

Effective supervision in Zanzibar's primary school: Strategies, effectiveness, and challenges of school management

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the impact of effective supervision on the school management system at Akiba Primary School, Zanzibar. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through face-to-face interviews with eight participants, including the headmaster, teachers, and administrators, and analyzed using Clarke and Braun's thematic analysis. The findings revealed that supervision practices such as classroom visitations, peer supervision, external supervision, and regular monitoring of teacher attendance contributed to an improved school system. The headmaster's inclusive leadership style, which emphasized shared responsibilities and accountability among staff, further strengthened the supervision process. However, several challenges were identified, including inadequate content knowledge among some teachers, heavy administrative workload, and bias in conflict resolution, all of which limited the effectiveness of supervision. The study concludes that effective supervision is essential for improving school performance but must be carefully planned, collaborative, and professional. It recommends delegating administrative duties and ensuring fairness and objectivity in supervision practices.

Keywords: Supervision, school practice, academic performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Generally, supervision is fundamental to the performance of schools. Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a senior member of a school to the junior members. The heads in the schools do not only serve as senior professionals providing intervention to their teachers, but they are also mandated to supervise all other activities of the school, and academic work is the central activity (Ankoma-Sey and Maina, 2016). Supervision aims at the development of the leadership of teachers and other school personnel in achieving educational goals (Karim et al., 2021). This means the principal is highly needed to assess and assist teachers to effectively and efficiently run all school program activities (Setyaningsih and Suchyadi, 2021).

School supervision is an integrated set of policies, procedures and mechanisms that together aim to improve

the quality of education provided (Owan et al., 2023). Consequently, if schools are not supervised adequately, they will have inimical effects on the students' output and the educational objectives may not be achieved. So, various supervisory techniques should be employed to ensure quality service delivery by the teachers (Knoff, 1986). Thus, effective supervision is needed to improve the quality of learning processes and outcomes (Lugusi et al., 2024). In short, effective supervision results in the growth and learning of teachers.

Concurrently, supervision in the modern era focuses on the improvement of education outcomes to benefit both the teachers and learners. This means that follow-up activities should be directed at the improvement of identified weak areas and creating a cordial working atmosphere based on good human relations (Dangara, 2015).

In addition, during supervision, the school head plays a very important role through the identification of teachers' weaknesses and recommending improved teaching methods (Kartini et al., 2020). Likewise, Setyaningsih and Suchyadi (2021) argue that the purpose of supervision is to help teachers develop their ability to achieve learning goals. This includes increasing teachers' knowledge and skills, commitment, and motivation to work (Karim et al., 2021). It applies that when teachers are highly motivated, their commitment and dedication to work increase.

Concurrently, Setyaningsih and Suchyadi (2021) suggest that supervision must be carried out by people who have extensive knowledge and qualified skills in supervision. This is important because every finding that is considered a deficiency must be given an alternative solution by the supervisor.

Setyaningsih and Suchyadi (2021) identified two types of supervision used in Indonesian schools, which include regular supervision (outside class) and clinical supervision (in class). In short, supervision is usually carried out in the form of activities that can assist teachers in overcoming the difficulties they face. Regular supervision (Outside class) is not scheduled but occurs suddenly or when needed by the principal or the teacher himself in solving a problem. Clinical supervision (In class) is carried out according to the schedule set by the school in accordance with the principal's decree. Usually, teachers are not surprised when the principal enters to carry out the supervision because they have been informed earlier about his/her presence (Setyaningsih and Suchyadi, 2021).

In Ghana, supervision is considered a mechanism to increase the understanding of teachers and supervisors on the teaching-learning process through collective inquiry with other professionals. Previous studies suggest that supervision improves instruction, fosters curriculum and staff development, motivation, and enhances collaboration (Ankoma-Sey and Maina, 2016).

In Zanzibar, school inspection was introduced by the Education Act, No. 6 of 1982, to hold schools, headmasters/principals and teachers accountable for the quality of education (Suleiman et al., 2017; Zanzibar Education Policy, 2006). Later, the government established the External School Quality Assurance (ESQA) as a Government Agency under the Education Act No. 10 of 2018, known as the Office of the Chief Inspectorate of Education (Suleiman et al., 2017). This was to ensure that ESQA assurers visit all schools and observe that there is compliance with the governmental rules and regulations (Kassim et al., 2024). Most importantly, Kassim, Matete, Mwinjuma and Ali (2024) highlights that supervisors share school supervision reports and recommendations with school heads on areas that need improvement. This feedback helps schools to improve classroom practices, syllabus coverage, and a better way of teaching and learning (Kassim et al., 2024).

