

Practices and Challenges of School Based Supervision**Shimelis Mesfin****Assistant Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership in the University of Gondar, Ethiopia****Corresponding Author**

Shimelis Mesfin, Assistant Professor of Educational Policy and Leadership in the University of Gondar, Ethiopia.

Submitted: 2025, Jan 29; **Accepted:** 2025, Feb 18; **Published:** 2025, Apr 14**Citation:** Mesfin, S. (2025). Practices and Challenges of School Based Supervision. *Curr Trends Business Mgmt*, 3(1), 01-06.**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to assess the practices and challenges of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum town. A case study was employed. Five teachers and three supervisors were purposively selected as a sample. A semi-structured interview was used to collect the data. The finding of this study indicated that the practices of school-based supervision did not improve the teaching-learning process due to unfavorable working conditions in which supervision services operated, conflict of roles, and how supervision services are managed. The research participants also understood school-based supervision as a means to assist and facilitate the professional practices of teachers to improve classroom instruction. Though supervisors understood the purpose of school-based supervision, they have failed to support teachers due to lack of supervisory skills, shortage of resources, presence of workload, lack of coordination of supervisory activities, and absence of smooth relationships between teachers and supervisors. Hence, it is concluded that school-based supervision was unsuccessful due to the absence of personal and institutional factors. Therefore, it needs to provide professional development opportunities for supervisors to support teachers, reduce the workloads of teachers and supervisors, allocate adequate resources, and supervisors need to understand the contemporary leadership and management theories. of a proprietary synthetic tissue adhesive to occlude the fallopian tubes, fully degrading and producing nonfunctional scar tissue. It has the potential to offer safe, effective, accessible, non-surgical permanent contraception as an option to surgical sterilization with fewer risks, contraindications, and a substantially lower cost.

Keywords: Challenges, Practices, School-Based Supervision, Supervisor**1. Background of the Study**

Supervision is one of the functions of education that offers opportunities for schools to improve the learning process and the professional development of teachers [1]. The way teachers gain professional support from supervisors and the way teachers view school-based supervision that they are undergoing is significant in the outcomes of the supervision process. Because, quality supervision enhances the performance and instructional effectiveness of teachers, thereby increasing the probability of desired student learning opportunities and results. Thus, the role of the teacher in the process of promoting such a process of improvement cannot be underestimated [2]. It is believed that the quality of education is realized only when nations in the world implement effective school supervision as an important tool to monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching-learning process provided by schools [3]. The quality of education is determined

by the provision of adequate supervision. To support this, quality education partly depends on how well teachers are trained and supervised as they are one of the key inputs to education delivery [4]. Hence, teachers' acceptance and interaction with the supervisory practice, as well as the techniques, methods, models, or processes used by supervisors at schools, provide the catalyst for any supervisory success.

Supervision is a multifaceted process that focuses on instruction to provide teachers with information to improve their teaching performance [5]. In line with this, the goal of school-based supervision is to assist teachers in improving instruction [6]. Hence, this can be carried out by supervising teachers in an instructional setting often involves direct assistance to improve the strategies of classroom practice through observation and evaluation of teacher performance [6]. As a result, many researchers believe that school-

based supervision has the potential to improve classroom practices and contribute to student success through professional growth and improvement of teachers [7,8]. They also noted that effective school-based supervision has a positive effect on teachers' motivation, satisfaction, self-esteem, self-confidence, sense of security, and feelings of support. Fullan also highlighted the critical importance of the supervision role in improving instruction and its systematic delivery as most necessary to ensure continuous improvement and ongoing academic success [9]. The realization of the professional competence of teachers remains questionable unless due emphasis is given to school-based supervision. To achieve this, supervisors should work with teachers collaboratively and democratically to improve classroom instruction. Thus, this study aimed to assess the practices and challenges of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum Town.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

School supervision is a long-lived practice that has been playing a vital role in improving classroom instruction through developing teachers' professional growth which in turn, improves student academic achievement. According to Carron and De Grauwe, supervision services have existed in most countries for many decades and play an important role in the management of education, between the schools and central offices [10]. Currently, supervision is considered a tool for improving the quality of classroom instruction and student learning outcomes through promoting the professional development of educators. It also aims at improving teaching teaching-learning process by working with the teachers [11]. This indicates that the improvement of schools would not be succeeded without improving teachers' performance, because, the quality of teaching is determined by the provision of adequate supervision services for teachers. Related to this, working for the quality of the teaching-learning process and improvement of students' progress towards the established standards are the main tasks of instructional supervisors [12].

