of investment decisions regarding development of instructional supervisors.

An interview guide was structured and administered on the sample of educational workers. The researcher administered the instruments at face-to-face level and over telephone. This was done after the researcher agreed on telephone with the respondents on the study and schedule for the collection of the information. In all seven different respondents were informed about the study but five was actually used from each of the three categories of respondents identified (University teachers, Teacher Training College tutors and circuit supervisors).

The collected responses were sorted and classified according to themes and were subjected to a thick description of the variables and conclusions were drawn on them. In this direction, the researcher classified the responses by means of an excel spreadsheet and thus made it easy to isolate the main issues in the responses for the report.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The responses came from interviewees with different demographic orientations. The brackets of differences were age, status in the education sector, sex, experience and academic qualification. All the respondents from the metropolitan education office were assistant directors with varying degrees of experience circuit assignments. At least each of the circuit supervisors held a degree in education related field and whereas some respondents had obtained their masters degree others were either enrolled or about to enrol for further studies. Such varying characteristics related with the university and teacher training college teachers. Whereas there are mixed gender for the university and teacher training college tutors who responded to the items, all the circuit supervisors were males.

The second part, respondents were asked about the difference between the work of an instructional supervisor and that of the teacher? Varying comments were received from the respondents. In response to the question posed, one respondent indicated that, *whereas the instructional supervisors guide and support the teacher, the teacher on the other hand helps the students to learn*. One of the respondents however stated that *the instructional supervisor's role includes supervising teachers in lesson preparation and delivery*. One the responses that stood out related to the fact that, *instructional supervisors supervise and the teacher teaches*". None of the respondents indicated that the work of the instructional supervisor is the same as the work of the teacher. The implication is that since there is difference in the individual job content, then there should be different training routes for the teacher and for the supervisor.

All the respondents indicated that it is worthwhile to develop instructional supervisors. Several reasons were assigned by the respondents as to why they agree with the fact that development of instructional supervisors is worthwhile. The human nature is complex and needs a level of moderation by means of a third person and instructional supervisors could fill that need. Training and development of instructional supervisors aid them to note what to look for in the teacher, establish appropriate commendation, help them to improve, and then diagnose the system. Professional guidance is offered by means of the activities carried out by instructional supervisors. A forty year teacher who has been teaching for 8years, indicated that *"it is worthwhile because it would enable the supervisor to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively supervise the classroom teacher"*.

Among other reasons assigned the instructional supervisor will gain the experience, and turn to play his/her role more effectively. Since a well resourced instructional supervisor has the training he/she commands respect on the subject. The information provided by the respondents are quite explicit enough in the sense that they provide basis on which it can be argued that is worthwhile to train the instructional supervisor.

Another item on the list which was similar to whether development of instructional supervisors is worthwhile is the expected benefits from development of instructional supervisors. I noted that a few of the respondents during the pretesting gave responses which indicated that this item be deleted but still the

reliability of the item was high so I proceeded to use and responses were rather fantastic. It provides the opportunity for teachers to use the appropriate instructional techniques and be abreast with current trends in the curriculum and especially in the syllabuses of the land. Time as a resource in the classroom is made more practical to the teacher so that he can perform well on the delivery of instruction and use time more judiciously. The development of instructional supervisors enhances the effectiveness of the linkage between the instruction and curriculum.

There was an item which was soliciting comments on the statement that "every trained and experienced teacher can succeed as an instructional supervisor". This attracted a lot of comments from the respondents. On the whole, about 75% of the respondents stated that it might not be necessarily true. These were some reasons assigned for that stand: it depends of the training requisite of instructional supervisors; the routes of producing the two are not the same. An interviewee stated that 'teaching in itself is different from instructional supervision' and thus tried to differentiate the instructional supervisor from the teacher. Ironically the interviewees who indicated that the statement is true were not able to remember the earlier statement of the work of instructional supervisors. They justified why that might be the case; by pointing out that the teacher builds experience and learn from other experienced instructional supervisors and through replete in-service organised regularly.

The question of which principal routes that interviewees will like to recommend to government to develop instructional supervisors was also popular among interviewees. Whereas some indicated that further training should be given to train teachers to become instructional supervisors others recommended special training by means of university or college designed curriculum. Government ensuring and assuring financial and motivational support was also recommended popularly. Mention was made of in-service as a viable option and was recommended by some interviewees to government.

Finally, interviewees were asked whether 'there is the need for development of instructional supervisors for our schools?' Except for one interviewee who indicated no all the other interviewees said yes. This item was further probed with whose responsibility it should be to train the instructional supervisors. Mainly, the responses centred on the government (Ministry of Education) and then the individual as principal financiers of such development efforts.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Principal of schools cannot play the role of an instructional supervisor effectively as they are saddled with a plethora of managerial demands in their respective schools. They can only serve as facilitator of teacher professional development and rarely provide intellectual leadership for growth in teaching skills. Also, a classroom teacher cannot act as an instructional supervisor since there is tendency for biasness. Self evaluation and assessment cannot be trusted as it has the propensity to create room for intellectual dishonesty.

It is therefore necessary for an independent assessment and evaluation of classroom teaching and learning experiences so as to ensure transparency, accountability, and profitability. In this vein, instructional supervision should have a professional road map that must be supported by government. The instructional supervisor should serve as a liaison between the teacher and the principal, and should act as an agent of change by ensuring that teachers use appropriate instructional techniques that are congruous with curriculum.

Training of instructional supervisors centers principally on the government and the individual. The human is really an economic agent for society; changes in policy and organization will result in productive teaching and learning outcomes. The instructional supervisor therefore serves as that human capital that is translated into higher economic growth in a globalised and dynamic world.

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