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UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

EXAMINING THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF BASIC SCHOOL

SUPERVISORS IN GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY OF GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and it has not been submitted, either partly or wholly to any other University for the ward of a degree or diploma.

Signed ………………………..

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(Supervisor)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADP	Accelerated Development Plan
BECAS	Basic Education Comprehensive Assessment System
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CAS	Critical Analytical Study
CLOGSAG	Civil and Local Government Staff Association of Ghana
CS	Circuit Supervisor
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DDS	Deputy Director (in Charge of) Supervision
EFA	Education for All
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
ESP	Education Sector Performance
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNECC	Ghana National Education Collation Campaign
GPRS	Ghana and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GSMA	Ga South Municipal Assembly
GSMEO	Ga South Municipal Education Office
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Country
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
HRMD	Human Resource Management and Development
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IIEP	International Institute of Educational Planning

IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSET	In-service Education and Training
JHS	Junior High School
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MA	Municipal Assembly
MC	Minimum Competency
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly
MMDEO	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Education Office
MoE	Ministry of Education
NEA	National Education Assessment
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIB	National Inspectorate Board
NNED	Northern Network for Education Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PAGE	Partnership for Accountable Governance in Education
PTA	Parent-Teacher Association
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SAPRI	Structural Adjustment Programme Review Initiative
SHS	Senior High School
SMC	School Management Committee
SPIP	School Performance Improvement Plan
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TLM	Teaching and learning material

UBE	Universal Basic Education
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCEW	University College of Education Winneba
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

ABSTRACT

In the last two decades, the global community and government of several countries have made heartening investments in promoting access to education in developing countries. It is estimated that since the reaffirmation by world leaders and development community to achieve education for all by 2015 in Dakar, Senegal, governments and donors have invested about US $ 15 billion annually in education. Despite the huge financial investments, empirical evidence shows that education outcomes remain low among school children in developing countries and key stakeholders in the education sector identified weak and ineffective supervision as one of the major factors responsible for the low educational outcomes. This study therefore examines the professional skills of school supervisors in ensuring effective teaching and learning in Ghanaian basic schools. Using the Ga South Municipality as a study area, I specifically explored the professional backgrounds of school supervisors, examining their recruitment and training processes, field experiences, and how they apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process.

Employing a purely qualitative case study approach under pinned by the concept of social constructivism, I engaged 7 school supervisors, 5 teachers/headteachers, 2 directors of education and 2 PTA/SMC members. I used in-depth interviews, observations and documentary reviews as the methods of data collection. The study made the following findings:

With regard to the professional background and qualification, the supervisors who participated in the study are well qualified and experienced in the field of education.

They are all trained professional teachers with over 10 years of classroom teaching experience. They also held Bachelor's Degrees; however, not all of them have pursued degree programmes in the field of education. Majority of them specialised in fields such as political science, sociology, human resources management, psychology, and history – and none had received any formal training in education administration or supervision.

The supervisor recruitment process is characterised by the phenomenon of neo-patrimonialism where political and traditional authorities use their influence and power to mount pressure on education officials to select their preferred candidates (mainly party faithfuls) as supervisors. Any resistance from an education director is interpreted as seeking the downfall of the political head and his or her administration. In terms of skills training, there is no formal pre-service and in-service training (INSET) programme designed to enhance the professional development of supervisors in the skills of supervision. Supervisors were reliant on peer training and support (both skills development and material) from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to build their professional capacity. Training provided by NGOs were governed by their philosophies or that of their donor partners rather than the sector policies of the Ministry of Education and GES. The study also revealed that even though supervisors have the knowledge in the field of education, they are deficient in the 'technical' and 'interpersonal skills' necessary for effective supervision in schools. There is also a general lack of material resources necessary for efficient supervision of schools.

Based on these findings as a whole, the study recommended an intervention in the form of a comprehensive policy to govern basic education supervision; the initiation of education supervision training programmes in pro-education specialisation tertiary

institutions such as the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the University of Education Winneba (UEW); and a clear framework to control and coordinate the activities of NGOs working in the field of education management and supervision in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.0   Introduction

The overall objective of this research is to empirically explore the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ghana, documenting their recruitment and training processes and field experiences. The Inspectorate Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES), National Inspectorate Board (NIB) – an agency of the Ministry of Education (MoE) – school supervisors, and basic school heads and classroom teachers, therefore, comprise the focal group from which empirical information was gathered for the study.

My motivation for embarking on this research in the field of education supervision arose from the interplay of personal, intellectual and professional goals. I have been working in the field of education in Ghana for over twenty-five years at various levels and in various capacities. I am a teacher with over ten years of classroom experience, and fifteen years as Education Administrator and Director of Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD) at the MoE. In 2010, I was appointed as a member of the newly established NIB, and have been directly involved in the development of structures, systems and policies designed to govern the supervision and inspection of pre-tertiary education in Ghana.

Intellectually, aside from such a study being an academic requirement for a doctorate degree, I am interested in the establishment of an empirically verifiable framework which can explain how supervision influences teaching and learning, and identify the factors that affect supervision in basic schools. In my earlier critical analytical study (CAS), I

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found that school supervisors play a key role in helping education achieve its ultimate goal of enhancing the wellbeing and sustainable development of society (Dzikum, 2011). Supervisors perform functions such as career coaching and professional development of teachers, liaison between schools and education policymakers, and monitoring and evaluation, among others (Dzikum, 2011; Moswela, 2010; Grauwe, 2009). However, in Ghana, there is increased concern from education stakeholders and researchers who question the system of school supervision and the professionalism of school supervisors (Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2011; Ghana Palaver, 2011).

My goal is thus to examine the recruitment, training, skills of basic school supervisors in Ghana, generate empirical knowledge to contribute to the improvement of basic education supervision, and feed into the debate on the quality of the inspection process. The findings will also contribute to the search for ways to enhance effective teaching and learning outcomes in African basic schools.

Professionally, I am the Director of HRMD at the MoE, and also the oversight Sector Director of the NIB with core responsibilities to oversee, coordinate and manage pre-tertiary supervision. An insight into the professional skills of supervisors, field supervision practices, and challenges confronting supervisors in the performance of their duties will therefore be a valuable source of information in the policymaking process. Moreover, a comparison of the views of supervisors, teachers and other relevant education stakeholders will provide valuable information in facilitating decentralisation of the education supervision system in Ghana.

1.1   Background and problem statement

In the last two decades, the global community and government of several countries have made heartening investments in promoting access to education in developing countries (Pritchett, Banerji and Kenny, 2013). It is estimated that since the reaffirmation by world leaders and development community to achieve education for all by 2015 in Dakar, Senegal, governments and donors have invested about US $ 15 billion annually in education (UNESCO, 2010). The increment in education investments were particularly notable in developing countries where education expenditure went up by 7.2% of Gross Domestic Product (UNESCO, 2012). Government expenditure on education in Kenya and Uganda, accounts for about 15% of government expenditure (Pritchett et al., 2013). In Ghana it is estimated that about 30% of government expenditure is on education (GNECC, 2009; World Bank 2010).

These investments have expanded access to education in developing countries and the school enrolment gap between the developed and the developing countries has closed considerably (Gove and Cvelich, 2011). Gove and Cvelich (2011:2) noted that by 2008, the average developing country was enrolling students in primary school at nearly the same rate as the average developed country.

However, despite the huge financial investment and the significant progress in enrolling boys and girls into school, empirical evidence shows that education outcomes in terms of employability, productivity, numeracy and literacy remain low among school children in developing countries (Brookings Institute, 2013; UNESCO, 2012). According to the 2012 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, approximately 120 million children around the world either never gain access to school or drop out before their fourth year,

and more than 250 million primary school age children who have spent at least four years in school cannot read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards. A further 200 million adolescents, including those who complete secondary school, do not have the skills they need for life, employment or a decent livelihood (UNESCO, 2012). The situation is quite worrying in Sub-Sahara Africa. Fleet (2012) using the Africa Learning Barometer to assess the state of education and learning in the region revealed that out of 128 million primary school age children in Africa, 57.6 million are not learning and a further 40.6 million are in school but cannot read, write or perform basic numeracy task.

The poor outcomes in education seem to be defeating the long term goal of education which according to the World Bank is "nothing less than to ensure everyone completes a basic education of adequate quality, acquires foundation skills—literacy, numeracy, reasoning and social skills such as teamwork—and has further opportunities to learn advanced skills throughout life, in a range of post-basic education settings". (Human Development Network, 2002:431 cited in Barrett et al., 2006). With the target date for achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and EFA goals in 2015 fast approaching, the challenge of poor education outcomes despite increase in education infrastructure/classrooms and teachers has turned many to question teaching and learning supervision in developing countries' school. Major among these questions are: what is the quality of supervision in schools? How effective is the supervision of teaching and learning in developing countries? How are school supervisors recruited and how are they trained?

In Ghana, recent National Education Sector Annual Review (NESAR) meetings organised by MoE have identified weak and ineffective supervision as one of the major reasons for falling standards in Ghana's education system (MoE, 2012). According to the 2013 NESAR report, "a major problem affecting the quality of education is ineffective supervision…and this is resulting in the neglect of participatory and interactive teaching methods in classrooms, high rate of teacher absenteeism and loss of teacher–pupil contact hours" (MoE, 2012:57).

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Ghana are also questioning the quality of supervision in Ghanaian schools. In a report on education supervision, Northern Network for Education Development (NNED) notes that:

> …poor supervision by Circuit [school] Supervisors (CS) across the country had left many classrooms empty, though teachers were choked [over deployed] in some schools doing nothing... There are deep and pervasive structural problems in the country's educational system, affecting effective supervision of schools and teachers (NNED Report, 2013:11).

Yet, although education is an area that has been widely explored by researchers, only a few studies have been conducted in the field of education supervision in Ghana. Kayongo (2006) explores the use and effectiveness of a participatory approach to school supervision in Krachi East District. The study identifies a lack of commitment in respect of all education stakeholders to the supervision process and inadequate resources to support school supervisors to be the principal causes of ineffective school supervision in the district. In their empirical study on education leadership and quality in disadvantaged communities in Ghana and Tanzania, Oduro and Dachi (2008) found that the quality of

management in Ghanaian basic schools was poor, which is attributed in part to weak and ineffective supervision.

However, neither of the aforementioned studies explores the capacity of school supervisors or their ability to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Therefore, the present study seeks to empirically explore the professional skills of Ghanaian school supervisors, analysing their training, recruitment, field experience, and ability to supervise effective teaching and learning. Glickman (2014:14) explained that school supervision encompasses various responsibilities and functions, including technical tasks such as developing the curriculum, organising teaching and learning materials (TLMs) for instruction, evaluating teaching; and meeting cultural requirements such as building community relations and facilitating innovation. My main argument is that school supervision is a complex phenomenon and education outcomes as well as education standards will persistently fall if there is no policy intervention to develop the skills of school supervisors.

1.2   Objectives and research questions

The main aim of this study is to explore and examine the professional skills of school supervisors in ensuring effective teaching and learning in Ghanaian basic schools.

1.2.1   Research questions

The central question the study sought to answer is "Do basic school supervisors in Ghana possess the professional skills to ensure effective teaching and learning?" Specific questions include:

1. What are the professional backgrounds of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?

2. What qualifies one as a basic school supervisor, and how is recruitment and selection conducted?

3. What pre- and in-service training is provided to basic school supervisors, and how is it implemented?

4. How do supervisors apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process?

1.3 Context of the study

Contextually, this study is broadly situated within the global debate on substandard learning outcomes in developing countries in spite of huge investment to promote access to education. However, its sub-context is the basic education supervision system in Ghana, with the main focus on the capacity of supervisors – professional background, recruitment, training, and supervision knowledge application – to ensure effective teaching and learning.

In the global context, MDGs are fast approaching in 2015, and the challenge of sub standard learning in developing countries has derailed progress on achieving education goals. This challenge has led many to criticize the MDG interventions in education for overly focusing on expanding access and neglecting what actually goes on in schools in terms of teaching and learning (Gove and Cvelich, 2011; Brookings Institute, 2013; Pritchett et al., 2013). These seem to direct the debate for a post-2015 education agenda on 'access and learning'. Proponents of the 'improved learning in schools agenda' argue

that education systems need to be strengthened, resourced and supervised to ensure that all children are able to enrol in and learn throughout a full course of basic schooling in order to meet minimum learning standards in reading, writing and curricular knowledge (United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons Report, 2013). Therefore, focusing the present study on the skills required of supervisors to ensure effective teaching and learning in schools fit well into the global education debate.

Nationally, the education system in Ghana has been characterised by repeated reforms and reviews since the country's independence from British colonial rule. Between 1957 and 2007, the education sector experienced four major reforms (in 1961, 1974, 1987 and 2007) and a number of reviews, notably those of 1966 and 1995 (Tona, 2009; Agbemabiese, 2007; Government of Ghana, 2006). In my review, I found out that all these policies have the common aim of expanding access to schooling, achieving quality education outcomes, and providing a well-trained and skilled labour force to meet the needs of the national economy. The system and structure of school supervision has also undergone considerable innovation along with these reforms (Dzikum, 2011).

In an earlier study, I found that the role of the Ghanaian school supervisor has changed significantly over the years from "monitoring of adherence to standards" to that of an "evaluator, professional guide and helper" (Dzikum, 2011:12). Thus, they are now expected to assess the performance of teachers and pupils to determine the extent to which school facilities and the professional skills of teachers measure up to the prescribed standards of effective education outcomes. The big questions, however, are do supervisors have the professional skills to perform these functions? What qualifies one as

a basic school supervisor? How are supervisors recruited? And what kind of training do supervisors receive?

1.4   Structure of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters. Chapter One presents the background and rationale of the study, objectives and research questions, and significance and structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two comprises a meticulous review of relevant and selected literature on school supervision and inspection. The chapter examines the concept of school supervision and its various definitions, its historical evolution and rationale, and assumptions around and models of supervision. It also discusses conceptual and policy frameworks for school supervision. The chapter further compares supervision in developing and developed countries. Various gaps and areas for further research are also identified and discussed.

Chapter Three takes a broad look at school supervision and the basic education system in Ghana, providing a historical overview of the sector, and considering pre- and post-independence education reforms and their effects on supervision. The chapter also critically discusses the functions of the Inspectorate Division of the GES and the NIB of the MoE. The final section probes the positive and negative effects of supervision on teaching and learning, and emerging issues in education supervision.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology and methods I adopted for the study, assessing the merits and demerits of selected methods and their justification for use in this research.

Chapter Five presents analysis and discussion of the data and field findings.

Chapter Six presents analytical case studies of rural and urban supervision in Ga South Municipality. The chapter probes the experiences of a working day in the life of a supervisor.

Chapter Seven concludes by reflecting on the research journey and process, and proposes a way forward for the future of education supervision in Ghana.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter comprises a review of relevant and carefully selected literature on school supervision and inspection, examining the concept, historical evolution, and triggers of supervision in schools; its various definitions; and assumptions and models of supervision. It also discusses conceptual and policy frameworks of school supervision. The chapter further compares school supervision in developing and developed countries, and identifies existing gaps in the literature and how this study seeks to address them.

2.1   Historical perspectives and triggers of school supervision

The concept of school supervision has a long history dating back to the inception of the public education system in Europe in the 18th century (Grauwe, 2009). In most advanced countries, especially in Europe, supervision systems – generally referred to as inspectorates – were formally established in the 19th century. England established Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in 1834, while the origin of France's inspectorate system can be traced back even further to the Napoleonic era (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007; Wilcox, 2000). Developed countries thus introduced means of supervision into their education systems for the purposes of monitoring, control, and ensuring uniformity and standards (Itaman 2009; Wilcox, 2000). Such inspectorates were also intended to help maintain efficiency and effectiveness in the education system in the wake of rapid expansion and investment in formal education resources (Wilcox, 2000).

In the 19th century, as formal education expanded to the colonies of advanced countries, means of school supervision/inspection were initiated to control and support the

education systems there (Itaman, 2009). For example, Itaman (2009) states that in the late 19ᵗʰ century (1882), the British introduced the West African Education Ordinance to the colonies of Lagos, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia to standardise school inspectorate services in West Africa. However, the inspectorate systems introduced in these colonies were more in the way of imposition and control, forcing the natives to learn in conformity to what the colonial powers dictated. This underscores Itaman's (2009) argument that the British government found it necessary to set up an education inspectorate in West Africa in order to create a channel of access and communication between schools in its various colonies and the education authorities at home. This practice attracted criticism from some African educationists and political figures such as Dr Kwagyir Aggrey and Kwame Nkrumah, who regarded the colonial education system as a means of external domination, fraud and a ploy to eradicate the cultural integrity of the African people (Biney, 2011).

For example, Dr Aggrey criticised the system of education and supervision in asserting, "Let Africans remain good Africans and not become poor imitations of Europeans;" further urging indigenous students to "amalgamate the finest in Western culture and education but retain their own cultural integrity" (Biney, 2011:22). In a similar vein, Kwame Nkrumah questioned the relevance of the education system to societal needs, stating that, "If education is life, then the weakness of the school system in Africa is evident." This was because the colonial education system only trained people to become interpreters or perpetrators of a Western agenda rather than equipping them to meet their various life challenges (Biney, 2011:22).

Considering such criticisms levelled against the colonial education system, it may be described as a thing of subservience, domination and power rather than promoting quality, standardisation and effective schooling. Some key questions to ponder are, if the purpose of the supervision system is to ensure adherence to standards, who defined these standards? Were they defined in consultation with the indigenous population or were they defined in Britain and supervisors assigned to impose them on the indigenous population? And, if so, what are the implications of such a practice?

One would have expected the educated elites of the colonies to make the school supervision structure more participatory after gaining self-rule. However, interestingly, this did not happen. After becoming sovereign states through independence, former African colonies surprisingly still maintained school inspectorate/supervision systems along the lines of those inherited from the colonial regimes (Grauwe, 2008). Grauwe (2008) interprets such an outcome in two complementary ways: firstly, it was due to the need to control what went on in schools through some form of supervision; and secondly, the decolonised states were not very different from the colonised ones – it was just that the owners of the state apparatus had changed from an external to an internal elite. Grauwe's (2008) post-independence assessment supports the criticism levelled against Ghana's education system in the late 1960s and 70s as being elitist in nature (just as it was during the colonial era), favouring a small educated elite at the expense of the masses (Dzobo, 1974).

Furthermore, the education systems of developing countries in the 21st century are experiencing a new kind of post-colonial control in the form of globalisation. The

concept of globalised education seems to promote the standardisation of curricula and education systems through international policies such as the Education for All (EFA) agenda after the World Education Forum in Jomtien in 1990, and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 on universal primary education, among others (see Report on Dakar Framework for Action, 2000; Millennium Development Goals, 2000). These policies have common implementing approaches, indicators, standards, and expected outcomes that all countries are advised to adhere to, and measure their performance and quality by. For example, during the World Bank/International Monetary Fund- (IMF) led Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) during the 1980s, education policies for all participating developing countries were designed to be similar in content and approach, introducing a national education assessment and testing system as a form of supervision to hold schools and teachers accountable (Robertson et al., 2007). The implication of implementing these policies is that even though most developing countries are now independent, they do not independently control their economies and education systems: there is a new force and external form of post-colonial control – globalisation – which shapes their education policies (Robertson et al., 2007). These global education policies and standards are mainly developed and financed by former colonial powers, and newly independent nations (i.e. developing countries) are required to adopt them if they wish to continue to receive international assistance and debt relief (Aryeetey and Dinello, 2007; Robertson et al., 2007).

From the above discussion of the literature on the historical origins of education supervision, its triggers can be identified as the need to maintain standards and quality as schools expand; the desire to ensure effective and adequate use of education resources;

and the need to create a communication mechanism between schools and education authorities. Additionally, amongst the more autocratic motives of colonial powers were the quest to consolidate mastery over their colonies through exercising control of the education system, and the imposition of policy decisions on indigenous populations through the exploitation of their own educated elite. The globalisation of education, which seems to promote standardisation of curricula and education systems in developing countries, has also been identified as a new form of colonial control and dependency (Robertson et al., 2007).

The historical perspective of education supervision in developing countries can be divided into three main phases: (i) colonial period, (ii) post colonial period, and (iii) globalisation and structural adjustment period. These periods are presented in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2:1   Historical phases of supervision in developing countries

Colonial period	Post-colonial period	Period of globalisation
Colonial masters fully control the education system and its supervision in colonies.	Indigenous elite controls education systems in newly independent states using colonial structures.	Standardisation of curricula and education systems for all countries through global policies such as SAP, EFA and MDG
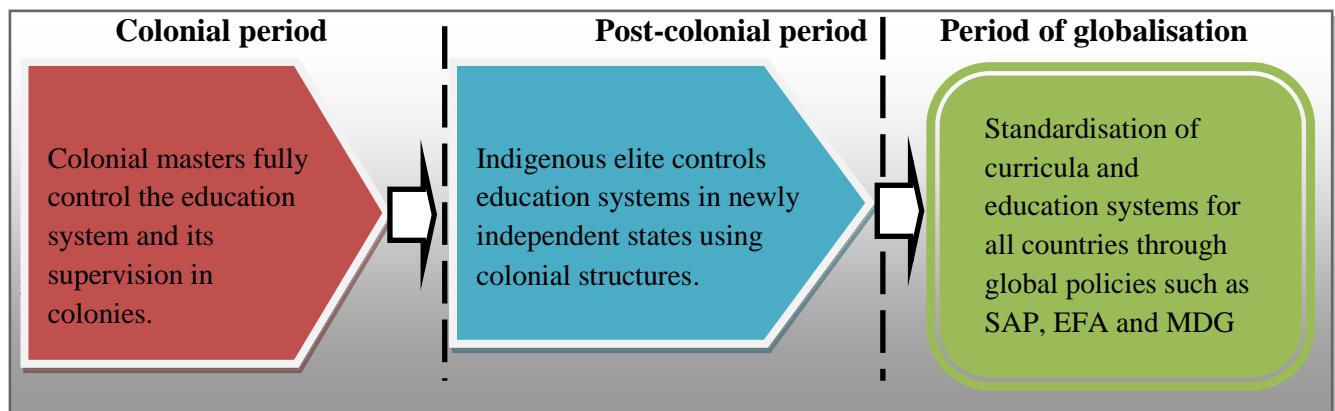
Source: The Author

2.2   Definitions of supervision

As the concept of supervision and its supporting theories and practices evolved, different views and perceptions about its definition, function and terminology also emerged. The

resultant plethora of meanings and diverse debate around the notion of supervision has created a great deal of confusion and contradiction in terms of the way the concept is applied (Eddy et al., 2008). Indeed, there is no agreement on the precise definition of the term 'school supervision', some education researchers argue that it has become a complex and intricate system subject to different perspectives, receiving different interpretations and using different terminologies (Hismanoglu and Hismanoglu, 2010; Grauwe 2008, 2009; Sidhu and Fook, 2010).

The International Institute of Educational Planning (IIEP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2007) defines school supervision as encompassing all services whose main function is (i) to inspect, control, evaluate; and/or (ii) advise, assist and support school heads and teachers to enhance education quality. Komoski (1997 cited in Sidhu and Fook, 2010) defines school supervision as an instructional act of leadership with the prime purpose of improving classroom teaching and learning outcomes; moreover, when conducted efficiently, such a process ensures that education standards and the formal curriculum are implemented and adhered to. Allan (1990) also describes supervision as a set of duties and comprehensive process designed to help teachers develop professionally and achieve their pedagogic objectives.

Grauwe (2009) refers to supervision as a service that has the mandate to control and/or support teachers and schools through regular visits. As explained by Grauwe (2009), the aim of such a mandate is to ensure the respect of norms and regulations established to contribute to the creation of a unified and standardised system of education. Mulkeen

(2010) regards school supervision as the practice of monitoring events in school, identifying the difficulties and needs of both teachers and students, and serving as a feedback mechanism to policymakers with regard to school realities in order to ensure quality. Mulkeen's (2010) definition shares similarities with Kilminster et al. (2007), who also considers education supervision to be the provision of guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and education development (I draw on this particular definition in the present study). A general and more comprehensive definition is provided by Daresh (2001), who posits that supervision is a dynamic process that leads to the scrutinisation and improvement of all factors that affect the education situation.

Ideally, a supervision system should not be autocratic or directive but rather a collaborative, interactive and democratic process (Acheson and Gall, 2003). Thus, Oliva (1993) suggests that school supervision activities should be teacher-centred instead of authoritatively supervisor oriented, since supervisors are generally considered to be the 'teachers of teachers'.

Taken as a whole, the definitions by IIEP-UNESCO (2007), Mulkeen (2010), and Kilminster et al. (2007) are quite comprehensive, encompassing almost all aspects of supervision. Mulkeen (2010) and Kilminster et al. (2007) highlight supervision as critical to policymakers, thus serving as a feedback mechanism. Although Daresh's (2001) definition does not mention any supervisory activities, it has the broad focus of improving all factors that affect education. From their respective viewpoints, Grauwe (2009), Allan (1990), and Komoski (1997) focus more on classroom instruction, control, and adherence to rules, norms and standards designed to enhance quality education

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outcomes. Grauwe (2009) and Allan (1990) also mention the need to support teachers in their professional development.

Accordingly, it seems that the various definitions of school supervision discussed above enumerate the following key issues: focus on quality teaching and learning outcomes; ensuring adherence to education standards, rules and norms; preference for a teacher-centred and collaborative approach to supervision; providing control and support; identifying school difficulties and needs; and a mechanism to provide feedback to policymakers. However, a recent debate in the field of education management questions whether school supervision and school inspection are the same or different concepts with different foci (Olagboye, 2004; Itaman, 2009). Therefore, the next section addresses views on whether supervision and inspection are interchangeable or not.

2.2.1   Supervision and inspection

For some researchers, supervision and inspection are merely different terminologies that refer to the same activities and can therefore be used interchangeably (e.g. Grauwe, 2001, 2009; IIEP-UNESCO, 2007; Itaman, 2009). Itaman (2009) posits that the terms 'inspection' and 'supervision' are used interchangeably or in a sense that makes inspection appear to be an aspect of supervision. Grauwe (2009) also postulates that in some countries, the term 'inspector' is considered too negative, hence the use of the terms 'supervisor', 'advisor', 'resource person' or simply 'education officer' instead. Grauwe (2009) therefore concludes that the use of these two terms (supervision and inspection) is no more than a name change since their fundamental characteristics are the same.

However, other commentators make a distinction between these related terms, arguing that although school supervision and inspection have the common goal of controlling quality and performance in education, they differ in many respects (Olagboye, 2004; Whawo, 1995). According to Olagboye (2004), while supervision constitutes an in-house, cooperative relationship in which the supervisor regularly supports and guides the teacher to meet set targets, inspection involves a situation whereby an inspector comes from outside the school to check and ensure that targets are being met by both teachers and in-house supervisors. Inspection in this sense therefore stresses a strict compliance with rules, regulations and standards as spelt out by the Ministry of Education (MoE) or its designated authorities, while supervision is more concerned with teacher management and the needs of the school (Whawo, 1995; Ogunu, 2001).

2.2.2   Definition of school supervision in the context of this study

For the purpose and context of the present study, with particular reference to Ghana, a developing country in which the education sector has recently been reformed and a National Inspectorate Board (NIB) established to ensure quality education supervision (Ghana Education Act, (Act 788), 2008), Mulkeen's (2010) definition has been adopted.

Such a definition is appropriate for the present study because it highlights supervisors as inspectors (monitoring events in school), developmental agents (identifying difficulties and the needs of both teachers and students), and liaison officers (a feedback mechanism for policymakers). Therefore, in the context of this study, school supervision is considered in its broadest sense, with inspection and evaluation being aspects of it.

2.3 Types, approaches to and models of supervision

Since the inception of the concept of school supervision in the field of education, diverse types, approaches and models inspired by different visions and ideologies have been developed (e.g. Glickman et al., 2014; Grauwe, 2009; IIEP-UNESCO, 2007; Akpa and Abama, 2000; Eddy et al., 2008; Ali, 1998; Carron and Grauwe, 1998; Agic et al., 2004).

2.3.1 Types of supervision

Studies and policy documents on school supervision identify two main types: (i) internal supervision and (ii) external supervision (Mulkeen, 2010; Grauwe, 2009, 2008; 2001; IIEP-UNESCO, 2007). According to Grauwe (2009), together, internal and external supervision form the principal tools for monitoring the functioning and efficiency of the school; however, their relative importance, degree of use, objectives, and characteristics differ in line with the various models of school supervision.

Internal supervision is also referred to in studies as school-level supervision in which the oversight responsibility for adherence to standards, and quality teaching and learning rests on the shoulders of the school head (Wilcox, 2000). IIEP-UNESCO (2007) identifies the principal/school head, heads of department, parent-teacher association (PTA) and school governing board as being among the key actors driving internal school supervision. Moreover, in the immediate school environment, the head is often regarded as the person responsible for supervision of not only his or her teaching staff but also all other aspects of school administration (Sidhu and Fook, 2010).

External supervision, as explained by IIEP-UNESCO (2007), encompasses the work of inspectors, supervisors, advisors, counsellors, coordinators, facilitators, etc. located

outside the school at local, regional or central levels. Almost all external supervisors share the following characteristics: (i) their explicit role is to control and/or support the school; (ii) they are located outside the school; and (iii) regular school visits form an essential part of their mandate (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007).

2.3.2 Approaches to supervision

Glickman et al. (2014:102) identify four main approaches to school supervision: nondirective, collaborative, directive informational, and directive control. In the nondirective approach, the school supervisor facilitates the teacher's thinking in the decision-making process or in the development of a self-plan. During this process, the supervisor listens attentively to the teacher, nodding to show understanding. He or she occasionally asks questions to seek clarification, encourages the teacher to elaborate on his or her concerns, and, at the end of the process, summarises the teacher's message for verification of accuracy. The maximum responsibility for decision-making is, therefore, on the teacher, the supervisor serving merely as an active prober, guide and facilitator (Glickman et al., 2014).

Unlike the nondirective approach, in the collaborative approach, supervisor and teacher share information, ideas and suggestions for possible practice as equals in arriving at a mutual plan or decision. The supervisor, therefore, employs methods such as presentation, for example, offering his or her own ideas and perspectives on issues; and problem solving, that is, after preliminary discussion of the issue, taking the initiative to generate possible solutions (Glickman et al., 2014).

According to Glickman et al. (2014), in the directive informational approach, the responsibility for providing solutions to problems rests mainly with the school supervisor. He or she provides the focus and range of possible solutions or actions, and the teacher is asked to choose from the supervisor's suggestions. The teacher is, therefore, not actively involved in the generation of possible solutions. The directive informational approach uses non-participatory methods such as direction in which the supervisor tells the participant(s) what the possible choices are or informs them directly what is to be done, and standardisation whereby the supervisor sets the expected criteria and time frame for the decision to be implemented. The principal characteristic of this approach is that activities implemented in the school are based on a supervisor-suggested plan.

Finally, in the directive control approach, the supervisor tells the teacher what is to be done, independently strengthening the directive, defining the criteria to be met, and drawing attention to the possible consequences of non-compliance. In this process, the supervisor decides what the school should do and assigns it to the school authorities to implement. The school is, therefore, subject to supervisor-assigned plans which are necessarily not shared or owned by its teachers (Glickman et al., 2014).

2.3.3 Models of supervision

IIEP-UNESCO (2007) identify four major models of school supervision: (i) the classic model; (ii) the central control model; (iii) the close-to-school model; and (iv) the school site model.

The classic model: The classic model resulted from the adaptation of the supervision service to the expansion of the education system and the deconcentration of school

administration. In this model, supervision is perceived as a tool to control and provide support in pedagogical and administrative areas (Grauwe 2009). For effective implementation, supervisors must be located at all levels of education sector administration, namely, school, district, regional and central. The referral of this model as 'classic' is because the essence of its supervision process has changed little since its inception. Historically, this model was implemented mostly in British and French colonies, the supervision system in Tanzania being a good example (Grauwe, 2001, 2009).