As a component of the quality improvement package, the Ethiopian Teacher Development Program general guideline highlights the need for school leadership and supervision that can effectively support schools in various aspects including the improvement of teachers' professional competence and teaching-learning process [13]. As Powell and Balli stated professional development opportunities should be given for poorly performing teachers to improve their classroom performance [14]. Thus, supervision becomes essential in supporting teachers to improve their profession and the quality of classroom instruction [13]. In order to attain the optimum level of improvement, teachers need to be well-educated and part of the learning community [14]. This can be achieved only when supervision brings closer to schools where the teaching-learning process is taking place. Although the practices of supervision started many years ago, it has been criticized for its failure to improve classroom instruction and quality of education due to lack of clarity about the purposes and activities of instructional supervision. In line with this, Carron and De Grauwe stated that the implementation of school supervision in all countries becomes complex due to its long history, and the

emergence of various changes and reforms as well as the direction of which is not yet fully clear [10]. This shows that the existing practices of school-based supervision are generally insufficient to help teachers in improving their skills of teaching.

As a result, the researcher was motivated to conduct this study due to the fact that teachers in Aksum town primary schools do not seem satisfied with the supervision services rendered to them. Similarly, from my informal observation, supervisors did not seem to play their roles as they were expected to improve teachers' professional competence and student learning outcomes. In addition, although some studies have been done on the practices of school supervision in some areas, study may not has been conducted in primary schools of Aksum town. Hence, the researcher was highly concerned by the view that little attention was given to the issue of school-based supervision which makes the teaching-learning process less effective. Therefore, this situation initiated me to conduct this research in order to assess the practices and challenges of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum town with the hope of suggesting the way in which school-based supervision can be improved.

1.2 Research Questions

To address this issue, the researcher formulated the following basic questions. These are:

- 1.How school-based supervision is carried out to improve the quality of classroom instruction in primary schools of Aksum town?
- 2.Why do school-based supervision services exist in primary schools in Aksum town?
- 3.What are the major challenges influencing the successful implementation of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum town?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide relevant information for educational leaders and planners about the purpose and challenges of school-based supervision. It could be also beneficial to school principals and other school administrators interested in improving supervision as it relates to teacher professional development at the school level. Moreover, the results of this study may also give relevant and timely information to school principals, teachers, educational supervisors, and educational leaders about the process of school-based supervision. Finally, it serves as a starting point for other researchers who are interested in conducting further studies in this area.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

Although supervision is a nationwide program that has been implemented throughout the country, this study was geographically delimited to primary schools found in Aksum town. It was also conceptually delimited to the purpose, process, and challenges of school-based supervision.

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Design

Research design is the "blueprint" that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analyzing data [16]. It also focuses on defining the unit of analysis and the likely cases to be studied, developing theory and identifying issues underlying the anticipated study, determining cases to be studied, and developing procedures to maintain quality case study [17]. Therefore, a case study was found suitable for this study because this study focused on the practices, purpose, and challenges of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum town to address the phenomena under investigation.

2.2 Sample and Sampling techniques

In Aksum town, there were 11 primary schools. Out of these, the researcher selected five schools using a simple random sampling technique mainly a lottery method. The target population were teachers and school supervisors. For manageability reasons, five teachers and three supervisors were selected as the key informant interviewees using purposive sampling techniques, specifically, typical case sampling technique. The researcher selected these respondents due to the fact that they have been participating in supervisory practices in the school so they were expected to have a better experience on school-based supervision than others.

