School Improvement and Support Officer as Curriculum Leader in Pru East District- Ghana: Roles, Challenges, and the Way Forward

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Abstract

This study investigated the roles and challenges of the School Improvement and Support Officer (SISO) as curriculum leader in Pru East district and the way forward. A cross-section survey design was adopted for the study. The tools used for collecting the needed data were a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed for SISO, headteachers and teachers to collect data about their current status as supervisors and roles of the SISO in schools. They were asked to rate the items on 5 points Likert scale. The semi-structured interview was conducted for only the nine selected SISOs about the challenges affecting supervision in the Pru East district and suggested appropriate improvement solutions. The data that were obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed by using descriptive statistics viz., frequency and percentage while the steps involved in the inductive analysis approach was followed to analyze the data obtained from the semi-structured interview. The major findings of the studies revealed that the majority (5) of the SISOs have work experience of more than ten years and mostly played roles such as; monitoring and implementing new educational policies in schools, serving as experts of curricula activities, and advising teachers on the preparation of scheme of work and lesson plans. Also, challenges that militate against effective supervision include; lack of means of transport to schools in the hinterland, no offices for the SISOs at the circuit level where teachers could easily locate them in times of need, inadequate logistics like safety boots, raincoats, life jacket motorbike and fuel for the SISOs to visit all the schools, overburdened with workload due to many schools under their supervision, and inadequate higher qualification (Master of Education in School Supervision). Appropriate suggestions were provided to improve supervision in schools.

Keywords: School-Improvement-and-Support-Officer, curriculum-leader, supervision, roles, and challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The basic school curriculum in Ghana is composed of several subjects with each subject consisting of topics or activities. All the topics or activities under each subject constitute the syllabus which is further elaborated into a textbook (Adentwi & Sarfo, 2011). Heads of institutions assign teachers in their areas of specialization and competency to teach the subjects by using textbooks. Each teacher, therefore, takes a subject allotted to him and makes a plan. Planning is an essential process that helps the teacher to achieve his lesson objectives (Afful-Broni & Ziggah, 2006). By using adequate techniques and methods,

teachers would be able to translate the content of the textbook to the children for them to be able to absorb the relevant knowledge and develop necessary skills and attitudes (Bishop, 1985). This process is known as curriculum transaction. Education stakeholders in Ghana have shown concern for effective curriculum transactions (Adu-Gyamfi & Adinkrah, 2016). For effective curriculum transactions in schools, teacher competency is required through effective supervision (Akyeampong, 2017). For this reason, the government of Ghana has underlined its determination to pull resources together to ensure effective curriculum transactions in schools. However, it is common knowledge that proper curriculum transaction cannot be done by mere pumping of resources into the educational system. The supervisory role of curriculum leaders is critical for effective monitoring of resources at the school level and making teachers competent to achieve the instructional goal (Adenwi & Baafi- Frimpong, 2010).

Supervision in the early days was characterized by a reliance on clergy in providing guidance and overseeing the activities of teachers (Robert et al, 2011). As school systems became more complex, the need for more specialized guidance for teachers gave rise to the principal teacher as a leader who should create awareness of the importance of pedagogy. Similarly, in the Ghanaian education system, supervision was long managed by the Monitoring and Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Education (MOE) at the central government level, which has now been decentralized to the municipal and district directorates (ME, 2018). Supervisors have been appointed and tasked to ensure that educational policies are put into practice at the grassroots level in accordance with the policies and regulations approved by the government (Appiah, 2009). This suggests that supervision in the Ghana Education Service (GES) consists of members of external and internal inspectorate teams mandated to ensure quality education (Adenwi & Baafi-Frimpong 2010). The external inspectorate team members are experienced educationists in the GES at the national level who occasionally visit schools for general inspections. The internal inspectorate team members are also experienced educationists who are located at

the district level to regularly conduct supervision in all the schools in their respective districts. For effective supervision at the districts level, circuits or zones are created (MoE, 2018). Each circuit is headed by a School Improvement and Support Officer (SISO), curriculum leader, who conducts evidence-based school inspection and monitors the processes of curriculum transaction in every school in the districts (NaSIA, 2021).

The SISOs are placed at the circuit level in order to visit schools regularly. The roles include; monitoring the teachers at work in ensuring that the children are properly taught, conducting in-service training for teachers and sending reports to their district; municipal or metropolitan education directorate (Appiah, 2009). However, the Dzobo committee on educational reform (1974) found that supervision has not adequately enhanced the teaching and learning process of basic schools in the country regardless of the several changes that have taken place from time to time. A study conducted by Asare and Nti (2014) also found that teachers have little knowledge of teaching skills despite the array of teaching methods they were taught. Osei (2010) maintained that the Basic Education Certificate Examination results of the schools did not show a consistent improvement in students' performance. Adentwi (1992) envisages a steep decline in the educational standards in Ghana which partly depends on the irregular visits of SISO. Kpatakpa (2008) therefore concludes on a fast falling academic standard in Ghanaians' schools and has shifted the blame to the teachers, who were found not to be providing effective teaching and learning. In line with the above, Pru East district is no exception.