However, according to Grauwe (2009) and IIEP-UNESCO (2007), operating the classic supervision model is very costly, requiring effective state services, and numerous departments and high-level, competent, and well paid professionals. Its structure is also cumbersome and characterised by role conflicts emanating from task-overlap and ambiguous post descriptions (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007).

The central control model: Considering that there are weaknesses in the classic model, various education reforms have led to the development of the central control model (Grauwe, 2009), which has the following underpinning convictions:

i. Supervision must concentrate on one task: control. Asking supervisors to combine control and support leads to a conflict of interests that renders their interventions in both domains ineffective.

ii. The complex bureaucracy which characterises the classic model is both expensive and also prevents it from functioning effectively. For example, the numerous

levels and consultations required delay the period between a supervisor's visit and follow-up recommendations.

iii. External supervision alone cannot lead to school improvement; but is an incentive to initiate internal school reform by informing key school-level stakeholders of the school's progress and weaknesses in respect of national policies and programmes.

In the central model, the role of the supervision service is mainly to inspect schools periodically and publish its findings. The model is, therefore, heavily dependent on visits and reports as monitoring tools. This approach has been criticised (e.g. Grauwe, 2001) on the grounds that overdependence on inspection, control and reports puts pressure on heads to please supervisors focusing mainly on administrative functions to the detriment of the school's pedagogical role. Moreover, publishing sensitive reports on schools can affect their reputation, which may eventually lead to their demise (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007).

The close-to-school model: This model is based on the view that schools have different characteristics in terms of environment, pupils, teachers, parents, resources, etc. The supervision system should therefore take into account and reflect these differences and the diverse needs of individual schools (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007). In this model, the core role of the supervision service is to assist weak schools to improve their performance. Indeed, each school should be treated and supervised differently; a weaker school may need more pedagogical support in addition to control, meaning that regular visits from a support-oriented supervisor are required.

The supervisory structure of the close-to-school model is designed in such a way that supervisors are based as close to the school as possible in order to promote regular visits (Grauwe, 2009). Central and provincial supervisors and officers no longer visit schools but concentrate on policy formulation and training. Moreover, to ensure effective and regular visits, each supervisor has only a few schools to work with, and a specific cadre of administrators is also created to avoid supervisors engaging in administrative work.

The close-to-school model was actually developed as a response to drawbacks in both the classic and central supervision models whereby all schools were treated as similar units and the same supervision strategies applied to all (Grauwe, 2009).

The school site model: This model does not require the MoE to organise formal supervision. It is based on the conviction that school teaching staff have the skills and professional integrity to participate in self and peer evaluation without external supervision; with the local community also competent and ready to exercise some control over the school (Grauwe, 2009).

In this model, all supervisory actors are based at the local level on or around the school site, and examinations, test results, and continuous performance indicators are used to assess quality. There is, therefore, a heavy reliance on professional and public accountability. This model is typical of countries with great homogeneity, little social inequality, well-motivated teachers, public trust in their professionalism, and strong parental interest in education (IIEP-UNESCO, 2007; Grauwe, 2009). Teachers and the community thus collaborate in monitoring the quality and functioning of schools. A good example of this model is the supervision system in Finland, where external supervision

was abolished in 1991 and schools were encouraged to undertake their own evaluation (Grauwe, 2009).

In summary, it can be observed that these four models differ in terms of approach to school supervision. The classic model considers it to be a tool to control and provide support to schools both administratively and pedagogically. This model also requires the location of supervisors at various MoD levels for effective implementation. On the other hand, the central control model focuses only on school control on the grounds that supervisors cannot effectively combine control and support functions at the same time. This model is therefore heavily dependent on school inspection and supervisors' reports. The third model, that is, the close-to-school model, holds that supervision systems must differ from school to school. This model is based on the premise that as schools have different characteristics, environments and needs, the supervision system must reflect these disparities. The close-to-school model is grounded in the belief that supervision systems should be developed to assist weak schools and supervisors must be based in the local community. The fourth model, the school site model, reflects the final stage of education decentralisation. The model is premised on the assumption that teachers are professionally trained, possess the requisite skills and professional integrity, and do not need external supervision to carry out their duties. Professionalism and public accountability form the core of this model, while examinations, test results, and other indicators are used to assess performance and the quality of outcomes.

The models discussed in this section largely inform the supervision structure and framework adopted by many developed and developing countries, such as Finland,

England, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Grauwe, 2009). A close look at the literature on the four supervision models identified by IIEP-UNESCO (2007) and Grauwe (2009) clearly shows that the school supervision structures of developed countries are mostly based on the central and school site models. On the other hand, those of developing countries tend to be based on the classic model, even though education reform in some countries (e.g. Botswana, Eritrea and Gambia) currently reflects either the close-to-school model or a hybrid of some of them (Mulkeen, 2010).

2.4   The role and purpose of supervision

In recent years, the concept of a school supervision system has gained recognition as a key contributor to effective teaching and learning in both developed and developing countries. Regardless of its definition and model (as discussed above) many studies have found that the expected outcome of all school supervision systems in various countries is improvement in the quality of education (e.g. Sidhu and Fook, 2010; Olivia, 1993; Smith, 2005; Komoski, 1997; Grauwe, 2009). This section seeks to explore the various ways in which school supervision contributes to quality education, identifying trends and changes over the years, and the major drivers of these changes. Firstly, I discuss the role of school supervision and present a model that highlights the role of the supervisor as a policy broker and catalyst.

2.4.1   The role of supervision

As discussed earlier, the difficulty in arriving at a common acceptable definition of the concept of school supervision has prompted many education providers and advisors, researchers, and policy formulators to focus on the role and function of the supervision service in ensuring a quality education outcome (GNECC, 2009; Dzikum, 2011).

However, the question is what role does school supervision play in ensuring the quality of a country's education system and how such a role is defined.

Traditional theories, approaches, definitions and concepts of education supervision generally point to two basic roles which impact directly on the function of the school (Govinda and Tapan, 1999; Ali, 1998). Firstly, the system of school supervision is designed to help maintain centrally defined norms in education. This is because individual schools make up the larger system and each school has its own uniqueness and individuality; however, schools have to follow certain common patterns of organisation and functioning to ensure uniformity in the education system. School supervision services and supervisors, therefore, have the basic responsibility of maintaining acceptable standards and practices approved by education authorities or the government. This role, that is, maintaining centrally defined norms, standards and practices, is also referred to in many education research and policy reports and documents as monitoring and control (Carron and Grauwe, 1997; Wanzare, 2002; Wilcox, 2000).

Secondly, the school supervision system is also designed to help promote change and development in each school. Theoretical literature on school supervision clearly shows that school supervisors are agents or catalysts of change in the education system (Ali, 1998; Ogunsaju, 2006). This is because supervisors monitor the realities – actual practices – of schools, and recommend the necessary support services for effective administrative and pedagogical development (Carron and Grauwe, 1997; Mulkeen, 2010).

A third important role of the supervision service which is also associated with the promotion of change and development is the supervisor as liaison agent between the lower (schools and communities) and higher levels (MoE/national inspectorate) of administration (Kilminster et al., 2007; Carron and Grauwe, 1997).

While these roles are well accepted and appreciated in theory, the actual functioning of school supervision systems as reviewed in the empirical literature often presents a one-sided picture of control and monitoring, with practically no support for change and improvement (see Fergguson, 1998; Govinda and Tapan, 1999; Wanzare, 2002; Holland and Adams, 2002). For example Ali (1998) found that supervisors were employed as objective evaluators to check whether teachers were indeed using prescribed and standardised methods in their classrooms, and to implement corrective measures as necessary.

Fergguson (1998) describes the role of the supervision service in New Zealand prior to the 1989 education reform as very bureaucratic and bound by stringent rules. The main focus of the system was to ensure that students reached prescribed standards of attainment, and that teachers' day-to-day lessons met targets. Consequently, teachers were paid based on results – in the main, as noted in the reports of school supervisors. Additionally, Clegg and Billington (1994 cited in Wanzare, 2002:2) state that, "A major purpose of inspection is to collect a range of evidence, match the evidence against a statutory set of criteria, arrive at judgments, and make those judgments known to the public."

It is therefore not surprising that several empirical studies (e.g. Moswela, 2010; Sidhu and Fook, 2010) have found that supervisors spend an enormous amount of time on teacher inspection and questioning (activities related to control and monitoring) with a complete neglect of school needs (e.g. teaching and learning materials, teacher capacity building, school infrastructure, etc), development, and other support services. The implication of this is that in order to get into the 'good books' of supervisors, teachers arrive early on the day of a supervision visit, or develop the habit of regular attendance in cases in which supervision visits are not announced, but may not have the necessary teaching and learning materials to promote quality education.

In Pakistan, Ali (1998) argues that school supervision practices are based on bureaucratic regulations and do not contribute to change or the professional development of teachers. Supervisors mostly focus on monitoring teachers' attendance and school records rather than helping them improve classroom instruction practice and education quality. A typical supervision visit to a Pakistani school described by Ali (1998) paints a clear picture of a superior–subordinate relationship whereby teachers (subordinates) were extremely nervous and tense because the supervisor (superior) commanded, instructed, warned and even spoke harshly to teachers in front of their students (Ali, 1998:10). Therefore, the conclusion reached by many studies (e.g. Farah, 1996; Memon and Mithani, 1996 cited in Ali, 1998) that supervisory personnel and practices have made no difference to the quality of instruction and education outcomes in Pakistani schools is not surprising.

In an empirical study conducted in Nigeria by Adegbesan (2007), some teacher respondents went so far as to describe the dynamic between supervisor and supervisee as a master–servant relationship. As discussed in the introduction to Chapter One of the present thesis, this kind of threatening teacher–supervisor environment only weakens the school supervision system and defeats its core purpose of ensuring quality teaching and learning outcomes (Cangelosi, 1991; Sidhi and Fook, 2010).

However, in another school study in Nigeria, Adegbesan (2007) identifies two important roles of supervision: staff development and instructional development. Staff development focuses on both teaching and non-teaching personnel, while instructional development gives attention to the curriculum and teaching practice, in order to create a more effective and systematic way of providing efficient and meaningful education. Supervision, therefore, improves the effectiveness of teachers so that they are able to contribute to the attainment of education goals to the best of their ability. In a related study on Nigeria, Ogunsaju (2006) defines the role of supervision as a catalyst to promote effective and quality education outcomes.

Figure 2.2 below shows the position of the supervisor as an intermediary in and catalyst for quality education.

Figure 2.2: Role of the supervisor as an intermediary in and catalyst for quality education delivery
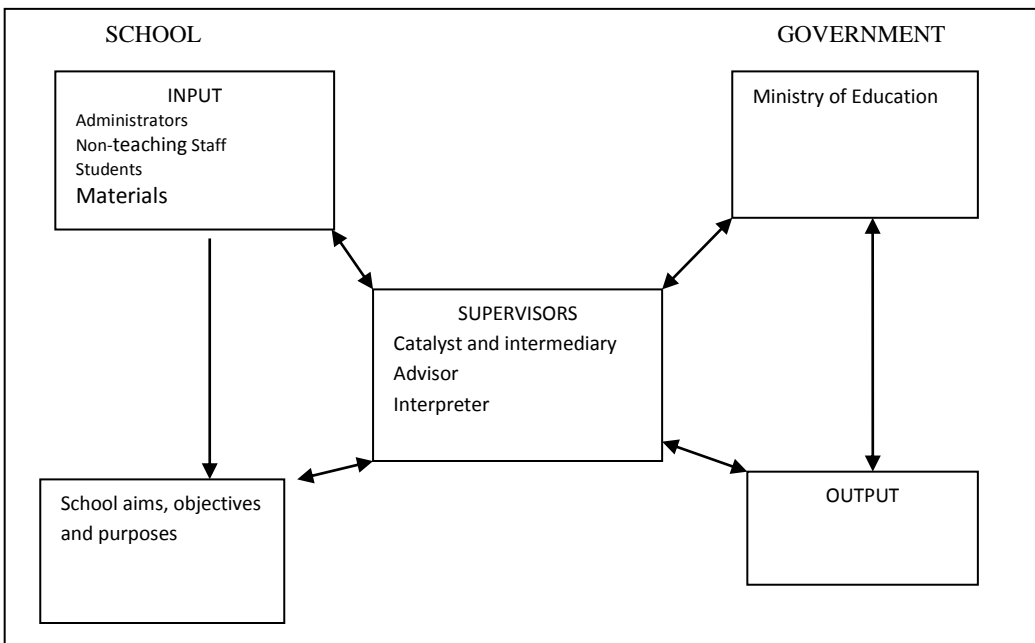
Source: Ogunsaju (2006).

In explaining Figure 2.2 above, Ogunsaju (2006) contends that quality education delivery and output depend to a great extent on the catalytic quality of the supervisor to align the objectives of each school with MoE policy. At the same time, the supervisor should inform the head and administrators of the performance of the school and its teachers in terms of national standards. In this regard, the role of school supervision cannot be limited to teacher welfare, classroom instruction and curriculum supervision, but must also include feedback and the establishment of a communication channel between schools and the MoE.

2.4.2 Defining professionalism

The concept of professionalism means different things to different people, making it somewhat difficult to define. Troman (1996) argued that professionalism is a socially constructed phenomenon and does not have an absolute/ideal definition but is rather best understood in context.

Hoyle (1975) defined professionalism as strategies and rhetoric employed by members of an occupation in seeking to improve status, salary and conditions. Hoyle in 2001, however reformulated his earlier definition by stating that professionalism has to do with improvement in the quality of service rather than the enhancement of status (Hoyle, 2001). Boyt, Lusch and Naylor (2001) explain the concept as a multi-dimensional structure consisting of one's attitudes and behaviours towards his/her job and it refers to the achievement of high level standards. Schon (1993) also argues that professionalism or professional practice is formulated on tacit knowledge which is a non-verbalised contextual form of knowledge, which might be called practice-oriented professional knowledge. According to Schon (1993) a practice-oriented knowledge is acquired by a practitioner during his/her schooling in a specific line of work thus knowing through action.

Mann (2013) defined professionalism in three distinct forms: (i) competence and mastery of appropriate knowledge skills and attitudes; (ii) capability to adapt to change, generate new knowledge and continue to improve; and (iii) self-awareness and self-regulation.

If we synthesize the various definitions above, it is perhaps best to interpret professionalism as a multi-dimensional structure including one's work behaviours and attitudes to perform the highest standards and improve the service quality.

2.4.3 Professional Supervision skills and successful school

Glickman et al. (2014) posit that for school supervision to achieve its ultimate goal of improved student learning, supervisors must have certain prerequisite skills. Firstly, supervisors should have a sound knowledge base of the dynamics of school supervision. They need the skills to understand how knowledge of adult and teacher development as well as alternative supervisory practices can help break the norm of mediocrity found in some schools. Secondly, supervisors must have interpersonal skills. They need to know how to relate to individuals as well as groups of teachers, and how to influence behaviours for positive change. Thirdly, supervisors must have the prerequisite technical ability to observe, plan, assess and evaluate teaching and learning. Glickman et al. (2014) refer to the three prerequisite capabilities of knowledge, interpersonal skills and technical competence as complementary aspects of supervision that cannot be ignored when appointing a school supervisor.

Figure 2.3   Framework for supervision skills and successful school
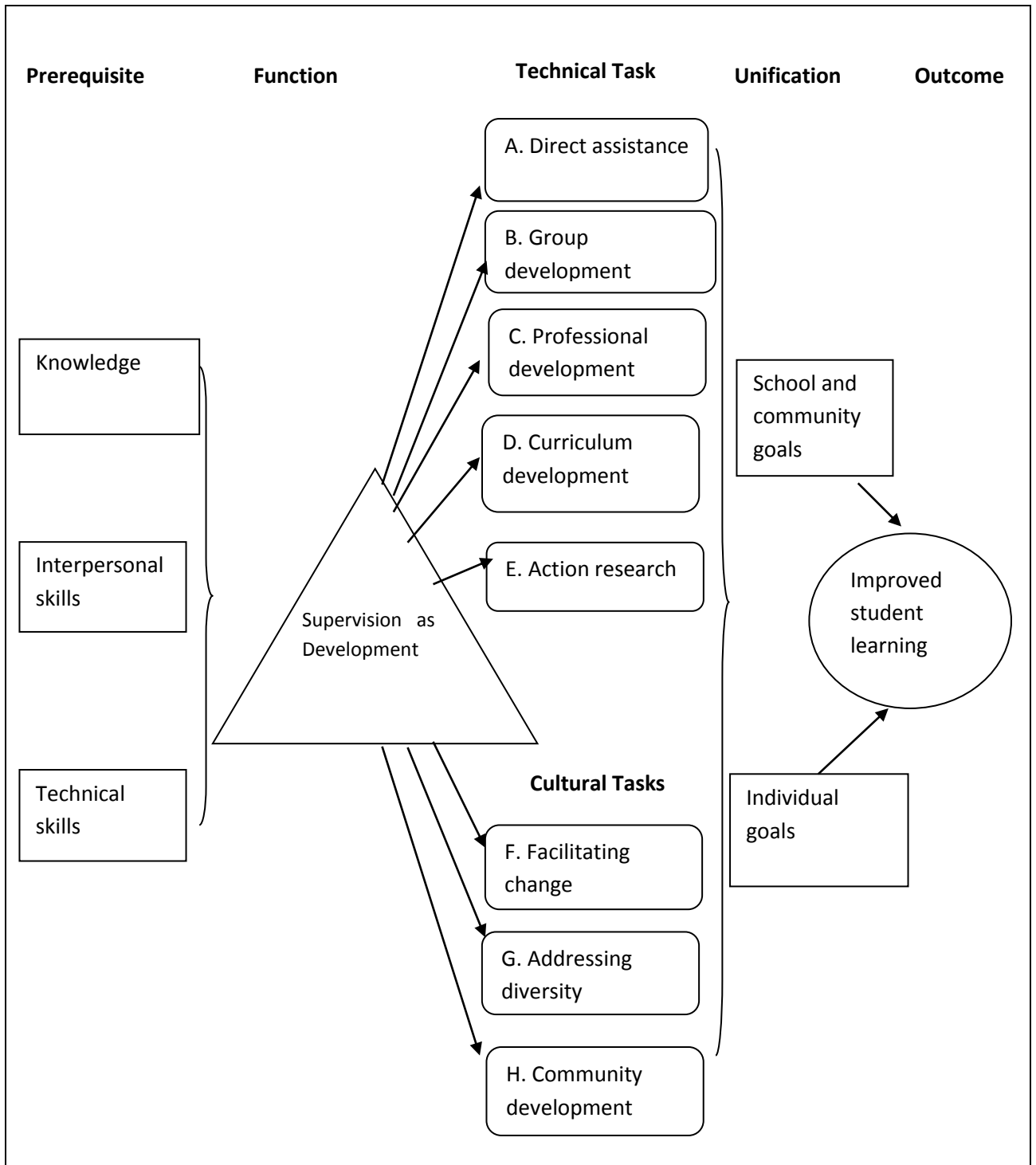
Source: Adapted from Glickman et al. (2014:14).

As illustrated in Figure 2.3 above, supervisors must have the prerequisite ability to give teachers the necessary technical and cultural support to teach their students successfully. The technical supervisory tasks that enhance teacher development include direct assistance, group development, professional development, curriculum development, and action research. Additionally, cultural supervisory tasks assist both school and teacher development, and include facilitating change in school, addressing diversity, and building a community conducive to effective teaching and learning. Effective supervision, therefore, promotes the unification of school, community and individual teacher goals, which leads to effective instruction and improved student learning (Glickman et al., 2014).

Schon's (1993) position on effective professional practices for fields such as education, contradicts Glickman's (2014) pre-requisite skills requirement. Schon (1993) argues that professionalism or effective professional practice does not only rely on technical/pre-requisite rationality as posited by Glickman but it is rather formulated on tacit knowledge which is gained through practice. According to Schon (1993) a practice-oriented knowledge is acquired by a practitioner during his/her practice in a specific line of work thus knowing through action.

2.4.4 Major problems facing school supervision

2.4.1.1 Excessive bureaucracy

The excessive bureaucracy that characterises the school supervision system in developing countries in particular has prompted commentators such as Moswela (2010) and Fobi et al. (1995) to assert that some supervisors are apt to impede the implementation of

education policy in schools. In most developing countries, supervision systems are centralised (Wanzare, 2002), a result of which is that policy communication forms a long process, passing through several phases and mediums before reaching school level. During this process, information can get distorted before policy is implemented. Moreover, in a situation in which a school faces a particular problem, instead of solving it at school level, the supervisor is obliged to wait for a directive from the central authorities before the issue can be addressed (Kayongo, 2009).

2.4.4.2 Power dynamics and the relationship between supervisors, school heads, and teachers

Power and its distribution is an additional problem faced by school supervision. In external supervision systems, there is apt to be a power struggle between external supervisors and school heads and their staff. In the case of internal supervision, however, the tension is either between heads and teachers, or community leaders and heads/teachers.

Moswela (2010) stated that some teachers criticised the manner in which administrative and instructional supervision are conducted in schools. According to them, the exercise only serves the interests of individual supervisors/head teachers who use it as an opportunity to settle scores with teachers rather than concentrating on staff development.

A major source of the power struggle that can obtain during school supervision is the question of what to supervise and inadequate expertise on the part of supervisors.

Additionally, Wanzare (2002) in a survey of 200 public schools in Sub Sahara Africa found out that school supervisors are not subject expects and do not possess sufficient

skills on how to observe teachers in the classroom as well as hold one to one conferences/meetings. In such cases, school supervisors are clearly unable to give detailed explanations or instructions to teachers. This point is corroborated by Kitavi (1995), who found that school heads lacked appropriate skills and experience to conduct effective staff supervision.

2.4.4.3 Conflicting roles of supervisors

With the power accorded to school supervisors that makes them representatives of the public or central authority, they are mandated to monitor, control and ensure adherence to rules, standards and norms defined by the authority (Wanzare, 2002; Carron and Grauwe, 1997). Yet, at the same time, they are supposed to act as agents of staff development, serving as guides, advisors and friends to teachers (Mwanzia 1985; Mulkeen, 2010; Kilminster et al., 2007). Performing the roles of supervision and control, and capacity building at the same time can be quite confusing. The big question here is how effectively do supervisors combine these activities? In answer, it is not surprising that the empirical literature on supervision (see sub-section 2.6.1 on roles of school supervision above) reveals that the role of monitoring and control is invariably performed to the neglect of teacher capacity development.

2.5   Trends in school supervision

As discussed earlier, school supervision and its related services have existed in one form or another in most countries since the inception of a formal education sector by their respective central authorities. As discussed in the literature, the general objective of such supervision is to maintain standards and ensure effective and quality teaching and learning (see Section 2.1). However, this service is plagued by several weaknesses, some

of which are associated with economic constraints while others are ingrained in the existing supervision structure and system, making it difficult to attain the desired objective, that is, to improve education outcomes (Moswela, 2010; Sahin, Cek and Zeytin, 2011).

In light of these weaknesses, and coupled with the recognition that effective education supervision and quality outcomes are paramount to economic growth and development (see Darka Framework for Action, 2000; United Nations- MDG Report, 2011), it is not surprising that several developing countries in the late 1990s through 2000s have attempted to reform their existing school supervision services. Hopes (1992) notes significant changes in school inspectorates in a number of European countries; Carron and Grauwe (1997) document changes in supervision and support services in Asia; while several research reports (e.g. MDG 2 Progress Report 2011; World Bank, 2011; Hosu-Porbley, 2009) also cite school supervision as one of the main focuses of education-related projects in developing countries.

Several countries (e.g. England, New Zealand, Finland, Netherlands, South Korea, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Chile, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe) have changed the system of and approach to school supervision in their respective education systems (Fergusson, 1998; Mulkeen, 2010; Mahfooz and Hovde, 2010; Carron and Grauwe, 1997; Hopes, 1992; Moswela, 2010; Grauwe, 2001). The prime aim of most of these reforms is a decentralised supervision system that brings it closer to school-site level (Fergusson, 1998).

For example, Fergusson (1998) notes that in New Zealand, the 1989 education reform changed supervision from a stringent, centralised and authoritative system to a decentralised and participatory one. The excess bureaucracy and control that had hitherto characterised the system were replaced with a more participatory approach that granted schools some level of autonomy in terms of governance. The government established a separate body – the Education Review Office – as the evaluation arm of the new reform, which was mandated to report publicly on the effectiveness of the system and on each individual school. The new reform also granted more power to schools' respective communities, the responsibility for running the school being transferred to its staff and a board of trustees, while parents and other community members were given the mandate to supervise the school and improve the performance of the head and teaching staff (Fergusson, 1998). The new supervision system, therefore, had a strong self-management focus.

Mahfooz and Hovde (2010) also identify self-management and self-assessment as common themes of school supervision reforms in England, Finland, Netherlands and South Korea. According to the authors, the new systems of supervision in these countries extend beyond issues of regulatory compliance into questions on the quality of the schooling process and students' education outcomes; with the exception of South Korea, which has installed a new teacher evaluation system in recent years, the school itself rather than its human resources being the main focus of external inspection (Mahfooz and Hovde, 2010).

Mahfooz and Hovde (2010) further categorise the focus of school-level supervision according to three main aspects: (i) student outcomes, (ii) school processes, and (iii) the context/environment in which the school operates. In addition to these defined aspects, school supervision reform is also identified as having a well-designed mechanism in terms of access to education data and feedback on the performance of individual institutions to each school and its community.

Such categorisation is a clear departure from the focus of traditional school supervision as teacher centred with the critical focus on control and compliance with regulations (see discussion on the historical origin of supervision in Section 2.1). It is now much more results oriented, concentrating on teaching and learning processes in the context of the school environment and its available resources.

The following are the institutions charged with the supervision of schools under such reform: a national inspectorate, municipalities, and local school boards in the Netherlands; the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in South Korea; municipalities in Finland; and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), local authorities, and local school boards in England.

Until recently, virtually all sub-Saharan Africa countries continued to practice the centralised system of school supervision that they had inherited from their former colonial masters (Moswela, 2010; Mulkeen, 2010; Grauwe, 2001; Wanzare, 2002). However, even though nations such as Kenya, Zambia and Lesotho still practices stringent, centralised and bureaucratic systems of supervision (Wanzare, 2002), others such as Gambia, Eritrea, Ghana, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda,

and Botswana have decentralised their respective education sectors with the intention of moving decision making and accountability closer to the school. This means that power has been redistributed between various local groups – school heads, teachers and parents/the community – who are key stakeholders in the content and delivery of quality education (Murphy 1990; Moswela, 2010; Essuman, 2010).

For example, Botswana decentralised its system of school supervision in the late 1990s. Prior to this, the MoE and its field offices supervised and served all schools from a central location (Moswela, 2010). However, the rapid increase in the number of schools resulting from an escalating population growth rate coupled with the remoteness of many schools rendered the country's centralised supervision system largely ineffective (Botswana Ministry of Education, 2005). The inspection and field education service was, therefore, decentralised.

In the new decentralised system, both regional and principal education officers are subject specialists whose main function is to keep in constant touch with schools and conduct their inspection activities in designated regions. Yet, field education officers are based in the regions while principal education officers remain at the head office (Inspectors Handbook, 2005: 89). Essentially, regional field education officers are responsible for undertaking instructional supervision in schools, making regular visits, and monitoring performance and other issues pertaining to the delivery of good quality education as outlined in national policy. They not only ensure the maintenance of academic standards but also assist in developing policies on inspection, raise issues identified during inspection with the deputy director of education, and assist teachers to

improve instructional delivery through workshops (Department of Secondary Education 1992, 1994; Moswela, 2010).

Nevertheless, a major challenge that still faces the system is the increase in the number of schools, which has imposed a limit on the amount of time officers can spend at each school. Additionally, most school supervisors in sub-Saharan African countries are not subject experts or experienced educationists, meaning that they do not understand the technicalities of or approaches to the effective delivery of many subjects (Wanzare, 2002). In such cases, they are clearly unable to give detailed explanations or instructions to teachers.

In an empirical assessment of the instruction supervision system in Botswana, Moswela (2010) found that teachers believed the motive of supervisors was to punish them for perceived misdemeanours or failure to carry out their duties satisfactorily (as evidenced in phrases such as "witch-hunting," "the motive…is ulterior," etc.) rather than improve their performance. This position was supported by the responses of school heads who seemed to be oriented in a culture that believed in supervision as the necessary and sufficient means of determining whether teachers merited promotion or annual salary increments.

Eritrea reformed and decentralised its system of school supervision in 2005 (Mulkeen, 2010). Subsequently, supervisors were no longer based at regional offices, but deployed to cluster schools. Similar to the decentralised supervision system in Gambia, cluster supervisors in Eritrea were expected to live at one of the schools and travel on foot or by bicycle to visit each teacher within the cluster three to four times a year. A cluster

comprises a total of approximately 80 teachers based at between two and ten schools. Cluster supervisors report to the regional office twice a year, and this information is fed into supervision workshops held twice a year for regional and central quality assurance staff (Mulkeen, 2010). The new supervision system encourages supervisors to identify and concentrate on weak schools and those with unqualified head teachers can be visited monthly, or even several times a month. Supervisors are also not normally drawn into administrative work, freeing up about 75% of their working hours to concentrate on the core duty of school supervision.

2.5.1   General observable trends

This subsection addresses some of the observable trends in the reformed supervision systems practiced by the countries discussed above. There has been a change of weight in the distribution of tasks and authority between the education system and the school; greater autonomy has been accorded to the school; and supervision services are required to be more development oriented and less control focused.

Moreover, supervision officers now function on at least three levels, namely, central, regional and district/local. Central officers focus more on policy formulation and district/local-level officers are mostly based in communities/clusters where they are in charge of visiting schools and gathering relevant information on their realities. Regional-level officers are intermediaries who inform local-level officers on new policies and approaches to supervision, and, at the same time, channel feedback to and from central-level officers on issues relating to education policy.

2.6   Drivers of change

2.6.1   Need to bring supervision closer to the school

The call for the active involvement and participation of all stakeholders in education is also a driver of change in the school supervision system. Parents and their communities are keen to participate in monitoring what goes on in school, how resources are used, and the various other ways in which they can help. As a result, many reformed school supervision systems have a component of community participation and involvement. In some countries such as New Zealand, the responsibility for school governance has been put entirely in the hands of teachers, parents, and the community (Fergusson, 1998).

In some sub-Saharan African countries in which the school supervision system has been reformed, communities are required to form Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) (Essuman, 2010). These provisions according to Essuman (2010) aim to bring supervision closer to the school, place administration in the hands of local populations, and ensure that supervision and decision making are implemented at the grassroots level rather than by a distant bureaucracy.

2.6.2   Promotion of openness and accountability

Public demand for accountability and openness in education processes and outcomes in both developed and developing countries has been at the core of education reform, decentralisation of the school supervision system in particular. The quest to know and monitor what happens in school (Carron and Grauwe, 1997; Grauwe, 2001), hold teachers and other service providers accountable (Fergusson, 1998), and wield the power to effect change and achieve the desired results are the factors that drive openness and accountability in education.

In New Zealand communities, schools are run by a board of trustees, and parents/communities have the right to employ teachers they deem qualified and also dismiss staff in cases of non-performance (Fergusson, 1998). In some sub-Saharan African countries, communities have management boards – SMCs in Ghana – that monitor, govern and supervise what goes on in school (Dzikum, 2011). The cluster supervision system practice in nations such as Gambia, Eritrea and Malawi also requires supervisors to reside in the communities where the schools for which they are responsible are located. The above changes are all efforts by various governments in responding to the call for openness, transparency and accountability through effective school supervision.

2.6.3 Rapid growth in enrolment and expansion of schools

Rapid population growth in sub-Saharan African countries in particular is identified in the literature as a critical factor in the rapid increase in the number of schools (Grauwe, 2001; Mulkeen, 2010; Moswela, 2010). However, the subsequent escalation in numbers of students and teachers has been accompanied by a slower growth in the number of supervision officers (Grauwe, 2001).

In Botswana, Moswela (2010) found that the population growth rate was a major cause of the ineffectiveness of the centrally located supervision system, hence the need to decentralise the service in the country's education reform. In a study on Kenya, Wanzare (2002) notes that, "The rapid growth and expansion of Kenya's education since independence in 1963…created new demands for teachers and consequently unqualified teachers had to be recruited to meet the demand."