Despite these efforts, some schools in Zanzibar still experience feeble supervisory practices resulting in poor school management systems. Therefore, this study investigated the strategies, effectiveness and challenges of school supervision on management systems in Zanzibar.

General objective

The study aimed to explore the supervisory methods employed by school administrators and their implications on school effectiveness in a selected Zanzibar primary school.

Specific objectives

The study addressed three core objectives, which were to:

1. Identify school supervision strategies that enhance effective school management systems
2. Explore how effective school supervision yields good management outcomes
3. Examine the challenges that hinder effective school supervision.

Research questions

The following questions were answered in this study:

1. What are the school supervision strategies used to enhance effective school management systems?
2. How effective is the school supervision in yielding good management outcomes?
3. What challenges hinder effective school supervision?

Theoretical framework

Theories provide a guiding framework for supervisors to develop strategies and interventions that improve school performance and academic outcomes (Owan et al., 2023). This study takes into account the system theory and its correlation to school supervision. The theory was pioneered by Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim, who viewed society from an interrelated perspective (Lamanauskas, 2023). In his division of labour in society, Durkheim (1984) explained that in highly organized systems, the division of labour contributes to the maintenance of societies. The system theory provides a holistic understanding of how educational institutions operate, and it is categorized into components such as input, process, output, and feedback.

Input refers to the available resources that schools

receive from their environments. In supervision, the input refers to the number of capacitated teachers that a school has to conduct effective supervision, organize classroom settings, and impact students' performance. A school that has well-experienced and competent teachers often performs exceptionally well. *Process* refers to the activities and interactions that transform input into educational outcomes. These include monitoring of teachers and teacher professional development programs. In school supervision, "*process*" involves frequently visiting classrooms to know teachers' punctuality, organizing professional development trainings for teachers to be equipped with leadership skills. *Output* is the result of the system after the processes have been applied to the input. In supervision, the output is like the results of effective supervision. The output involves school achievement, such as examination results, teacher competencies to conduct supervision, and graduation rates. Lastly, *feedback* is the information that is returned to the school system about its performance. The feedback helps schools to know whether there has been progress or not, or means of determining whether a supervision approach is successful or not. If the feedback is negative, it means the input needs more reinforcement to strengthen the weaknesses. However, if the feedback is positive, it encourages continuous improvement (Lamanauskas, 2023).

Overall, the components of the system theory are linked with the entire supervision process. This is because for supervision to be effective, the supervisors need to be capacitated with the fundamentals (Input). Also, teachers need to be monitored through classroom visitations and teacher punctuality should be traced through log books or attendance lists (process). In the same vein, the good performance of students in examinations and the well-functioning of the school are the result of good supervision (Output). After the whole process, the outcome determines whether a particular approach was effective or not (Feedback).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Supervision enables personnel to remain focused and work conscientiously in the realization of the stated objectives. In institutions such as schools, supervision plays an important role in ensuring that equal standards are met and quality is guaranteed (Lyonga, 2018). The principal can use multiple methods or strategies to ensure effective classrooms. These include monitoring the teaching methods, conducting action research, observing classroom management, and systematic school observation. Ankoma-Sey and Maina (2016) believe that having teachers and heads who work together enhances cooperation in best practices and good academic output.

The existence of a high level of collaboration between

teachers and the principal is characterized by mutual respect, shared work values, and cooperation (Ankoma-Sey and Maina, 2016). One of the most effective supervision approaches is collegial supervision; it involves teachers providing feedback to each other to improve teaching and learning processes. In this approach, teachers conduct action research on their own to identify areas for improvement and develop solutions collaboratively (Gordon, 2022). The principal's function is to provide assistance to teachers to improve and develop their teaching abilities (Mukhtar et al., 2020). In short, collegial supervision is considered a good approach because it allows teachers to visit each other, assess each other, and correct each other (Mukhtar et al., 2020).

