

# Instructional Supervision Practices: Perceptions Of Principals And Teachers Of Federal Government Educational Institutions

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## Abstract

Instructional supervision holds an important position as it offers optimum assistance for the valuable and dynamic development of an institution. Instructional supervision encompasses the supervisory practices practiced by the principals of the institutions that are carried out wittingly to supervise the teaching and learning process in its entirety.

The present study endeavored to investigate and compare the perception of the principals and instructors of the FGEIs about the instructional supervision as practiced by them in their institutions. For this study, a qualitative approach was implemented and purposive sampling was observed. Ten FGEIs heads and thirty teachers were incorporated for sampling. Interviews were conducted and the data was analyzed through thematic analysis.

The findings of the study proposed that among the prime duties of the heads, the vital one is to single out the weak areas of the teachers and propose alternate strategies to make up for their deficiencies. The result of the present study showed that the principals of the institution used numerous practices to make up the deficiencies which comprise discussion, development of interpersonal relationships, providing assistance, feedback, and motivation for self-assessment, and provision of follow-up meetings. The study suggested that the process of supervision in instruction should be followed regularly to help the teachers for their continuous and regular professional development.

**Keywords:** Instructional supervision, teaching-learning, classroom instruction, principals, teachers

## Introduction

Instructional supervision deals with continuous, sustained, and regular improvement in the instructional and educational process (Ali, 2000). The practices of supervision in instruction aim the assist instructional staff to reinforce their instructional skills, enhance their professional skills, and put them into practice on the progression of curriculum objectives (Thobega & Miller, 2003). The supervisory practices are crucial for the teaching staff of all the levels available in the institution; the new inductees, the under-training faculty, and the qualified

skilled teachers (Vazir & Hussain, 2008). Hence, supervisory practices are necessary and desirable and play a crucial role in the educational procedure (Kebede, 2014; Marks, 2008).

The basic aim of supervision is to provide opportunities for in-service and on job learning and improvement so that the teachers enhance their instructional skills in a befitting way and make progress in their profession and career (Ahmad, 2004). Consequently, it will aide in the improvement of learning atmosphere, nourish teachers' self-assurance and lead to the improvement in the learning

standards (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). The principals being the classroom supervisors of the instruction are required to make sure that the environment available for academic work is uninterrupted, regular, organized, attainable, and workable. The principals are required to encourage and acknowledge the efforts made by the teachers (Ali, Taib, Jaffar, Salleh, & Omar, 2014). To provide a systematic and workable learning environment in the institutions is the primary responsibility of the principal (Gamage & Pang, 2003). For the academic improvement of the students, principals should ensure provision of all effective means and resources i.e. equipment, academic assistance, and administrative support (Abdullah & Kassim, 2011).

The process of instructional supervision becomes more productive when supervisors coordinate with their teaching staff (Farley, 2010; Tesfaw & Hofman, 2012). Supervision conducted by the heads of the schools exerts a great effect on the objectives set, instructional guidance, regular supervision of teachers' progress, and their specialized advancement in respective institutions (Ghavifekr, Ibrahim, Chellapan, Sukumaran, & Subramaniam, 2015).

The supervisory practices focus on the set objectives of the teaching-learning process so that all concerned can get an opportunity to improve upon their teaching capability (Atnafu, 2014; Grande, 2012). The supervisor concentrates on the instructional supervision practices and involves himself in; attaining the set objectives, the institutions' checklists, and the formation of narrative and rating scales for recording the observations of the teachers, evaluating them, providing them with feedback for the attainment of the set objectives (Abdullah & Kassim, 2011). Instructional supervision helps the heads of the institutions to deal with the problems connected to irregularity, evasion, inefficiency, weaknesses in teaching skills, lack of preparation, and slackness (Jaffer, 2010; Marks, 2008). The supervisory practices of instruction don't make any difference if the supervisors are not