School expansion coupled with the recruitment of untrained teachers explains the need for the decentralisation of the supervision system in these countries. Weak schools – i.e. those with untrained teachers need regular visits and support services; therefore, the adoption of the cluster supervision approach in countries such as Eritrea, Gambia and Malawi (Mulkeen, 2010) is a good approach, as supervisors become teachers of teachers, helping those who are unqualified to enhance their capacity to engage in effective pedagogy. This is a clear rationale for the concept of 'differential supervision', in which supervision and support services are based on the needs of individual schools (Glickman, 2014).

2.7   Summary and conclusion

The theoretical and empirical studies reviewed in this chapter revealed interesting findings and gaps in the literature. Analysis of the historical perspectives and triggers of supervision revealed three main phases of the service in developing countries, namely, colonial, post-colonial and globalised education. The colonial and post-colonial periods seem to have promoted elite education at the expense of mass schooling, while the globalised education phase seems to be promoting EFA with strong focus on pro-poor education policies. Policies formulated during all three periods have either external influence/direct control (during the colonial period), or indirect control (during the post-colonial and globalised education periods).

Moreover, various definitions and interpretations of the concept of school supervision notwithstanding, it seems from the literature reviewed that the service is concerned with ensuring the effectiveness and quality of the education systems. The following key issues

seem to cut across the various definitions: (i) adherence to standards, (ii) teacher professionalism, and quality teaching and learning, and (iii) a feedback mechanism informing authorities and policymakers about school realities. Even though numerous researchers and education policy advisors have debated the meaning, interpretation and position of school supervision and inspection, from a developing country's viewpoint, it could be argued that both terms (supervision and inspection) have the same meaning and are used interchangeably in education management (Itaman, 2010; Grauwe, 2009). However, this assertion requires in-depth analysis and empirical verification.

Recent reforms in both developed and developing countries focus on school supervision in the interests of improving the education systems. Nevertheless, there is little consensus on the extent to which the service promotes quality education outcomes (MoE, 2011).

The chapter further explored the various ways in which school supervision contributes to quality education, trends and changes in school supervision over the years and the drivers of these changes. Theoretically, school supervision performs two main roles: (i) maintaining school-level norms − a monitoring and control function (see Ali, 1998; Govinda and Tapan, 1999; Wanzare, 2002) − and (ii) promoting school change and development (Ogunsaju, 2006; Ali, 1998). However, the empirical literature revealed that school supervisors focus mainly on monitoring and control, with little or no support for change and the improvement.

Power dynamics, weak supervisors, poor relationships with teachers, excessive bureaucracy, and conflicting roles of supervisors were found to constitute the major problems characterising school supervision systems. However, such systems in various

countries have experienced substantial changes in recent times. The principal innovation has been the shift from a centralised to a more decentralised system, allowing local communities to actively participate in the supervision process. The drivers of change identified in the literature include the need to bring supervision closer to the school (e.g. Fergusson, 1998), promotion of school openness and accountability (e.g. Carron and Grauwe, 1997; Dzikum, 2011), and rapid population growth and concomitant expansion of schools (e.g. Moswela, 2010; Mulkeen, 2010).

CHAPTER THREE

SCHOOL SUPERVISION AND THE BASIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GHANA

3.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the broad national context within which the study is located, reviewing the basic education system in Ghana and its supervision structures. The review addresses a historical overview of basic education supervision, pre- and post-independence education reforms, and their effects on basic school supervision. The chapter also critically discusses the functions of the Inspectorate Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The final section probes the effect of supervision on teaching and learning, emerging issues in education supervision, and the implications for policy and practice.

3.1   Historical overview of basic education and supervision in Ghana

3.1.1   Pre-colonial and colonial education

The origin of basic education and supervision in Ghana dates back to the pre-colonial period with the arrival of European merchants and missionaries in the coastal areas of the then Gold Coast in the 15th Century (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). European merchants and missionaries, particularly from France, Portugal, Netherlands and England, introduced formal education in the coastal areas to facilitate communication between them and the locals (Little, 2010). McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975) note that the Europeans established schools in the forts of Elmina Castle, Cape Coast Castle, and Christianborg Castle – just to mention a few – in order to educate their mixed race children and those of some selected local trading partners. These schools were located

within the forts largely for the purposes of convenience and close supervision since most of them served as homes for the Europeans (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Foster, 1963). However, another reason seldom mentioned in the literature was to prevent European children from attack by aggrieved locals.

The formal education system practised during this period was tailored to conform to European standards (Foster, 1963). McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh (1975) and Foster (1963) assert that reading, writing and arithmetic formed the main focus of the pre-colonial basic education. This system put much emphasis on (i) educating locals to facilitate trade between them and the European merchants; (ii) training local interpreters to spread the word of God in Gold Coast; and (iii) educating the mixed race children of European merchants in accordance with the European system.

School inspection has been a regular feature of the educational system in Ghana since the appointment of the first inspector of schools for British West Africa (Kwame-Poh, 1975 cited in Opoku Asare, 2006:109) Subsequently, a regular schedule of school inspections was put in place to supervise teachers as well as educate them in pedagogic methods suited to the level of the pupils they taught (Opoku Asare, 2006).

The advent of colonial rule in Ghana led the British administration to open more schools in coastal areas and the expansion of access spread slowly north (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Basic education expansion saw significant progress during this period and several schools were established (Agbemabiese, 2007; Akyeampong et al., 2007). The increasingly rapid establishment of schools obliged the administration to revise the pre-colonial supervision and inspection service, and a system of 'payment by results' was

introduced in 1902. This was designed as a mechanism to compel teachers to teach to European standards and ensure that the administration got value for the salaries it paid (Ghana Education Service, 2012).

This payment by results system became the sole determinant of the amount of government funding schools received as well as the size of teachers' salaries (GES, 2012). Under this system, an annual grant was paid on a per-pupil basis for passes in arithmetic, reading and writing and teachers' salaries were paid based on the number of pupils who passed the examination conducted by the inspector/supervisor. The system considered teachers to be the main cause of pupil failure, and were therefore to be blamed and made to pay for their shortcomings by reducing their salaries. The social and family backgrounds of students were thus ignored as influential factors in examination performance, which was attributed solely to the efficacy of classroom instruction.

This authoritative and harsh supervision practice generated a lot of tension and problems in the school environment. Supervisors visited schools with an attitude of superiority, omnipotence and condescension, looking into teachers' work and writing reports on them (Bame, 1991). The school environment, therefore, became very hostile, with teachers regarding supervisors as enemies, and refusing to cooperate effectively during examination and supervision visits (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

In 1951, with Ghana enjoying limited self-rule under the British, the government led by Kwame Nkrumah – who had been appointed head of government businesses by the colonial authorities – introduced the ten-year Accelerated Development Plan (ADP) for Education (World Bank, 2010). The ADP implemented a ten-year basic education

structure consisting of six years of primary and four years of middle school education (Ananga, 2011). It also abolished all tuition fees and basic education was made free and compulsory for everyone. Education facilities such as school infrastructure and textbooks were also marginally increased (Agbemabiese, 2009; Akyeampong et al., 2007).

The concept of the 'pupil teacher' (an untrained teacher) was formally introduced to address the staff deficit that had arisen due to the rapid expansion of schools. However, the concomitant increasing student and teacher populations outpaced the available number of supervisors, which adversely affected the quality of supervision during the implementation of the ADP because supervisors were unable to visit schools regularly.

Even though it is argued in the literature that, at the time of independence, Ghana's education system was one of the best in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2010; Akyeampong et al., 2007), it may be observed from the above discussion that the unavailability of sufficient supervisors to effectively regulate the activities of teachers who were largely untrained was a foreboding of the problem in store. It is therefore not surprising that the quality of the country's education has deteriorated rapidly since independence (Akyeampong et al., 2007).

3.1.2 Post-colonial education reforms and basic school supervision

The Ghanaian education sector is characterised by substantial restructuring in the post-colonial/independence period. Between 1957 and 2007, it experienced four major reforms, in 1961, 1974, 1987 and 2007 respectively and a number of reviews, notably those in 1966 and 1995 (Tona, 2009; White Paper on Education Reform, 2006). All such reorganisation aimed at expanding access to quality education and producing well-trained

and skilled citizens who could contribute effectively to the national economy. A critical review of the literature also reveals that the school supervision system experienced parallel changes each time the broad education system was reformed. The following subsections take a systematic look at these reforms and reviews.

The 1961 education reform

The first post-independence education reform was conducted in 1961 and led to the promulgation of the Education Act of the same year. The latter was implemented to support the ADP for education policy developed by Kwame Nkrumah in 1951 (Foster, 1965). The 1961 Education Act represented a departure from the system of school supervision and inspection that had obtained under the colonial administration, and led to the establishment of the School Inspectorate Division of the MoE.

The main responsibility of the Inspectorate Division was to ensure the maintenance of minimum education standards in public middle schools, secondary schools, and teacher training colleges, as well as private education institutions (MoE, 1962). The key minimum standards outlined by the reform included standards of accommodation and equipment, standards of teaching, standards of pupil and student achievement and standards of administration and discipline. The Inspectorate was mandated to have both first- and second-cycle institutions inspected and assessed, and their staff given in-service training and professional assistance. School supervisors were instructed to encourage schools and teachers to exceed the basic minimum requirements and aspire to the highest possible standards.

Even though the nature of and approach to school supervision experienced some changes compared to the payment by result system of the colonial administration, the core mandate of the Inspectorate remained unchanged – to ensure maintenance of quality teaching and learning standards in school. However, unlike the colonial supervision system whereby a school received a grant based on the supervisor's assessment of its performance and teachers were paid according to how well their pupils did in the examination, the 1961 Education Act introduced general funding to all public schools, and teachers were paid in line with any other public servant based on their rank and qualifications.

Although the 1961 Education Act led to the establishment of the School Inspectorate Division, as previously mentioned, the expansion of schools during this period outpaced supervision services and available personnel. As a result, by the mid 1960s, school supervision had become largely ineffective, and classroom teaching and teacher development were no longer efficiently monitored. Such a situation among other factors led to the erosion of education standards at both elementary and middle school levels.

The 1966 education review

The ousting of the Nkrumah Government in 1966 also came with a review of the country's education system. However, according to critics, the 1966 education review had the deleterious effect of exacerbating an already precarious situation (Palmer, 2005; Ahadzie, 2000). Expenditure on the sector was reduced and the proportion of trained

teachers declined (Ahadzie 2000). During this period, that is, the late 1960s and early 1970s, the education system was criticised for being undemocratic and elitist in nature, favouring a small affluent minority at the expense of the much poorer majority (Nimako 1976; Antwi, 1992). The supervision system was seen as one of the major perpetrators of this review because it was undemocratic and concentrated on a few schools only. Supervisors focused entirely on the enforcement of standards set by the educated elite, neglecting the interests of local communities and disregarding the needs of schools and teachers. Supervision was centralised and the Inspectorate had the final say when it came to school-level assessment and monitoring – neither school heads nor the community had a voice.

The 1974 education reform

A change of government through a coup d'état in 1972 coupled with the aforementioned criticisms of the sector facilitated another education reform in 1974 (Nwomonoh, 1998). The 1974 reform redefined the structure and content of education delivery in Ghana, pre-tertiary education being reduced from 17 to 13 years (Akyeampong, 2010; Akyeampong et al., 2007). The new structure comprised six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school (JSS), and four years of senior secondary school (SSS).

Researchers and education policy advisors hailed the 1974 reform as highly innovative with its renewed focus on the country's developmental needs (Agbemabiase, 2007; Akyeampong, 2007; Education Assessment Committee Report, 1972; Fobi et al., 1995; Kadingdi, 2004). Additionally, the reform was praised for giving much attention to practical skills development in pre-tertiary education (Akyeampong, 2010; World Bank,

2010). The 1974 reform also established the GES to implement and manage the country's education system. As a result, the Education Inspectorate Division, which had hitherto fallen under the direct auspices of the MoE, became a subdivision of the GES (Kadingdi, 2004).

The Inspectorate Division of the GES

As a subdivision of the GES, the Inspectorate Division is mandated to work towards ensuring quality education delivery in pre-tertiary institutions through the maintenance of minimum education standards. This is achieved through supervision, inspection, monitoring and evaluation, and offering professional support to heads of school, teachers, circuit supervisors, and regional inspectors.

The mission of the Division is basically to "supervise teaching and learning activities in order to ensure the promotion and maintenance of standards of teaching and learning in pre-tertiary institutions in the country, and provide dedicated professional and administrative support to various categories of supervisory and teaching personnel in the effective use of educational resources to achieve educational goals."

The vision of the Division is to "ensure quality education delivery to the school-age child at the pre-tertiary level through efficient supervisory structures."

The Division has the following main objectives:

i. To ensure the effective implementation of education policies in pre-tertiary institutions

ii. To inspect facilities, materials and school environments, and ensure their optimum use in achieving effective teaching and learning

iii. To ensure the establishment of an effective supervisory mechanism in all pre-tertiary schools

iv. To conduct investigations into matters which are likely to militate against the progress and proper functioning of education institutions, and to make recommendations to offer remedies

v. To monitor and evaluate teaching and learning processes in schools so as to offer professional support and guidance to schools, staff and pupils/students, parents and other stakeholders

vi. To submit reports with recommendations on the state of schools to authorities concerned on a timely basis for the purpose of initiating necessary policy review

The Division is to perform the following functions:

i. To establish guidelines for inspection and supervision in schools

ii. To conduct comprehensive inspection in basic- and second-cycle schools through the examination of all aspects of school life, the assessment of the state of infrastructure, and the giving of support in administration, management, and the proper use of resources in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning

iii. To ensure compliance with Government policies, rules and regulations on education

iv. To monitor districts to assess the supervisory activities of Deputy Directors and Circuit Supervisors, and offer the necessary professional support

v.   To assess the suitability of facilities and staffing, and recommend approval for various courses and programmes in both private and public second-cycle schools

vi.   To investigate special cases, complaints, and allegations that adversely affect the education process in schools, and make recommendations to the appropriate authority for further action.

Even though the school inspectorate became a division of the GES during this period, just like previous restructuring, the new policy reform did not make sufficient provision for effective supervision of education resources as well as teaching and learning. Although well defined in the reform, education supervision was poorly managed and saddled with a stringent bureaucracy, resource bottlenecks, and the unavailability of trained education supervisors. It is, therefore, not surprising that many studies, including Tamakloe (1992) and Aboagye (1992), argue that the 1974 reform was largely on paper only and poorly implemented. Indeed, it was only executed in a few experimental schools and even they failed to yield the desired results (Agbemabiese, 2007).

The 1980s witnessed the virtual collapse of Ghana's education system. The 1983 droughts and the country's economic crisis led to a drastic reduction in government spending, and the education budget was heavily affected by the imposed austerity (Akyeampong, 2007; Tamakloe, 1992). As a result, there was an acute shortage of teachers, supervisors, textbooks, and other instructional materials throughout the country (Akyeampong et al., 2007; Agbemabiese, 2007).

The period also experienced a mass exodus of trained teachers and supervisors to other parts of the continent, particularly Nigeria (Kadingdi, 2004), in search of better sources of

livelihood. Aboagye (1992) found that the few available teachers were under prepared and did not have the capacity or requisite skills to teach effectively. School supervision services also came to a virtual standstill. The cumulative effect of these deficiencies was widespread poor quality teaching and learning and heavily reduced patronage of the education system by children and youth (Agbemabiese, 2007).

The following quotations exemplify how some education commentators have described the situation in this period:

> By 1983, Ghana's education system had seriously deteriorated in quality...and can be viewed as dysfunctional in relation to the goals and aspirations of the country. Government resources were no longer available to even maintain the existing educational facilities and the down-turn in the economy resulted in the mass exodus of qualified teachers to other parts of the continent (Kadingdi, 2004:1).

> Over the past decade, there has been a sharp deterioration in the quality of education at all levels. There has been a virtual collapse of physical infrastructure in the provision of buildings, equipment, materials, teaching aids, etc. (Abdallah, 1986:1).

> While referring to the low standard of education in the 1980s, [] stated that maintenance of school facilities had been neglected, libraries decayed and students shared laboratory equipment, and that ineffective supervision had all contributed to this situation (Sutherland-Addy, 1998:13).

This breakdown of the education system was largely due to a lack of interest and commitment on the part of sector administrators and managers, the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the reduction in government expenditure. Consequently, school supervision services were largely unavailable and the few operational supervisors poorly coordinated. If supervision had been effective, the capacity and resource needs of schools and teachers that the reform was intended to address would have been monitored and areas in need of improvement would have been identified and adequately addressed.

The 1987 education reform

The quest to salvage Ghana's collapsing economy and the dysfunctional education system led the government to launch the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1983 and 1986 respectively, with funding from global development agencies, namely, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). The implementation of these initiatives led to a number of socio-economic reforms and adjustments in various subsectors of the Ghanaian economy, including education.

In 1986, the first phase of the reform came to an end and the ERP was supplemented with the SAP, which was geared towards correcting structural imbalances in order to engender sustained, healthy economic growth (Aryeetey and Kanbur, 2008). As a condition of SAP implementation, the government was required to reform the education system (Structural Adjustment Programme Review Initiative: SAPRI, 2001), which led to the 1987 education reform. This was intended to improve access, enhance quality, and increase vocational content in curricula for practical skills acquisition at the elementary and secondary levels (World Bank, 2010).

The 1987 reform was acknowledged by both national and global researchers and development agencies as being comprehensive and well planned (World Bank, 2010; Akyeampong, 2004). The reform integrated older policies, notably the 1974 education reform, with new thinking in the field, prompting many education analysts and researchers to describe it as the rebirth of Ghana's education sector. Kadingdi (2004) dubs the period the "moment of rescue;" Akyeampong (2004) considers it the "period of

restructuring Ghana's school system;" while Agbemabiese (2007) refers to it as the "period of rejuvenation."

The reform identified a participatory approach to supervision as a key component of quality education, calling on the MoE (or central government) to decentralise education management and involve local communities in its implementation and moreover, require them to participate in the supervision of schools (Agbemabiese, 2007). An inclusive and participatory approach to school supervision was therefore encouraged during this period; however, no policy or legal document was formulated that made it mandatory for supervisors and head teachers to involve local communities in school supervision and management processes.

The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education policy of 1995

The Jomtien Declaration, which proposed Education for All (EFA) at the World Education Forum in 1990 and the promulgation of basic education as a constitutional right in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, led to a further review of the sector in 1996. The revised education system introduced the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy (World Bank, 2010; Akyeampong, 2009), which was designed to drive the global EFA agenda on education as well as fulfil the constitutional mandate of the state to provide free basic education to all. It had three main objectives: (i) to increase access and participation in basic education by making it free and compulsory; (ii) to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and (iii) to improve the efficiency of basic education management (GES, 2010). It can, therefore, be deduced that while the

EFA agenda made FCUBE a global standard policy, the 1992 Constitution legitimised free basic education and made it a constitutional right of all Ghanaian children.

In my opinion, the FCUBE reform introduced the concept of global education supervision. This is because EFA, which is a pillar of FCUBE, seems to deepen the concept of globalised education by creating a framework with desired objectives and performance indicators which serve as an international education measurement standard. All signatory countries to the Jomtien Declaration must therefore adhere to it and supervise progress accordingly.

Under EFA, supervision of quality education, for example, must focus on global indicators such as:

> (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3) adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language, and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures (UNESCO, 2014).

The progress of all countries towards the attainment of EFA goals is published in an annual EFA report. With the advent of FCUBE, basic education supervision in Ghana was thus focused on performance indicators such as appropriate development and use of teaching and learning materials; teacher development through in-service training; teacher time on task (teacher–pupil contact hours); enforcement of standards, policies, rules and regulations in the day-to-day running of schools; and the safety of the learning environment, among others (GES, 2010).

The MoE introduced the concept of decentralised supervision and education management in 1995 through a GES Act (Act 506), which allowed communities to participate in school-level supervision and management processes through school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs) (Act 506 of 1995; GES, 2002).

With the enactment of the GES Act (Act 506) of 1995, communities were obliged to form SMCs and PTAs with the intention of enhancing a sense of local ownership, supervision and participation in education service delivery. These community associations were required to review the progress of the school in implementing national education interventions such as the School Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) with the head teacher and school supervisor. The SMC was thus mandated to implement mechanisms to hold head teachers and their staff accountable for progress towards goals set out in the SPIP.

The 2007 education reform and the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778)

A change in government – this time through democratic election – in the year 2000; the promulgation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Dakar Framework for Action on Education by the international development community in the year 2000; and the implementation of the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I & II) under the World Bank Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) initiative led to another reform of the education system in 2007. According to the World Bank (2010), the HIPC Fund was used mainly to finance basic education reform and development in Ghana. The 2007 reform led to the enactment of the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778). The reform

introduced a kindergarten level into the formal education system. Basic education as defined by the Act (778) thus now comprised two years of kindergarten, six years of primary, and three years of junior high school (JHS: formerly JSS) (Akyeampong, 2010; Ananga, 2011).

The 2007 policy reform created an independent and external body, the NIB, to govern school supervision activities within a national framework (GES, 2012). The Inspectorate Division of the GES was also restructured to make it more efficient and focused on quality assurance, while at the same time it was also recommended that it continue to operate as an internal MoE body for formal inspection and the gathering of information for improving the education system (Ghana Education Service, 2012).

The 2007 reform and the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778) redefined both internal and external levels of education supervision in Ghana. Internal supervision was now to be conducted by the Inspectorate Division of the GES through its inspection and supervision structure throughout the various regions and districts of the country; while external supervision was to be carried out by the newly established NIB. Moreover, the GES was mandated to routinely supervise schools guided by standards and performance indicators set by the NIB and the Inspectorate Division had the authority to inspect both private and public pre-tertiary institutions, by engaging in monitoring and evaluation as well as coordination of activities at regional and district levels (GES, 2012).

The National Inspectorate Board

The result of a major effort to improve the quality of supervision and education outcomes was the establishment of the NIB. Together, the 2007 Education Reform White Paper and the Education Act, 2008 (Act 778) called for the establishment of a national inspectorate.

The main objective of the NIB is to determine what a school must do to improve teaching and learning outcomes, and, to this end, it is mandated to govern the supervision of schools and other education institutions at all levels. Its members are appointed by the President of Ghana with advice from the Council of State (elders), and its Secretariat is headed by the Chief Inspector of Schools, who is also the Secretary to the Board.

Article 8, Subsection 1 of the Education Act (Act 778) defines the functions of the NIB as follows:

a) To undertake the inspection of schools
b) To evaluate, on a periodic basis, the first- and second-cycle institutions
c) To set and enforce standards to be observed at the basic- and second-cycle levels in both public and private education institutions

The NIB has been mandated to set up external inspection panels to undertake the inspection and supervision of schools, evaluate on a periodic basis the quality of teaching and learning in schools, and to set and enforce quality standards that must be observed in both public and private pre-tertiary education institutions (NIB, 2010). The inspection/supervision panel is also required to provide an independent external evaluation of quality and standards in first- and second-cycle institutions using the following criteria:

i. Quality of leadership and management

66

ii. Quality of teaching and learning, and the standards of academic achievement

iii. Available facilities

iv. Relationship between the school and the community in which it is located

Inspection panels coordinate closely with regional and district directorates of education (the Inspectorate Division) who are responsible for routine internal supervision. Based on its findings, the NIB advises and makes recommendations to the Minister of Education on the quality of education delivery and standards and sets up mechanisms to implement subsequent decisions. Finally, the findings of the NIB on the state of education in Ghana are published in an annual report (National Education Reform Implementation Committee, 2007).

3.2 Types and forms of basic education supervision in Ghana

After reviewing of the historical overview of school supervision in Ghana in the preceding section, this section now focuses on the current system and approach to school supervision in Ghana. The GES (2002) developed the Head Teacher's Handbook and the Circuit Supervisor's Handbook to serve as a guide to school heads and circuit supervisors respectively in the execution of their duties. The Head Teacher's Handbook defines two main types of supervision: internal and external (GES, 2002).

3.2.1 Internal supervision

The Head Teacher's Handbook emphasises that internal basic school supervision is the sole responsibility of the school administrator (head teacher), whose duty it is to supervise and work towards the improvement of teachers' competencies, techniques and skills; addresses the common professional needs of teachers; and implement pedagogic development and innovation (GES, 2002).

3.2.2 External supervision

External basic school supervision is conducted by GES officers at either the national, regional or district levels. However, the system has been decentralised with the education directorate at the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA) accorded the power to supervise schools within its jurisdiction. The education directorate at the MMDA report to the regional directorate, who, in turn, report to the national level for budgetary and policy purposes.

External supervision takes various forms, including comprehensive inspection, brief visits, familiarisation visits, follow-up visits, special investigative visits, and assessment for promotion (GES, 2002:39). Unlike the other types of external supervision, special investigative visits and assessment for promotion are not conducted on a regular basis but only when there is the need to investigate an issue at a school or assess a teacher who is due for promotion. The Circuit Supervisor's Handbook (GES, 2002:39–41) lists the forms of external supervision practiced in the Ghanaian education system, as outlined in the following subsection.

3.2.3 Forms of external supervision
Comprehensive inspection

This visit involves examining all aspects of school operation, the supervisor being expected to perform the following tasks:

i. Inspection of records and monitoring of standards: During this process, the supervisor is expected to assess schemes and records of teachers' work, check lesson plans and preparation, observe teaching, and examine pupils' work. The supervisor is also expected to check the classroom inventory for inclusion of an attendance register, timetable, adequate furniture, visual learning aids, other equipment and textbooks.

ii. Subject inspection: During subject inspection, the supervisor considers three main areas: availability and suitability of teaching and learning materials (TLMs); teacher staffing, and allocation of classes and subjects; and availability of relevant and current syllabuses, schemes of work and records of work.

iii. Assessment of school organisation and management

iv. Assessment of school environment

v. Assessment of interpersonal relationships in the school

vi. Assessment of the school–community relationship

Brief visit

During a brief visit, the supervisor is expected to focus on only one aspect of the school. For example, the purpose of the visit may be to check on furniture availability, or on the punctuality of teachers.

Familiarisation visit

Familiarisation visits are normally undertaken by a newly appointed circuit supervisor. He or she visits all the schools in the area to get acquainted with staff, pupils and the

various communities. A supervisor may also visit a newly established school to familiarise him or herself with the institution and its environment.

Follow-up visit

Follow-up visits are conducted to gauge progress made in implementing recommendations made on a previous visit such as comprehensive inspection.

Assessment for promotion

This is carried out to assess a teacher who is due for promotion. Lesson plans and classroom teaching approach among other aspects of the teacher's conduct are assessed by a group of supervisors.

Special investigative visit

The purpose of this visit is to investigate inappropriate behaviour or an allegation against a head teacher, teacher or pupil.

3.3   Visualising Ghana's current supervision system

The Ghanaian supervision system is a hybrid of different models. The MoE makes policies for its agencies – including the GES – to implement at all levels. Some of these policies are implemented at the district and school levels, at which circuit supervisors play a facilitating role in terms of thorough supervision and maintenance of standards. Circuit supervisors and school inspectors ensure that standards for public schools set by the MoE are adhered to and subsequently return feedback from schools and their communities to the MoE through district and regional offices. This feedback then guides policy review and also facilitates the identification of teachers' training needs for

effective professional development. Circuit supervisors are also responsible for making
sure that teachers who consistently violate quality standards are sanctioned adequately.
School communities also support the supervision process since they work hand-in-hand
with the school to ensure quality and standards.

Figure 3.1 below shows a conceptual and policy framework for education supervision in
Ghana.

Figure 3.1: School supervision framework

Framework

Ministry
of
Education
Policies

Community
of school

Supervisors

District
Education
Office

Schools

Background

➢Level of Education   ➢Experience
➢Number of years   ➢Age
   in service   ➢ Technical and interpersonal
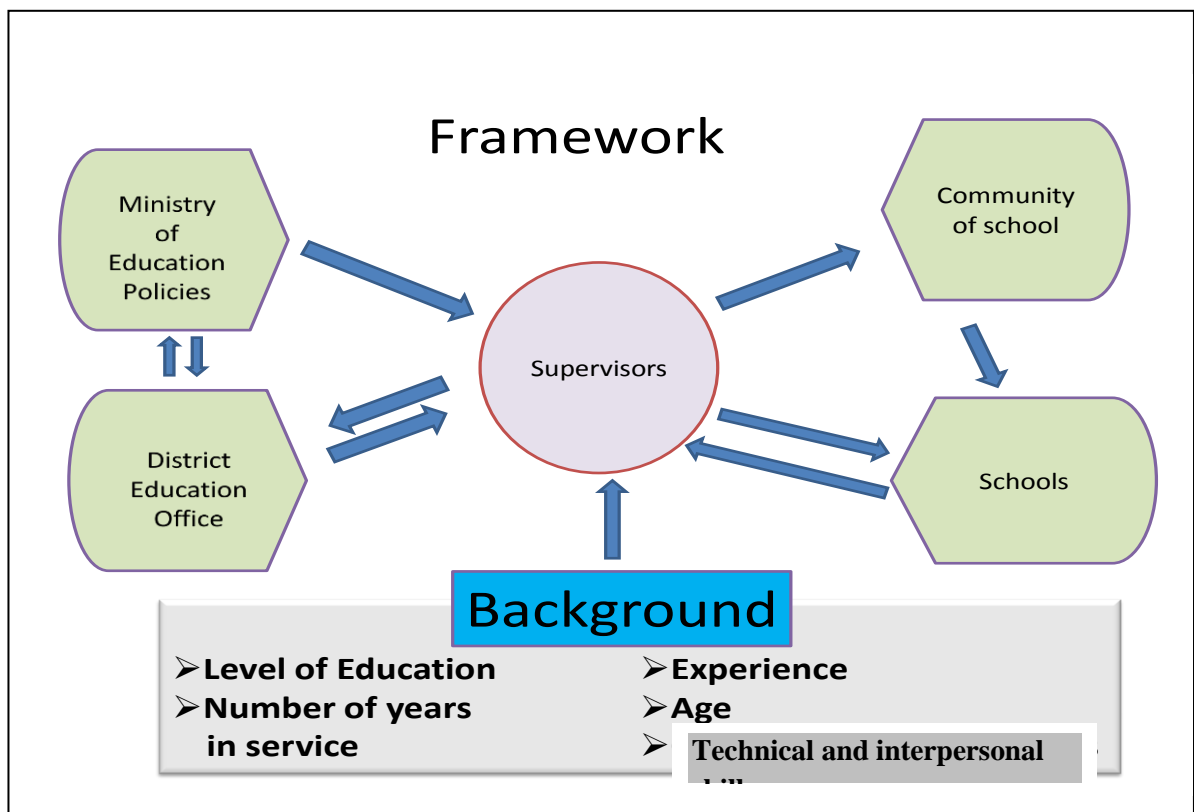
Source: The author (2013).

Using this framework as a conceptual guide, the present study sought to ascertain the role
of supervision in pre-tertiary education in Ghana. The discussion in this thesis
encompasses supervision by the MOE and NIB at the school, district, regional and

national levels, incorporating a detailed consideration of the work of school/circuit supervisors and its effect on education supervision.

3.4   Concerns over education outcomes in Ghana

In many countries, student learning outcomes form the core metric of education sector performance (World Bank, 2010). As in most developing countries and the development community at large, the definition and measurement of learning outcomes in Ghana is a topic of contention amongst government departments, civil society and the general public alike. However, while the government and some development agencies use the Basic Education Comprehensive Assessment System (BECAS) or the National Education Assessment (NEA), which measures the minimum competency (MC) and proficiency levels of primary (P)3 and P6 students in Mathematics and English, as a benchmark for learning outcomes, civil society organisations and the general public base their judgement on the performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) (GNECC, 2009).

According to the MoE (2011), the NEA/BECAS is the only standardised test currently undertaken to measure performance at basic education level, although employing two comparatively less stringent criteria: minimal competency and proficiency. On the other hand, the BECE is the final examination conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) for JHS pupils as a requirement for entry to senior high school (SHS: formerly SSS). In this regard, the BECE marks the transition from basic education to second-cycle education.