Pru East district is located along the Volta Lake in the Bono East region of Ghana. The majority of the people are peasant farmers who are into crop production, animal rearing and fishing (PHC, 2010). Due to their occupation, most of them have settled in the hinterland. Therefore, road networks and potable water are some of their challenges. Despite the low socio-economic situation, formal education is their topmost priority. About nine Circuits have been created with schools sited in them to provide formal education for all. Consequently, about 50 per

cent of the people can read and write (PHC, 2010). As part of the roles of the Pru East District Directorate of Education, a SISO has been assigned to every circuit. However, the result of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in this district from 2014-to 2018 shows a considerable decline (Apambila, 2021). This author further revealed that the supply of motorbikes to SISOs have improved their mobility and regularity at work. Therefore, the questions that come to mind are; what roles have been assigned to SISOs to improve teaching and learning? And what challenges are confronted by SISO in Pru East district? Answers to these questions are relevant in this study. Perhaps, suggestions would be sought to improve teaching and learning in this district.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature forms the foundation upon which further research can be done. In this paper, the review of related literature is presented in the following areas; the concept of supervision, and the roles of SISO curriculum leaders.

The Concept of Supervision

Supervision in education has been an important aspect of school management and administration (Jaafar, 1998). Its purpose is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Mankoe (2007) identified two critical dimensions in education supervision. Thus; pupil-related and instructional-related. The pupil related dimension includes distribution of instructional materials conferences with parents and rescheduling of classes whereas the instructional-related dimension involves classroom presentations, educational counselling, and assisting children in selecting a library book, conducting achievement tests, completing continuous assessment forms, preparing terminal reports for parents, selecting appropriate instructional materials and conducting the in-service session. Supervision is about curriculum development, communication leadership and helping teachers and learners to realize their full potentials in their respective careers (Cogan, 1973). The supervisor monitors the teacher while teaching gathers information about his external behaviour and discusses with him the effective ways to modify them. For effective

Supervision, the supervisor should have a purpose and establish a democratic environment in accordance with the education system. The democratic environment would create leadership qualities in teachers, respects individual differences, helps individual teachers in diagnosing teaching difficulties, and recognizes the inherent importance of an individual teacher.

Roles of SISO as Curriculum Leader

The name SISO varies from one country to another depending on which country colonized which country. In the United Kingdom and its colonies, it is called the circuit supervisor or the school inspector. In the American literature, it is referred to as the school superintendent whilst other countries call it the circuit manager (Robert et al, 2011). It is known as the SISO in Ghana. The SISO is a curriculum leader. He exerts managerial roles in curriculum transactions by creating a culture for establishing a shared vision, common goals and encouraging leadership throughout the circuit. To ensure managerial effectiveness, the circuit supervisor embraces his functions as the primary instructional leader for the educational district, prioritizing learner achievement and effective instructional practices as the foremost goals of the district (Waters &Marzano, 2007).

A man by nature has an inherent attitude of dislike for work and must be directed and supervised (McGregor, 1960). It is assumed that without proper supervision, teachers will not put up their best at their workplaces. Supervision puts workers on their toes and supervised teachers become more diligent and productive. Researchers such as (Wile, 1995; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 1998) found that effective supervision encourages teachers to demonstrate the ability to exercise mature and sound judgment in the performance of their roles and responsibilities resulting in the achievement of professional growth and academic performance. As schools are expected to turn out a certain level of output of work per day, week, month and year, it is expected that the teachers remain proactive in performing teaching tasks on time to be able to meet delivery schedules and deadlines. It is envisaged that work output alone is not

enough (Mankoe, 2007). The supervisor is required to be judged by the quality of work of his teachers concerning the number of qualifying students. To ensure effective supervision, the supervisors mutually planned lessons with teachers; decide on what and how to observe before proceeding to the class to observe a lesson (Blase& Blasé, 2004). Pansiri (2008) conducted a study in Botswana and found 75% of teachers indicated that their supervisors planned lessons with them, so the teachers accept the supervisors as regular visitors who are partners of instructional improvement rather than intruders in private instructional behaviour.

Teacher competency fosters teachers' values and improves their professional development (Selvi, 2010). This author further opines that teachers' professional competencies could be attributed to curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies and emotional competencies. Similarly, Aziz and Akhtar (2014) envisage that the professional development of teachers provides a relevant impact on teachers' professional skills, knowledge and abilities for the benefit of students' learning. For this reason, supervisors should not remain detached from teacher evaluation because it offers opportunities to change the lives of both teacher and student for the better. Harris recommended cooperative supervision whereby teachers are deeply involved with peers and the supervisors while observing and analyzing their behaviours for improvement of teaching and learning.