prepared or incapable of supervising the teachers (Billheimer, 2007). Heads of institutions focus on carrying out formative assessments that focus on the help of teachers and the identification of the areas that require improvement (Violet, 2015). Behlol (2011) executed a study in which he endeavored to investigate the notions of supervisory practices at the primary level in Pakistan. The result of the investigation brought into light the fact that the heads of the school lack professional expertise and capacity which they can utilize to direct their teachers towards suitable classroom activities. Tongola (2016) investigates the effects of instructional supervision as executed by the heads of the institution on the teaching staff's efficacy in terms of their mode of instruction. The study disclosed that those heads who made frequent observations of lessons and arranged sessions of model teaching had a remarkable effect on their teaching staff. Only those heads of the institutions, who regularly carry out instructional supervision, will remain aware of the capability and ability of their teachers regarding teaching methodology. Khan (2012) carried out an investigation that brought home the point that the role of principals is many-sided because they not only guide, instruct, and inspire but also lead their teams who endeavor to strengthen the weak areas and utilize all the merits effectively of his team in order to attain the aspired results.

Federal Government Educational Institutions are governed by the Ministry of Defence, Government of Pakistan. All the teaching and administrative staff are government employees and are paid from the national exchequer. In addition, the tuition fee collected from the students is also deposited in the national exchequer. However, this chain of schools is administered and supervised by the Pakistan Army only. The researcher decides to embark on finding the differences and similarities between the perceptions of teachers and principals through instructional supervision practices for empowering teachers. The current study aimed to investigate the conduct of

supervisory practices with a focus on its regular conduct, weaknesses of the teachers, the capability of principals in terms of supervision, the effect on the school faculty, and teaching learning improvement. The current study has the following research questions to get satisfactory answers;

1. Principals of FGEIs follow which practices during instructional supervision?
2. What is the perception of principals' of FGEIS about instructional supervision practices being followed in their institutions?
3. What is the perception of FGEIs teachers' about instructional supervision practices followed by their principals in their schools?

### **Methodology**

The present study is engrossed in the investigation of the instructional supervisory practices which are carried out by the principals of FGEIs. The nature of the investigation was qualitative and the interview was employed as a tool to elicit the perceptions of heads and the teachers regarding instructional supervision. The population of the research constituted 191 principals and 5130 teaching staff from FGEIs throughout Pakistan. The purposive Sampling technique was carried out to select the sample of the study from Punjab, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa respectively. Ten principals (6 from Punjab, 2 from Sindh, and 2 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and thirty teachers (18 from Punjab, 6 from Sindh and 6 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) of FGEIs were selected for the interviews.

A schedule was designed to administer the interviews. Keeping in view the schedule, a systemized survey was conducted. Thematic Analysis was incorporated to interpret the data. The primary step was conducting and recording the interview. In the next step, the interviews were transcribed into text. The acquired data was coded to discover the themes and patterns. Initially, 14 different codes were explored. Subsequently, these fourteen codes were

reduced to four codes and five major themes. These themes are comparable codes and accumulated together to form a major idea in the database.

### **Results and Finding**

The themes that were drawn through the views and responses of the heads and teaching staff were as follows; "instructional supervision; purpose and concept", "instructional supervision; procedure and areas of focus", "the impact of instructional supervision and professional enhancement", and "improvement in instructional supervision".

### **Viewpoint of Principals and Teachers of FGEIs**

The study at hand focused on exploring the various facets of instructional supervision. The core points as per the themes are summarised here, with archetypal specific quotations given.

#### **Instructional supervision; purpose and concept**

As far as the opinions of the principals of FGEIs are concerned, a great number of them endorsed the same views about the instructional supervision concept. The principals opine that instructional supervision practices are meant to organize the school activities, to improve upon the behavior of the staff members, foster a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning, supervise the instructors' teaching techniques, and provide optimum chances to teachers to increase their professionalism. A head of FG said that,

"Instructional supervision is meant to monitor the teaching staff. The role of the supervisor is more of a helper than a supervisor. The supervisor, truly, plays a remarkable role in academic programs, which is the fundamental requirement for progression of the school systems."

At the same time, the majority of the teaching staff said that supervision in instruction focuses on implementing the rules and instructions, which in return improves the instructional supervision method in school, which categorically jolt down the responsibilities of the teaching staff as defined by the respective principal. A female teacher in FG School opined,

“Instructional supervision is a practice that the head of the school executes to inspect the teaching activities. The principal is required to be well aware of the desired objectives, their achievement, and failures (if any). It also makes the head aware of the previous instructions being implemented or not. Instructional supervision contributes to the progress of the institution. Pro-active supervision of instruction can increase while retro-active supervision can decrease the productivity.”