As a result, conflicting reports on education quality have been published. For example, in 2011, the Ghana National Education Collation Campaign (GNECC) conducted a study on the BECE pass rate over a period of five years which indicated that the quality of education in Ghana was falling. This was evidenced by a decline from 61.63% in 2005 to 58.42% in 2010, which implies that almost half of the pupils who sat for the BECE in 2010 did not qualify to enter SHS. Consequently, the study concluded that such a falling trend was an indication of deteriorating quality (GNECC, 2011).

Figure 3.2: BECE pass-rate trend 2005–10

	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010
Pass Rate	61.63	61.94	61.43	62.43	58.42
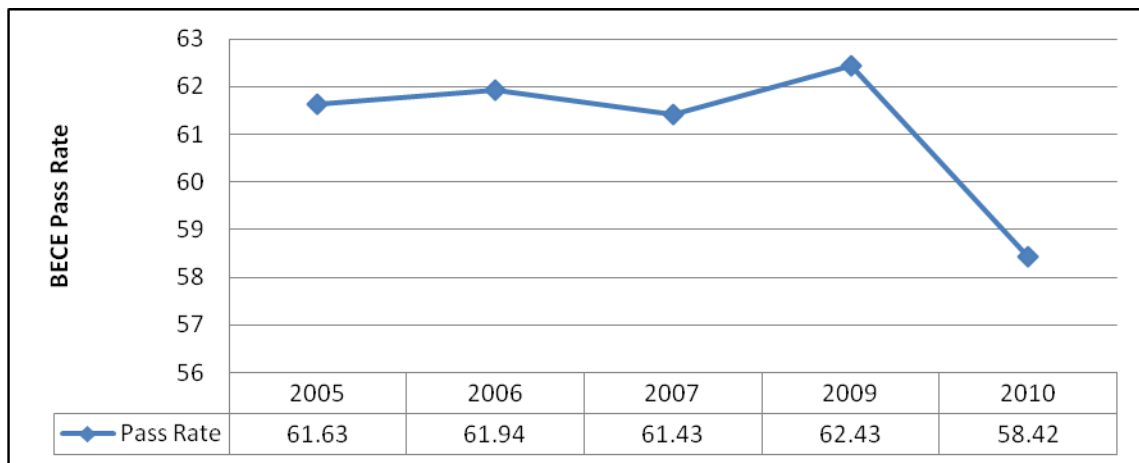
Sources: GNECC (2009) and MoE (2011).

The findings of this study resulted in a series of discussions in the Ghanaian media on the need for the government and the MoE to effectively supervise what went on in school, how resources were used and teacher–student contact hours in the classroom (Ghana Palaver, 2011; Myjoyonline, 2010; Ghana News Agency, 2010).

However, the 2011 MoE report on education quality (National Education Assessment: NEA, 2011) that used the BECAS indicated that the quality of education had improved

compared to previous years. According to the NEA Report (2011), the percentages of pupils reaching minimum competency and proficiency levels increased in both Mathematics and English in 2011 compared with those recorded in 2005, 2007 and 2009 (see Figure 3.3 below).

The NEA Report (2011) also showed a continuous increase in the ability of P3 and P6 pupils in English reading (proficiency) and thinking and working (competency). Figure 3.3 clearly shows that the English MC for P6, for example, increased from 63.9% in 2005 to 78.9% in 2011. English proficiency also increased from 23.6% in 2005 to 35.3% in 2011. Similarly, both MC and proficiency in Mathematics generally increased between 2005 and 2011.

Figure 3.3 National Distribution of Minimum Competency and Proficiency in English and Maths (2005–2011)

	English (MC)	English (Proficiency)	Maths (MC)	Maths (Proficiency)
2005	63.9	23.6	47.2	9.8
2007	69.7	26.1	46.2	10.8
2009	76.9	35.6	61.9	13.8
2011	78.9	35.3	56.9	16.1
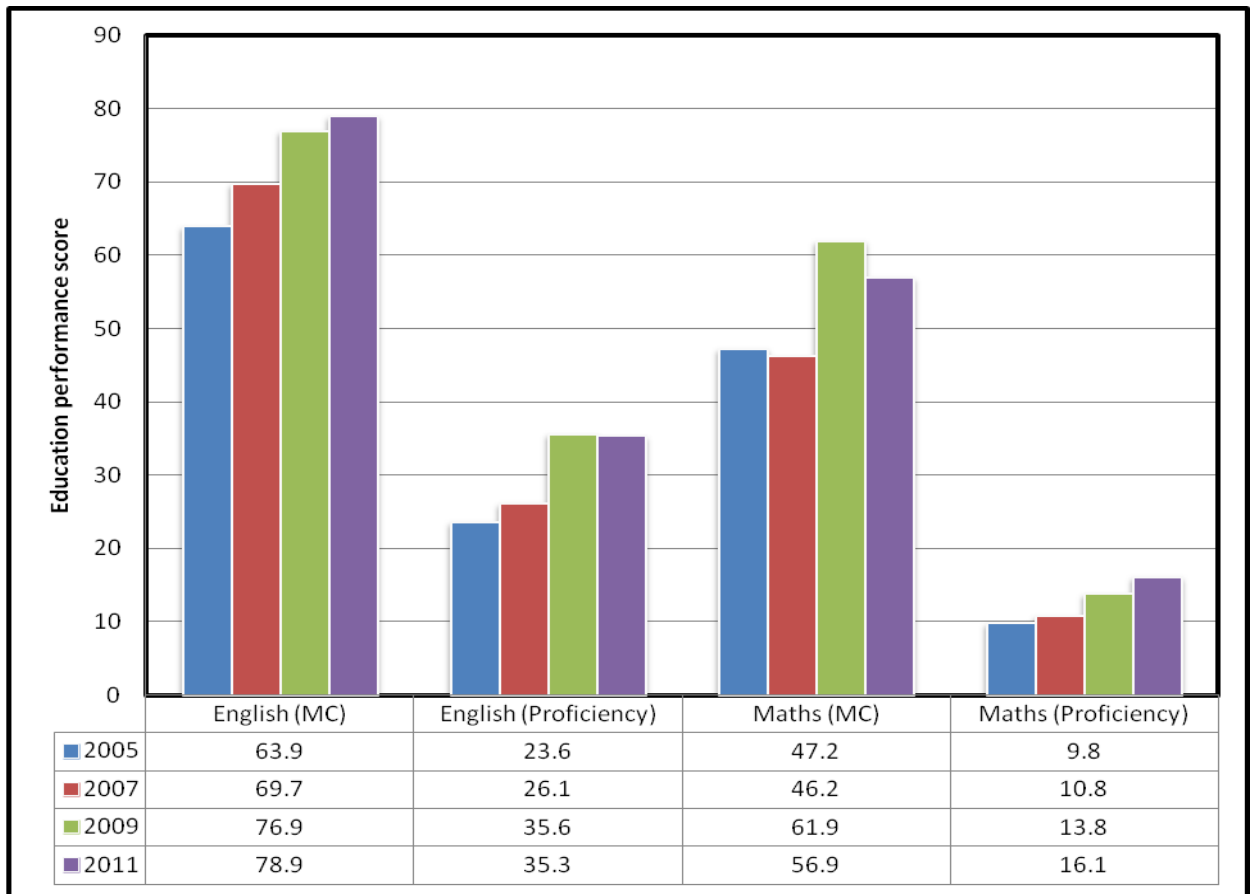
Source: NEA (2012).

The general conclusion that can be drawn with regard to NEA/BECAS as a measure of education outcome is that Ghana is making steady progress in primary education. Yet, the questions that baffle me, and I believe also many of those who read this thesis, are: Why is no such progress reflected in the performance of JHS pupils in the BECE? Why is the pass rate falling? And how effective is the system of external supervision and monitoring in basic education?

Some researchers criticise the use of testing as the sole measure of education and learning outcomes, arguing that such outcomes are much broader than academic achievement

measured by an examination taken at a given time (Fushimi, 2010; Barrett, 2009; Gardner, 2006). Fushimi (2010) noted that the narrow definition of education outcome using test score has traditionally been adopted by researchers who model education as a 'production function' and treat schools in the same way as economist do factories. Barrett (2009) criticised the use of standardise test score alone as a measure education outcome that it does not take into account the wider socio-economic context/characteristics of the individual leaner and other non-quantifiable outcomes. Goldstein (2004) in this vein also argued that since a standardise test measures only an aspect learning outcome, a rise in test score should not be interpreted as a rise in learning achievements. Education outcome and quality measurement require a much broader and more comprehensive frame of reference that is able to accommodate the wide range of learner attitudes, values, behaviours, motivations, intellectual capacities, cultures, and social and life skills (UNICEF, 2009 cited in Fushimi, 2010). The focus of this study is however not on how educational outcome and quality is measured in Ghana, but rather to examine the supervision skills of supervisors who are mandated to supervise effective teaching and learning in schools.

Even though at education review meetings, the Ghanaian media and civil society organisations usually blame poor public school performance on ineffective supervision, the big question – which largely remains empirically untested – is the extent to which education outcome can be attributed to the efficacy of school supervision. The debate is normally around the paradox that although there are more professional teachers in public schools, the performance of private schools is relatively better than that of their public counterparts. According to many analysts and reports, this may be explained by the

intensity and effectiveness of supervision in the private education sector (e.g. MoE, 2011; Pre-NESAR Civil Society Forum, 2011). Grauwe (2008) admits that even though supervision is a key determinant of quality education, it is difficult to quantify the extent to which it accounts for education outcome. Barrett (2009) in contributing to the post-2015 education outcome debate recommended the need to strengthen inspection [supervision] systems to monitor the quality of educational processes and outcomes that are not amendable to standardise testing. Therefore, the present study constitutes a timely investigation of the capacity of basic school supervisors to promote effective teaching and learning in schools.

3.5 Emerging issues in basic education supervision

3.5.1 Legal Framework for education supervision

Education supervision was enshrined in the Education Act of 2008 (Act 778) and the education sector reform policy document of 2007. The Education Act of 2008 (Act 778), Section 7 (1) states that, "There is established by this Act a body known as the National Inspectorate Board... The Chief Inspector of Schools is the Secretary to the Board." (See Section 3.1.2 above for the objectives and functions of the NIB). Moreover, in respect of the quest to decentralise supervision and enhance effective management, Section 8, Subsection 3 of Act 778 stipulates that, "A religious body in conjunction with the District Assembly may set up its own directorate for the inspection and supervision of educational institutions established by that religious body."

Supervisors are allocated among education circuits and these circuit supervisors report to the District Education Office in each of the country's 216 districts. To enhance the

effectiveness of circuit supervisors and the entire supervision process, Subsection 4 also stipulates that "Directors and supervisors within the Regional and District Directorates of Education shall undertake, in accordance with the directives or guidelines of the Board, routine inspection of schools to ensure the maintenance of standards of performance in teaching and learning."

However, the problem is that even though school monitoring and supervision has been decentralised, with supervisors located in regions, districts and circuits, decision making and policy implementation is still centralised: supervisors only serve as agents of policy implementation and feedback, and cannot make unilateral decisions. Thus, they do not have the authority to implement sanctions or take other decisions in terms of non-compliance with education standards or absenteeism on the part of teachers – they can only report such instances to a superior at the District Office. The deficiency of this system is evidenced in the finding of one study that even though teacher absenteeism and failure to meet standards were high in basic schools, no teacher had been penalised for such misconduct in the previous five years (GNECC, 2009).

3.5.2   Inadequate skills training and expertise

A major issue confronting education supervision in Ghana is the lack of adequate expertise on the part of supervisors to ensure effective and quality supervision of schools. These officers are mostly teachers who have risen through the ranks to become supervisors; they do not receive any formal training and education supervision is not a field of specialisation or programme offered by institutions of higher learning or colleges of education. Indeed, my visits to the Supervision Division of the GES in search of data

on the kind of training – either initial or in-service – provided for school supervisors yielded no results. Finally, I was informed that there was no training structure beyond orientation on recruitment and the issue of a handbook outlining their duties.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international development agencies facilitating education delivery in Ghana – e.g. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – have sought to address this systemic weakness by designing and providing some training programmes for school supervisors. However, the problem is that these interventions are either based on the education philosophy of the donor country or that of the organisation itself, without any coordination or ownership on the part of local actors such as the MoE or GES. As a result, supervisors receive conflicting input that can lead to sector confusion in the long term.

Similarly, head teachers tend to lack the appropriate skills and experience to perform their role as internal school supervisors. Just like supervisors, head teachers have also risen through the ranks; or, in some cases, a school's most senior teacher in terms of years of service is automatically appointed head. Such individuals do not receive any specialised training on school management or internal assessment, and therefore lack the requisite skills and techniques to ensure effective school-level supervision. Indeed, as far as some head teachers are concerned, supervision means nothing beyond checking the teachers' attendance book (GNECC, 2009).

Moreover, through my experiences in education management, and interaction with SHS heads and supervisors, I have observed that some heads and course instructors are more

highly educated than the school supervisor. As a result, some supervisors are intimidated and unable to perform their tasks effectively during supervision visits.

3.5.3 Task overload and conflicting roles of supervisors

As in most developing countries, school supervisors in Ghana suffer from task overload and with the rapid expansion of basic education, the number of schools that each supervisor is required to service is also on the increase (Moswela, 2010). A circuit supervisor is expected to visit an average of about 20 schools, each of which must be visited at least 3 times a term. However, the frequency of visits is dependent on the particular needs of individual schools (MoE, 2010). Clearly, schools requiring assistance in terms of physical infrastructure and staff professional skills need more supervision visits than those without such problems.

Furthermore, supervisors suffer from conflicting roles. In a study I conducted on the performance management of education assessment in Ghana, I identified that the role of the supervisor has expanded over the years to encompass that of evaluator, professional guide, and helper (Dzikum, 2011). They are therefore required to evaluate the performance of teachers in accordance with national standards, and, at the same time, serve as career counsellors in helping them to improve their performance.

The question that arises here is how can a teacher who has been accused by a supervisor of non-performance or non-compliance with standards approach the same officer for career counselling, and what then happens when tensions develop in the supervisor– teacher relationship. These two conflicting roles that supervisors are expected to play can hinder the supervision system in achieving its desired objectives. However, there is no

empirical verification of this perception, although Grauwe and Carol (1997) do acknowledge it as a challenge facing school supervision systems in developing countries in particular.

3.5.4   The supervisor as teaching capacity developer

The Manual for Governance and Inspection of Senior High Schools (MoE, 2010) and the Circuit Supervisor's Handbook (GES, 2002b) clearly portray supervisors as trainers of trainers. Accordingly, they are expected to identify the development needs of teachers, and educate them where necessary in new approaches to teaching and learning as well as relevant policies introduced by the MoE. However, many supervisors in developing countries do not have the skills to assess the needs of teachers (Wanzare, 2002) or evaluate their performance effectively. However, due to the poor standard to which some supervisors carry out these activities, they end up creating a situation in which teachers regard them as the enemy rather than a professional guide (Grauwe, 2008; Dzikum, 2011).

3.6   Summary and conclusion

This chapter reviewed the broad national context of school supervision and the basic education system in Ghana. The historical review revealed that education supervision in Ghana dates back to the 15th century when European merchants established schools in castles and forts for their children, and a few selected Ghanaians in the coastal areas who either served as interpreters or trading partners. Although not formally defined as such, school supervision in this period was conducted in a manner that sought to make pre-colonial schools conform to the European system of education. Nevertheless, the school supervision system was formalised by the colonial administration in 1853.

The colonial administration's introduction of a new supervision system of payment by results in 1902 generated hostility in the school environment. This system, whereby teachers were paid based on student examination performance, ignoring their social and family backgrounds as influential factors, created rivalry, conflict and tension. Teachers came to see supervisors as the enemy while the latter adopted an attitude of superiority, omnipotence and condescension. Such hostility affected school development.

The struggle for independence from colonial rule coupled with the quest to educate all Ghanaian children led to the introduction of an ADP for education policy in 1951, which led to the establishment of new schools and increased enrolment figures. However, such expansion proceeded without a corresponding increase in the recruitment of supervisors or strengthening of the school supervision system. This affected the quality of supervision and education outcomes, as supervisors were unable to regularly visit schools.

The post-independence education system was characterised by several reforms and reviews, school supervision also undergoing changes each time the broad education system was reformed. A major finding of the chapter was that the education system was reformed or reviewed anytime there was a change in government either by election or military takeover. Indeed, all the reforms of 1961, 1974, 1987 and 2007 respectively as well as the 1966 and 1995 reviews seemed to have occurred when there was a change or transition in government.

As part of the 1974 reform, the GES was established to implement and manage the country's education system (Kadingdi, 2004). As a result, the Inspectorate Division of the

MoE became a subdivision of the GES and mandated to supervise the quality of education delivery in pre-tertiary schools through the maintenance of minimum education standards. It was also required to offer professional support to heads of school, teachers, circuit supervisors, and regional inspectors.

Following the 2007 review, the NIB was established by the Education Act (Act 788) of 2008. The NIB was expected to focus on policy and standards formulation, with the aim of improving the supervision of teaching and learning, while the Inspectorate Division was to ensure the implementation of policies and standards developed by the NIB.

The chapter also revealed that school supervisors conducted six different forms of visit each of which was for a different purpose. The types of supervision identified include comprehensive visit, brief visit, familiarisation visit, follow-up visit, assessment for promotion, and special investigative visit.

Finally, the chapter found that supervision outcomes and education quality were subjects of contention among the various education stakeholders, with the government on one hand, and civil society and the general public on the other. This was largely because various actors used different means of measuring education quality; the government and some development agencies employing the NEA, which measures the MC and proficiency levels of P3 and P6 students in Mathematics and English, while civil society adopted student BECE performance as an indicator. As a result, conflicting reports have been published on the quality of basic education in Ghana.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

4.0   Introduction

In previous chapters, I discussed the study background, problem statement, and research questions. I also reviewed the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on basic school supervision, identifying literature gaps and how this study seeks to fill them and contribute to knowledge in the field. In this chapter, I discuss the methodology and methods I employed for the study.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first section discusses the methodology, methods and conceptual framework I employed. It also probes the theoretical foundation of the conceptual framework, the merits and demerits of selected methods, and their appropriateness for the study. The second section discusses the plan and conduct of the study, socio-demographic characteristics of the study area, selection of cases and study participants, and how the interview protocol and guides were developed. The section further discusses how access to basic school supervisors and teachers was negotiated. The third section discusses the actual fieldwork and data collection methods and tools; recruitment and training of a research assistant; processes of data management and analysis; and the ethical issues encountered during the fieldwork, and how they were managed.

4.1   Understanding research methodology and methods

> The distinction between methods and methodology...[is] fundamental to understanding continuities and discontinuities between research positions (Dunne et.al, 2005:186).

Given that the study was underpinned by social constructivist theory, it was necessary to probe and gain a firm grasp of the differences between methods and methodology. Kothari (2004) defines research methodology as a means of systematically solving a research problem; going on to assert that such methodology represents the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying the research problem, along with the logic behind them. Dawson (2004) also contends that the methodology is the overall approach the researcher employs in the study of a phenomenon or phenomena, and includes issues that need to be taken into account such as data collection and analytical techniques, constraints, dilemmas, and ethical considerations. In sum a research methodology is the theory or general principle which guides a study (Dunne et al., 2005).

On the other hand, research methods as explained by Dunne et al. (2005:163) denote the ways in which data are produced/collected, interpreted/analysed and reported, which include instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and observation, among others. Dawson (2004) corroborates this definition, adding the focus group to the list of instruments. Moreover, Henning et al. (2004) make the distinction between research methods and methodology by arguing that a method denotes a way of doing something, while methodology refers to an interrelated group of methods that complement each other and help to generate findings that will answer the research questions as well as address the research problem.

Based on my understanding of the explanations and distinctions between research methods and methodology given by the various social researchers discussed above, in the present study, I adopted the notion of methodology as a broad systematic approach

underpinned by a theory that defines how methods (research instruments) are used to gather, collate and analyse data in order to address the research problem.

4.1.1   Qualitative case study research approach

In this study, I employ the qualitative case study research approach. Qualitative case study research explores complex social phenomena such as attitude, behaviour and experience, using variety of methods such as interviews and focus group discussion (Dawson, 2004; Baxter and Jack, 2008). The attraction of this approach is that it enables researchers to conduct in-depth studies on and analysis of identified social phenomena of interest (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). Yin (2003:1) argues that case study research approach is more appropriate when "how" or "why" research questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. In answering the "how" and the "why" questions, qualitative case studies primarily focus on gaining in-depth understanding of a particular event or phenomenon at a specific time (Dawson, 2004; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). The in-depth understanding/knowledge is gain through views of comparatively few participants but the contact time with them tends to last longer (Dawson, 2004; Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995:319) in this vein tout qualitative case study as "a study of the key players, key situations and critical events in life".

According to Creswell (2012) the merit of qualitative approach lies in its ability to help the researcher address a problem in which he or she does not know the variables and needs to explore. A literature review might yield little relevant information, meaning that

the researcher needs to learn more from participants through exploration. Thus, the meanings and interpretations accorded to social phenomena in a qualitative study must take into account the setting and the time in which they occur (Cooper and White, 2012).

Yin (2009:8–9) conceptualises qualitative research by identifying the following five major functions:

1. To study the meaning of people's lives in real-world conditions

2. To represent people's views and perspectives

3. To address the contexts within which people live

4. To contribute insights into existing or emerging concepts that may help to explain human social behaviour

5. To draw on multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source

The present study sought to explore the professionalism of Ghanaian school supervisors, assessing their skills to carry out their duties for effective teaching and learning in basic schools in Ga South Municipality. The various experiences of supervisors, their perceptions of their role(s), the challenges they encountered in the execution of their duties, and their professionalism in these processes were the key factors I sought to capture and analyse. My aim was to bring to the fore issues confronting various aspects of the country's education supervision system in order to determine how stakeholders needed to improve their respective practices. By the nature of the topic and the research questions I sought to answer, I considered the qualitative case study approach as outlined above to be the most appropriate methodology for this study (Yin, 2009; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2012; Cooper and White, 2012).

I thus adopted a qualitative case study approach, drawing on insights from social constructivism and inductivism. In social constructivism, it is believed that individuals develop varied and multiple subjective meanings in respect of their experiences and interactions with phenomena in society (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Crotty, 1998). Constructive research therefore relies as much as possible on the views of the study participants, focusing on the specific contexts in which people live and work, in order to understand the social setting of the participants (Crotty, 1998). The construction of meanings, concepts and theories from the direct responses of individuals observed in a study is known as inductivism (Maxwell, 2004). With this in mind, I based the study principally on the views and experiences of school supervisors, teachers and head teachers – the focal group of the research – which I collated using in-depth interviews and direct field observation.

I considered these methods to be appropriate on the grounds that a contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study and the active participation of the researcher in the research process is a necessity in constructivism (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly, I listened carefully to the responses of the participants, taking note of their social environment and setting. This approach enabled me to generate meaning from the data collected, which inductively assumed a pattern of meaning that I interpreted by focusing closely on the social setting and environment.

4.2   Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is based on structuration theory, which, in social constructivism, interprets socially constructed phenomena from two perspectives:

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structure and agency (Giddens, 1984; Varien and Potter, 2008). Structuration theory is based on the proposition that structure is simultaneously enabling and constraining, in virtue of the inherent relationship between structure and agent (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990). Giddens (1984) defines structure as rules and resources, and agency in terms of the actions of individual actors within society. Structure is believed to provide the context in which individuals as strategic actors make decisions and construct their social identities (Varien and Potter, 2008). Agency is viewed by Callinicos (2004) as constituting the choices people make as they take action in their attempts to realise specific goals. Such choices are based on the patterns of thought and action that an individual acquires by virtue of being raised in a particular social system (Bourdieu, 1990:80–97).

Thus, social systems would not exist without human agency, but it is not the case that individual agents create the social system: they only reproduce or transform it, continuing to remake that which already exists (Callinicos, 2004). Giddens' (1984:377) explain that the individual's agency is both constrained and enabled by structure – i.e. the rules and resources available to strategic actors – led Varien and Potter (2008) to view agency as strategic actors' appropriation of rules and resources in order to take social action in the quest to achieve specific goals. Thus, the recursive relation between rules, resources and social action reproduces the social system.

Employing the concept of structure and agency in structuration theory to the central focus of the present study, I located the school supervision system within a broad social system (the Ghanaian basic education sector) and represented school supervisors as human

agents/strategic actors. Therefore, I was able to explore the professional skills of my human agents/strategic actors informed by available rules and resources (structure), and the effectiveness of the system of supervision (social system).

In adopting the structure and agency approach, the present study explored the actions of school supervisors (agents) and available rules and resources (structure) as interrelated and inseparable parts of a single process, as posited by Lopiparo (2005:565) and Giddens (1984). In considering the structure of the supervision system, I focused on the rules that governed it as a social institution and the available resources (human and non-human) for its effective operation. The human resources comprised supervisors' qualities that could be drawn upon to enhance the operation of the supervision system; and included physical robustness such as strength and maturity, and mental attributes such as knowledge, skills, and knowledgeability, that is, the capacity to gain control and extend the use of both human and non-human resources. The non-human resources consisted of the physical infrastructure and logistical systems required to enhance the effectiveness of basic school supervision.

Adoption of a structure–agency approach was extremely useful as it provided a framework within which to explore social change and relationships. With the approach providing an opportunity for dual analysis, I interpreted the findings from the perspective of agency, that is, respondents' perceptions and narratives, as well as structure, that is, the social, economic and political contexts, paying close attention to the rules and resources that produce them.

Figure 4.1 below presents a conceptual framework for my study of the school supervision system in Ghana. It is made up of (i) the policy actor, namely, the Ministry of Education/National Inspectorate Board (i.e. the intentional agents); (ii) the structural context, that is, the Ghanaian basic education sector, which defines the range of potential actions; (iii) the strategic actor, namely, the school supervisor, who is located in the structural context and is responsible for implementing the intentions of the policy actor; and (iv) strategic action, which is the fusion of strategy and intention on the part of the strategic actor, and informed by knowledge of the structural context. Strategic actions result in consequences that may be intended or unintended depending on the structural context and choice of strategy.

In line with this framework (Figure 4.1), and as previously stated, the MoE/NIB makes policies for its agencies, including the Ghana Education Service (GES), to implement at the regional, district and school levels. At the latter two levels, circuit supervisors play a facilitating role in terms of thorough supervision and maintenance of standards to ensure that public school policies are followed, and subsequently provide feedback from schools and communities through district and regional offices to the MoE/NIB. Such response then guides review and also enhances identification of teachers' training needs for effective professional development. Local populations also support the supervision process since the school and its community work hand in hand to ensure quality and standards.

Figure 4.1: Conceptual framework for the study


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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                       │
│  ┌──────────────────┐         ┌──────────────────────┐                │
│  │   Policy actor   │◄────────│   Effects of action  │                │
│  │     MoE/NIB      │         │ Enhanced strategic   │                │
│  └──────────────────┘         │     knowledge,       │                │
│          │                    │ feedback, and policy │                │
│          │                    │      planning        │                │
│          ▼                    └──────────────────────┘                │
│  ┌──────────────────┐                   ┌──────────────────────┐      │
│  │  Strategic actor │──────────────────►│   Strategic action   │      │
│  │ School supervisor│                   │  Quality supervision │      │
│  └──────────────────┘                   │   of basic schools   │      │
│       ▲         ▲                        └──────────────────────┘      │
│       │         │                                                      │
│  ┌──────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐                            │
│  │ Structural   │  │ Background of       │                            │
│  │  context     │  │   supervisors       │                            │
│  │ Ghanaian basic│  │ Level of education, │                            │
│  │ education     │  │    experience,      │                            │
│  │ sector       │  │ and professional    │                            │
│  └──────────────┘  │    training         │                            │
│                    └─────────────────────┘                            │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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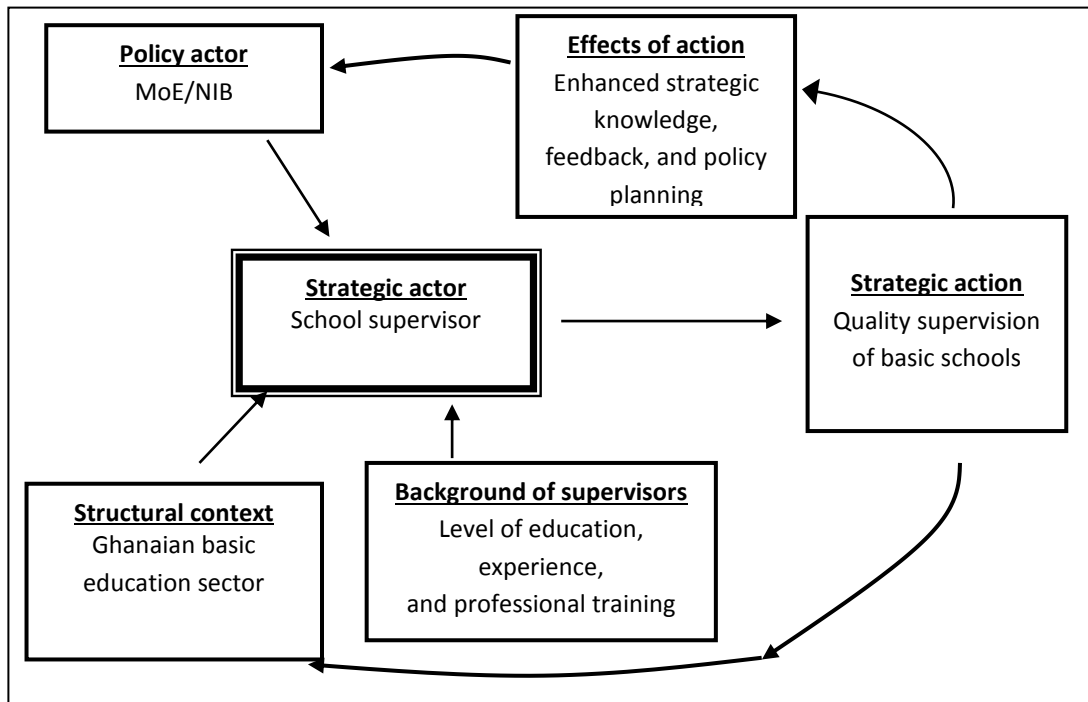
Source: The author (2012) adapted from Hay (1995).

School supervisors can thus be said to: (i) perform the role of liaison officers, managing communication between schools and policymakers (Grauwe, 2008); (ii) serve as agents of change, educating schools and communities on new policy initiatives introduced by the MoE/NIB (Mulkeen, 2010); and (iii) act as evaluators and professional career guides, mentoring, advising and ensuring that teachers develop the necessary professional skills for effective teaching and learning (Dzikum, 2011).

4.3   Profile of the study area – Ga South Municipality

4.3.1   Location and size

Ga South Municipality is one of four districts created in the Greater Accra Region in 2007. The municipality shares boundaries with the Accra Metropolitan Area to the southeast, Akwapim South to the northeast, Ga West to the east, West Akim to the north,

Awutu-Effutu Senya to the west, Gomoa to the southwest, and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. It occupies an area of approximately 517.2 sq km and houses about 362 communities (Ga South Municipal Assembly - GSMA, 2012).

4.3.2 Population size and growth rate

According to the 2010 National Population and Housing Census, the population of Ga South Municipality was estimated to be 316,091, with a growth rate of 3.4%, which is higher than the national growth rate of 2.5% (Ghana Statistical Services, 2012). The high population growth is a result of the municipality's proximity to the capital, Accra, which means that it serves as a dormitory community for many of those employed in Accra and Kasoa, a neighbouring peri-urban conurbation in Central Region (GSS, 2012). The population is mainly concentrated in the peri-urban areas of the municipality, along the border with Accra Metropolitan Area in particular. The urban population constitutes 76.04% with the remaining 23.96% residing in the rural area of the municipality.