A study by Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2010) revealed that professional English language teachers in Northern Cyprus showed a very positive attitude towards professional development since it helps them to learn new trends in teaching, and as such become aware of other opportunities in teaching. The study however showed that lack of time, qualification and inadequate financial resources were seen as two major impediments to teachers' professional development. Again, the nature of professional development activities found was 'one-shot' workshops which aimed at helping teachers to master prescribed skills and knowledge. According to Mankoe (2007), supervisors orientate staff members with the basic information necessary to

carry out their assigned responsibilities. Other duties include; introducing new teachers to facilities, staff, and community and also keeping staff informed about organizational developments. Esia- Donkor and Ofoso-Dwamena (2014) found that there is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers of public basic schools at Winneba, in terms of developing their experiences, classroom management, characteristics of the pupils they teach, and assessment techniques. Kutsyuruba (2003) in a study on beginning teachers' perception of instructional supervision revealed that beginning teachers require more instructional supervision to be able to meet their professional needs. Therefore, it is recommended that supervisors need to help them by providing them with professional and emotional support.

Wile (1995) conducted a study titled; 'Supervision for Better Schools' in India and found that; supervision is a process that is confidential, positive, forward-looking; primarily educational and developmental, and designed to help the individual to progress. Wile emphasizes that in educational supervision, the supervisee should be comfortable about displaying weakness. This means the supervisor should not adopt a fault-finding approach like directing, telling but rather participatory and mutual sharing technique of feedback with teachers must be encouraged. Blase and Blase (1999) found supervisors provided feedback that was specific, expressed caring, interest and support in a non-judgmental way and encouraged them to think and re-evaluate strategies. These authors conclude that feedback informs teachers' behaviour and results. They further argued teachers should plan carefully and employ a variety of instructional practices that would address students' diversity to achieve a goal.

Yunus et al studied the school principals' roles in teaching supervision in selected schools in Perak, Malaysia. Data were collected using structured questionnaires from 120 secondary school teachers in the District of Central Perak. The findings revealed that the effectiveness of principals' supervision leads to effective curriculum implementation, the use of effective teaching and learning materials, and the improvement of teachers' professionalism.

Also, Rahimah (1986) study found a significant relationship between principal leadership style and students' academic performance. According to AzaliMahbar (1982), supervisory practices of a principal include: i) examining teachers' teaching plans, ii) examining students' workbooks, iii) observing the process of teaching and learning in the classroom, iv) hoisting teachers' conferences. Supervisors provide professional development for teachers in the form of in-service training sessions, workshops and conferences to make them abreast with time in their instructional practices (Glickman, 2003). Pansiri (2008) conducted a study in Botswana and found that supervisors ran school-based workshops to address the curriculum needs of teachers. The study also indicated that teachers had learnt a lot of new techniques and challenges that would help them to stay abreast with new development. Other roles identified by Glickman, et al., (2001) include; teacher motivation, development of teachers; self-esteem, efficacy, and reflective behaviour like risk-taking, instructional variety, innovation and creativity in the schools. However, Apambila (2021) conducted a study on instructional supervision of teaching and learning of public Junior High Schools in Yeji, Pru East District in the Bono East Region, Ghana and found that school supervisors were facing challenges like; non-payment of maintenance allowances, lack of induction courses, and lack of office.

In conclusion, it can be learnt from the above review of related literature that supervision plays a critical role in the improvement of teaching and learning. For this reason, different authors have defined it differently based on different disciplines. In GES, supervision is conducted both at the district levels and at the national level. While the SISOs perform their roles at the district levels, the National Inspectorate Board is at the national level making sure that the needs of the society are met. To ensure effective supervision, the supervisors must play their roles diligently in schools. Therefore, SISOs

Table 1: Biodata of SISO

have greater responsibility to undertake in schools to improve teaching and learning. This can be done by creating an interactive and conducive environment in schools.

Objectives of the study

This paper seeks:

i.   To examine the current status of SISO in terms of gender and qualification
ii.   To explore the roles of SISO as curriculum leader
iii.   To find out the problems that affect effective supervision in schools
iv.   To suggest strategies to improve supervision in basic schools.

METHODOLOGY

The design used in this study is a cross-sectional survey and qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed to address the objectives. While the quantitative method was used to address the role of the SISO, the qualitative method was used to find out the challenges and the way forward. Qualitative research aims at providing an understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants (Gay et al., 2012). A qualitative study also seeks to collect in-depth data from the respondents to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon of concern. Since this subject is investigating SISO as curriculum leader in Pru East District-Ghana: roles, challenges, and the way forward, there is a need to collect comprehensive data from SISOs, headteachers and teachers to achieve the study objectives.