2.3 Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured interview was used to collect the data concerning the practices, purpose, and challenges of school-based supervision in primary schools of Aksum town. Because, interview is one of the most common and powerful instruments used to gather qualitative data, especially in case studies. Case studies are likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information [17]. However, depending on the importance and the nature of the cases, a semi-structured interview was used to gather data for this study.

2.4 Data Collection Procedures

Before starting to gather the data, the researcher asked permission from the head of the education office. Based on the permission, the researcher sampled teachers and supervisors before starting to collect the data. Then, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected teachers and supervisors inside the compound of schools. The researcher took 40 to 50 minutes with each interviewee to collect the necessary data.

2.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis is the process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. In this study, narrative and thematic techniques were used to analyze the data collected through semi-structured interviews.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The required ethical requirements were followed throughout all phases of the study. Initially, a permission letter was granted by the woreda education office head to collect the data from the research

sites. Then, the researcher provided information to the participants about the purpose of the study before they were involved in the study. The respondents were also informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary so they would withdraw from the research at any time if they wanted to do so. The study had no potential risks or benefits on the participants due to participation in the study and received approval from the Institutional Ethics Review Committee (IERC) of the College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences at Bahir Dar University, with the ethics committee approval reference CEBS_IERC_0121/2022.

3. Results and Discussion

This chapter discussed the key findings of the interview according to the themes of the research questions. It began by describing the practices and purposes of school-based supervision respectively. It also discussed the major challenges influencing the successful implementation of school-based supervision. Finally, this chapter presented the results and discussion concurrently.

3.1 The Practices of School Supervision

The growing interest in supervision is a result of the realization, highlighted in the introduction, that supervision and support staff have a central role to play in monitoring and enhancing the education and teaching process [10]. This does not guarantee, however, that supervision is having a positive impact. Evidently, when it consists of irregular and brief school visits, whose main rationale is to fulfill a poorly appreciated administrative duty, its influence on teaching can hardly be beneficial. But even when supervision visits are performed efficiently, they will not instantly be effective in improving the quality of schools. When interviewees were asked about the organization of school-based supervision, teachers and supervisors explained that supervisory practices were not organized in line with the school supervision manual. This implies that although there is a manual about the activities of school supervision to be carried out, they have not been working together to improve the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the improvement of classroom instruction was not more likely to be accomplished through working with others in a cooperative manner. Contrary to this, Hoy and Forsyth confirmed that the purpose of supervision is to work cooperatively with teachers to improve their skill of teaching rather than making judgments about their competence [12]. However, with regard to the procedures, respondents differed in their perception of the implementation of school-based supervision to improve the quality of teaching-learning process, which in turn, brings a change in student learning.

Respondents of this study were also asked to describe their roles as instructional leaders in the schools. In this case, all teachers explained that they have been engaged in conducting action research, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and different forms of professional development as instructional leaders. On the other hand, supervisors engaged in arranging professional development programs, curriculum improvement, classroom observation, group development, allocation of resources, rewarding outstanding performance, and reporting the overall performance of the schools. This indicates that teachers and supervisors have

discharged different roles in their schools to implement school-based supervision. With regard to the importance of instructional supervision, all teachers believed that supervision improved the teaching-learning process and supported them to develop their profession. Teachers were asked whether they received professional support to improve the quality of classroom instruction in their schools. Concerning this issue, all teachers highlighted that they did not get sufficient support from supervisors to improve their profession and solve immediate classroom problems. They also added that those supervisors who were assigned to supervise them devoted much of their time to administrative duties at the expense of instructional activities. This shows that school supervisors did not help teachers to improve their way of teaching as indicated by research respondents. Similarly, one of the teachers also further explained: Supervisors are expected to play an important role in improving classroom instruction. However, I did not get any support from school supervisors to improve my skill of teaching due to they are overloaded with administrative tasks at the expense of instructional activities. In addition, supervisors are not qualified enough to help teachers.