The population of Ga South Municipality is youthful, with the majority being under 25 years: as Figure 4.2 below shows, as of 2012, the age ranges 0–14 years and 15–24 years constituted 36% and 22% of the total population respectively (GSMA, 2012). The implication of such a young population is pressure on social amenities such as schools and hospitals. It terms of demand for basic school access, the free education policy coupled with others such as a school feeding programme and free school uniform has led to a rapid increase in enrolment (GSMA, 2012).

Figure 4.2: Ga South Population Distribution (2012)
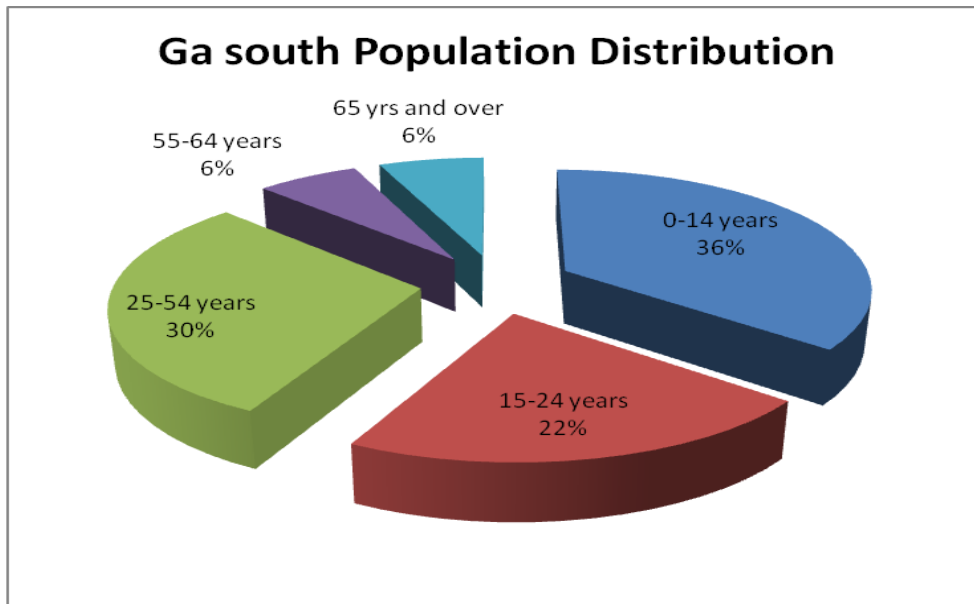
Source: GSMA (2012).

4.3.3 Education in Ga South Municipality

A peculiar characteristic of the education sector in Ga South Municipality is that there are significant numbers of private education institutions operating alongside public schools. Available statistics show that as of 2012, there were 615 private schools compared to 205 public institutions across the various education levels (GSMA, 2012). However, while most of the private schools are located in the municipality's urban communities, the public schools are scattered throughout both its urban and rural areas (GSMA, 2012). Rural public schools – as typified in Plate 4.1 below – are generally in deplorable condition and not conducive to teaching and learning, some of them still being located under trees or housed in flimsy and dilapidated structures.

Plate 4.1 Typical rural basic school in Ga South Municipality

Source: The author (2013).

School enrolment from kindergarten to junior high school (JHS) has recently increased even though there are still substantial numbers of children in the municipality who do not go to school. According to Ga South Municipal Assembly (GSMA), most children of school-going age engage in petty street trading, such as selling water, bread and fruit among other commodities, as a source of livelihood or to support their parents/guardians (GSMA, 2012). As a result, children do not attend school regularly and studying after school is of low priority to them. These phenomena coupled with a high teacher to pupil ratio in the municipality have a negative effect on teaching and learning outcomes in public basic schools in particular.

4.4 Plan and conduct of the study

4.4.1 Selection of cases and study participants

The study was conducted in seven education circuits[1] – Gbawe, Bortianor, Weija, Obuom, Asaladzah, Kofi-Kwae and Nsuobiri[2] – out of a total of nine in the municipality. Geographically, in terms of settlement classification, Ga South Municipality has both urban and rural communities. Based on this categorisation, I also divided the education circuits into urban and rural strata. The urban areas were made up of four circuits, namely, Gbawe, Bortianor, Anya and Weija; and the rural areas comprised five circuits, that is, Obuom, Asaladzah, Kofi-Kwae, Nsuobiri and Amanfrom. Three urban and four rural circuits were selected, making a total of seven. To give all circuits a fair chance of selection, I used a simple random sampling technique after the stratification process. According to Creswell (2012), this technique avoids selection bias in homogenous groupings and gives every case or element in the target population an equal chance of selection.

Study participants were not randomly selected; rather, I purposively selected individuals judged to have the potential to help me address the central aim of the study and answer the research questions. The criterion I used in selecting participants was, therefore, based on the amount of relevant knowledge I perceived them to have. This approach is advocated by Patton (1990) and Creswell (2012), both of whom hold that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects respondents based on his or her personal judgment.

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[1] Education circuits are subdivisions of a district, as defined by the MoE for convenience of administration and sector decentralisation, each circuit being assigned a basic school supervisor (known as a circuit supervisor).

[2] These are the real names of the education circuits in Ga South Municipality but, for reasons of anonymity, pseudonyms were used in the analysis.

Accordingly, a total of 16 in-depth interviews were conducted, respondents comprising seven basic school circuit supervisors; the municipality's Director of Education; the Assistant Director in Charge of Supervision; two experienced head teachers; three classroom teachers who had taught in the selected circuits for between five and ten years and one member of the school management committee (SMC) and parent-teacher association (PTA) respectively.

Table 4.1   Breakdown of research participants

Category of respondent	Frequency
Basic school supervisors	7
Municipal education directorate	2
School heads and teachers	5
SMC/PTA members	2
Total	16

Source: The author (2013).

Table 4.2:   Research questions and approaches used to answer them

Question	Who	How	Where
1. What are the professional backgrounds of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?	Supervisors, Municipal Education Director, Assistant Director of Supervision	In-depth interviews; documentary analysis; fieldnotes	Selected schools in Ga-South Municipality; Municipal Education Office
2. What qualifies one as a basic school supervisor, and how is recruitment and selection conducted?	Supervisors, Municipal Education Director, Assistant Director of Supervision	In-depth interviews; documentary analysis	Selected schools in Ga-South Municipality; Municipal Education Office

3. What pre- and in-service training is provided to basic school supervisors, and how is it implemented?	Supervisors, Municipal Education Director, Assistant Director of Supervision	In-depth interviews; documentary analysis	Selected schools in Ga South Municipality; Municipal Education Office
4. How do supervisors apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process?	Supervisors, Municipal Education Director, Assistant Director of Supervision, SMC* and PTA**	In-depth interviews; documentary analysis	Selected schools in Ga South Municipality; Municipal Education Office

Notes: * School Management Committee; ** Parent-Teacher Association.

4.4.2   Development of my research instrument

Interview guide was main research instrument I used for the study. Developing the interview guide is a crucial aspect of any study. Yin (2009) noted that an in-depth interview guide is an excellent tool for exploratory studies in which rich details of participants' perspectives are desired. Given that the present study sought to explore the professional skills of basic school supervisors, I developed an interview guide that would provide a predetermined interview focus. The interview guide I developed followed the three-phase structure proposed by Seidman (2006). The first phase probed the background of each school supervisor, reviewing his or her life history in the field of education up to the time he or she became a basic school supervisor. The second phase explored the school supervision structure, supervisor training and recruitment processes.

The third phase explored what I term 'contemporary experience', that is, how participants would describe the experience of working as a basic school supervisor, and the details of his or her daily routine. The Phase three also comprised reflection on what it meant to participants to be a basic school supervisor, and, in the light of responses in phases one

and two, how they made sense of their work as they strive to ensure effective teaching and learning.

The in-depth interview questions were shaped partly by my earlier doctoral studies on research and evaluation in professional organisations, and critical analytical study (CAS), which focused on basic school management and supervision; and partly by the literature on basic school supervision in developed and developing countries.

4.4.3   Negotiation of access to basic school supervisors and teachers

Because qualitative studies that engage with primary data are heavily dependent on the interviewer–participant relationship, ethical concerns such as how access is gained are critical to the quality of the data collected (Ananga, 2011; Seidman, 2006). Seidman (2006) argues that the manner in which interviewers gain access to potential participants and make contact with them affects not only their relationship but also each subsequent step in the interview process. In the course of engaging participants during the data collection process of the present study, their welfare in terms of interests, rights, and social and institutional environment were among the key ethical issues I gave consideration to. This was vital since natural and institutional settings must be respected in qualitative study of this nature (Yin, 2009).

My first point of contact in negotiating access to school supervisors, head teachers, and teachers was the Ga South Municipal Directorate of Education. I took advantage of an earlier encounter with the Municipal Education Director during an education planning workshop organised by the MoE for teachers of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and their respective district directors. I introduced myself and the

study to her informally and we exchanged contact details. However, to ensure a cordial relationship and also in the interests of adhering to ethical standards, I sought a formal appointment with the Director. Arranging this meeting proved highly problematic, but after she had rescheduled some half a dozen times, I finally made an unannounced visit to her office and she agreed to see me.

During the meeting, I formally introduced the broad nature of the study, and explained its purpose and what was expected of the participants; and sought institutional consent to approach some of the municipality's head supervisors, supervisors, heads of basic schools, and teachers. Institutional consent to access from the Municipal Education Directorate notwithstanding, I also sought informed consent to access and cooperation from the heads of selected schools, since they were the authorities at the school level.

4.4.4 Contacting participants

After I had gained consent and access to the individuals I wished to interview from the Municipal Education Directorate and heads of the respective schools, a telephone call was my first point of contact with selected participants. This initial call was limited to a brief personal introduction and outline of my research project, how I had obtained their names and phone numbers and a request and subsequent arrangement as to when I might meet each of them in person to discuss the study.

I followed this up with a contact visit to all participants that had two main purposes. The first was to explain the study, start to build relationships, and also to initiate the process of informed consent on an individual level. I explained the purpose of the study and went over all possible areas of discussion in order to sensitise the participants to the research

process and the kind of information that I would be collecting. Seidman (2006) notes that when contact visits are conducted properly, participants understand the nature of the study and how they fit into it. The second purpose of the contact visit was to explore the social settings in which participants lived and worked and familiarise myself with the access routes to the various communities and schools.

4.5 Fieldwork and data collection methods

4.5.1 Data collection instruments

To effectively capture, explore and analyse the data emerging from an in-depth investigation of the professional skills of school supervisors, qualitative data collection approach was employed. This was appropriate because the data required was qualitative in nature and could best be obtained through interviews, direct observation and documentary review.

I utilised the in-depth interview to enable the elaboration and clarification of responses and probing of further information while maintaining an attitude of openness to the participant's reactions (Creswell, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007). As mentioned previously, an interview guide was used to guide the process. Additionally, non-verbal cues and responses as well as some other sources of data were physically observable. In this regard, direct field notes was employed (Seidman, 2006).

Reports and records that could provide useful information for the study were also reviewed. Subsequent triangulation of these qualitative approaches was conducted to enhance internal and context validity and the reliability of the data gathered (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2012; Seidman, 2006).

4.5.2   Interview methods

A personal, face-to-face and one-to-one interview technique was used throughout the field data collection process. This was my preferred method because it allowed for in-depth exploration and the collection of not only verbal data compared to other interview methods (Fowler and Mangione, 1990; Seidman, 2006; Silverman, 2005). In other approaches such as the group interview and focus group, one respondent can dominate the process and discourage other participants who might hold different opinions on a given issue (Fowler and Mangione, 1990). Seidman (2006) also argues that the personal interview is appropriate for an in-depth qualitative study because when human beings communicate directly with each other, much more information passes between them since the exchange extends beyond purely verbal expression. Additionally, of key interest to me was the choice of words, facial expressions, and other body language of participants during the interview process.

Furthermore, Dillon, Madden and Firtle (1994) advise that if a personal interview is to be effective, the researcher must adhere to six fundamental rules: (i) avoid appearing superior and making use of simple terminology only; (ii) put questions directly and informatively; (iii) remain detached and objective; (iv) avoid question structures that encourage simple 'yes' or 'no' answers only; (v) probe until all relevant details, emotions and attitudes are revealed; and (vi) provide an atmosphere that encourages the participant to speak freely yet keep the conversation focused on the issue(s) being researched. Keeping these rules in mind and also briefing my field assistant on them proved most fruitful.

All interviews were conducted in English with the exception of two that were conducted in Twi,[3] the participants being members of the SMC and PTA respectively who could not express themselves effectively in English.

4.5.3 Recruitment of a research assistant

A field assistant with a multilingual background who could speak Twi, Ga, Ewe[4] and English fluently was recruited to facilitate the aforementioned interviews with the SMC member and PTA member due to my limitations in the local languages spoken in the research area. The research assistant, who was a post-graduate student, was given two days of training for the fieldwork. This orientation addressed the purpose of the study, translation of the interview protocol into Twi, practice administration of the interview instrument, and the answering of questions that arose. The field assistant had similar experiences in collecting data in both English and the language spoken in the research area; it was, therefore, easier for him to translate the questions on the interview guides into the local language for the two participants who could not speak English fluently.

4.5.4 Validity and reliability of the research instrument

To ensure the internal validity and reliability of the interview protocol, themes and questions were developed based on the research questions. Additionally, with the help of the research assistant, a pilot study was conducted in Ewutu Senya District, a district that borders Ga South Municipality. Two circuit supervisors, a head teacher, and two SMC members took part in the trial administration of the instrument; the purpose of which was

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[3] A local Ghanaian language spoken widely in Ga South Municipality.

[4] Local Ghanaian languages spoken in Ga South Municipality.

to pre-test the interview guides and ensure that they generated relevant information in addressing the research questions, and also to identify challenges that might be faced. After the pilot study, the need for a clearer translation into Twi for the non-English interviews and a shorter instrument administration time emerged. Thus, the necessary changes were made before the actual fieldwork commenced.

4.5.5 Methods of recording interview data

All interviews were tape-recorded, which was necessary to enable me to capture everything that the respondents said; although some social researchers argue that the presence of recording equipment can cause the respondent to be more cautious in what he or she says, particularly if the issue under discussion is sensitive (Vulliamy et al., 1990). To minimise this problem, I devised the strategy of keeping my small digital recorder in my pocket, even though I always informed participants that I was using it. However, since non-verbal cues such as facial expressions, body language, etc. cannot be captured by an audio recorder, field notes were taken throughout to complement the recordings.

The recorded data were transcribed after the fieldwork, and the transcriptions sent back to the respondents to verify and validate whether they represented a true reflection of what had transpired during each interview.

4.5.6 The Use of field notes

Taking of field notes was also employed as a method of data collection throughout the fieldwork. I took notes of the physical and social settings of the various locations in which the study was conducted. I recorded descriptive details of places, events and

people I met during my field work as well as my daily reflections on data patterns and research process.

According to Brodsky (2008) the use of fieldnotes in qualitative research form the context and quality control that adds value to the research findings. Creswell (2012) also posited that observing and taking notes of the behaviour and activities of elements of a study is important in qualitative research. Thus, direct field notes augmented the in-depth interviews that explored the skills of basic school supervisors.

4.5.7 Documentary analysis

Analysing the content of reports and documents were useful sources of data for this study. The documentary analysis gave me insight and provided the opportunity for me to check the primary data I collected during field interviews. The documentary analysis also enabled me to triangulate findings on the various issues relating to supervision practice. Creswell (2012) describes documents as a good place to search for answers, which also provide an effective means of checking primary data gathered through interviews.

Key documents I analysed include the school supervision handbook, appointment letters for school supervisors, National Education Assessment Report, school performance report among others. For instance, the school supervision handbook was useful in obtaining data on organisation of 'pre' and 'In'-service training for supervisors and the supervision approaches to be used.

4.5.8   Data analysis

Data analysis was mainly influenced by the research questions and field interview schedules. The qualitative data gathered were analysed using the three-stage coding technique developed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Data were analysed and interpreted from the perspective of study participants, paying particular attention to the context in which they were collected (Creswell, 2012). In the first stage of the analysis, I divided textual data into broad categories or text segments. Strauss and Corbin (1990) call this stage open coding.

In the second stage, I redefined the initial broad categories by putting them into more detailed categories, and determining the meaning of each subcategory and the relationships between them. This stage, which is also known as 'axial coding', enables the qualitative researcher to get a clear picture of the data gathered, and the linkages and interrelationships between the various identified themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

The third stage of the analysis is the final integration and refining of the central theme that dominates the findings (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Links and variations between subcategories were given logical explanations in the context of the data gathered, taking into account the social setting within which the study was conducted.

The categorised and refined textual data were then analysed to describe and seek the meaning of the various themes identified by the study. According to Creswell (2012), describing individuals as well as seeking meaning of themes in qualitative research will result in the emergence of a rich, complex picture of the phenomenon under study, which, in this case, is the professional skills of education supervisors, and how they affect basic

school teaching and learning. Based on the picture created, I interpreted the meaning of the data and how the findings related to existing policy and research on school supervision in Ghana.

Finally, even though the study is not intended to produce generalisable results, the findings might resonate with the situations in other sub-Saharan African countries whose school supervision systems share similarities with the Ghanaian education sector.

4.6 Ethical issues

A number of ethical issues that need to be observed in social research are identified and discussed in the School of Education, University of Sussex guidelines as well as the wider relevant literature (e.g. Cohen et al., 2007; Bruce, 2001; Sarantakos, 2005; Bordens and Abbot, 2008). I took into consideration four key ethical issues identified in the literature, namely, informed consent, confidentiality, right to privacy, and anonymity. On the issue of consent, as explained earlier, I obtained the appropriate authorisation in order to gain access to the participants. In the case of school supervisors, I obtained permission from the Ga South Municipal Education Directorate to gain access to basic schools and interview the supervisors operating in the municipality. Access to teachers was also negotiated through the heads of their respective schools, while access to the member of the SMC and member of the PTA was negotiated through their respective chairpersons. The purpose of the study was explained to all participants in order to gain their approval and maximum cooperation.

In ensuring confidentiality, I provided the assurance that the data I collected would be used for the purposes of this study only, and that the anonymity of all participants would

be safeguarded. I also respected the right to privacy of participants and did not intrude on their personal lives to a greater degree than was required by the objectives of the study. Finally, I sought their consent at every stage of the field data collection process.

My dual positionality as Director for Human Resource Development and Management, and member of the National Inspectorate Board (NIB), that is, an insider, and an indigenous Ghanaian researcher who has worked in the field of education for many years, that is, an outsider, had two main effects on the study.

Firstly, as an insider education officer, there was the natural tendency for a number of ethical issues with my colleagues and other subordinates at the Municipal Education Directorate to arise. As a senior official from the MoE, my colleagues, the municipality's Director of Education and Assistant Director in Charge of Supervision were somewhat unsure of my mission and thus not very forthcoming during the initial stages of their respective interviews. However, I explained that I was using the information for an academic exercise and that their identities would not be disclosed in the research report.

Secondly, another major ethical issue I was confronted with during the fieldwork was the power dynamic. A superior–subordinate relationship came into play when some of the respondents got to know informally that I was not only a research student but also an officer from the MoE. The knowledge of my position at the Ministry caused some slight apprehension among school supervisors in particular. My first encounter with the supervisors was on the day of the interviews, and the problem became apparent when one of them postponed our arranged interview to another time for no tangible reason.

I felt that such an atmosphere of apprehension might negatively affect the interviewees' responses, and prevent them from providing accurate information and a true picture of the situation on the ground. In trying to address their uneasiness and emphasise the focus of my mission as a research student, I informed them too that the study was a purely academic exercise, and that the data I gathered would be handled confidentially and not be disclosed to any third party. Finally, I assured them that neither the information they provided nor the findings of the study would affect their promotion prospects in any way.

4.7   Limitations of the methodology

The main limitation of this study is the scope of the study. Ghana currently has 216 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), this research however focussed on basic school supervisors from only one Municipal Assembly. This affected extrapolating and generalisation of some of the findings. According to Cohen et al (2007) scope limitation is a major challenges of using qualitative case study approach due to its inability to generalised and the research findings also seen as biased and subjective. Jaeger (1997) corroborated this and argued that using the case study method is synonymous to seeing the situation through the lens of the researcher.

4.8   Summary and conclusion

The chapter discussed the methodology employed for the study. In the first section I differentiated between methodology and methods after which I justified my choice of qualitative case study approach for this research. The chapter further explained my conceptual framework underpinned by the structuration theory that social phenomena are interpreted from two perspectives: the structure and agency. The social structure in this

study is the Ghanaian basic education system and the education resources while the agency is the basic school supervisors.

The socio-demographic characteristics of the study area, the plan and conduct of the study, how cases/study participants were selected and the factors that informed development of the interview guides were also discussed. The chapter further discussed negotiation of access to basic school supervisors, schools, teachers, etc and the ethical issues I encountered and how I overcame them. The chapter also discussed the effect of limitation in scope on generalisation of findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DYNAMICS OF BASIC SCHOOL SUPERVISION IN GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY

5.0 introduction

This chapter addresses the dynamics of basic school supervision in Ga South Municipality. The discussion is informed by the views and practical experiences of selected school supervisors, municipal directors of education, and head teachers and their staff at basic schools in the municipality. Other data sources include observation of socio-cultural practices in the study location, school supervision models in the literature, and the Ghana Education Service (GES) publication *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2009).

The chapter is divided into three major sections. In Section One, I probe the professional background of the basic school supervisors under study, and the nature of their training (both pre-service and in-service training and education: INSET) in school supervision and management. I also explore the various processes through which supervisors are recruited and the nature of their job description upon their appointment.

Section Two explores basic school supervision in Ga South Municipality, addressing the basic school supervision process, and differences between rural and urban practices. It also conducts an in-depth exploration of power dynamics and conflict in school supervision.

The discussion in sections one and two lays a solid foundation for the critical reflection on basic school supervision in the municipality that forms the topic of Section Three. The

discussion in all three sections is guided by the research questions and objectives of the study.

5.1 Professional background of school supervisors

This section sought to answer the research question "*what are the professional backgrounds of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?* To explore their background, I probed their education, field of specialisation, years of experience in the field of education and length of service as a basic school supervisor.

5.1.1 Level of education and specialisation

The level of education attained by school supervisors was of key interest to the study. Evidence from the field data collected indicates that the lowest qualification held by a school supervisor is a bachelor's degree, while the highest was a master's degree; of the seven respondents, five held a first and two a higher degree. Further exploration of courses of study and specialisations revealed that only two had expertise in the field of education, that is, primary education and education psychology respectively. The remaining five had majored in other fields, namely, political science, sociology, human resources management, psychology, and history respectively (see Table 5.1 at page 108).

Moreover, responses from the supervisors under study revealed that they had each initially attended a teacher training college – now college of education – from which, after completing a three-year programme, they graduated with a teaching certificate (thus Certificate 'A' or 'B'). They had also practised as classroom teachers for more than five years before applying to a university to pursue their respective degree programmes as mature students.

The above findings indicate that all the basic school supervisors under study had undergone initial training in education at least at the diploma or certificate level. This implies an understanding of basic pedagogy and classroom teaching and learning methodologies. However, none of them had received any formal training in education administration or supervision.

Nevertheless, it may be observed from the data gathered that even though most of the subjects these supervisors studied at the higher education level do not relate directly to education, they are applicable in the broader sense; a position derived from the following responses:

> *You see, university education is supposed to open our minds regardless of the course, and now that my mind is opened, I think it is helping me. I studied Political Science in the university, and after my graduation, I applied for promotion and I got it; that is how come I qualified to be a school supervisor. So indirectly, it has helped me in my work.* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

> *I studied Sociology in the university and, you see, even though it is not directly an 'educational' course, I learnt and understood how society behaves. The school is located within the society, so I am able to understand how it has to relate with the larger environment. A school is effective when parents, chiefs and even the youths in the community have good relationship with school authorities, and this is sociology.* (Edu Ansah, 2013)

> *My area of specialisation is human resource, and the school is managed by human beings. My understanding of supervision is the [to] support and help schools function effectively, and in human resource management, our focus is on mobilising and motivating people to perform a given task. So, my programme I studied is very relevant; I think I am applying some of the things I learnt in my practice.* (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

5.1.2 Experience in the field of education and as a school supervisor

Field experience in education on the part of the supervisor is essential for effective school supervision. Glickman et al. (2014) found that individuals who had been promoted to the

position of school supervisor without any prior experience in the field of education were intimidated by older and more experienced teachers during their supervision visits. Therefore, rather than adopting a neutral and external position, supervisors tended to seek advice from the experienced teachers, who might impose their opinions on the former.

Supervisors' responses point to the fact that they were highly experienced in the field of education. All of them had more than 10 years' teaching experience, with some having exceeded 20 years of service (see Table 5.1 below). The following are some of the answers to the question of how long respondents had been working in the field of education:

> *I graduated from the teacher training college as a trained teacher and started teaching in 1995: this is my 18th year. I was first posted as a classroom teacher, I taught for about five years and I received my promotion. I later become a subject teacher at the junior high school and an assistant head teacher before my appointment as school supervisor.* (Edu Ansah, 2013)

> *I have been working in the field of education for 25 years. I worked as a teacher for 21 years, where I rose through the ranks to become a 'senior superintendent' before I was recruited as a school supervisor. During my teaching periods, I taught at both lower and upper primary. I was also a member of the school management committee and the teacher in charge of safety in the school environment.* (Ama Yeboah, 2013)

> *I have ever [initially] worked as a pupil teacher [untrained teacher] for four years, teaching primary 2. After I had received my training as a professional teacher, I taught for 22 years in 3 different regions in Ghana before my appointment as a school supervisor.* (Yaw Adjei, 2013)

Table 5.1: Backgrounds of selected school supervisors

Name of supervisor [5]	Name of circuit [6]	Level of education	Field of specialisation	No. of years in education	No. of years as a supervisor	No. of years as a supervisor in Ga South
Ama Yeboah	Bawekrom	Bachelor's degree (BEd)	Primary education	25	4	4
Edu Ansah	Tanya	Master's degree	Human resources management	18	5	5
Akua Goh	Gbelishi	Master's degree	Social work	15	6	6
Yaw Adjei	Adzah	Bachelor's degree (BA)	Psychology and political science	27	10	6
Edem Adzoh	Ayano	Bachelor's degree (BEd)	Education	20	3	3
Kwame Koffi	Oboduom	Bachelor's degree (BA)	Sociology and social work	20	7	7
Kwesi Mintim	Nsamua	Bachelor's degree (BA)	Political science	13	4	4

Source: The author (2013).

The finding that all the supervisors under study had over ten years' service in teaching at the basic level prompted me to explore the question of how past experience as a teacher was useful to them in their current role as a school supervisor. The following are some of the responses:

> *We are still teachers – the only difference now is we don't teach pupils but rather teach teachers. I am saying this because as a supervisor, I support teachers,*

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[5] All names of respondents are pseudonyms.

[6] All names of selected education circuits are pseudonyms.

especially the newly trained ones, in terms of ideas on how to write their lesson notes [plans], and also develop their own teaching and learning materials – TLMs – for effective classroom teaching (Kwame Koffi, 2013).

Any time I attend workshops organised by some NGOs [non-governmental organisations] or the GES on issues such as new teaching methods, new subject areas, etc., I have to organise in-service training for teachers on these new developments. I heavily rely on my past experiences as a teacher to organise such activities (Akua Goh, 2013).

My experience as a teacher is helping me in several ways. One, the teachers during the supervision process are in the known that I was once a classroom teacher and, therefore, understand the process of teaching and learning. As a result, they listen to me and also come to me for advice and support from time to time (Edem Adzoh, 2013).

At times, the Municipal Education Directorate will call you to educate teachers on a new policy, law or directive. For instance, I was once tasked to educate teachers in my circuit about the capitation grant policy introduced by the government at a forum. If I were not a trained teacher, I don't know what I would have done, but my teaching experience gave me the courage and I did it (Ama Yeboah, 2013).

From the above responses, it is clear that teaching experience was of use to the supervisors in three main ways: (i) helping them to support and develop newly trained teachers in terms of practical experience on the job; (ii) organising INSET in new teaching methods; and (iii) earning respect from teachers and school heads.

5.1.3   Length of service as a school supervisor in Ga South Municipality

All the supervisors under study had over three years of experience as supervisors in Ga South Municipality. The responses also indicate that Ga South Municipality was the first posting for six of them, the seventh (Akua Goh), who had ten years experience as a supervisor, having spent four years in another municipality before she had been transferred to Ga South (see Table 5.2 below). It is evident from the data gathered that the supervisors had a wealth of experience and knowledge of the environment of Ga South; a vital criterion in addressing the objectives of the study.

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5.2   Recruitment of basic school supervisors

This section focused on the research question *"what qualifies one as a basic school supervisor, and how is recruitment and selection conducted?* To effectively address this research question, I explored the requirements to qualify as a supervisors and the supervisor recruitment processes in the Ga South Municipality. Responses from the Municipal Director, Deputy Director of Supervision, and the seven supervisors indicated that the ideal recruitment process involved four principal steps: (i) advertisement of supervision vacancy; (ii) short-listing and interview of applicants; (iii) background and employment history assessment; and (iv) appointment.

5.2.1   Advertisement of supervision vacancy

Supervision vacancies were usually advertised by Ga South Municipal Education Office (GSMEO) through a memorandum to all public schools within the municipality, and also posted on Education Office notice boards for teachers who might not otherwise see a copy. The memorandum outlined the skills and qualifications necessary for the position, and called on interested applicants with the requisite qualifications and rank – the minimum being principal superintendent, i.e. the level of graduate entry into the GES – to apply. This implies that all interested applicants must be at least bachelor's degree holders with some teaching experience.

However, even though the GSMEO advertised supervision vacancies through their internal recruitment process, some of the empirical data collected by this study clearly indicate that neither the GES nor the GSMEO had a clear procedure for identifying suitable candidates. The circulation of an internal memo was in line with the basic requirement for staff recruitment, but the terms of the job description's person

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specification were too narrow to allow applications from other qualified teachers, head teachers, or non-teaching staff who might have obtained relevant experience and qualifications in other districts and regions. This implies the exclusion of candidates who might have been even more suited to the position from the recruitment process. Gyimah,[7] a Primary Six (P6) teacher, had this to say:

> *I have been teaching for almost 11 years now in this community but I have never seen an advertisement for the position of a school supervisor. My school does not have a noticeboard, so where have they been posting the memo…? Any time there is a new school supervisor, they do well by informing us but we don't get the information about the recruitment of supervisors. Maybe they have their favourites.*

Gyimah's perception of nepotism in the recruitment process was confirmed when I asked one of the basic school supervisors how he had heard about the vacancy, and he replied as follows:

> *Well, to be frank, I did not see any advertisement; I was told by a friend who works at the GSMEO that there was a vacancy for the position of a basic school supervisor, and that if I am interested I should write an application and give it to him.* (Yaw Adjei, 2013)

While the accusation of nepotism posited by some teacher respondents may be well founded to a certain extent, direct observation during the fieldwork also identified the disparity between the communities of Ga South Municipality as a challenge to the circulation of advertisements to all schools. As described in Chapter Two, the municipality comprises both rural and urban settlements. Urban schools were found to have good infrastructure and were easily accessible. Teachers had a staffroom where they

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[7] A pseudonym.

sat to prepare lessons, mark exercises, and hold regular meetings. These rooms also had noticeboards where memos and other announcements were posted. As a result, information such as job vacancy advertisements was circulated in urban schools.

However, this was not the case in the rural areas where school infrastructure was poor and classes were held under trees or in sheds. Unlike their colleagues in urban areas, teachers in rural schools did not have an office but sat outside or in a dilapidated classroom to mark exercises, hold meetings, and perform other official duties. Moreover, such schools were not easily accessible, meaning that communication with the GSMEO tended to be poor. Even if job vacancy memos reached these schools in good time, they got no further than the head teacher's table, and he or she might or might not remember to inform his or her staff about them.

Thus, for a combination of reasons, the study found that the supervision selection procedure was not sufficiently transparent and competitive for all qualified applicants to participate.

5.2.2 Interview of applicants

Applicants for a supervision vacancy who met all the requirements were shortlisted and formally invited for a competitive interview in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Education Directorate. The interview was conducted by a panel consisting of the GSMEO Director, Deputy Director of Supervision, representatives from the human resources department, and other invited experienced educationists. According to Director 'A', applicants were questioned on matters such as education development and

management, basic school supervision, monitoring, and knowledge of practices in the Ghanaian education system, among others.