Participants

The population consists of all the basic schools and their affiliated circuits in the Pru East district in Ghana. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample all the 9 SISOs. The researcher selected 9 SISOs because there were only 9 in that district. Their selection was based on certain criteria such as their educational level, and work experience. Therefore, the selected SISO could be accepted for providing the needed data for the study. The details of the biodata of the SISO are presented in table1.

Table-1: Biodata of the SISO

Code	Gender	Age	Experience	Educational Level	Field of Study
S1	Female	54	21	Bachelor	Basic Education
S2	Male	57	23	Bachelor	Mathematics
S3	Male	41	12	Master	Basic Education
S4	Male	47	15	Bachelor	Social Studies
S5	Male`	52	20	Bachelor	Basic Education
S6	Female	58	31	Bachelor	Basic Education
S7	Female	58	29	Bachelor	Basic Education
S8	Male	44	13	Bachelor	English
S9	Male	48	19	Bachelor	Basic Education

Other participants of the study were the headteachers and the teachers who were in charge of the school where the SISO operated. For this reason, 18 headteachers were selected from the school by using purposive sampling techniques. This was based on the criteria that there were only 18 headteachers in the selected schools, having experience and knowledge to provide the required data. For each school teacher to have an equal chance of being selected, a random sampling technique was employed to sample 80 teachers. As the headteachers and teachers were working under the supervision of SISO, it was thought that they would be able to provide appropriate data about the roles they had been playing in schools.

Tools used for data collection

The major tool used for collecting the needed data was a semi-structured interview. According to Lester et al (2014), the interview is mostly used to collect qualitative data about a phenomenon. An interview form consisting of two parts was prepared to focus on; problems affecting SISO and the suggested solutions. Therefore, a total of 12 open-ended questions were framed for the interview. To administer the interview questions, the respondents were allowed to scan through the questions. In the course of the interview, the researcher probed further for more comprehensive data. This process was made successful based on the trust the researcher had established with the participants. Another tool used in the study was a questionnaire. A close-ended questionnaire was designed for headteachers, teachers, and SISO to collect data about their current status as supervisors and the roles of the SISO in schools. The questionnaire consists of two sections: biodata and questions about the roles of SISO. The questions were prepared as per the findings and recommendations of the previous studies. The questionnaire items consisted of a total of 18 close-ended questions were framed. The

participants were asked to rate the items on 5 points Likert scale as in Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity

For ensuring validity, the tools for data collection were given to three experts in the field of teacher education together with a proposal showing the research problem and the objectives. The experts were requested to check for grammar and clarity of the contents and give suggestions for modification. Based on their suggestions from the experts, the required corrections were made and the tools were appropriately modified. The researcher further conducted a pilot interview to test for clarity and the internal validity of the questions. The pilot study was conducted on five volunteered head teachers and two SISOs in the district.

Data analysis

The data that were collected through questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive statistics viz., frequency and percentage. Also, the steps involved in the inductive analysis approach was followed to analyze the data obtained from the semi-structured interview. Such steps as cited in Boru (2018), and (Yıldırım & Simşek (2006), are presented as follows.

i. *Data Coding:* The collected data were categorized into broad sections. The sections could either be words, sentences, paragraphs or pages conveying conceptual understanding and encoded.

ii. *Determination of themes:* The codes generated were categorized with each of the categories of code bundles is a focus to encode as a theme. And each of the themes focuses on a general case.

iii. *Organizing and describing data as per codes and themes:* the various category of the generated themes and codes were presented and described in an understandable manner.

iv. *Interpretation of findings:* the category of themes and codes, which are presented in a particular manner were discussed, interpreted and made some conclusions by the researcher.

FINDING

Bio-Data

The bio-data of the respondents were used to determine the current status of the SISOs in the Pru East district. The details of the bio-data collected from SISO, headteachers and teachers of public basic schools are presented as follows.

Table 2: Number of respondents by gender

Respondent	Gender		School		Total
	Male	Female	JHS	Primary	
SISO	6	3			9
Head Teachers	6	7	9	9	18
Teachers	50	30	40	40	80
Grand Total					**107**

The data in the table-2 show107 respondents of the study. All the SISOs (9) of Pru East district were used. Out of the 9 SISOs, 6 were males while the other 3were females. Also, it can be seen from the table-2 that the headteachers (18) who were selected from basic schools were serving in both the JHS (9) and primary schools (9). The gender-wise of the

selected headteachers show that male headteachers (11) as against female headteachers (7). The table-2 further shows that the basic school teachers (80) selected for the study were made up of primary school teachers (40) and JHS teachers (40). These teachers comprised of male (50) and female (30).