Concerning the above issue, supervisors confirmed that they did not provide sufficient professional support for teachers to improve their competence due to lack of sufficient knowledge and experience. They also explained that school-based supervision was not carried out in the schools properly due to the negative perception of teachers towards it. As a result, school supervision has become unsuccessful in improving the teaching-learning process.

3.2 The Purpose of School-Based Supervision

Initially, interviewees of this study understood school supervision as a means to improve classroom instruction. Similarly, Powell and Balli described school supervision as a means to improve classroom instruction through implementing practices most likely to improve teachers' professional development [14]. This indicates that respondents had a good level of awareness about the purpose of school supervision although it has failed to be implemented practically. Concerning this issue, both teachers and supervisors considered school-based supervision as a means to create favorable conditions for the teaching-learning process in schools which eventually leads to improved learning outcomes. In addition, interviewees believed that school-based supervision is important in ensuring that teachers can develop their pedagogical and subject matter knowledge, which in turn improves classroom instruction. Related to this, Chike-Okoli suggested that teachers should be guided to improve teaching methods, utilize newly discovered principles of group dynamics, locate and utilize community resources, and evaluate their teaching competence [18]. According to the majority of teachers and supervisors, school-based supervision helps to guide in ensuring the supply of teaching materials, providing inductive training for newly employed teachers, providing technical assistance to teachers when required, ensuring that discipline is maintained, boosting high morale among teachers, giving opportunities to discover teachers with special abilities and creating favorable classrooms

for teaching-learning process. In the same way, Fullan also believed that school-based supervision results in high-quality instruction and systematic delivery necessary to ensure continuous improvement and ongoing academic success [9].

In addition, respondents added that although school-based supervision is important, the actual function of the supervision system often presents a one-sided picture of reporting and monitoring school, with practically no support for change and improvement in schools. This showed that much attention has been given to administrative tasks at the expense of classroom instruction. Due to this reason, teachers faced difficulties to improve their skill of teaching. However, Villegas-Riemers assumed that teachers to recognize their work as professional by providing new opportunities for growth exploration of learning and development [19]. Moreover, my research respondents also were asked about the importance of school supervision for their profession. In response to this question, the three respondents expressed that they were unable to improve their profession through instructional supervision due to a shortage of sufficient training and support rendered to them. Furthermore, one supervisor enlightened his views about the importance of school-based supervision for professional development as follows:

Structurally we have school-based supervision in our school but the implementation of the program is poor. This happened due to lack of pedagogical knowledge and skill to improve teachers' professional development in line with the existing guidelines. In addition to this, I am also overloaded with many administrative duties. As a result, I cannot help teachers as I expected to develop their profession and improve students' learning outcomes. This shows that no matter how teachers and supervisors are committed to developing their profession and how much the leader convinced them to develop their profession, improvement will not be brought unless they are empowered to use their full potential.

3.3 Challenges of School-Based Supervision

Supervision is one of the most important tools that facilitates the professional activities of teachers working collaboratively to achieve school improvement through shared decision-making [20]. Currently, schools are challenged with numerous problems to realize their short-term and long-term objectives. In my interview with the respondents, most of them believed that school-based supervision was not successful in improving classroom instruction due to bad working conditions in which supervision services are operated, conflict of roles which they are asked to play, and the way in which supervision services are managed.