It emerged from the data that the GSMEO followed some of these procedures and other laid down structures. However, indications from the field emphatically show that some unsuitable individuals found their way into the supervision system as a result of political and sometimes cultural pressure applied to district education officials to select certain candidates over the rest, a situation the Director confirmed:

> *We sometimes receive increasing pressure from politicians and traditional authorities to recruit their favourites as supervisors. When we resist it, at times, [this] generates tension between us [Education Directorate], and the politicians and authorities.* (Director A, 2013)

Such nepotistic practice in the recruitment process on the part of political and religious authorities is referred to as neopatrimonialism (Weber, 1980 cited in Von Soest, 2006; Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997; Engel, 2006). Weber (1980 cited in Von Soest, 2006:7) notes that, "Patrimonialism connotes that a patron in a certain social and political order bestows gifts from [his or her] own resources on followers in order to secure their loyalty and support." As a result, such patrons (in this case, politicians and traditional authorities) pervade formal state institutions thereby influencing the decision-making process in their favour (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997). Additionally, Engel (2006) observes that in a neopatrimonial system, patrons tend to be office holders in state or traditional institutions who abuse public authority, including funds, in order to remain in power. Director 'A' however noted that *"some of those who are recruited in favour of more legitimate applicants following the political pressure, mostly mounted by*

government or traditional authorities to underscore some political agenda, generally do

not perform creditably but, rather, bring the image of the profession into disrepute.

A supervisor respondent attested to the perception that such officials invariably revealed

their professional incompetency:

> *Those who do not pass the right recruitment procedure and are also inexperienced struggle in the field. Some of these people do not have the requisite knowledge in education matters; they were recruited due to their relationship with politicians.* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

Another supervisor also noted that:

> *Looking at the conditions in which we work, you need the passion and self-interest to keep you effectively at post. So, those who are smuggled into the system as supervisors most of the time perform poorly simply because they lack the basic characteristics of a school supervisor.* (Ama Yeboah, 2013)

Interestingly, most of the time, such eventualities created serious tension between the

Municipal Chief Executive (the political head) and the GSMEO, which seemed to wish to

adhere to correct administrative procedure and vehemently resisted the imposition of

unqualified political favourites. Indeed, the study found that some district directors had

been transferred to other municipalities or districts if they continued to resist such a

neopatrimonial recruitment system. This was because the political head regarded the

influencing of the recruitment process as an opportunity to reward the party faithful;

therefore, any resistance from the Education Director was interpreted as an attack on the

political head and his or her administration. The direct response of the GSMEO Director

in this regard was as follows:

> *It has not happened here, but in one of our neighbouring municipalities where the Deputy Director in Charge of Supervision was transferred to a remote district due*

to the conflict between him and a political figure at the municipality during supervisor recruitment process: the Deputy Director did not recruit the preferred candidate of the politician. (Director A, 2013)

Another source of neopatrimonialism in the recruitment processes was the informal influence of traditional authorities. Unlike political neopatrimonialism, the traditional authorities did not make their intentions so obvious. According to field data, due to involvement in school supervision and administration through the school management committee (SMC), traditional authorities mostly wished to recruit a supervisor who was a native of the locality, arguing that such an individual would be more likely to ensure the development of the municipality's schools, as explained by the SMC respondent during an interview:

> *We have tried several times to get the Education Office to select one of our own as a supervisor but they said the person is not qualified. If the supervisor is from the community, it means his or her family is also here so they will stay in the community and work hard for the development of the schools. However, if the supervisor is not from the community, instead of working, they will travel to go and visit their families.* (SMC Respondent, 2013)

The neopatrimonial influence that seemed to characterise the supervisor recruitment process in the research area implies that some basic school supervisors were 'serving two masters'. For example, in an election year, a supervisor selected through political favour might be required to undertake campaigning in the communities that fall under his or her jurisdiction alongside official supervision duties. This, in turn, could lead to ineffective school supervision as teachers would interpret whatever the supervisor said as political. Supervisory visits would also suffer as the supervisor's time would be devoted to attending party rallies instead of visiting schools. According to the Northern Network for Education Development (NNED), the inability of the Municipal Education Directorate to

independently recruit supervisors is a reflection of the current weakness in the basic school supervision system whereby supervisors are reported to frequently neglect their duty of overseeing teaching and learning (NNED, 2013).

5.2.3 Background and employment history assessment

As gathered from the field data, the third stage of the supervisor recruitment process was a thorough check and assessment of the background and employment history of applicants, which was conducted without their knowledge. Selected members of the interview panel contacted applicants' previous and current schools, assessed their lessons plans, and sought oral recommendations from their heads of school. The panel also inquired about the behaviour and attitude of applicants towards their work, colleagues, and the community, as well as their competence in the job. According to Director 'A', "*The work history and behaviour of applicants in their schools and communities is very key in the selection process.*"

However, it emerged that there were cases in which, on realising that such assessment was for an individual's promotion to a supervisor, some head teachers and their staff had provided information that favoured their friends or, conversely, reflected poorly on those they did not support. Director 'A' cited her experience during one background check:

> *I visited a school where an applicant was the assistant head teacher. During the assessment, I realised I was receiving conflicting reports from the head teacher and the teachers. While reports about the applicant's attitude from teachers was positive, the head teacher seems to be giving negative reports. This prompted me to do further investigations and my findings revealed that at the time of the assessment, the applicant was not on good terms with the head teacher, so, upon realising that the assessment was for his recruitment as a school supervisor, he was giving negative reports to derail his chances of getting the appointment.* (Director A, 2013)

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Further probing of the assessment process revealed that after the background check, the outcome was fed back to the interview panel for their assessment. Individual scores were compared and the applicant with the highest score was recruited. However, Director 'A' acknowledged that, again, people in political office tried to influence decision making at this level, citing an instance in which, as the chair of the panel, she had been forced to comply with the dictates of a politician in high office in order to keep her job:

> *We had finished an interview process and the background check. The scores were compared but before we could release the result, I received a call from a politician from a high office asking me to tilt the result in favour of a particular candidate. Let me tell you the truth, the politician is powerful and disobeying him can cost me my job, so I obliged.* (Director 'A', 2013)

Responses from the supervisors under study confirm that the background assessment had been conducted without their knowledge, as some had learnt of it from their head teachers afterwards while others had only got to know about it after they had been appointed:

> *I was told by my head that some officials from the GSMEO came and probed into my commitment and behaviour as a teacher, and also assessed my lesson notes over the years.* (Kwame Koffi, 2013)

> *I only got to know after I was appointed. My predecessor, in a discussion after my appointment, told me that I need to improve upon how I relate with people because feedback given to them about me was not the best for the work as a school supervisor. It was at this point that I got to know they went to my school where I was teaching without my knowledge.* (Edu Ansah, 2013)

5.2.4 Appointment letter and job description

The issue of an appointment letter was the last stage in the supervisor's recruitment process. At this stage, all successful candidates were informed that they had met the necessary requirements and were appointed as school supervisors. The letter was issued with a detailed job description or directive as to whom to report for it. According to

Director 'A', *"The purpose of the appointment letter is to inform the supervisor of his new role and what is expected of him or her, and who to contact or report to in the performance of his [or her] duties."* Boxes 1 and 2 show sample appointment letters that I collected from two supervisors during the fieldwork. For the sake of confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms have been used.

Box 5.1: Sample appointment letter (a)

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

<div style="text-align:right">

Ga South Municipal Education Office
P.O. Box Gs 234
Weija
4th February, 2008
</div>

Kwesi Mintim
Bawekrom DA School
Bawekrom-CP
Dear Sir,

APPOINTMENT AS A CIRCUIT SUPERVISOR KWESI MINTIM, ASSISSTANT DIRECTOR II

I am pleased to inform you that you have been appointed the Circuit Supervisor for the Bawekrom Circuit within the Ga South Municipality with retrospective effect from 1st February 2008. We are confident that you will not disappoint the Circuit over which you will superintend.

As the Circuit Supervisor, you will work under the Deputy Director, Supervision who is your Unit Head. In this position, you will be expected to:

- Promote effective teaching and learning in all Basic Schools (Public and Private) in your circuit and offer professional support to teachers.
- Interpret educational policies to teachers and help them understand the educational objectives of the curriculum.
- Promote effective school management by giving headteachers the necessary support.
- Liaise between the schools in your circuit and the Municipal Education Office by collating and regularly up-dating inventory on textbooks, furniture, stationery and compounds and other educational data on staff and pupils
- Support the organization and conduct of In-service Training (INSET) for the professional development of teachers and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Promote healthy school – community SMC/PTA relations through transparency and accountability, recruitment drives, sensitization programmes, durbars, the drawing up of SPIPs, conducting school/community SPAM etc.
- Monitor the achievement and performance of pupils and staff.
- Prepare work improvement and inspection schedule for approval by your Director of Education and the Deputy Director (Supervision) and send copies to the schools concerned.
- Undertake special assignments requested of you by the Director of Education in schools and communities within your circuit.

Do accept my congratulations.
Your faithfully,
………………………….
KK Agbezuge
Director of Education

Source: Field data, 2013

Box 5.2: Sample appointment letter (b)

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

Municipal Education Office
P.O. Box Gs 234
Weija
4th February, 2008

Edem Adzoh
Nsuobri Primary
Nsoubri

Dear Madam,

APPOINTMENT OF CIRCUIT SUPERVISOR: EDEM ADZO

I am happy to inform you of your appointment as a Circuit Supervisor. Your appointment takes effect from 1st September, 2008. Your duties as the Circuit Supervisor are as follows:

    a.   Conduct regular In-service Training
    b.   Liaise between the school and the Metro Directorate
    c.   Monitor effective teaching and learning
    d.   Establish good school/community relationship
    e.   Any other duties that may be assigned to you from time to time by the Director.

By a copy of this letter, you are requested to report to the Municipal Education Director for further directives.

Please hand over any school property to your Head teacher and acknowledge receipt of this letter by 1st October. 2008.

Accept my congratulations.

……………………………
KK Agbezuge

Source: Field data, 2013

A glance at the two appointment letters (boxes 1 and 2) above clearly reveals that even though they were both issued by the GSMEO, they differ in format, content and supervisory role definition. While the sample in Box 1 appears to be relatively more detailed in terms of job description than in Box 2 is very shallow. The latter stipulates only four main tasks, numbered from (a) to (d), followed by an open reference to an indeterminate yet potentially wide range of other duties in (e). Moreover, the supervisor in question − Edem Adzoh − indicated that although the appointment letter requested her to report for "further directives", no such instructions or detailed job description had ever

been provided: "*I went to the office several times, but I have not been given any further job description.*"

It may be further noted that both letters are silent on terms and conditions of service, including salary and a medical examination to ascertain physical fitness for the new position, even though such details are key to any appointment. Neither is the law under which the supervisors were recruited mentioned in either letter.

My interviews with GSMEO directors also revealed that the GES did not have a standard template for letters of appointment to school supervisors, the responsibility for composing such documents lying with the Director of Supervision or Human Resources Officer in each municipal education office, as explained by Director A:

> *The GSMEO is responsible for writing the appointment letter. We only have to inform or send a copy to the GES, and the Controller and Accountant General about the appointment of the person as a school supervisor for all the necessary salary adjustments. We are responsible for the content of the appointment letter; GES has no formal template for writing it.* (Director A, 2013)

When I asked what informed the contents of the appointment letter, the Director continued:

> *I normally use the Circuit Supervisor's Handbook as a guide whenever I am to write an appointment letter. It contains everything you need to tell the supervisors upon appointment.* (Director A, 2013)

The absence of a formal guide for writing appointment letters and providing terms of reference was found to be one of the causal factors in the inability to measure the performance of school supervisors. Another factor that exacerbated the situation was the finding that the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002) was in short supply, although it had been developed with donor funding.

5.2.5 Supervisors and teachers' perception of the recruitment process

According to respondents, the recruitment processes instituted by the GSMEO to fill supervision vacancies in the municipality was free and fair to all applicants; in their view, selection was based on merit and was not biased. The following quotations exemplify the various ways in which the supervisors under study described the process they had gone through:

> *The process was fair to all participants.* (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

> *I think it was very fair: we were all interviewed the same day and nobody to the best of my knowledge has a prior knowledge of the questions they will be asking during the interview.* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

> *There was nothing discriminatory about the process. I am a woman but I don't think I was appointed because of my gender; it was based on my performance.* (Ama Yeboah, 2013)

However, such a point of view conflicted with the position held by some of the basic school teachers under study who argued that the lack of knowledge and experience exhibited by some supervisors during school visits raised questions about the robustness of the recruitment process. One basic school teacher expressed a lack of confidence in the process in the following terms:

> *If the recruitment is done right, then why [do] some supervisors...rather become [a] problem on the job; and why do they create confusion and mislead teachers...? The fact that somebody has been teaching for long does not make him or her a good supervisor. I am not a supervisor, but I think supervision requires more than experience; values such as good character and truthfulness are very important. These, however, are lacking in some of the supervisors.*

During an in-depth interview, a P3 teacher expressed her opinion as follows:

> *I have been a classroom teacher for about 20 years now and I can say that some of the supervisors don't have what it takes to supervise. They cannot communicate well and they have bad reputation among teachers. If teachers do not have*

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respect for a supervisor due to his or her inabilities, how can they listen to him or her? If the supervisor is also too proud to learn from experienced teachers, then he [or she] becomes a mockery after he [or she] has finished supervision, or when he is not around. Such supervisors are given weird names like 'Taliban', 'Pontius Pilate', 'Hammer', just to mention a few.

5.3 Training of basic school supervisors

The foreword to the *Handbook of Circuit Supervisors* notes that:

The Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service recognize the critical leadership role that Circuit Supervisors must play in ensuring that learning takes place in schools. This leadership role involves providing support to the Headteacher and Teachers as curriculum advisor and in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The Circuit Supervisor must also provide guidance and leadership in helping the Headteacher become more effective in managing school resources. Finally, the Circuit Supervisor must provide support to the Headteacher and Teachers in developing strong and positive relationship[s] with community leaders and other stakeholders who will support the school. (GES, 2002:i)

This section takes a critical look at both pre-service training and INSET programmes designed to build the capacity of basic school supervisors to ensure learning takes place in schools by answering the question *what pre- and in-service training is provided to basic school supervisors, and how is it implemented?*

5.3.1 Pre-service training

Glickman et al. (2014:98) present a model of prerequisites for effective school supervision that identifies three core competencies, namely, knowledge, interpersonal skills, and technical skills. The authors go on to posit that if supervision is to be effective, the supervisor's knowledge base must include an understanding of the education system and its policies, and the ability to asses individual school needs in terms of staff

development and the furtherance of quality teaching and learning. Moreover, these capabilities should be accompanied by (i) interpersonal skills, such as relationship management, and communication with teachers, the school community, and other stakeholders; and (ii) technical skills, that is, a repertoire of various approaches to supervision, and planning, appraisal and assessment methodologies for school improvement. The model of prerequisites developed by Glickman et al. (2014) is illustrated below:

Figure 5.1   Model of prerequisites for effective school supervision

Effective supervision

Interpersonal Skills   Technical skills

Knowledge
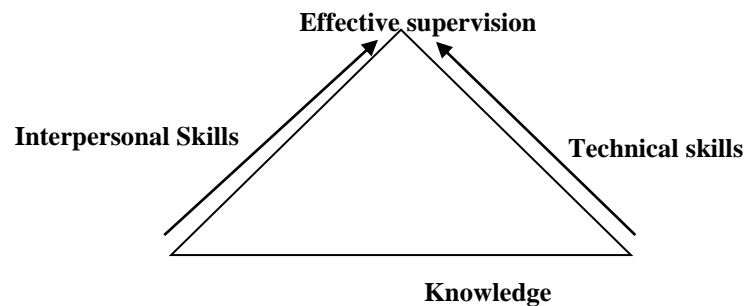
Source: Glickman et al. (2014).

My review of the various definitions of school supervision in the literature (see Chapter Two) also led to the clear understanding that such supervision is a technical and professional occupation that requires knowledge in education, basic skills in human resource management, planning, communication, relationship management, leadership, and emotional intelligence, among other competencies. Based on this understanding, it is evident that school supervisors need some form of training before taking up their duties if they are to build the requisite knowledge base, and technical and interpersonal skills and capacities to function effectively.

My earlier analysis of the education and professional background of supervisors (see Subsection 5.2 above) indicated that all the supervisors under study had a wealth of experience in the field of education, being trained teachers with over ten years' experience. This satisfies the first prerequisite of effective supervision, that is, supervisor's knowledge in the field, as posited by Glickman et al. (2014). However, the two other vital competencies – technical and interpersonal skills – seem to be conspicuously lacking. Although respondent supervisors seem to have had sound professional knowledge and practical experience, none of them had received formal training in school supervision and management.

According to the GSMEO Education Director, as a prerequisite to the recruitment and appointment process, all newly appointed school supervisors were to be trained and oriented in the supervision system, and, *"The aim of the training is to equip them with the basic necessary skills for supervision and also orient them on what is expected of them as school supervisors."* Yet, data gathered from supervisors on training on appointment painted a gloomy picture. While the GSMEO insisted they made sure that all newly recruited supervisors were adequately prepared for the job, responses from school supervisors indicated otherwise. According to the supervisors, after they had received their appointment letters, the GSMEO merely organised a two-day workshop at which they were formally inducted into the profession. Some respondents argued that such orientation did not constitute training per se:

> *I received orientation. Orientation is not training; it is to tell you your job requirements, but training is to develop your skills to perform the various tasks required by the job. So, yes, we were oriented about the nature of the job – can we call that training?* (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

You cannot call that [the orientation workshop] training. I did not learn anything new that will enhance my work; I was only taken through the 'dos and don'ts' as a school supervisor. So, to me, the workshop was an information session, not a training session. (Kwame Koffi, 2013)

When asked whether they had received any pre-service training, some of the supervisors responded further as follows:

That is rather unfortunate – we learn on the job. So, we have not gone through any training but we were given job description… With my experience and the job description, I am able to work, and I also seek advice and counselling from colleagues who have been in the field before me, so that is how I go about it. There is nothing like pre-service training in supervision. (Ama Yeboah, 2013)

I did not receive any training when I was appointed; I was called to the Education Office for my appointment letter, after which I attended a two-day orientation workshop. We were given our job description and also how to report to the Municipal Education Directorate. We were not given any training on school supervision, but since I have been in the teaching field for a long time, I used my classroom experience in supervision. (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

We were given an orientation – maybe that is the training we received before we started work as school supervisors. I did not attend any other training workshop on supervision prior to my commencement of work. (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

I have attended a number of training workshops in HIV and AIDS education, sanitation and hygiene in schools, writing of reports, among others; but I never received any training on school supervision prior to my appointment. GES is suppose to give us a supervision manual during our orientation, but as I am talking to you now, I have not receive mine, so I am learning on the job. (Edu Ansah, 2013)

It is evident from the above responses that the supervisors under study did not receive any formal training. As a result, the other two prerequisites for effective supervision – technical and interpersonal skills – in Glickman et al.'s (2014) model seem to have been lacking. By mapping the findings of the present study on to the Glickman et al. (2014) model, I made the observations shown in Figure 5.2 below.

Figure 5.2   Mapping findings on pre-service training on to the Glickman et al. (2014) model of school supervision

Ineffective supervision

Interpersonal Skills (weak human relations and leadership skills)

Technical skills (Weak technical skills in supervision and administration)

Knowledge (Strong knowledge and practical skills in the field of education)
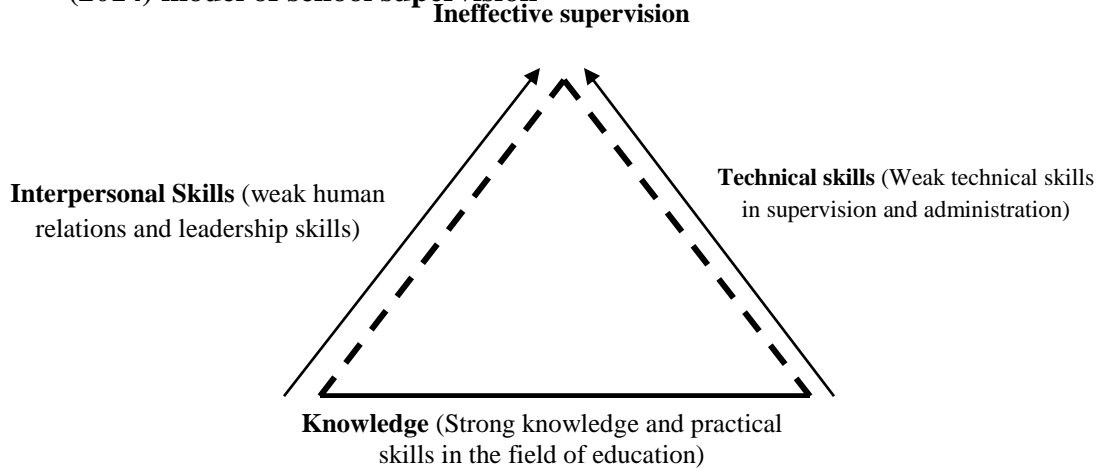
The implication of the above findings is that even though the supervisors under study had sufficient knowledge in the field of education, the absence of comprehensive pre-service capacity building and training in supervision and management resulted in the ineffective supervision of schools in the research area.

5.3.2   In-service training

The GES (2002) defines INSET as any planned on-the-job activity carried out to promote the growth of teachers or supervisors to make them more efficient in the delivery of quality education; the purpose of such INSET is to provide teachers and supervisors with experiences which will enable them to work together and grow professionally. Nevertheless, the present study's documentary analysis, and interviews with supervisors and directors revealed some interesting findings. The *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002) does not make provision for any form of INSET or capacity building for basic school supervisors; only stipulating how supervisors should organise teachers' INSET programmes, the various types of INSET training, and guidelines to follow when

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organising such events. Subsequently, the school supervisor is to support the process and also observe lessons to assess the impact of training on teaching and learning (GES, 2012:93).

The absence of provision for INSET for school supervisors was confirmed in an interview with the GSMEO Director, who noted that neither the GES in particular nor the Ministry of Education (MoE) in general had implemented a specific INSET capacity development programme for basic school supervisors. According to the Director, this was actually due to inadequate resources and structural challenges faced by the MoE and GES. The absence of a professional development structure or training centre and inability of the GES to finance the cost of capacity building for supervisors is captured in the following quotation:

> *The Ghana Education Staff Development Institute was established by the Ghana Education Service to serve [as] a professional training and capacity building centre for teachers and education administrators in management positions. However, the Institute was given to the University of Education, Winneba to be used as one of its new campuses for other accredited programmes. Since this takeover occurred, the GES has no other formal training institute to train teachers, supervisors, and the key education administrators. Furthermore, the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration was supposed to provide...professional and skills enhancement training programmes for education managers including school supervisors, but due to inadequate funds allocated for the these courses in its budget, the GES is unable to finance the cost of the training programmes offered.* (Director A, 2013)

Accordingly, the study found that the inability to utilise these structures and facilities for their intended purposes had weakened the Ghanaian school supervision system and the capacity of supervisors to carry out their jobs to professional standards.

Yet, while there is empirical evidence to indicate that there was no formal INSET for supervisors, two informal kinds of training were identified. For the purposes of this study, I consider formal training to be any programme designed and executed by the GES/MoE aimed at improving the technical and interpersonal skills of school supervisors. The two types of informal training identified were (i) the supervision training programmes that were occasionally organised by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and (ii) peer training.

Peer training

Peer training was the most common form of informal INSET identified by the study. This occurred when supervisors contacted colleagues to seek help and clarification on various issues to improve the supervision process. Almost all the supervisors under study had engaged in this form of training either as a 'peer trainer' or 'peer trainee'. The following are some of their responses in this regard:

> *I also seek advice and counselling from colleagues who have been in the field before me.* (Yaw Adjei, 2013)
>
> *My predecessor is a very good friend, so any time I face a difficulty or I need an advice, he is my first port of call, and, in most of the cases, he helped me.* (Edu Ansah, 2013)
>
> *I do receive calls from colleagues asking questions about organising training for teachers, advice on how to handle some conflict situation. At times, I also call them – so we support each other when necessary.* (Ama Yeboah, 2013)
>
> *We learn and share experiences any time we meet either at the Municipal Office [or elsewhere].* (Akua Goh, 2013)

The advantage of peer training was that learning or skills were acquired through practical experience. It was usually initiated when there was an issue to be addressed, the

supervisor in question realised that it was outside his or her experience, and he or she then called on a peer for assistance. This finding corroborates Schon (1993) position that it is not only formal training that enhances professionalism/technical skills of supervisors but also through tacit knowledge which is acquired by a practitioner during his/her specific line of work thus experiential learning.

However, the drawback of the peer training approach is that it might or might not be what was actually required according to education standards, but, rather, based on the experiences and understanding of the 'peer trainer'. Such a reading of the situation might be erroneous at times, and this could lead to misinformation, which, in turn, had a negative effect on the quality of the supervision process.

Informal supervision training by NGOs

The other type of informal INSET identified by the study was the support provided by NGOs working in the field of education in Ga South Municipality. Some of these organisations offered training in supervision skills and donated resources to aid the GSMEO in the execution of the education service. Even though this programme was implemented with the approval of the education authorities, the training it included was classified as informal because the design and content of courses had not originated with the GES. The following comments represent the views of some of the supervisors under study on NGO training programmes:

> *Partnership for Accountable Governance Education (PAGE) is an NGO that has been providing some form of training for the school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality. They train us in management, conflict resolution, coaching, etc. If PAGE were not to be supporting us with training as well as resources, honestly, I*

don't know what we would have been doing as school supervisors. (Yaw Adjei, 2013)

I have attended a number of training programmes organised by GNECC, PAGE, and some other NGOs. They have actually been helping us a lot. PAGE gave me the motorbike I am using currently. (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

Even though we don't get training from the office, NGOs have been coming to support us. (Kwame Koffi, 2013)

Yes, I have received training from some NGOs. They normally train us in areas of specific projects of interest [sic] in schools and communities, [and] how we can support as well as benefit from their activities. Some of the trainings are good but the issue is that at times, different NGOs train us differently on the same issue, so we get confuse[d] at times. (Edu Ansah, 2013)

The challenge with the training support provided by NGOs was that because they developed courses themselves, such programmes were designed to suit their interests and core philosophies rather than the strategic focus or objectives of the GSEO. For example, an NGO working to reduce teenage pregnancy was likely to gear its supervision training programme towards the prevention of teenage pregnancy amongst schoolgirls, but not necessarily how to improve teaching and learning, and materials development.

Another negative effect of NGO training was that school supervisors were also made representatives of the projects they benefitted from. Accordingly, allowances were tied to their ability to submit reports by set deadlines, meaning that they tended to pay more attention to project monitoring activities and writing reports for NGOs than supervising teaching and learning. One of the supervisors under study who doubled as the local representative of an NGO project explained how he combined both roles:

I am the local representative of an NGO which ventures into Water and Sanitation projects in schools. So, during my supervision visit to schools, I take the opportunity to visit the community to monitor progress of the project activities. I am not residing in the community so I have to do all the two activities.

I also use PTA meeting as a platform to educate and assess the project since the parents are key stakeholders in the project as well. (Yaw Adjei, 2013)

This responsibility conflicted with supervision duties, as time that should have been devoted to school visits and PTA meetings was used to monitor the NGO project. Serving as local NGO representatives put further demands on supervisors' work routines as, in addition to actual fieldwork, they also had to attend project meetings and seminars.

This finding is corroborated by the growing literature arguing that donor-funded NGOs in the developing world are causing a brain drain from host countries, and also render public institutions ineffective as locals prefer to work for NGOs rather than the state due to greater monetary reward (e.g. Maltha, 2008; Pfeiffer, 2003).

5.4   Structural conditions for education supervision

The temporality of the structure–agency relationship becomes apparent once we recognise that all human activity takes place within the context provided by a set of pre-existing social structures. At any given moment of [in] time people confront social structures which are preformed in the sense that they are the product, not of people's actions in the present, but of actions undertaken in the past. (Lewis, 2000:250).

In the conceptual framework for the present study (see Chapter 4.2), I consider the structure of a supervision system to consist of the rules that govern it as a social institution and the resources (both human and non-human) available for its effective operation. This section provides a structural critique and understanding of the Ghanaian basic school supervision system. Therefore, the discussion focuses on the policies (supervision rules), resources (physical and non-physical), and hierarchies of social power in education supervision.

5.4.1 Identifying institutional components of the basic school supervision structure

Even though there is no formal definition of the components of the Ghanaian basic school supervision system, based on findings from the literature and the field data collected, I identified six institutional components that constitute the supervision system: (i) the National Inspectorate Board (NIB); (ii) the Inspectorate Division; (iii) the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Education Office (MMDEO); (iv) the SMC; (v) the circuit supervisor (CS); and (vi) the school. These agencies are interdependent but perform different roles in the supervision system. The components that formally constitute the supervision system are illustrated in Figure 5.3 below:

At the apex of this hierarchy is the NIB, which is headed by the Chief Inspector of Schools. As discussed in the literature review, the NIB is responsible for developing supervision policies and standards, and reports directly to the Parliament of Ghana. Beneath the NIB is the Inspectorate Division of the GES, which oversees the implementation of education standards and policies in all schools in both public and private sectors. Next, is the MMDEO, which comprises the decentralised education offices mandated to manage and govern schools in each Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assembly (MMDA). Each MMDEO has a Deputy Director in Charge of Supervision (DDS) who is responsible for monitoring school supervisors in the performance of their duties. At the community level, the SMC works hand in hand with CSs, the former cutting across various sectors of the local community. Finally, the school is the primary focus of the supervision structure. Figure 5.3 below illustrates the institutional components of the basic school supervision system.

Figure 5.3   Components of the Ghanaian basic school supervision system

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          NIB and GES         │
└─────────────────────────────┘
        │
        ▼
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│     Inspectorate Division    │
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        │
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│            MMDEO             │
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        │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│         SMC and CSs          │
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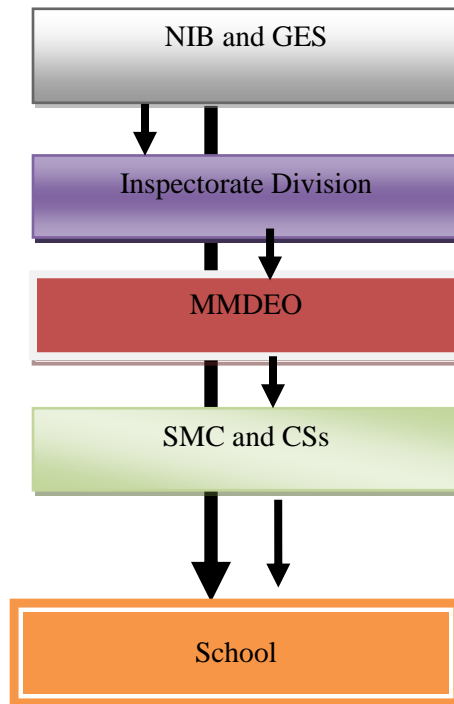
Source: The author (2014).

5.4.2   Basic education supervision policy, finance and resources

Exploring the function of the supervision structure, it was evident that the Chief Inspector in consultation with the MoE developed policies and standards of supervision taking into account global trends and international development frameworks such as Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed in an interview, one NIB member (Director B) noted that, "*We are in the era of global interdependence, so in developing supervision standards and approaches, we have to take global education indicators into consideration.*" This was also stated in the Manual for governance and inspection of schools.

However, field data revealed that since its establishment in 2010, the NIB had yet to start functioning as intended and develop a policy on education supervision. Supervisors relied on the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* developed by the GES in 2002 with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), but during interview, some of those under study revealed that there were problems of access, as exemplified by the following extract:

> *I have not been given the handbook when I was appointed. I was told GES has run out of supply. At the initial stages, I have to be borrowing from a colleague supervisor hoping that I will be given my personal copy soon. Since it was not coming, I went to photocopy the handbook with my own money.* (Edu Ansah, 2013)

The *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002) is a working guide to the supervision process but does not provide policy direction in terms of investment and provision of a supervision infrastructure within the education system. It is also over ten years old and it needs to be revised to take account of global trends and developments in the field of education supervision.