Table-3: Qualification of the Respondents

Degree/Certificate	SISO	Headteachers	Teachers
Master	1	2	3
Bachelor	8	16	54
Diploma		17	73
Certificate 'A'		10	34

The table-3 shows the qualification of the respondents of this study. The higher qualification found among all the SISOs (8) was a bachelor's degree. While a SISO also has a master's degree (1). This implies that the SISO in the Pru East District, Ghana does not have higher qualifications that would equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills of school supervision. The table again found no record for doctorate among the headteachers but (2) of the headteachers have a **Table-4: Work Experience**

Master's degree as a higher qualification. A majority (16) of them have a bachelor's degree, some (17) diplomas while a few (10) have teacher certificate 'A'. Data about the teachers shows that none of them has a Doctorate. However, it was found that a few of teachers (3) have a master's degree; some have a bachelor's degree (54) and a majority have a diploma (73) and others have teacher certificate 'A' (34) respectively.

Respondents	Work Experience		
	0-5 years	5-10 years	Above 10 years
SISO (n=9)	-	-	-
Headteachers (n=18)	3	6	11
Teachers (n=80)	23	37	20

It can be seen from the table-4 that the majority of the SISOs (9) and the majority of the headteachers

(11) have work experience above ten years. Also, the majority (37) of the teachers have work experience between five to ten years. This indicates that they would be abreast with their roles and their professional environment.

Table-5: Frequencies and Percentages of Roles of SISO as Curriculum Leader

S/N	Items	Response from the Respondents (N=107)				
		SA	A	N	D	SD
1	Serve as experts of curricula activities	84 (75.5%)	10 (9.3%)	-	8 (7.5%)	5 (4.6%)
2	Responsible for corrective action in schools	17 (15.8%)	68 (63.5%)	3 (2.8%)	11 (10.2%)	8 (7.5%)
3	Allocate resources in schools	13 (12.2%)	77 (71.9%)	5 (4.6%)	9 (8.4%)	3 (2.8%)
4	Monitor and implementation of new educational policies in schools	89 (83.1%)	11 (10.2%)	-	5 (4.6%)	2 (1.8%)
5	Organizing orientation and utilization of special personnel	23 (21.4%)	66 (61.6%)	8 (7.5%)	3 (2.8%)	7 (6.5%)
6	Designing & conducting in-service training sessions for teachers	23 (21.5%)	71 (66.3%)	3 (2.8%)	9 (8.4%)	1 (0.93)
7	Liaise with outsiders who provide favour for schools	1 (0.93)	4 (3.7%)	-	27 (25.2%)	75 (70%)
8	Staffing and motivating of teachers	9 (8.4%)	16 (14.9%)	5 (4.6%)	49 (45.7%)	28 (26%)
9	Design TLM for use in schools	2 (1.8%)	5 (4.6%)	-	22 (20.5%)	78 (72.8%)
10	Represent schools at major negotiation tables	10 (9.3%)	27 (25.2%)	-	51 (47.6%)	19 (17.7%)
11	Improve basic teaching skills and encourage the use of TLMs	19 (17.7%)	66 (61.6%)	-	13 (12.1%)	9 (8.4%)
12	Constructive criticism of teachers	61 (57%)	12 (11.2%)	5 (4.6%)	21 (20.5%)	8 (7.4%)
13	Advice teachers on the preparation of scheme of work & lesson plans	75 (70%)	17 (15.8%)	-	9 (8.4%)	6 (5.6%)
14	Diagnose and reports pupils' strengths and weaknesses to stakeholders	28 (26.1%)	48 (44.8%)	11 (10.2%)	17 (15.8%)	3 (2.8%)
15	Identify brilliant but needy students & recommend them for assistance	14 (13%)	17 (15.8%)	2 (1.8%)	55 (51.4%)	19 (17.7%)
16	Build a healthy relationship between teachers, parents and students	49 (45.7%)	22 (20.5%)	7 (6.5%)	18 (16.8%)	11 (10.2%)
17	Organize co-curricular activities and extra curricula activities to build confidence in teachers and students	4 (3.7%)	13 (12.1%)	-	75 (70%)	15 (14%)
18	Encourage teamwork in school	17 (15.8%)	19 (17.7%)	11 (10.2%)	33 (30.8%)	27 (25%)

It can be seen from the table-5 that most of the respondents 89 (83.1%), 84 (75.5%) and 75 (70%) strongly agreed that the roles of SISO as curriculum leader include; monitoring and implementing new educational policies in schools, serve as experts of curricula activities, and advise teachers on the preparation of scheme of work & lesson plans. Also, some respondents 77 (71.9%), 71 (66.3%) and 68 (63.5%) agreed that the SISO allocate resources in schools, designing & conducting in-service training sessions for teachers, and is responsible for corrective action in schools. However, the majority of the respondents 78 (72.8%), and 75 (70%), strongly disagreed that the SISOs in Pru East district design TLM for use in schools and liaise with outsiders who provide favour for schools while others 75 (70%) and 51 (47.6%) disagreed that the SISOs represent schools at major negotiation tables and organize co-curricular activities and extra-curricular activities to build confidence in teachers and students. The negative response suggests that such roles were not observed by the participants.