On the basis of research findings, several principles of school supervision are identified that are most likely to contribute to improving teaching practice that leads to improved student learning. Among the principles, professional development should involve teachers in the identification of what they need to learn in the development of learning experiences in which they will be involved. This is identifying gaps in which teachers choose valuable learning experiences in order to address the needs of

learners. This helps to meet the needs and accommodates different levels of expertise by finding out what teachers need to know to help all students learn better. In this study, respondents explained that the existing professional development program was failed to address the needs of the teachers. Related to this, one of the teacher respondents argued that:

We need to participate in every decision that affects our practices. However, the practices were far from the reality happening now because decisions were made at the center and passed to the lower level through the government channel for implementation. We expressed our dissatisfaction at different times, but no one considered our comments for improvement. All of the reforms are forcefully implemented without the consent of teachers. There were also many occasions when teachers were terrified of the concerns and worries they expressed about the teachers' development program. We were not consulted about what we needed, what skill gaps we had, and what suited our context. As a result, we have accepted the professional development trainings half-heartedly because it didn't address our needs. This shows that simply designing school-based supervision by itself does not improve classroom instruction unless it considers the needs of teachers. Therefore, any training must be related to the needs of schools and teachers which will be affected.

In addition, the rest of respondents perceived that the implementation of instructional supervision was poor due to lack of coordination among stakeholders, shortage of sufficient knowledge and skill to implement the program, inappropriate application of the supervisory principles, absence of clear procedures and techniques to conduct classroom observation and lack of the supervisory activities focusing on students learning activities. One of the respondents further noted the problems of professional development as follows:

No teacher can be effective if he or she does not have adequate knowledge of the subject matter being taught. Most school leaders assume the process of teacher credentialing assures that teachers know their subject matter. Supervisors are not necessarily trained in the content of the teachers they supervise. Supervisors must ask themselves how they can discharge their roles and responsibilities to support teachers who are in need. The above statements indicate that supervisors failed to accomplish their roles due to institutional and personal factors. Thus, teachers and supervisors need to develop their pedagogical and subject matter knowledge to reach their full potential by dealing with the concerned bodies. Concerning the challenges of school-based supervision, the interviewees unanimously remarked that the remuneration of teachers is an issue that should be raised as part of the reform agenda. They further explained that their monthly income runs out before the month ends without even covering their living expenses. The respondents indicated that, owing to this, their basic needs were not being met. According to their speech, the goal of improving schools will remain unmet unless the government reconsiders the salary scale for teachers, and supports them morally and materially. Beside this, they also explained that it might be difficult to attract

better candidates to the teacher training program if the benefit of educational personnel is low compared to other employees who are working in other institutions with the same academic status. Thus, it needs to design an appropriate incentive package to motivate teachers in order to improve classroom instruction.

During the interview, teachers and supervisors also considered workload as a major factor that hindered the proper implementation of instructional supervision. They explained that the increased and intensification of workload not only impeded their participation in professional development but also caused them to lose their focus because they were distracted by multiple, contradictory, and often confusing demands. The participants explained that the reasons for the increased workload were changes in the demographic characteristics of students, changes to assessment procedures, the intensification of non-instructional duties, and the curriculum content too broad. To strengthen the above issue, one of the respondents further stated that:

The existing workload has not enabled us to engage in professional development programs. Classrooms are overcrowded and consequently, we have to assess a lot of students and keep their profiles. The curriculum content is very broad, so we have to rush to cover it. We are also overloaded with non-instructional duties, such as organizing clubs, participating in different meetings, and engaging in various committees. Moreover, interviewees further identified the major problems that affect the successful implementation of school-based supervision. In this regard, the respondents identified teachers' resistance, shortage of qualified persons in the field, absence of sufficient materials, lack of smooth relationship between teachers and supervisors, poor communication in the workplace, frequent change of the curriculum, and low teacher morale contributed to the poor implementation of school-based supervision. Furthermore, teachers and supervisors believed that the development of strong school-based supervision has received little attention due to the absence of favorable working conditions. These services indeed seem to be the victims of more structural neglect, the result arguably of an underestimation of their tasks. This structural neglect is characterized by internal conflicts and weak management of supervision services. To sum up, all interviewees have similar views about the poor implementation of school-based supervision in their schools. Therefore, although there was an attempt to implement school-based supervision, significant improvement was not observed in teaching-learning process due to personal and institutional factors.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it is possible to conclude that school-based supervision was not properly implemented due to shortage of resources, lack of supervisory skill and knowledge, workload, lack of coordination, role confusion, absence of incentive package, and bad perception of teachers toward instructional supervision as well as absence of a smooth relationship between teachers and supervisor. In addition, the complexity of supervision activities strongly affects the successful implementation of school-