### **Instructional supervision; procedure and areas of focus**

As far as the principle areas in terms of supervisory practices are concerned, most of the heads of institutions shared a similar viewpoint. Students’ participation and discipline in the class turn out to be the major areas of observation during supervisory practices. While some others considered the teaching techniques and lesson planning the major areas to be observed during supervision. A principal of FG opined that,

“For me, the practicality and validity of the instructions are key areas of instruction to which I pay attention in particular. Following the assurance on the above-mentioned criterion, I concentrate more on the outcome of the instructions

disseminated. Lately, I have evaluated all the instructions disseminated and drew together the feedback from all stakeholders. In addition, I do visit the classes regularly”.

More or less majority of the teaching staff shared similar views regarding the heads’ focal area of instruction. They opine that their heads pay attention to the pedagogical techniques of the teaching staff and their professional development, and consequently offer help and guidance to increase their performance in the light of the observations during supervisory practices. A FG teacher said,

“Through the process of supervision, my head of the school inspects my performance in the process of teaching and provides me with significant feedback. Moreover, she guides me on the enhancement of my professional development.”

### **The impact of instructional supervision and professional enhancement**

As far as the impact of instructional supervision and professional enhancement was concerned, the heads of FGEIs expressed nearly similar views. A principal of an FG school stated,

“Instructional supervision is a key area that provides the chance for teachers to increase their professional capacities and expertise. It assures the desired professional career. It makes the teachers able to develop their competence and ways to express and exploit their expertise. A systematic supervisory practice plays a focal role regarding the professional enhancement and growth of the teacher”.

Whilst, rest of the principals opined that the process of instructional supervision has impacted the teaching expertise as well as that of the teachers. It tends to develop the

personality of the teachers, and their competence, enhance their sense of responsibility, modify their teaching techniques, and nourish confidence in them. Apart from the above-discussed areas, two heads stated that supervision of instruction enables the teachers to identify their weaknesses, empower them to analyze their performance, and make desired improvements in their overall performance.

A great number of FGEIs teachers stated that practices of supervision in instruction exert a remarkable effect because it enables the teachers to find out the weak areas of their teaching performance, to furnish responses in the shape of feedback, and to help them in the achievement of the set objectives of the school. Besides this, some teachers stated that supervisory practices of their heads help them to self-assess themselves and support them in making use of the new and diversified pedagogical techniques in the classroom. A teacher opined,

“Supervision in instruction carries great significance for the professional growth of the teaching staff. It tremendously affects my growth and development professionally in a constructive way. The head of my institution is cooperative and provides a healthy working atmosphere that builds more confidence in the teaching staff. He provides feedback regularly along with positive remarks. It helps me and my colleagues for betterment in our performance in various fields of classroom instruction.”

### **Improvement in instructional supervision**

The FGEIs principals suggested constant and objective supervisory practices with the active involvement of the teaching faculty. The heads should give positive feedback and motivation to

the teaching staff. Moreover, eight heads suggested that supervisory practices should not be used to degrade, punish, or discourage the teachers rather it focus should be on enhancing the teaching staff's professionalism. A principal suggested,

“The measure discussed in the following lines may prove helpful regarding the improvement of supervision in instruction.

- (1) The supervisory practices should be executed regularly.
- (2) The personality of the supervisor must be refined and improved.
- (3) The supervisor should use all the available resources and means to obtain the desired goals.
- (4) The meeting sessions should motivate and reinforce the teaching staff.”

Likewise, the majority of the FGEI teachers stated that supervision in instruction tends to enhance the managerial skills of their heads. Supervision in instruction empowers them about the management of the time, acquisition of new pedagogical techniques, and development of the supervisory sense. It has also been pointed out that, the instructional supervisory capabilities of the heads of institutions are enhanced by the time that enables them to manage and execute all the tasks of the school and devise activities for teachers' professional progression. A teacher expressed,

“... instructional supervision process has enriched the professional outlook of the principal of our institutions the focal area of his supervisory practices encompasses all the 3domains of instructional supervision; academic, managerial, and administrative.”