Problems that Affect Effective Supervision in Schools

To find out the problems militating against supervision in schools, a semi-structured interview was used to collect the needed data from the nine SISOs in the Pru East district. As the researcher was a professional teacher teaching under the jurisdiction of the SISO, they did not hesitate in releasing information about the problems affecting effective supervision and needed suggestions for improvement. Also, since the majority of the SISOs were experienced (more than ten years) in the field of work, data regarding challenges at their workplaces were not far-reaching. During the interview, the researcher asked for permission and recorded the session by using a tape recorder. The recorded data were later transcribed and coded and written in a notebook. The coding was done as per themes that emerged. The themes that emerged after coding include; a) transportation problem; i) poor road network, ii) lack of logistics, iii) lack of maintenance allowances, b) workload on SISO; i) lack of motivation, ii) lack of knowledge in ICT, and lack of

accommodation, c) inadequate qualified personnel; i) lack of training, ii) lack of energy to reach all the schools, iii) inadequate appraisal of SISO. The details of the findings are presented as follows.

Transportation Problem

The codes used to determine this theme (transportation problem) include; poor road network, lack of logistics, and lack of maintenance allowances. Direct statements from the participants that address this theme 'transportation problem' could be found in the paragraphs as follows. For the code of '**poor road network,**' S3 said that *Most of my schools are located in remote areas with poor road networks. For this reason, there is no means of transport. This makes it difficult for me to visit all the schools, especially during the rainy season.* S5 said *the road leading to the schools in rural areas are extremely bad. Therefore, it is difficult for me to get the means to all my schools.* S8 said *most of my schools in the villages are not accessible due to a poor road network.* For the code of '**lack of logistics**' S1 said, *I have not visited all my schools due to lack of logistics.* S7 said *since I have to cross rivers, go through the forest to visit some of my schools, I need logistics like safety boots, raincoat, life jacket a motorbike and fuel to visit all the schools.* S8 said *I am appealing to the government of Ghana to make logistics available in every circuit to ease our job.* For the code of '**lack of maintenance, allowances**' S1 said *my motorbike is broken down and cannot be used because I have not received maintenance allowances to maintain it.* S4 said *the fact that the maintenance allowance is not enough, it does not get at us regularly.* S6 said *the government of Ghana should increase the maintenance allowance and infuse it into our salaries for us to have direct access to it.* It can be learnt from these codes and their associated quotations that transportation problem in most of the areas under the supervision of the various SISOs, is preventing them from achieving their goals.

Workload on SISO

The codes that were used to determine this theme (workload on SISO) include; lack of motivation, lack of knowledge in ICT, and

lack of accommodation. Many direct quotations from the participants leading to the development of this theme could be found in this paragraph. In addressing the code of 'lack of motivation' S9 said *I have not received motivation either in cash or in-kind from the government of Ghana or an individual in the community for performing the duties diligently.* S1 said *since we have been passing through the huddles to do our job as SISOs, we need to be motivated by the government. However, there is no motivation in this regard.* S8 said *the challenges in the job viz., too much work, lack of logistics, and poor salary are not motivating me to put up my best in the job.* S4 said *there are about twenty schools in my jurisdiction which pose a lot of pressure on me. I am not motivated to supervise all the schools within a week.* The code of **lack of knowledge in ICT**S4 said *I do not know ICT to facilitate in records keeping on the schools under my jurisdiction.* S2 said *I need to be provided with a personal computer by the government of Ghana to help discharge my duties.* S4 *said to reduce our workload as SISOs, we require knowledge in ICT.* S8 said *I am entreating them GES to incorporate technology and train supervisors to be able to use it to facilitate supervision.* For the code of **lack of accommodation,** S2 said *lack of office accommodation in my area compels me to visit every teacher to address his/her problem in the school.* S3 said *offices are not created for us as a result, our teachers find it difficult to reach us at the appropriate time.* S5 said *lack of accommodation in my area of supervision makes me travel so many kilometres to reach my teachers. Travelling makes me tired and ineffective.* S8 said *we need offices in our places of work to reduce some of the transportation costs.* It can be concluded that the SISOs in Pru East districts are overburdened with responsibilities. For them to perform their duties effectively certain support systems like motivation, accommodation, and ICT skills are required.