Director B blamed the NIB's inability to implement basic school supervision on two key factors: inadequate finances, and lack of material resources to facilitate the inspection and supervision process:

> *Most of the NIB members have been appointed, the Chief Inspector of Schools has also been appointed, but due to resource constraints [low budgetary allocation, unavailability of vehicles, and recruitment of regional representatives], it is yet to commerce full operation.* (Director B, 2013)

This assertion is corroborated by Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011:78), who conclude that supervision and inspectorate divisions in many countries are poorly resourced, which is a

shortcoming that ministers tend to fail to recognise as a serious fault in the education sector.

In the field, the school supervisors under study were structurally constrained by the lack of finances to support teachers' professional development. The *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002) stipulates that supervisors should serve as development coaches and organise INSET for teachers. However, due to cost constraints and lack of personal financial incentives, respondents were not able to implement such programmes regularly:

> *I am constrained financially to organise regular in-service training for teachers. There is no financial provision for us to organise this activity even though it is one of our major responsibilities. Can you believe it that I have not received my supervision allowance for the past four years? So, how do I finance my movement and also organise in-service training?* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

Kwesi Mintim's response is supported by Arthur (2011), who found inadequate and irregular supply of fuel for school supervisors' motorcycles, lack of a motorcycle maintenance allowance, and non-payment of maintenance to be among the major factors hindering effective supervision of teaching and learning.

5.4.3 Communication within the supervision structure

Another critical factor impeding the efficacy of the supervision structure was the lack of feedback to schools. According to Mahfooz and Hovde (2010), for supervision systems to be effective, schools must receive useful information and actionable feedback on their performance. However, in the present context, information and feedback to schools was a major challenge. The study found that even though data were collected from schools annually, they seldom received feedback on the use of these statistics. The MoE published an annual Education Sector Performance (ESP) report but schools did not a

receive copy of it. In this regard, one head teacher noted that although he had heard it debated on the television and radio, he had never received a copy of the ESP report:

> *Information on performance [of] our schools has always been a challenge. I have been teaching for over 15 years, and also as a head teacher for 4 years now, but I have never seen an ESP report before. We have been filling questionnaires for the Ministry of Education and the GES on regular basis, but we don't get any feedback. All that they tell us is that educational standards are falling, but if we don't see the assessment reports, how can we appreciate the issue better. In primary schools, we don't write BECE [Basic Education Certificate Examination], so we need to have access to the ESP and NEA[National Education Assessment] reports.* (Head teacher J, 2013)

The above quotation represents a reflection of the growing frustration of head teachers at the failure to provide feedback on data collected from schools; a grievance that also seems to have affected their willingness to complete MoE and GES questionnaires or participate in exercises designed to gather primary data at school level.

5.5   Power dynamics and hierarchies in the education supervision structure at the Municipal Level

To further critique the decentralised supervision structure in the Ga South Municipality and also to provide a deeper contextual understanding, this sub section examines the power dynamics and hierarchies in the education supervision structure and how it influences the behaviour of school supervisors as agents in the supervision structure. Fine and Turner (2003) noted that in supervision, power is an integral aspect of the supervisor–supervisee relationship. Respective individuals' roles were set in a power hierarchy such that supervisors were responsible for overseeing and facilitating their supervisees' performance on the job as well as their professional development (Fine and Turner, 2003).

Based on this knowledge and data collected from the fieldwork, I grouped the power dynamics of school supervision structure into three broad categories: (i) agents involved in supervision power dynamics at the municipal level; (ii) power used to effect change at the school level; and (iii) supervision strategies and behavioural outcomes.

5.5.1   Agents involved in supervision power dynamics at the municipal level

Giddens (2014) explains agency in terms of constructivism, whereby the pattern of behaviour or social identity of individual actors in society is shaped by the dictates of their environment. Such actors' decisions and choices are based on thoughts acquired by virtue of being raised in a particular social structure (Bourdieu, 1990:80). With the Ghanaian basic school supervision system serving as a social structure, the study identified two types of agent involved in supervision power dynamics: (i) policy-level supervision agents – also known as external agents of school supervision; and (ii) school–level supervision agents – or internal agents of school supervision. These individuals operate in two different but interrelated structures: policy-level agents (the municipal education directorate and school supervisors) of the national basic education system, and school-level agents (head teachers, teachers, and SMC and PTA members) of the school environment or community.

The Ghanaian education system is decentralised (Essuman, 2010), and, as a result, the MMDA is directly responsible for education governance and administration in its jurisdiction. The education directorate of the MMDA thus appoints basic school supervisors to supervise teaching and learning.

In the present study, Director A elaborated thus:

The Municipal Education Directorate is actually the representative of the GES and it is responsible for recruitment of supervisors. On paper we are supposed to be the final decision-making body in the municipality, but, in reality, this is not so: we still take orders from the Inspectorate Division of GES and NIB; they develop the policies and we supervise the implementation. (Director A, 2013)

This response clearly reveals that the education supervision system was still not fully decentralised. Director A went on to describe the education supervision chain as follows:

Education supervisors are to directly report to the Deputy Director of Supervision – DDS – through quarterly reports on their activities; or, in case of issues needing urgent attention, they come to the office to inform the DDS. The DDS then informs the Municipal Director of Education. When the issue is beyond his or her powers, the Inspectorate Division and NIB will be informed. (Director A, 2013)

It can therefore be observed that even though the Municipal Education Directorate oversaw supervision of schools in its jurisdiction, it was still subject to the powers of the Inspectorate Division and NIB when it came to making a decision, particularly one related to policy formulation.

School supervisors served as a feedback loop between policymakers (the municipality, Inspectorate Division, or NIB), and the school and its community. Accordingly, in addition to their communication function, supervisors were education policy implementers, capacity development actors, and school conflict mediators. As communication agents, supervisors informed the school and its community members of new trends, policies and developments in education. Director 'A' referred to basic school supervisors thus:

Supervisors are like messengers of the gospel of education. They deliver messages from the municipality to head teachers and teachers in schools, as well as bring messages from schools to the municipality. (Director A, 2013)

Supervisors could therefore be regarded as liaison agents serving as policy communicators, Kwesi Mintim noting that:

> *Any time there is a new policy or information for schools, we will be called to the Municipal Education Office. The DDS then informs us about the policy with the necessary explanations. It is our duty as supervisors to make sure we understand the policy and its explanation, because, at the school level, we are going to serve as the resource person educating head teachers and teachers on the policy. Also, during the implementation of school policy, we are to be communicating back to the municipality, informing them about the realities and progress of implementation.* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

Edem Adzoh also gave a vivid account of how she carried out her duty as policy communicator during the introduction of the Free School Uniform Policy at DA[8] Primary School:

> *The Free School Uniform Policy was introduced in 2010 to support children from deprived communities and poor households. The policy was, however, announced in the media [radio and television] as if every child in the selected public schools will be given the uniform. The distribution of the first consignment of the uniforms was therefore marred with pockets of conflict and misunderstanding in some schools. In a [one] school, for instance, parents came angrily to attack the head teacher of being biased in distributing the uniform; it took the intervention of the chief and community leaders to calm the angry parents. To address the situation, I have to organise a meeting with all head teachers, teachers and parents in the various communities to educate them on the content of the policy and who qualifies to receive a uniform.* (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

Basic school supervisors were therefore education policy educators in both school and community, and had to ensure that head teachers, teachers, and community members understood policies, projects and directives from the MoE and GES. In this regard, supervisors required effective training in communication and public relations if they were to build positive relationships between schools, communities and the Municipal

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[8] District Assembly

Education Directorate. However, as discussed in subsections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2, findings on pre-service training and INSET for supervisors revealed that they did not receive any formal training in these areas. They were therefore left to learn as best they could from informal sources such as peers and NGOs.

As implementing agents, supervisors were tasked to ensure that prescribed education policies were carried out as designed, and, through quarterly reports, they were supposed to provide regular feedback to national-level policymakers on the effectiveness or otherwise of the various policies. In this sense, supervision activities also entered the realms of policy analysis and monitoring. Akua Goh made the following comments:

> *One of our primary responsibilities is to ensure policies are implemented as planned. For instance, in schools within my circuit, I sit with the head teachers to distribute the capitation grant. This is because I want to make sure the resources are used for the right purposes and not diverted. I sometimes experience some resistance from some of the head teachers, but I always insist on being part of the grant disbursement process.* (Akua Goh, 2013)

Kwame Koffi also cited an example in which he had to write to GSMEO about delays in the release of the capitation grant:

> *There was a time I had to write a letter to the Municipal Education Directorate on the effect the delays in the release of capitation grant was having on the schools. For a whole academic year, the capitation grant was not coming forth. As a result, teachers were unable to print examination questions for pupils; chalk and notebooks were all not available for teachers to use. In the letter I wrote, I informed the DDS that if the delay in the release of the capitation grant is not addressed, the goal of the policy, which is to improve access and quality education, will not be achieved in the long run because teachers and head teachers will always be frustrated in schools, and will not be able to plan the teaching and learning activities as they should. My report actually led to a prompt response and the Municipal Director of Education visited most of the schools to explain the situation.* (Kwame Koffi, 2013)

Ensuring effective implementation of policies, as in the case of Akua Goh, and also reporting the effects of policies during the implementation process, as Kwame Koffi had done, are clear indications that school supervisors were actually education policy analysts and advisors who needed to be well equipped for policy implementation and development.

5.5.2   Supervisors as advisors and capacity development actors

Another major responsibility of school supervisors was their role in teacher capacity development. Supervisors were responsible for identifying the skill needs of teachers, developing the necessary training interventions, and scheduling INSET sessions accordingly. The *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002:i) describes their advisory capacity as follows:

> This leadership role involves providing support to the Headteacher and Teachers as curriculum advisor and in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The Circuit Supervisor must also provide guidance and leadership in helping the Headteacher become more effective in managing school resources.

Moreover, the key expectations of the school supervisor as stipulated in the handbook (GES, 2002:vii) are to:

- Assist head teachers to apply basic management techniques to the running of the school

- Assess teachers' performance

- Provide INSET for teachers and head teachers

- Use democratic techniques in helping teachers to improve their work

In this sense, supervisors could add to their job descriptions the roles of leader, advisor, trainer and capacity builder. However, when asked whether they had the requisite skills

to assess teacher performances and organise INSET as indicated in the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002), Ama Yeboah gave the following response:

> *We have not received any formal training in organising in-service training, but we are also teachers so we should be able to organise it; but it is difficult at times. We don't have resources to go for consultants so we are forced to always read and learn to teach teachers. I have organised in-service training on several occasions for both teachers and head teachers. Some of them I did the training myself; other times, I called on other colleague supervisors to help. The challenge is that teaching adults is different from teaching children and you need extra training techniques to be effective as an adult trainer.* (Ama Yeboah, 2013)

Edem Adzoh noted that she built the capacity of new teachers in pedagogic methodology after assessing their performance:

> *I have been helping both new and old teachers. For the new teachers, I coach them in lesson note preparation, as well as designing teaching and learning materials for the various lessons. This is, however, not easy because it is not everybody that is willing to be corrected and some of the young teachers even think they know better than me.* (Edem Adzoh, 2013)

Kwame Koffi also observed that:

> *We have a lot of work to do as supervisors, due to policy failure in my opinion... Head teachers, are to perform administrative functions in schools; here is the case where head teachers, just like us [supervisors], are not given any formal training in institutional administration and management. They are therefore struggling to function effectively. As a supervisor, I am supposed to support the head teachers and organise capacity development training for them.* (Kwame Koffi, 2013)

Even though the supervisors made a conscious effort to operate as advisors and capacity development actors, they struggled to function effectively due to inadequate skills. The responses of Ama Yeboah and Kwame Koffi clearly reveal a capacity gap in terms of education supervision, as they lacked skills in the execution of adult education and

teaching approaches and did not have adequate knowledge of institutional administration. Yet, these were critical competencies of an efficient supervisor.

With supervisors expected to undertake all these disparate roles and activities – policy disseminator, implementer and monitor; advisor; and capacity development actor – it is not surprising that they were found to be at the centre of supervision power dynamics. This was because they needed the skills to communicate effectively with policy formulators, and, at the same time, also required policy implementation and training competencies in order to communicate effectively with head teachers and teachers.

Teachers managed education delivery at the school level, the head teacher being responsible for internal supervision of classroom teaching and learning. However, these functions also operated at the level of the environment in which the school was located, and, as part of the education decentralisation and participatory governance process, the community also contributed to school supervision.

The full range of agents involved in school supervision power dynamics is illustrated in Figure 5.4 below:

Figure 5.4: Agents involved in decentralised school supervision power dynamics
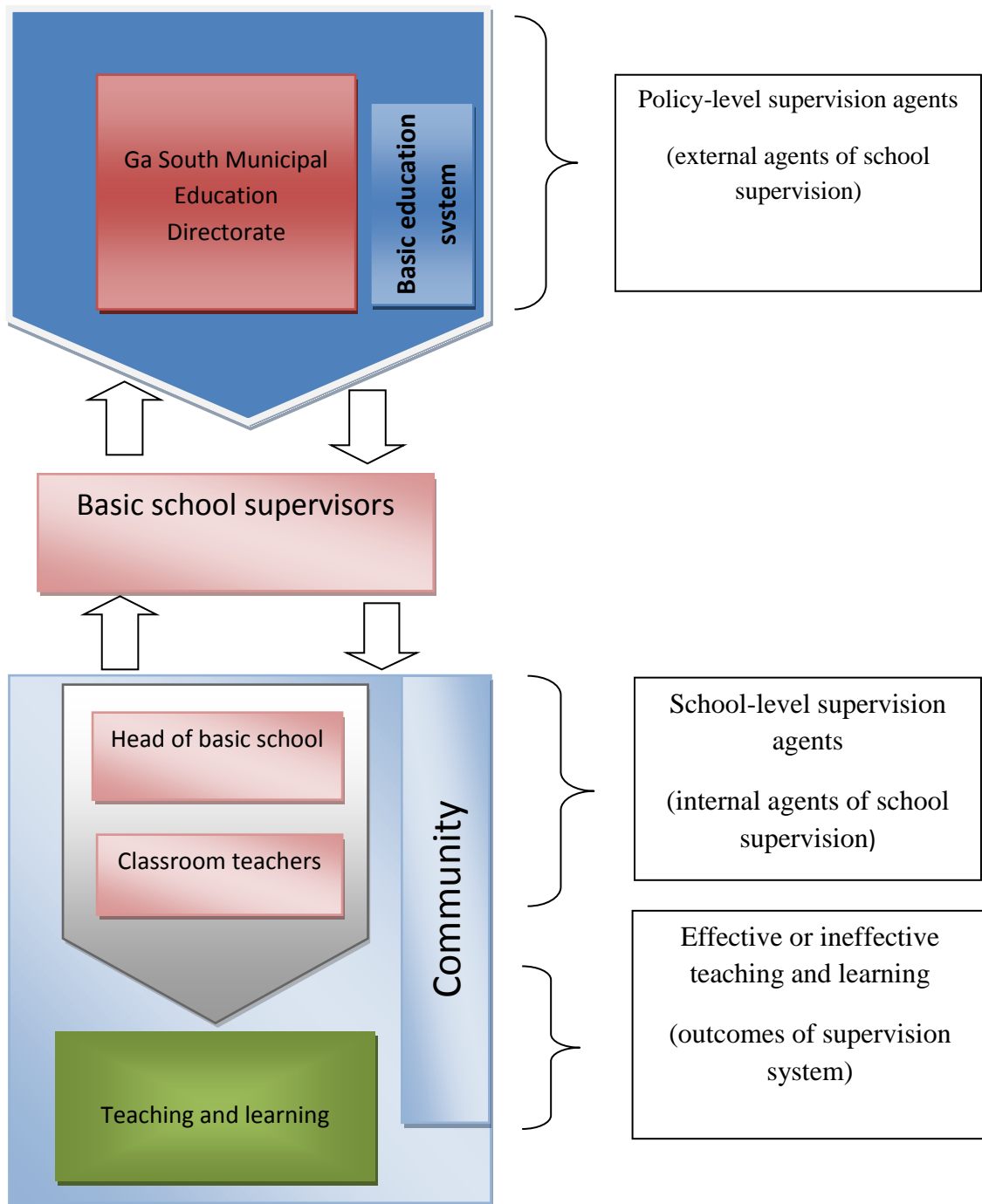
Source: The author (2013).

5.5.3 Power used to effect change at the school level

In the research area, the power to effect formal change in schools rested with the GSMEO, the GES, and the MoE – all external supervision agents. Supervisors, who were external agents as well as liaisons between higher external agents and school-level (internal) agents, had limited power to effect change in schools. They had to report to GSMEO and could recommend changes or actions they judged to be necessary. However, such a recommendation could be accepted or rejected, as explained by one respondent:

> *Our system works in an interesting way: even though we, the supervisors, are close to the schools, critical decisions relating to policy are made by GES and the Municipal Education Directorate. We are only to implement the decisions taken by the national and municipal authorities, and support the schools. At the school level, supervisors have the power to query teachers, organise in-service training, resolve conflicts, and recommend that teachers should be transferred. For instance, a supervisor can recommend that a teacher should be punished or transferred from a school due to misconduct. The Municipal Directorate is, however, not obliged to heed...the recommendations given by the supervisor; it can be taken or rejected.* (Kwesi Mintim, 2013)

Supervisors had the power to take some decisions unilaterally, such as organising INSET for teachers, but, according to the GSMEO Director, "*The power given to school supervisors has to be controlled, else they will become 'power drunk'. Can you imagine giving a school supervisor the power to dismiss teachers? Even in Ghana, it is very difficult to dismiss an employee in the public sector.*"

The amount of power available to supervisors was thus carefully controlled by the education authorities in the interests of the smooth running of the supervision system. Even though this affected the pace of the decision-making process, it was intended to prevent conflict in schools (see Section 5.6).

5.5.4 Supervision strategies and behavioural outcomes

According to the data gathered, even though the community contributed to school decision making through the SMC and PTA, GSMEO was the final decision making unit. As a result, basic school supervisors in the research area had a very limited range of power and resources to effect change or make decisions in schools. This is evident in the appointment letters presented in boxes 5.1 and 5.2 respectively.

Supervisors were tasked to liaise between the school, its community, and the Municipal Education Directorate; monitor teaching and learning; and support head teachers in effective school management. In the performance of all these duties, the supervisor could only report an issue to the Municipal Directorate. In case of misconduct – such as absenteeism – on the part of a teacher, his or her supervisor could only write a letter of enquiry to the culprit, after which the supervisor had to forward the response to the directorate: *"We cannot take decisions on our own, we have to get approval from the municipality first; the approval at times can take over six months."* (Akua Yeboah, 2013).

Secondly, supervisors were required to conduct regular INSET for teachers to enhance their professional skills development. However, responses from the supervisors under study indicate that they did not have sufficient resources to execute this service. According to respondents, implementing an INSET session required both financial resources and technical knowledge. However, they were not provided with allowances or resources to support such activities, and neither did they have access to their own INSET for skills development. Consequently, they struggled to offer the professional teacher development required of them. In this regard, Kwame Koffi commented, *"I am supposed to be supporting the professional development of the teachers in schools within my*

circuit, but this is not possible... Since my appointment, I have never attended any

supervision training or skills workshop, so how can I also help the teachers."

These limitations were found to affect the ability of supervisors to control what actually went on in the schools they oversaw.

5.6   Chapter summary and conclusion

The discussion in this chapter addressed the professional background of basic school supervisors; the supervisor recruitment process; supervisor training (both pre-service and INSET); the supervision structure; power dynamics; and conflict in the school environment.

Findings from the professional background analysis revealed that all supervisors in Ga South Municipality were professionally trained teachers with over ten years' work experience in the field of education. However, they studied different degree programmes, some of which were not directly related to education.

It emerged that the supervisor recruitment process in the research area was tainted by neopatrimonialism, and subject to pressure from politicians and traditional authorities. Moreover, job descriptions and responsibilities were not well defined in the appointment letter.

Professional training in supervision skills was found to be inadequate, and supervisors were unable to organise regular INSET for teachers or support their professional development. Supervisors managed to the best of their abilities by relying on peer training and support (both skills development and material) from NGOs to carry out their

duties. However, with supervisors appointed by benefactor NGOs as community project representatives, they were found to divide their time unequally between monitoring projects and supervision of schools to the detriment of the latter. This was because they seemed to be more interested in the monetary rewards of working for an NGO.

It emerged that the Ghanaian basic education supervision structure was bureaucratic and poorly resourced. These factors caused delays in supervision decision making and constrained supervisors in the performance of their duties.

Finally, in the supervision chain, school supervisors were found to serve as a feedback loop between policymakers (GSMEO, the Inspectorate Division, NIB), and schools and their communities. In addition to such a communication function, supervisors played the roles of education policy implementers, capacity development actors, and conflict mediators. However, inadequate supervision skills affected their ability to perform all these duties effectively.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY ON RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOL SUPERVISION IN GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY

6.0   Introduction

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin 2003:13).

In this chapter, I explore school supervision activities in their real-life context, investigating what goes on in the life of a supervisor in the performance of his or her duties in Ga South Municipality. The research question I address in this chapter is *how do supervisors apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process?* In answering this question, I explore pre and post supervision practices, how school level supervision is carried out and the environmental/socioeconomic factors that affect supervisors in school supervision processes. In-depth interview and field notes were used to collect data from two supervisors working in different geographical settings (i.e rural and urban).

As stated earlier, the Ga South Municipality comprises both rural and urban settlements, with the urban population constituting 76.04% while the rural population makes up the remaining 23.96% (GSMA, 2012) [see Chapter 4.3]. Settlements in urban areas are condensed with clusters of public schools, while rural settlements are dispersed with schools a long way from many communities. Consequently, pupils and teachers in urban areas only have to walk a short distance or can use public transport to get to school, while their rural counterparts have to walk long distances and have little or no access to regular public transport.

Based on this demographic, I categorised school supervision in the municipality into two subgroups: urban and rural. To effectively explore and compare rural with urban supervision, the chapter follows a day in the life of a school supervisor in each environment.

6.1   Case study 1: A typical school supervision in a rural setting within the Ga South Municipality

6.1.1   A brief background to Adzah Circuit

Adzah Circuit is one of nine in Ga South Municipality. It is a rural circuit comprising 11 community basic schools located beyond the Densu River,[9] which some children have to cross, or at least negotiate a tributary, daily to get to and from school. The communities in the circuit are linked by seasonably motorable (i.e. untarred) roads. In order to facilitate easy movement of people, including schoolchildren, teachers and supervisors, a steel bridge has been constructed over the main Densu River. Bicycles and motorcycles and are the main forms of transport in these communities.

Farming, fishing and sand collection are the main economic activities. The first two traditional occupations are mainly engaged in by adults. The youths – who are mostly school dropouts – occupy their time collecting sand and working as commercial motorcyclists instead of going to school. Many of the youth withdraw from education to engage in such activities as a source of livelihood because they bring 'quick money'.

Similar to other rural supervisors, the supervisor of Adzah Circuit, Yaw Adjei (a pseudonym), lived in a nearby town about 33km from the circuit. He drove as far as the

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[9] One of Ghana's major rivers: it is 116 km long and flows from the Atewa Range into the Atlantic Ocean; it supplies half the drinking water for Accra.

road would permit, parked the car, and continued by motorcycle to his office, which was located at Adzah Municipal Assembly (MA) Basic School. He explained his daily commute thus:

> *I reside in the nearby town with my family and come to work every day. Due to the bad nature of the road, I normally pack [park] my car along the way and continue the journey on a motorbike to the office. The closest school is about 45 minutes' walking distance from the supervisor's office, while the farthest school is about 4 hours' walking distance from the office.* (Yaw Adjei, 2013)

Yaw Adjei had a motorcycle that had been donated by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in January 2013 to aid him in visiting the schools in his circuit. Prior this, he had to hire a commercial motorcycle at his own expense. However, getting round the schools at all was a challenge in the rainy season due to bad roads and the river overflowing its banks:

> *Prior to the donation of the motorbike by the NGO, I have been hiring commercial motorbikes for my supervision visits at my own cost. The only problem is that supervision is a little difficult in the rainy season. During the rainy season, River Densu overflows its bank, the road to some of the schools becomes difficult to ply, and these affect supervision activities in these schools. There is an alternative route that I have been using at times, but it is also in a very poor condition and very expensive to use. On the average, I am able to visit two schools a day when I am doing a brief visit and one school during a comprehensive visit. The schools are located in communities and these communities are far apart so it is very difficult to move between schools, particularly in a situation where I am without motorbike – I have to walk for hours and by the time I get to the school I am exhausted.*

Yaw Adjei's comments on poor access to rural schools are a reflection of the general situation facing rural education in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011; Hosu-Porbley, 2009). In a study on rural–urban education inequality in Ghana, Hosu-Porbley (2008) notes that aside from the problem of insufficient teachers,

rural schools are often characterised by poor classroom structures, schools under trees, and poor access routes, which, in most, cases consist of untarred roads and footpaths; in such schools, it is sometimes impossible to hold classes during the rainy season.

I am, therefore, tempted to postulate that, all things being equal, effective teaching, learning and supervision were seasonal activities in some rural schools in Ga South Municipality. In inclement weather, roads became inaccessible while poor infrastructure made classrooms uninhabitable for teachers and pupils. Figure 6.1 below depicts a rural school in the Adzah Circuit that I visited during my fieldwork.

Plate 6.1: A rural school in Adzah Circuit

Source: The author (2013).

6.1.2 Preparation for a school visit

According to the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002:41), school supervisors need to prepare adequately before visiting a school. The supervisor should read previous reports on the school to familiarise him or herself with its situation as per the last visit, and update his or her knowledge of the relevant education policies. To explore Yaw Adjei's pre-supervision activities, I asked him how he prepared for a visit and he responded as follows:

> *I check my itinerary and also review relevant notes on my previous visits to decide the type of supervision I will be doing. My visits depend on what I want to do. My visit to the school can either be a brief visit – visit to schools just to acquaint myself with schools after a vacation, greet teachers, explore learning environments, etc. – a comprehensive visit – where I assessed critically teaching and learning in schools, teachers' and pupils' attendance to school, etc. – or a follow-up visit; I do this visit after a brief or comprehensive visit to follow up on issues I identified during my earlier visits. After I [have] settled on the type of visit I will be doing for a particular school, I prepare ahead. I review my previous visit to the school, issues that were discussed, and proposed actions or decisions that were taken.*

Comparing Yaw Adjei's response with the guidelines in the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002:41), I found that his preparation activities were in line with standard practice.

I followed up by asking what he did during a supervision visit, and this was his reply:

> *My first point [port] of call is the head teacher's office. In most cases, I don't inform them of my visit; even if I have to inform them, I do that early in the morning on the day of the visit. This is to give me a true picture of what is going on in the school. After meeting the head to discuss progress of the school, I demand for the attendance book of teachers, where [I] observe teachers' attendance, absenteeism and time of reporting to school. My second chain of activities is classroom visits. I visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning, collect lesson notes of teachers, and check pupils' attendance; after which, I assess the safety of the school environment. After all these activities, I will have a*

brief meeting with all the teachers. If there is any information from the Municipal Office, I relay it to them; if it's a new policy, I try to explain it to them based on my understanding. I also give the teachers opportunities to ask me questions.

Have you ever had a problem with a teacher during a visit?

Yes, it is the nature of the work and it is common. In one of the cases, I visited a female teacher in her classroom during a lesson period. This teacher was relatively new in the school. I sat in her class and observed the lesson. She was teaching science – 'the three states of matter' – and it was clear she did not adequately prepare for the class. The pupils were only reading from the textbook; there was no practical demonstration. After the class, I called her outside and I gave her the feedback. She got angry that I don't like her, and that the headmistress gave me negative information about her, and everybody is finding fault with everything she does. She became very self-protective and truant in the[was often absent from]school. She picks quarrel with anybody who tries to give her feedback. Realising she was bringing division and problems among the teaching staff, I reported her to the Municipal Office. But you see, in Ghana, it is difficult for a teacher to be dismissed, so the best the Municipal Office can do was for her to be transferred from the school.

This finding supports the growing body of literature which has found that disciplinary structures are weak in sub-Saharan African education systems, and that transfer to a rural posting is often the only means of dealing with staff misconduct (e.g. Adedeji and Olaniyan, 2011). However, rather than addressing indiscipline, and helping those teachers who would benefit from some form of in-service education and training (INSET), Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) warn that this practice might only exacerbate the problem since the supervision system tends to be even weaker in rural areas.

Similarly, Yaw Adjei noted that he had addressed pockets of conflict, mainly between teachers and heads. However, he had also resolved a major dispute between a school and its school management committee (SMC):

There was an instance where I have to address a serious conflict between teachers and members of the SMC. The community members who are members of the SMC think they have the power of a supervisor. As a result, they walk to the

school anytime to demand teachers' attendance book and lesson notes. The teachers, however, did not take the activities of the SMC members kindly at all. They resisted by refusing to give them the register and lesson note books they requested. This led to a serious conflict between the school and the community. Some of the SMC members openly threatened the teachers in front of the pupils, and some teachers also left the community because they felt their lives are not safe in the community for them to teach. Their absenteeism therefore increased, and this was affecting teaching and learning. Upon hearing the conflict situation, I met both parties separately to listen to their side of the story. The SMC members apparently were of the view that the teachers were teaching their wards, so it is their duty to monitor what their wards are learning in school. In the process, I have to educate the SMC members about their duties. They understood it, and I also explained to the teachers that the SMC are partners in school development so they should not be seen as enemies.

6.1.3 Challenges to a supervisor at the time of appointment

Yaw Adjei gave an account of the challenges he had faced as a newly appointed supervisor:

At the time of my appointment, I had a very narrow knowledge in basic school supervision. I attended a two-day training workshop for circuit supervisors. I did a lot of learning on the job by consulting senior supervisors for advice. We also have PAGE, an NGO that has been providing training for school supervisors in the municipality. If PAGE were not to be supporting us with training as well as resources, honestly, I don't know what we would have been doing as school supervisors. The job is very technical, and tedious as well. Another challenge is that in these communities, parents find it difficult to provide basic needs for the pupils. As a result most of them are left to fend for themselves. Parents think providing and supporting pupils through education is the responsibility of the government, and they have no role to play. Finally, the community is very hostile to the school. Youths fight teachers and even chase them out of classrooms at times; they destroy school facilities and resources, they smoke, defecate in classrooms, etc.

Yaw Adjei's description of the supervision process and his experiences in carrying out his job give a clear picture of school supervision in rural Ga South Municipality: schooling is more or less seasonal, a situation that is beyond the control of the supervision system; and it also reflects the marginalisation of rural schools in terms of infrastructure development. These findings are corroborated by Adedeji and Olaniyan

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(2011), who note that in many developing countries, rural schools lack basic infrastructure, most teachers are unqualified, and there are high levels of child labour in agriculture; factors that lead to ineffective teaching, weak supervision, and, ultimately, poor learning outcomes.

6.2   Case study 2: A typical school supervision in an urban setting within Ga South Municipality

6.2.1   A brief background to Gbelishi Circuit

Gbelishi is an urban circuit located in South Accra. There are 21 'schools' in this circuit but only 10 actual school buildings, as all except one operate two 'shifts'. In the shift system, two schools share the same facilities, meaning that one runs from 6.00 am to 12.00 pm and the other runs from 12.00 pm to 4.30 pm. Each shift represents a school in its own right with a separate head and complement of teachers (GSMA, 2012). Two of the schools are faith based – Catholic and Islamic respectively – while the rest are public community schools.