According to Mukhtar et al (2020), a good supervisor must have a positive attitude, appreciation for tasks well-performed and the ability to effectively and efficiently communicate with employees. In order to enhance effective supervision practice, supervisors can delegate some of their duties to the teachers (Mukhtar et al., 2020). This is because a supervisor is not an expert in all subjects. For example, a supervisor might be good at mathematics but not good at English.

Concurrently, clinical supervision is a formative evaluation strategy that involves working with instructors to improve education. This teacher-centred and collaborative style necessitates the development of rapport, trust, and a conducive environment. Clinical supervision is a more structured approach to individual supervision. It involves a cyclical process of planning, observing, and reflecting on teaching practices (Gordon, 2022). As such, clinical supervision helps teachers minimize the gap between actual teaching behaviour and ideal teaching behaviour (Nur Rochbani and Nurdianingsih, 2023).

In the clinical approach, the supervisor develops authentic relationships and promotes a positive environment for teaching and learning (Gordon, 2019). In essence, the supervisor identifies and solves problems through respect and encouragement for teachers.

Similarly, individual supervision techniques are essential for fostering the professional development of teachers. These techniques focus on personalized support and feedback, and allow supervisors to address the unique needs of each educator. Therefore, individual supervision approaches consist of classroom visitation, individual conferences, and self-assessment (Wiyono et al., 2022).

Inasmuch as school is concerned, there are barriers affecting effective school supervision. Wiyono et al (2022) highlights various barriers that affect effective school supervision. One of the biggest setbacks to school supervision is insufficient funds to carry out supervisory tasks. Since supervision is a management function that requires capital for its operation, money is required to purchase supervisory materials and other contingencies needed in the course of supervision (Wiyono et al., 2022).

Schools with insufficient funds often struggle to conduct effective supervision, because the entire process requires resources.

In addition, Wiyono et al. (2022) stated that the absence of competent personnel often serves as a barrier to effective school supervision. This is because unqualified individuals may lack principles, knowledge and experience in supervision. In this scenario, schools that have inexperienced heads and teachers often struggle to conduct good supervision.

In the African context, corruption and nepotism affect school supervision. Some of the supervisors are corrupt officials who are bribed to ignore flaws. Yet, others favour their friends as a result of tribal affiliation or nepotism (Owan et al., 2023).

Most importantly, inadequate planning serves as an obstacle to school supervision. For effective supervision to be carried out, strategic planning should be done. In the absence of this plan, the aim and objectives of supervision are rumbled (Owan et al., 2023). For schools that are located in interior areas with a poor road network, this poses a challenge and makes it difficult for supervisors to ply such roads for supervision (Owan et al., 2023). This is so true because schools that are located in far-reaching areas are often neglected, as supervisors often concentrate on schools that are located in urban areas where transportation is not a problem.

Moreover, the reviewed articles were deeply concerned with general supervision approaches without due consideration to their application in the local context. In essence, the literature only expressed supervision strategies and barriers that are deemed to be universal, forgetting that education systems vary in the ways they operate. Most importantly, none of the reviewed articles expressed educational supervision in Zanzibar schools. Therefore, this study is based on the gaps in the literature and explores suitable school supervision strategies and challenges that affect their effectiveness in primary schools in Zanzibar.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a single case study design to engage teachers, headmasters and school administrators. According to Yin (2018), a single case study design focuses on an in-depth understanding of a single case within a real-life context. Through this, the researcher may choose a single case and decide to study it carefully and intensively so as to understand the factors associated with the topic that is being studied. Therefore, a single case study design was used because the study focused on one school and had a clear motive of getting an in-depth understanding of the school supervision methods.

In addition, the study was conducted with a primary school in Zanzibar, pseudonymously referred to in this

study as *Akiba School*. Data was collected between 8th and 19th September, 2025. This involved two weeks of intensive engagement with the school head, teachers and other administrators, to explore school supervision methods and their implications on effective school systems.

A qualitative research method was used for this study. This method attempts to understand a problem and the underlying reasons for its occurrence through active engagement with participants in a form of interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or observation (Yin, 2018). Concurrently, a semi-structured interview was used to engage the head master, teachers, and administrators. This method was chosen because it captures the thoughts and opinions of participants, which is important for a study of this nature. The semi-structured interview focused on areas that are linked to the objectives of the study. This involves identifying school supervisory approaches, their effectiveness and issues that hinder effective school supervision.