Inadequate qualified personnel

Concerning the theme of inadequate qualified personnel, codes like; lack of training, lack of energy to reach all the schools, and inadequate appraisal of SISO were used. For **lack of training,** S2 said *we don't undertake in-service*

on regular bases to rekindle our supervisory skills. S1 said *I do not have professional training on school supervision. I was selected based on my years of experience in this district.* S6 said *I did not study for a master's degree in school supervision which is making me lack supervisory skills.* S9 said *I wish I could be sponsored to pursue Master of Education in School supervision to be effective.*S8 said *though trained graduate teachers are considered, teachers with higher certificates (Masters and Doctorate) in school supervision are not the primary requirement.* S3 said *the Pru East district rarely organizes workshops and seminars for us to update our knowledge and skills.* S7 said *I have also observed that SISOs in the basic schools are not trained in our universities to be qualified enough to perform their duties because most of us were trained as basic school teachers to teach.* For **lack of energy to reach all the schools,** S5*I am 58 and not strong enough to ride a motorbike to remote areas.* S6 said e*very day, I commute from home to my area of supervision which is very far (about 26 kilometres). So I get tired and can't perform effectively when I eventually get to school.* S4 said *I suggest my circuit should be split and more supervisors employed to relieve us of our burden.* S6 said *young teachers who are full of energy are not employed for this job.* For **an inadequate appraisal of SISO**S1 said *we are not appraised regularly by the GES so that we can know our strengths and weakness.* S3 said *appraisal result is essential for the improvement of skills and performance. However, this important aspect eludes us in our job.* S9 said *it is critical for the National Inspectorate Board of the GES to appraise us regularly to ensure effective supervision in schools.* S8 said *The GES does not provide comprehensive orientation service to newly recruited SISOs.* S6 said *orientation for newly recruited SISOs is necessary for specifying their roles in clear terms.* It can be concluded that SISOs are selected based on the number of years they have served in the teaching profession. Although some of them were trained graduate teachers having bachelor's degree and master's degree, higher qualification and their field of study was not a major concern. It is obvious that their knowledge and skill for supervision would not be in-depth and must be relooked by the GES.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data presented above, it can be said that the gender-wise representation of SISO, headteachers and teachers have more males than females. This indicates that the male curriculum leaders in Pru East district dominate their female counterparts. This finding is consistent with the finding of Esia-Donkor & Ofoso-Dwamena (2014). Further investigation with the SISO revealed that there were more male children in schools than female children. This is because most of the parents in the Pru East district did not have formal education. And most of them were peasant farmers and fishermen with low incomes. For this reason, they have no reason to educate their girl-child since they would be married to men in the future. They would rather prefer to educate their male children believing that they would remain at home to take care of them in their old age. This finding is not in line with Esia- Donkor and Ofoso-Dwamena (2014). This problem must be relooked to ensure gender equality in the teaching profession.

Qualification of curriculum leader is critical for effective supervision. It was found that most of the SISO, headteachers and teachers have a first degree. It was revealed that a Bachelor of Education was the basic requirement for the selection of SISO. However, a Master's degree and a Doctorate which are the highest qualification were not given a priority. It can therefore be said that since the SISO were not having the highest certificates, they were not equipped with in-depth knowledge and skills in school supervision which would consequently impede effective supervision. This assertion is in line with the finding of Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu (2010) and Hawk and Hills (2003) who conclude that higher qualification of supervisors provides knowledge of supervision theory, practice and personnel management. Therefore, the issue of supervisors' qualification and professional development in Ghana is of great concern and must be taken up.

Concerning the work experience of the curriculum leader, it was revealed that the majority of the SISOs and headteachers were having work experience of more than ten years. It can be said that workers who have more work

experience are familiar with the environment than those that are new. Also, studies have revealed that the knowledge and experience of supervisors are critical for the implementation and establishment of a conducive learning environment in schools (Wells and Feun, 2007) and Hord (2003). Therefore, it can be established that the SISOs in the Pru East district were experienced to undertake supervisory tasks at the basic schools.

It can be learnt from the data presented above that SISO has a lot of roles to play at the basic school. A few of the numerous roles that were played regularly include; monitoring and implementing new educational policies in schools, serving as experts of curricula activities, and advising teachers on the preparation of scheme of work & lesson plans. These major roles were also found by Glickman, (2003), Pansiri, (2008), Crankshaw (2011), and (Mankoe, 2007). Further investigation revealed that the roles of SISOs were impeded by factors such as lack of means of transport to schools in the hinterland, no offices for the SISOs at the circuit level where teachers could easily locate them in times of needs, inadequate logistics like safety boots, raincoat, life jacket motorbike and fuel for the SISOs to visit all the schools, overburdened with workload due to many schools under their supervision, and inadequate higher qualification (Master of Education in School Supervision). Similar findings were found by Apambila (2021). These challenges must be relooked to ensure affecting teaching and learning in the Pru East district.