Gbelishi is adjacent to a major market, meaning that petty trading is the main economic activity in the communities comprising this circuit. According to its supervisor, Edem Adzoh (a pseudonym), "*On market days, some of the school pupils don't come to school: they go to sell at the market, either for their parents, caregivers or guardians, or for themselves, since some fend for themselves. They sell items such as sachet water, fried plantain, second-hand clothes, fish, etc.*"

Due to the predominance of this economic activity, parents residing in the circuit tend to have a negative attitude to education; and their commitment to and participation in issues such as the enrolment of their children and attendance at parent-teacher association (PTA) meetings are poor. As Edem Adzoh explained, "*Most of them seem not to be*

interested in the basic education because in the short term, it does not bring any money home; but when the pupils go to the market, they bring money home." According to the supervisor, community understanding and perception of the concept of free education is the problem: "*Parents think basic education is free so they have no responsibility towards basic education.*"

6.2.1 Preparation for a school visit

Action planning and the review of previous school reports seemed to be the supervisor's main preparatory activities for her supervision visits. She thus had a predetermined focus in terms of what to look out for each time:

> *I develop my action plan that informs me of which school to visit at a particular time. It is only during emergencies that I don't go according to this plan. I study the plan to draw the itinerary for my visit the day before the supervision visit. I also review previous reports if any to abreast [sic] myself with issues in the school. My visit normally focuses on three main areas: teaching methodology, classroom management, and early years education. During the morning of the visit, I prepare very early and set off to avoid traffic jams and also queues at the lorry station. I make sure I get to the office before the morning shift school starts teaching. As I mentioned earlier on, here we have morning and afternoon shift system.*

From this response, it can be observed that, due to the rapid rate of urbanisation, school supervisors in these areas were faced with issues such heavy traffic; as a result, they were forced to leave home early in order to get to work on time.

6.2.3 Activities during a school visit

Descriptions of activities collated from Edem Adzoh's responses indicate that she also generally followed the procedure outlined in the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002):

When I arrive at the school, my first port of call is the head teacher. After greeting the head and informing her of the purpose of my visit, I go round every classroom to greet all the teachers; after which, I inspect attendance registers of teachers and the pupils, lesson notes and expanded scheme of work, exercises given to pupils. I then sit in some of the classrooms [to] observe [the] lesson. During the observation, I focus on teaching methodology, teacher presentation delivery mode, look at the seating arrangements, observe the dress code of teachers, and also engage some of the pupils on the topics they have studied. After the lesson, I will discuss the lesson observation with the teacher privately. There have been instances where I have to correct some of the teachers or encourage them to improve upon their style of delivery in the classroom to make it more child-centred.

This approach can be likened to the collaborative supervision method discussed by Glickman et al. (2014), in which the supervisor observes a lesson, and, in a post-observation meeting, seeks clarification, encourages the teacher, and suggests possible areas for improvement.

Edem Adzoh also noted that in situations in which the feedback was negative, teachers found it difficult to accept.

6.2.4   After a school visit

I write a formal report to the GSMEO [Ga South Municipal Education Office]. This report is quarterly. Aside [from] the report, I handle issues that are within my scope of work, such as organising INSET for teachers, settling disputes, or queries about teacher indiscipline. Other issues beyond my powers, I refer to the GSMEO for decisions to be taken. I must admit that decision-making process is very slow and this negatively affects supervision in schools.

The supervisor was required to submit a report to GSMEO on the school's progress and issues affecting its development. As per the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002), She was also responsible for organising INSET in areas in which teachers were identified to be lacking.

Edem Adzoh went on to explain that even though she was required to organise teacher INSET, she lacked the financial resources to do so and did not have the necessary

knowledge or skills in all areas. She asserted there had been several instances in which she had been obstructed by these factors:

> *It's not all the time that I am able to organise the INSET as required: I am financially and technically constrained; I am not knowledgeable in all areas and there is no financial provision for us to hire services experts. When you pre-finance a training programme, it may take you years before you are reimbursed, so the system does not encourage you to pre-finance any activity.*

6.3 Conflict in the school environment during school supervision

Disputes between individuals are inevitable where groups of people interact in society or an organisation. Wilmot and Hocker (2011) define such conflict as a serious struggle between two or more interdependent individuals over perceived incompatible differences; going on to note that conflict presents both an opportunity and challenge to every leader. With this definition in mind, I explored the various conflicts that occur in the school environment and how the supervisors under study sought to address them.

Data collated from the field revealed several forms of conflict in the school environment that confront school supervisors. For the purposes of this study, I grouped the various conflicts into three main categories: (i) teacher–teacher conflict; (ii) teacher–head teacher conflict; and (iii) school–community conflict.

6.3.1 Teacher–teacher conflict

I considered teacher–teacher conflict to occur when there was a misunderstanding or disagreement between two or more teachers over an issue, with one party feeling aggrieved. One supervisor explained the phenomenon thus: "*When two or more people are working in an environment, you should expect disagreements; the disagreements,*

however, become conflict when a party is offended in the process." My discussions with supervisors revealed that teacher–teacher conflict occurred mainly as a result of poor communication among teachers, when a teacher felt superior and mocked his or her colleagues, or when sexual relationships developed between male and female teachers.

6.3.2 Teacher–head teacher conflict

The second form of conflict was teacher–head teacher conflict. My discussions with such individuals revealed that this type of dispute was largely due to issues relating to communication, absenteeism, failure to prepare lesson plans, and indiscipline among teachers. One head teacher complained, "*Some of the teachers, particularly the young ones, are just not committed to the profession. They come to school, absent themselves, come to school late, and some even do not prepare their lesson notes. When you query them, they call you names.*"

6.3.3 School–community conflict

School–community conflict was one of the major causes of grievance in Ga South Municipality. This occurred when there was a disagreement between community members and the school authorities. The study found three origins of school–community conflict: (i) a poor relationship between the community, as represented by the SMC, and the school; (ii) clashes between male youths in the community and male teachers; and (iii) disputes over ownership of school land.

SMC–school authority conflict occurred mainly over the school decision-making process. For example, an SMC chairperson grumbled, "*Some heads don't listen to us; they always*

ignore our views when taking some decisions because they think they are more educated than us."

6.4   Chapter Summary

Empirical evidence from these two case studies revealed that rural and urban supervision processes were quite similar, and also each seemed to generally follow the guidelines in the *Handbook for Circuit Supervisors* (GES, 2002).

However, rural and urban supervisors were respectively confronted with very different environmental and socioeconomic conditions. The rural supervisors under study were all males and who resided in nearby towns and commuted to work by car and/or motorcycle. Lack of electricity, lack of potable water, and unreliable mobile network coverage were the main factors that influenced their decision to live in a nearby town instead of one of their circuit's communities. Moreover, some rural communities became inaccessible during the rainy season, thereby making school sessions as well as supervision visits seasonal in these circuits.

Unlike their rural counterparts, most of the urban supervisors under study resided in one of their respective circuit's communities, and access routes to schools were not a challenge. However, due to rapid population growth in urban areas and limited education infrastructure, schools operated a double-shift system. Morning and afternoon sessions effectively formed different schools, each with its own head and complement of teachers, meaning that urban supervisors were faced with twice as much work in respect of each school. Moreover, with morning school starting as early as 6.00 am, supervisors had to leave home very early in order to avoid traffic jams.

Both rural and urban supervisors are confronted with three forms of conflict – teacher to teacher, teacher to school head and school-community conflicts – in the school environment in the performance of their supervision duty.

In the final chapter, I address the implications of the study's findings on teaching and learning in Ghanaian basic schools, and provide policy recommendations for improvement in school supervision and supervisors' capacity development. I also reflect on the research process, and the strengths and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.0   Introduction

This study sought to explore the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South Municipality, Ghana, how they were recruited, the nature of the training they received, and how they applied acquired skills and knowledge in their work. It also examined the structure and agency of education supervision in Ghana, and how they affected basic school supervision. For the purposes of in-depth investigation and analysis, I engaged 16 participants, comprising school supervisors (7); directors of education (2); head teachers and classroom teachers (5); school management committee (SMC) members (1); and parent-teacher association (PTA) members (1). I considered supervisors and teachers to be the real insiders and therefore my primary sources of information throughout the study.

In this concluding chapter, I revisit the research questions, assess the implications of the findings for basic education supervision, and propose some policy recommendations accordingly. I also critically reflect on the research process, the strengths and limitations of the study, and the bases for further research.

7.1   Research questions revisited

7.1.1   What are the professional backgrounds of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?

This research question was discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.1. My efforts to explore the backgrounds of the school supervisors under study led me to probe their education,

specialisations, length of service in the field of education, and number of years working as a basic school supervisor.

Findings revealed that all the supervisors were well qualified and experienced in the field of education. They were all alumni of the various colleges of education in Ghana, where they had trained for three years to become professional teachers and were awarded a teaching certificate (the so-called Certificate 'A' or 'B'). Moreover, they had all gone on to study for a degree and graduated with either a bachelor's or master's.

All the supervisors had a wealth of classroom teaching experience. However, not all of them had pursued degree programmes in the field of education – specialising in fields such as political science, sociology, human resources management, psychology, and history – and none had received any formal training in education administration or supervision.

In terms of length of service in Ga South Municipality, most of the supervisors had been classroom teachers in the locality before their present jobs. Additionally, all of them had over three years' experience as a supervisor in the municipality, which was a first posting as such for most of them.

7.1.2 What qualifies one as a basic school supervisor, and how is recruitment and selection conducted?

Chapter 5, sub section 5.2 explored this research question. Study findings revealed that the minimum rank required for one to qualify as a school supervisor was principal superintendent. This was the level of graduate entry into the Ghana Education Service (GES), implying that all interested supervision applicants must hold a minimum of a

bachelor's degree and have some teaching experience. Although, the Education Directorate outlined four key steps – (i) declaration of supervision vacancy; (ii) short-listing and interview of applicants; (iii) background and work history assessment; and (iv) appointment – as stages in the supervisor recruitment process, field findings revealed that it was sometimes characterised by elements of neo-patrimonialism on the parts of both political and traditional authorities.

Indeed, it emerged that those in high political office as well as traditional authorities sometimes used their power to mount pressure on education officials to select preferred candidates. This was to reward them for support in elections, or because they belonged to the faction in power. Since political and traditional authorities regarded the influencing of the recruitment process as an opportunity to reward the party faithful, resistance from an education director was interpreted as seeking the downfall of the political head and his or her administration. Such interference in the recruitment process was found to lead to the population of the supervision system with unqualified employees.

7.1.3   What pre- and in-service training is provided to basic school supervisors, and how is it implemented?

This research question was discussed extensively in Chapter 5.3. The findings revealed formal pre-service and in-service education and training (INSET) programme in supervision skills to be lacking. Supervisors were therefore reliant on peer training and support (both skills development and material) from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to build their professional capacity. However, the trainings provided by NGOs was found to be largely governed by their aid philosophy and/or that of their donor partners rather than the sector policies of the Ministry of Education (MoE) or GES.

Moreover, an emerging trend revealed by the study was the appointment of school supervisors as NGO project representatives, coordinators, and/or monitoring officers. Accordingly, they struggled to divide their time equally between NGO duties and the supervision of schools; a disparity that invariably erred on the side of the former, with supervisors seemingly enticed by such benefits as the generous per diems and material rewards (staying at expensive hotels when attending meetings) of working for an NGO.

7.1.4   How do supervisors apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process?

The entire chapter six discussed this research questions into details. The study revealed that for school supervision to be effective, a supervisor required professional knowledge, interpersonal skills, and technical aptitude (e.g. awareness of different supervision approaches, reporting skills, and appraisal and assessment methodologies, etc). However, field findings revealed that although the supervisors under study seemed to have sound professional knowledge and practical experience in the field of education, none of them had received formal training in school supervision or management. The professional knowledge and teaching experience of the supervisors thus met the first prerequisite of effective supervision, namely, 'the supervisor's knowledge in the field', as posited by Glickman et al. (2014). However, two other important competencies, that is, 'technical' and 'interpersonal' skills seemed to be conspicuously lacking.

Indeed, the study found that school supervision in Ga South Municipality was not only deficient in terms of the interpersonal and technical skills of school supervisors, but also in a host of other material resources necessary for the efficient supervision of schools. The implication of these findings is that even though supervisors might be trained,

experienced and exemplary teachers, the absence of comprehensive pre-service training, INSET capacity building in school supervision and management, and a sound structural foundation in the context of a decentralised education sector has led to the inadequate supervision of Ghanaian public basic schools.

7.2   Recommendation

The findings of this study naturally lead to some policy recommendations that seek to improve the Ghanaian basic school supervision system as well as the skills of its supervisors in the performance of their duties. The recommendations are sectioned into two: (i) recommendation for policy and (ii) recommendation for practice.

7.2.1   Recommendations for policy

Firstly, the main area that requires serious attention is the development of a comprehensive education policy to define and govern the basic school supervision process and all the agencies involved in its implementation. This demands the engagement of national-level actors in school supervision, such a platform enabling the National Inspectorate Board (NIB) and GES to collate the views and input of all education stakeholders to inform the development of the supervision policy.

Secondly, there is a need for the establishment of an education management and supervision training institute, or the introduction at an existing institution of a formal supervision training programme solely for school administrators and supervisors. The undertaking of such a programme must then be a necessary prerequisite for consideration of an application for the post of school supervisor. Moreover, current post-holders must also be obliged to pursue the course on a part-time basis within a given period of time.

Finally, there is a need to develop a scheme of service and a grade scale for school supervisors that is completely separate from that of teachers. The scheme of service should comprehensively list the working conditions under which individual supervisors will operate, detailed person and job specifications, and the code of conduct as well as ethical requirements of the position. It should also address the problem of assigning supervisors different job descriptions, some of which are vague. Currently, supervisors and teachers are subject to the same grade scale in terms of eligibility for promotion, and this is generates conflict between them. The development of a grade scale specific to supervisors would rectify the situation whereby some teachers believe that their grade is higher than that of their supervisor and therefore refuse to respect him or her or submit to the supervision process.

7.2.2   Recommendation for practice

The following recommendations were also put forward to enhance basic school supervision practice.

- There is the need to develop mechanisms and systems where the activities of school supervisors can be monitored by the Municipal/Metropolitan/District Education Directorates.

- Also, supervisors need to go for refresher courses and skills upgrade in the areas of supervision technical skills and inter-personal skills. In addition to this, there is the need for newly recruited supervisors to be paired with experience supervisors for mentoring and coaching over a period of time in order for them to learn practical knowledge and skills relating to supervision practice.

- Finally, at the school level, teachers need to be educated about the work of a supervisor and the importance of the supervision process. These will prevent situations where teachers will see supervisors as fault finders or people who comes to query their work.

7.3   Reflection on the research process

In this section, I reflect on the research process, taking note of the strengths and limitations of my research journey. This research project was a purely qualitative case study underpinned by social constructivism theory. Qualitative research methods – in-depth interviews, literature review, and direct observation – were the principal means of data collection. Basic school supervisors, head teachers, and class teachers formed the core of the study participants.

The study afforded basic school supervisors the opportunity to freely express their views on the supervision system and their professional capacity to carry out what was required of them in the execution of their duties. The technique of triangulating the aforementioned methods of data collection enabled the probing of various factors that affected supervisors and the supervision process. Accordingly, I pursued issues that had emerged from the literature review through in-depth interviews and direct field observation.

Seidman's (2006) three-phase interview structure was very helpful. In conducting the first phase, I centred the discussion purely on the background and life history of the respondent, a review of his or her career in the field of education up to the time he or she had become a basic school supervisor, and what had prompted the decision to apply for a job as a supervisor. The second phase explored the practical experiences of the supervisor

as he or she went about his or her work. Finally, in the third phase, I sought to reflect on the meaning of responses from phases one and two from the perspective of the respondent.

My use of open, categorical and axial coding techniques of grounded theory enabled the categorisation and subsequent interpretation of emerging themes and sub-themes that arose from the data. My observations throughout the fieldwork of the geographical environment and non-verbal cues of respondents leant a deeper meaning to the linguistic data. This gave me the opportunity to effectively interpret the field data and discuss them in relation to the research questions.

Although the study was largely successful in addressing the research questions, I confronted some challenges during my research journey. Firstly, there was negotiation of access, and obtaining institutional consent from Ga South Municipal Education Directorate was very challenging. My appointment with the director (a colleague) was rescheduled six times, and, in the end, making an unannounced visit to her office was the only way I could meet with her. This delayed the research process by about three months.

Secondly, the remoteness of some of the rural communities and schools, and the poor road network made field visits difficult. At one point, I had to postpone a visit to some remote schools because the bridge that linked their communities to the nearest towns had been destroyed and carried away by the River Densu; and I had to wait for a new bridge to be constructed by the local assembly before I could continue with the fieldwork.

Thirdly, positionality was one of my major challenges during the fieldwork. My position as a director at the MoE and also a board member of the NIB made me an 'insider', while, at the same time, I conducted the study as an independent doctoral researcher and 'outsider'. In the interview process, even though I clearly explained the purpose of the study to the participants, and assured them of their anonymity and confidentiality, the relationship between the supervisors and me might have caused data bias, and I wondered whether their responses would have been different if I had been purely an outsider. In an effort to correct this, I returned interview transcripts to participants to confirm whether they represented a true reflection of what they had said.

Finally, another concern was with my research sample. Initially, I had wanted to interview all nine basic school supervisors in Ga South Municipality. However, after careful assessment of the issue of anonymity, I decided to randomly select seven of them. I also considered the use of a teachers' focus group as a means of data collection, but considering the nature of the topic, available time, and resources, I opted for in-depth interviews with a smaller number of teachers.

7.4   Contribution of the thesis to knowledge
The study contributed to both theoretical and methodological knowledge in the field of education supervision.

7.4.1   Theoretical contribution to knowledge

Theoretically, this study was based on structure and agency theories and social constructivism where behaviours of agents are informed by their structural environments. As per the findings of this study, the structure of the education supervision system in

Ghana is weak and this is negatively impacting on school supervisors (agents) and supervision practices as a whole.

The findings of the study also highlighted cultural practices, the issue of power and politics within the social context of Ghana and the how they affect the recruitment and selection of school supervisors and the practice of supervision.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader literature on education supervision by offering an African case study in an area dominated by literature from Europe and other developed economies.

Finally, the study is significant as it highlighted what should go into designing training programmes for school supervisors. It also revealed the potential importance of novice school supervisors 'shadowing' the more experienced ones to develop practical knowledge and skills in school supervision.

7.5   Areas for further research

During this study, several themes emerged that effect the school supervision process but which remain under-researched. These include:

- Gender politics in basic school supervision.

- Neopatrimonialism in education management and supervision. The study revealed neo-patrimonialism in the recruitment of basic school supervisors. However, such a culture, perpetrated by political and traditional authorities, seems to cut across the entire system of education management and supervision in Ghana. There is

therefore the need for an empirical investigation into the practice of neopatrimonialism in formal education, and its effect on education quality.

- Globalisation and education supervision. There is a need to explore how the globalised education agenda is shaping school supervision standards and frameworks in developing countries.

- The NGO phenomenon in education delivery and supervision in developing countries. With so many NGOs working in the field of education in Ghana, it is surprising that the education system is still underperforming. A study is therefore called for that seeks to determine whether the activities of NGOs in such contexts really support the education system or, rather, contribute to its ineffectiveness.

7.6   Concluding remarks

With school supervision promoted in the literature as the best mechanism to ensure effective teaching and learning as well as ultimate education outcomes, in both developed and developing countries, the present study has shed considerable empirical light on the professional skills of basic school supervisors in developing countries. The findings of the study revealed that Ghanaian basic school supervisors have a good background in the field of education but lack technical and interpersonal skills in the school supervision process. There is no formal training or capacity development programme designed either by the MoE or the GES to enhance the capacity of supervisors. Therefore, they are dependent of peer training and informal capacity building provided by NGOs. However, the latter is mostly designed to suit the philosophies of local NGOs and the interests of their donors, and do not conform to long-term education sector planning. With working

for NGOs perceived to be monetarily and materially more rewarding, supervisors spend an inordinate amount of time engaged in NGO work at the expense of their school supervision duties.

The phenomenon of neopatrimonialism uncovered in the supervisor recruitment process coupled with ambiguity in the terms of reference and job description negatively affects the external supervision of basic schools. While neopatrimonialism leads to the recruitment of unsuitable persons as supervisors, ambiguity in terms of reference and job descriptions means that individuals invariably resort to their own discretion in conducting school supervision. As a result, supervisors are left to an uncertain fate in the supervision system.

Rural and urban supervisors are each confronted with a unique set of environmental and socioeconomic challenges. Lack of electricity, lack of potable water, inaccessible roads, and unavailability of basic social amenities in rural communities are among the main impediments of supervision in schools in these areas. On the other hand, urban supervisors are confronted with rapid population growth, limited education infrastructure, and the operation of a double shift school system. Nevertheless, both sets of factors have the common effect of obstructing school supervision activities.

Yet, taken as a whole, these findings have satisfied my motivation for the study, which, to a large extent, arose from the interplay of personal, intellectual and professional goals. My personal goals of a deeper understanding of education supervision in Ghana, the skills of basic school supervisors, and my role as an education policymaker have been

achieved. I am now in a better position to contribute to the policy debate around the design of an effective basic education supervision structure in Ghana.

Intellectually, the study gave me the opportunity to apply the concept of social constructivism to understand the structure – in terms of both physical and non-physical resources – that defines the Ghanaian supervision system, and agency – with regard to the behaviour, skills of supervisors – in the supervision process.

As a measure to address the findings of this study, I will be taking the following key steps as a member of the National Inspectorate Board:

- In the first place, I will advocate for and facilitate the development of a policy instrument that will govern the supervision system as well as seek to restrain politicians, traditional authorities and people in power from interfering with supervisor recruitment processes.
- I will also facilitate the organisation of a stakeholder forum in education to streamline the activities of NGOs supporting school supervision systems. At this forum, I will also advocate for the formalisation of the practice where novice school supervisors are made to shadow the more experienced ones to develop practical knowledge in supervision.
- I will ensure that the NIB and the Ministry of Education establish an education management and supervision training institute to promote skills and capacity enhancement of school supervisors and education administrators.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview guide for school supervisors

Topic: Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South Municipality

Demographic Background

1. How long/how many years have you been working in the field of education/or with Ghana Education Service?
2. How many years have you been working as a school supervisor? And how long have you been working as a supervisor in the Ga South Municipality?
3. Have you taught in a formal classroom before? If yes, for how many years?
4. What is your current educational qualification?
5. Where do you stay currently?

How are school supervisors recruited in Ghana?

6. What was your qualification at the time of your appointment as a school supervisor?
7. In which year did you become a school supervisor and on what grade?
8. How did you become a school supervisor? Please describe the recruitment processes you went through before your appointment. (*NB: let the respondent tell you about the various processes/steps of recruitment thus application, recruitment, interview, appointment, etc)?*
9. What is your general perception about the recruitment processes you outlined above?
10. Do you feel the recruitment processes were fair?

Training of school supervisors?

11. Did you receive any pre-service training in school supervision?
12. What were the components of the training?
13. What training approaches were used (*NB: approaches such as workshops, lecture, role play, peer teaching/training, etc)*
14. Since your appointment as a school supervisor, have you received any in-service training on school supervision?

15. Who organised the training? And what were the training components? (can you please name the areas you received the training)
16. What training approaches were used (*NB: approaches such as workshops, lecture, role play, peer teaching/training, etc*)
17. What is your general view about training of school supervisors in Ga- South Municipality?
18. What other professional skills do supervisors need to execute their key duties effectively?
19. How often do you receive skill development programmes?

How are school supervisors monitored and evaluated to ensure optimal performance?

20. How many schools do you have under your control as a school supervisor?
21. How many minutes does it take you to get the nearest community where the schools under your care is located?
22. How many minutes does it take you to get to the furthest community where the schools under your care is located?
23. As a school supervisor who do you report to when it comes to your work?
24. How does GES monitor your work and the progress you are making?
25. How is your performance assessed/evaluated by your immediate superiors?

How are systemic challenges related to school supervision addressed to enhance the work of School Supervisors?

26. What are the challenges facing school supervision system in the Ga South Municipality?
27. Are some of these challenges related to national/regional policies on school supervision?
28. Are some of these challenges based in the school environment and community?
29. Have you communicated the challenges you mentioned above to the appropriate authorities? (**NB: probe for communication mechanisms**)
30. What has been the response? And how are these challenges being addressed?

Interview guide for Municipal education director

Topic: Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South Municipality

1. How many years have you been working in the field of education/or with Ghana Education Service?
2. How many years have you been working as the Municipal Education Director in Ga South?
3. What is your level of education?
4. How are school supervisors recruited in Ghana and with what minimum qualification?
5. Does your directorate train/ build the capacity of the school supervisors?
6. What do you train them in? What kind of professional skills and training do you offer the supervisors?
7. How often is/are the training activities/programme(s)
8. How do you fund your training activities?
9. What is your general view about training of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?
10. How are school supervisors monitored in Ga South Municipality?
11. How are school supervisors assessed/evaluated in the Municipality?
12. What are the challenges confronting school supervision in the Municipality?
13. With your experience over the years, what do you think need to be done to enhance quality pre-tertiary supervision in Ghana?

Interview guide for ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IN CHARGE OF supervisors IN GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY

Topic: Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South

Municipality

1. How long/how many years have you been working in the field of education/or with Ghana Education Service?
2. How many years have you been working as a school supervisor? And how long have you been working as the Head of supervision in the Ga South Municipality?
3. How were you appointed or recruited into this position?
4. How many pre-tertiary schools (primary, Junior High and Senior High school) are in Ga South?
5. How many are public and how many are private?
6. How does your unit supervise education delivery in both public and private universities?
7. What criteria are used recruit school supervisors in the municipality?
8. How is the recruitment process done (please can you give me a detailed account of the processes involved in recruiting school supervisors?)
9. There is the general perception that school supervisors do not possess the requisite professional skills to effectively supervise schools in Ghana? What is your view on this perception?
10. What is your general perception about the recruitment processes you outlined above?
11. Does Ghana Education Service (GES) trains/builds capacity of the school supervisors?
12. What are the components of the training programmes?
13. How is the training done (probe into the various training approaches)
14. What is your general view about training of school supervisors in Ga- South Municipality?
15. How are school supervisors monitored in the municipality?
16. How are school supervisors evaluated and assessed?
17. What are the challenges facing school supervision in the Ga South Municipality?
18. Are some of these challenges related to national/regional policies on school supervision?
19. Are some of these challenges based in the school environment and community?
20. What measures are GES/MOE putting in place to address the challenges you mentioned above?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (SMC)
AND PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA) MEMBERS

Topic: Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South

Municipality

1. How long have you been a member of the School Management Committee (SMC)/ Parent Teacher Association?
2. What is your current position in the SMC/PTA?
3. What are the functions of the SMC/PTA?
4. How does the SMC/PTA supervise education delivery in the school?
5. Does the school have an external supervisor, who supervises what goes on in the school?
6. What is the nature of relationship between the SMC/PTA and the school supervisor?
7. Do teachers/head-teacher complain (s) about the processes of school supervision?
8. What are their complaints?
9. Being a community member and a representative on the school management committee what is your general perception of the system of school supervision in the community?
10. What are the challenges facing school supervision in the Ga South Municipality?
11. Are some of these challenges based in the school environment and community?
12. What measures are SMC/PTA putting in place to address the challenges you mentioned above?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS/HEAD-TEACHERS IN GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY

Topic: Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in Ga South Municipality

1. What is the name of the school?
2. How long have you been teaching in this school?
3. Does your school have a supervisor?
4. How many times in a term does the school supervisor visits your school?
5. What are the various processes you normally go through during a supervision visit?
6. What is your perception about the school supervision processes?
7. What is the perception of your colleague teachers about the supervision process?
8. How will you describe the relationship between school supervisors and teachers during a supervision visit?
9. What challenges do you encounter when school supervisors visit your school?
10. How can these challenges be addressed?

APPENDIX 2: LETTERS OF CONSENT

ETHICAL REVIEW APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT 1

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE EDUCATION OFFICE , GA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY.

> **Ministry of Education**
>
> **Box M 45, Ministries**
>
> **Accra**
>
> **10th November, 2012**

The Municipal Director

Ga South Municipal Education Office

Weija, Ga South

Dear Madam,

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am a Director of the Ministry of Education and a phase three (3) doctoral research student of the Education and Social Work Department, University of Sussex, United Kingdom.

In fulfillment of my doctoral studies, I intend to conduct my research project on the topic "Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality". I have enclosed an information letter explaining the details of my study more fully.

In this regard, I will interview your good self, seven of the nine Circuit Supervisors, five teachers and headteachers, and two members of the School Management Committee /Parent Teacher Association. The study is for academic purposes only and would keep all information that would be collected in a confidential manner and anonymised.

I will therefore be very grateful if you can grant me the permission to carry on the research in your District.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

Evans Agbeme Dzikum

DOCUMENT 2

LETTER TO THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION REQUESTING HER TO BE INTERVIEWED

Ministry of Education

Box M 45, Ministries

Accra

10th November, 2012

THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR

MUNICIPAL EDUCATION OFFICE

WEIJA, GA SOUTH

Dear Madam,

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

I am a Director with the Ministry of Education and also a phase three doctoral student of the Education and Social Work Department of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. In fulfillment of my doctoral degree, I intend to carry out a research project on the topic "Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality".

I have enclosed an information letter explaining the details of my study more fully.

I wish to assure you that any information that would be provided will be utilized solely for academic purposes and be treated confidentially and anonymised.

Yours faithfully,

Evans A. Dzikum

DOCUMENT 3

LETTER TO THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS REQUESTING TIME TO INTERVIEW HIM

> **Ministry of Education**
>
> **Box M 45, Ministries**
>
> **Accra**
>
> **10th November, 2012**

THE CHIEF INSPECTOR

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

ACCRA

Dear Madam,

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH THE CHIEF INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

I am a Director with the Ministry of Education and also a phase three doctoral student of the Education and Social Work Department of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. In fulfillment of my doctoral degree, I intend to carry out a research project on the topic "Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality".

I have enclosed an information letter explaining the details of my study more fully.

I wish to assure you that any information that would be provided will be utilized solely for academic purposes and be treated confidentially and anonymised.

Yours faithfully,

Evans A. Dzikum

DOCUMENT 4

INFORMATION SHEET (FOR ALL INTERVIEWEES)

I am a Director of the Ministry of Education and a phase three doctoral student of the Education and Social Work Department of the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. In fulfillment of the requirement of my doctoral studies, I am carrying out a research project on the topic "Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality".

It should be on record that the interview I am requesting is strictly for academic purpose.

The research is designed to provide answers to the following questions :

1. What are the professional backgrounds of school supervisors in Ga South Municipality?
2. What qualifies one as a basic school supervisor, and how is recruitment and selection conducted?
3. What pre- and in-service training is provided to basic school supervisors, and how is it implemented?
4. How do supervisors apply their professional knowledge to the school supervision process?

The study will involve one interview for each participant lasting not more than one hour. You can, however, withdraw at anytime and ask for your interview materials including the tape to be destroyed and or your data removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so.

(Please note that any information which is provided for this study will be handled in the strictest confidence).

I want to emphasis that all interviews and data will be anonymised and confidential.

Thank you.

Evans Agbeme Dzikum

DOCUMENT 5

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE:	**"Examining the professional skills of basic school supervisors in the Ga South Municipality".**

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio taped
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required
- Provide the researcher with all relevant documents and information needed for the study

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party. I further understand that the following will be done to prevent my identity from being made public:

- My real name will not be used in the report

- The real name of the schools I supervised will not be used in the report

- The real name of the circuit (the area under my control as a supervisor) I supervised will not be used in the analysis of the report

I further understand that I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before being included in the write up of the research.

I consent to the use of sections of the audio tapes in publications.

I also consent that the information I provide can be use in further research provided:

- My name is removed before passing it on.
- My contact information is removed
- The real name of the circuit (the area under my control as a supervisor) is not used.

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- The name of schools I supervised will remain anonymous.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

Name:

_____

Signature

_____

Date:

_____

Independent witness to participant's voluntary and informed consent (if this is necessary for your project for example, where there is a relationship between the participant and the researcher which might be deemed to unduly influence the participant's voluntary consent).

I believe that _____ (name) understands the above project and gives his/her consent voluntarily.

Name:

_____

Signature

_____

Address:

_____

Date:

_____