based supervision. Therefore, school-based supervision has failed to achieve its purpose as planned due to personal and institutional factors.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommended the Woreda Education Office to provide professional development opportunities for supervisors in the form of short and long-term trainings to develop their supervisory skills. The existing workload of teachers and supervisors also should be minimized so that they can participate in professional development activities to improve classroom instruction by filling their skill gaps. In addition, the woreda education office should allocate sufficient resources to carry out the activities of school-based supervision. Moreover, school supervisors and teachers need to understand contemporary leadership and management theories in order to implement school-based supervision effectively. Finally, supervisors need to devote much of their time to instructional supervision such as instructional planning, teaching methods, assessment techniques, test construction, and professional development based on research, best practices appropriate data, etc. at the expense of administrative tasks.

References

1. Arong, F. E., & Ogbadu, M. A. (2010). *Major Causes of Declining Quality of Education in Nigeria from Administrative Perspective: A Case Study of Dekina Local Government Area/les causes principales de la dégradation de la qualité de l'éducation au Nigeria à partir d'une perspective administrative: Une etude de cas de la region de gouvernement local de dekina*. Canadian Social Science, 6(3), 183.
2. Kutsyuruba, V. V. (2003). Instructional supervision: Perceptions of Canadian and Ukrainian beginning high-school teachers (Doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan).
3. Tuli, F. (2009). *Understanding undergraduate students Practicum experience: A qualitative case study of Jimma university*. Ethiopian Journal of Education and Sciences, 5(1).
4. Lockheed, M. E., & Verspoor, A. M. (1991). Improving primary education in developing countries (pp. xix+-429pp).
5. Beach, D. B., & Reinhartz, J. (1989). *Supervision: Focus on supervision*.
6. Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2001). Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach. Allyn & Bacon/Longman Publishing, a Pearson Education Company, 1760 Gould Street, Needham Heights, MA 02494.
7. Sergiovanni, T. J., Starratt, R. J., & Cho, V. (1993). *Supervision: A redefinition*. (No Title).
8. Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999). *Principals' instructional leadership and teacher development: Teachers' perspectives*. Educational administration quarterly, 35(3), 349-378.
9. Fullan, M., & Boyle, A. (2014). Big-city school reforms: lessons from New York, Toronto, and London. Teachers College Press.
10. Carron, G., & De Grauwe, A. (1997). *Current issues in supervision: A literature review*.
11. Oye, O. O. (2009). *Perceived influence of supervision of instruction on teachers' classroom performance in ijobu-north education zone of Ogun state*. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, Department of the Educational Foundations University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
12. Hoy, W. K., & Forsyth, P. (1986). *Effective supervision: Theory into practice*. (No Title).
13. MoE (2012). Professional Competence Standard for School Supervisors: Addis Ababa.
14. Powell, N. D. and Balli, S. J. (2011). Supervision and Evaluation of Instructional Personnel: A Guide for Principals and Supervisors (4thed.). California: La Sierra University.
15. Tesfaw, T. A., & Hofman, R. H. (2014). *Relationship between instructional supervision and professional development*. International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 13(1), 82-99.
16. McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry. pearson.
17. Yin, R. K. (2009). Case study research: Design and methods (Vol. 5). sage.
18. Chike-Okoli, A. N. (2004). *Educational administration and planning: Theory and practice*. Kaduna: Shamac Publishers.
19. Villegas-Reimers, E. (2003). *Teacher professional development: an international review of the literature*. International Institute for Educational Planning.
20. Zepeda, S. J., Wood, F., & O'Hair, M. J. (1996). *A vision of supervision for 21st century schooling: Trends to promote change, inquiry, and reflection*. Wingspan, 11(2), 26-30.

Copyright: ©2025 Shimelis Mesfin. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.