Based on the data presented above, the following can be derived as challenges that affect effective supervision;

1. Lack of means of transport to schools in the hinterland. The means of transport include good roads, motorbikes and cars to transport the SISOs to schools.
2. There were no offices for the SISOs at the circuit level where teachers could easily locate them in times of need.
3. There were inadequate logistics like safety boots, raincoats, life jacket motorbikes and fuel for the SISOs to visit all the schools.

4. The SISOs were overburdened with work due to many schools under their supervision.
5. The SISOs were not having higher qualifications (Master of Education in School Supervision) to perform assiduously in schools.
6. Inadequate in-service training and professional development programmes for the supervisors. This is because the Pru East district rarely organizes workshops and seminars for the SISOs to update their knowledge and skills.
7. The SISOs were old and not physically fit to walk or ride bicycles to schools located in places of poor roads.
8. The SISOs were not technologically savvy. Therefore, they were not capable of applying computer knowledge in facilitating supervision.
9. The GES did not appraise the SISOs regularly for professional development.
10. The GES did not provide proper orientation service to newly recruited SISOs. For this reason, their roles were not specified.

Suggestions for Improvement of Supervision in Schools

The suggestions that could be drawn from the above data are presented as follows;

1. The SISOs should be provided with motorbikes and fuel to visit all schools in the hinterland.
2. Accommodation and offices should be provided at the circuit levels to make SISOs accessible.
3. The GES should ensure that every SISO is provided with logistics like safety boots, raincoats, and life jackets to visit all the schools during the rainy season.
4. Larger circuits should be split and employ more SISOs to ensure effective supervision.
5. The GES should ensure that candidates with higher qualifications like Master of Education in Supervision and other related areas are recruited. Such candidates are more competent for the job.
6. The Pru East district should organize workshops and programmes for SISOs

on regular bases to update their knowledge and skills.
7. Young teachers who are full of energy should be engaged especially in circuits that are in remote areas. Such SISOs will have the energy to visit schools without difficulties.
8. Universities and the GES should incorporate technology in school supervision and train supervisors to use it to facilitate supervision.
9. The National Inspectorate Board of the GES should appraise SISOs regularly and submit a report for improvement.
10. The GES should provide orientation service to newly recruited SISOs and specify their roles to them in clear terms.
11. Universities and the GES should incorporate technology in school supervision and train supervisors to use it to facilitate supervision.
12. The schools' timetable should incorporate workshops and training for teachers to allow SISOs to interact with them regularly.

Implication, limitations and future directions

It can be learnt from the findings that there is a need for policymakers to provide regular on-the-job training for curriculum leaders (SISOs) on school supervision and equip them with the needed resources to be effective in schools. This is because, effective supervision encourages teachers to demonstrate the ability to exercise mature and sound judgment in the performance of their roles and responsibilities resulting in the achievement of professional growth and academic performance (Sergiovanni and Starrat, 1998). Future researchers may conduct studies on the roles of curriculum leaders in basic school curriculum design with evidence from SISOs, basic schools headteachers and teachers. This will provide insight into how SISOs contribute to curriculum design in the GES. This study aimed to offer the roles, challenges of SISO of Pru East District and offer appropriate suggestions for improvement but not to make a generalization conclusion. Therefore, future researchers should draw a generalized conclusion by providing larger data involving a larger sample of SISOs, headteachers and teachers in Ghana.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine the roles and challenges of SISOs as curriculum leaders and the way forward. The findings indicate that the majority (5) of the SISOs have work experience of more than ten years and

mostly played roles such as; monitoring and implementing new educational policies in schools, serving as experts of curricula activities, and advising teachers on the preparation of scheme of work and lesson plans. Despite this significant roles they play in schools, major challenges that militated against effective supervision include; lack of means of transport to schools in the hinterland, no offices for the SISOs at the circuit level where teachers could easily locate them in times of needs, inadequate logistics like safety boots, raincoat, life jacket motorbike and fuel for the SISOs to visit all the schools, overburdened with workload due to many schools under their supervision, and inadequate higher qualification (Master of Education in School Supervision). To improve supervision in schools, it was suggested that; the SISOs should be provided with motorbikes and fuel to visit all schools in the hinterland accommodation and offices should be provided at the circuit levels to make SISOs accessible, the GES should ensure that every SISO is provided with logistics like safety boots, raincoat, and life jacket to visit all the schools during the rainy season, larger circuits should be split and employed more SISOs to ensure effective supervision, and the GES should ensure that candidates with higher qualification like Master of Education in Supervision and other related areas are recruited.

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