In a qualitative study, the sample size is usually small because its focus is to collect in-depth information about the subject under investigation rather than quantifying data (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2018). This means that respondents are chosen based on their knowledge and experience of the topic, not quantity. Therefore, a sample of eight (8) participants was selected since the study was a single case study that focused on the exploration of supervision strategies within a single school system. The sample distribution involved the headmaster (1), three (3) administrators, and four (4) teachers. Most importantly, sample procedures like purposive and convenience sample techniques were employed in the selection of research participants. This means that respondents were chosen based on their ability to meet criteria such as being involved in school supervision, having at least three (3) years of experience in school supervision, being available during data collection and being willing to participate in the study.

In order to guarantee the accuracy and validity of the data, the study used peer debriefing. For instance, different respondents were asked the same questions to ensure the validity of the findings. This technique figured out overlapping responses and enhanced the high-quality standard in data collection.

In addition, the study adopted Clarke and Braun's (2006) thematic analysis, which involved familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and writing the report. Concurrently, the study adhered to research ethics such as gaining research clearance from the authorized institutions in Zanzibar, upholding informed consent, and assuring confidentiality. For anonymity reasons, initials were used to describe respondents in the data analysis process instead of the real names of respondents.

The rationale for using a qualitative study is that it allows

participants to provide rich and detailed explanations of school supervision is done in Zanzibar. In other words, the

qualitative approach enhances the in-depth expression of study participants.

Table 1. Development of codes, sub-themes and themes.

| Raw data | Codes | Sub-themes | Main themes |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>"Teachers write their names, arrival time and departure time in the log book to monitor punctuality."</i> | Teacher attendance monitoring, time tracking, record keeping | Use of log book to monitor teacher punctuality | School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"The headmaster walks around classrooms to observe teaching methods."</i> | Classroom observation, monitoring teaching practices | Classroom visitation | School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"Departmental heads supervise other teachers in their subject areas."</i> | Departmental monitoring, subject-based supervision | Peer supervision | School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"Inspectors from the Ministry visit the school to monitor activities."</i> | School inspection, government monitoring | External supervision | School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"Monitoring attendance has reduced teacher absenteeism."</i> | Reduced absenteeism, improved punctuality | Increased teacher punctuality | Effectiveness of School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"Teacher weaknesses are identified during classroom visitation."</i> | Performance evaluation, improvement guidance | Improved teaching attitude | Effectiveness of School Supervision Strategies |
| <i>"The supervisor must know the subject content to supervise effectively."</i> | Lack of subject expertise | Inadequate supervisory knowledge | Challenges in School Supervision |
| <i>"The head teacher performs both academic and administrative roles."</i> | Work overload, multiple responsibilities | Teacher workload | Challenges in School Supervision |
| <i>"Favoritism and bias affect supervision outcomes."</i> | Bias, favoritism | Unfair treatment in supervision | Challenges in School Supervision |

Table 1 demonstrates how raw data were developed into codes, sub-themes and themes to enable smooth and accurate data analysis.

FINDINGS

Supervision is considered part of the school management process; therefore, all schools conduct both internal and external forms of supervision to ensure good performance. The findings present a qualitative analysis of the impact of effective supervision on the performance of Akiba Primary School, Zanzibar. This section presents findings that were clustered into main themes based on the objectives.

Theme: Supervision strategies used in Akiba school

Supervision is a fundamental pillar for school performance. This is because when teachers are supervised, their

competence and dedication to work increase. This study identified various supervisory approaches that are used in Akiba School. The strategies involved tracking teacher punctuality through log books, observing classroom sessions to monitor teaching approaches, sharing supervision roles among teachers, and providing constructive feedback to enhance teaching improvement.

Sub-theme: Use of a logbook

This was identified as one of the supervision approaches used by the school administrators. It was found that the head teacher made use of the logbook for different supervision purposes. In an interview with the school headmaster, the following details were revealed:

Primarily, we have a logbook where teachers write their names, the time they arrive at school and their time of departure. This helps us monitor the

punctuality of teachers and note reasons for being absent. In case a teacher is absent, we notice it through the logbook. This book is controlled by a neutral and trusted individual, which makes it difficult to falsify. However, in cases where a teacher is absent for days without tangible reasons, we query him/her during staff meetings to know the cause for his/her absenteeism.