### **Discussion**

In an endeavor to find out the answer to the research statements, it was figured out that, both, the teachers and principals of FGEIs shared more or less similar views regarding

instructional supervision practices in their academic institutions. It was revealed in the analysis that the heads of the institutions were fairly mindful of the supervision process. This research also explored that the principals oversee the activities of the school, pay visits to the classrooms, take observations, give feedback, conduct meetings with the teaching faculty, talk about their issues, and arrange seminars and courses for skill development for the teaching faculty. Archibong's (2013) findings reconfirm these findings that the reliability of the instructional and educational system ensures the quality of education and this reliability stipulates the instructional supervision by the principals. Furthermore, the results by Dangara (2015) support the findings of the present study and the investigation discloses that the 'visits to the classroom frequently, identification of the problems that occur during teaching, arrange meetings with the staff members and conduct discussions about the problems. Bailey (2006) concluded; that supervision in instruction uses a "technical process" aiming at developing the instruction and education through concern, leadership, motivation, and inspiration.

The responses of both the FGEI principals and teachers showed that the supervisory skills and capability of instruction are of paramount need to deal with the issues that the teaching faculty encounter, develop interpersonal relations, discuss the issues with the teachers, and for the evaluation. Besides, the viewpoints of the teachers disclosed that their heads are concerned with the provision of instructional and educational resources. The findings of Lang (2017) contradict the present research as it discloses that the teachers differ from principals in their opinion about the process of supervision in their institutions, evaluation and the process of supervision of instruction, and setting up incentives to the teaching faculty.

Simultaneously, the instructors were uncertain regarding the implementation of the instructional supervision procedure as practiced by their heads. The heads stated that they

frequently take actions for improvement in the plausibility of instruction, conduct discussions regarding the problems faced by the instructors as a result of observations, inspect the performance of their teachers, and assess and give rewards to the teachers who perform better than others. Moreover, they were not sure about the available chances for the professional skill development of teaching staff and appreciation of the teaching capabilities of the teachers, it was a fair contradiction of their opinion during the interviews. The discussion also indicates that the heads of FGEIs frequently; arrange on one meetings with the individual teaching staff members after observing their classes and make use of the checklist for checking the performance of their teachers. The results of Pearce (2017) confirm the results of the current investigation that the principals of the institutions should be capable enough to judge the situation at hand and organize seminars, and workshops accordingly to solve the problems. Generally, it suggests that it is one of the focal responsibilities of the principals to provide the teaching staff with the best strategies so that they can deal with the situation and build interpersonal relationships with their fellows.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The current study concludes that the school administrators i.e. the principals, vice principals, and department heads should be competent in different instructional supervision practices so that they could equip themselves with the most updated techniques of instructional supervision and can implement them in no time. The principals of the school should utilize the maximum resources of the institution and deliver opportunities to their instructors during the teaching-learning process. As far as the procedure of instructional supervision is concerned, the results show that the supervisors organize conferences after visits. Moreover, teachers expect that the supervisory staff would give them feedback regarding their strong areas and weak areas but vice versa is the situation. One of the primary responsibilities of the heads of the institutions

is to find out the shortcomings of their teaching staff and suggest suitable courses of action to them so that they can overcome their weakness.

The findings of the study discovered that the heads of the institutions utilized different remedial steps i.e. meetings, building better interpersonal relationships, provision of feedback, motivation for self-evaluation, organising follow-up sessions till the removal of weakness, and arrangement of seminars and training sessions.

Keeping in view the results deduced from findings, discussions, and conclusions, the proposed recommendations are as follows:-

1. Supervisors should be skilled and qualified enough to comprehend and understand the phenomenon of instructional supervision. Thus, FGEI directorate makes arrangements for on-the-job training for the principals to enhance their supervisory skills.
2. Educational supervisors, being heads of institutions and supervisors should not focus only on finding errors and faults of the teachers. They should behave like mentors and leaders to communicate and discuss the observations to improve in the light of modern teaching requirements.
3. The principal should organize regular feedback meetings with the staff of the school after the conduct of supervision to facilitate the instructors to enhance their practices in the field of teaching.

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