The logbook was found to be effectively used in tracking punctuality and the presence of teachers in school. This helped reduce the rate of absenteeism in the school. This initiative also helps the school head to know the most dedicated and inconsistent teachers. All these are the necessary factors for students' academic success as they ensure teachers' presence in school and in the classes.

Sub-theme: Classroom visitation

The frequent classroom visitations by the school management were also identified as an effective supervisory method. This is considered a very adequate approach and yields good academic output. Visits help the supervisor to monitor teachers' punctuality and their different delivery methods. In line with this, one of the respondents stated that:

The headmaster always walks around classrooms to observe if teachers are in class and to monitor their teaching methods. This initiative is effective because when teachers notice that they are being monitored, their dedication to work increases. In the same vein, if a particular teaching method is not found effective, the principal recommends a more inclusive method that integrates all types of learners.

In addition, constructive feedback is part of an effective classroom visitation method. This is because the supervisee needs feedback to know their gaps and areas that need improvement. In an interview with a teacher respondent, it was revealed that:

During classroom visitation hours, teacher weaknesses are identified, and recommendations for further improvement are made during staff meetings. That is to say, constructive feedback is provided to all staff on areas that need improvement.

This approach enhances the effective teaching and learning process. That is, a teacher may change the way he/she engages students if a teaching strategy is deemed inappropriate.

Sub-theme: Peer-supervision

To enhance the effective supervision process, peer

supervision was also found to be one of the important methods used. It is safe to say that supervision is a collaborative effort and cannot be performed by one person. Peer-supervision strategy allows one teacher to supervise the work of another teacher. One of the respondents stated that:

In our school, there are departmental heads for each subject. The heads of each department supervise their peers/teachers during classroom sessions to identify their areas of strength and weakness. In case of weakness, the teacher is provided with recommendations on how to improve in that area.

Conversely, another respondent added:

Since most of the teachers have experience in the supervision process, the head teacher shares tasks among staff as a way of including them in the supervision process. For instance, each teacher who has been assigned to a specific class is responsible for maintaining good classroom management. This is to ensure that teachers are included and participate in the supervision process.

Overall, the inclusion of teachers in the supervision process is a good strategy that will enable them to take full responsibility for their actions.

Sub-theme: External supervision

In the Zanzibar education curriculum, external supervision is carried out by the District Education Officers (inspectors) from the Ministry of Education to monitor and evaluate the activities of schools. This helps a lot in making supervision effective. In an interview with one of the respondents, the following was revealed:

Every academic year, we receive Inspectors from the Ministry of Education who monitor and evaluate the activities of the school. The inspectors come two (2) times in the academic year. That is, at the start of the academic year and at the end of each academic year, to follow up.

In the first place, when the inspectors want to come, they will inform the school head about the date they want to come. Then, the school head will inform us to ensure that all teachers are present during the inspection sessions. During inspection sessions, the inspector would visit the classrooms to see how teaching is being carried out. For example, the inspector would sit in class while teaching is going on to see how the class is arranged, how the teacher handles his/her class and how students are benefiting

from the session. In areas that are not clear, the inspector would engage the teacher personally for clarification. Then, he/she would grade the teacher through a scale sheet based on the teacher's performance.

The external supervision is a good strategy to track school performance. This is because the external supervision is carried out by a neutral body that provides a substantive report without being subjective or biased.

Theme: Effectiveness of school supervision strategies

Owing to the fact that supervision strategies vary, in the same vein, one strategy might be more effective than another. Therefore, it is important to note that the effectiveness of schools depends on the principal's ability to blend different supervision approaches. The supervision strategies, such as the use of log books, frequent classroom visitations, peer supervision, and external supervision, are considered effective and have resulted in an increase in punctuality of teachers, improved teaching attitude, and increased student performance.

Sub-theme: Increased punctuality

Individuals perform exceptionally well when they are being monitored. Therefore, the frequent monitoring of teachers' attendance in school may result in increased punctuality and good work ethics. In line with this, one of the respondents stated that:

The constant monitoring of teachers' attendance and punctuality has reduced the rate of teacher absenteeism in class and has made teaching effective. On a monthly basis, we conduct a thorough review to verify teachers' punctuality. As for teachers who are found to have been absent a lot, they are being cautioned during staff meetings to improve their performance.

Sub-theme: Improved teaching attitude

The attitude of the headmaster to frequent classroom visits has instilled favourable work ethics in teachers and improved teacher performance. A teacher respondent stated that:

During classroom visitation hours, teacher weaknesses are identified and suggestions for improvement are made during staff meetings. Also, teaching approaches are assessed to know if they are favourable to all sorts of learners.

The aspect of peer-supervision has made teachers take full responsibility for their actions, as the teacher is seen performing both academic and

administrative roles.

Sub-theme: Increased student-teacher engagement

The initiation of a peer-supervision strategy and monitoring of teachers' commitment through log books has a positive outcome on the school management system. One of the respondents stated that:

There has been increased student-teacher engagement as a result of frequent emphasis on a blend of teaching strategies. For instance, when we are conducting peer-supervision, we identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher and observe how his/her teaching approach suits the pupils. So, if a particular teaching method is deemed inappropriate, we suggest an adequate approach that will increase students' performance.

Theme: Challenges in school supervision

Supervision is complex in itself. Inasmuch as the school is concerned, some challenges hinder the effectiveness of the supervision. These include a lack of knowledge, unfair treatment, and a heavy workload.

Sub-theme: Lack of knowledge

The findings highlight that a lack of knowledge in a particular subject limits the accuracy of the supervision process. One of the respondents stated that:

In order to conduct effective supervision, the supervisor must know the whole course content. Otherwise, he/she will just give basic feedback on the classroom arrangement.

Also, each teacher must be supervised by someone from the same field of teaching. For instance, an English teacher must be supervised by someone from the English department. This is because, each time the headmaster comes to my classroom to inspect, he just focuses on the classroom set-up and my engagement with pupils, simply because he doesn't have knowledge in my field.

On a more serious note, supervision without knowledge of the content being taught will deviate from the true purpose of supervision. This highlights how the lack of knowledge on a particular subject contradicts the feedback.

Sub-theme: Teacher's workload

The heavy workload of teachers was found to be a barrier

to the effective supervision process. This is so because teachers have to perform both academic and administrative tasks. A respondent stated that:

I don't have enough time to perform academic functions as well as supervise other teachers. It is very hectic and challenging to effectively carry out good work, especially when there is a lot of work on my table.

Sub-theme: Unfair treatment

Unfair treatment by the departmental head towards certain staff was found to be a great challenge in the supervision process. One of the respondents noted that:

Personally, I think unfair treatment is a significant problem in school supervision. The headmaster is sometimes biased in his supervision approach, especially when he has a conflict with a teacher. Having an issue with the departmental head may sometimes change the score a teacher gains from an inspection session. As a result of this, some teachers tend to build and sustain favourable relationships with the departmental head to get fair treatment during the supervision process.

Another teacher respondent added that:

You see that thing called 'favouritism', it is actually the biggest challenge in school supervision and administration. Sometimes the school head is biased in settling disputes between teachers. For instance, the school head may tend to favour one teacher at the expense of others. This attitude of the headmaster annoys some teachers and makes things complicated. In short, I would say a principal working in a school where the environment is favourable is more likely to provide teachers with positive feedback than when the relationship is feeble. This is because it is difficult to deliver good work when you have some bias in you.

Theme: Strategies to overcome the identified supervision challenges

In order to overcome the challenges in school supervision, several factors need to be addressed. Therefore, the subsequent paragraphs present findings of how supervision challenges can be addressed.

Sub-theme: Capacity building

Capacity development training is the backbone to overcome challenges encountered in supervision. This is because when the staff are well-equipped with the

requisite knowledge to carry out supervision, then the work becomes easy. One of the respondents expressed:

I would advise the school to organize workshops and training to familiarise teachers and other administrators with how effective supervision is carried out. This could also involve sending teachers to attend training from outside the school.

Sub-theme: Equitable task delegation

The equal distribution of tasks among staff plays an important role in reducing heavy workload among teachers or the school head. A respondent stated that:

I think the school head should develop a culture of distributing responsibilities fairly among staff members to avoid overburdening certain staff and to encourage shared ownership of school activities.

DISCUSSION

The findings provided comprehensive data on how effective school supervision results in a good school management system. The findings are integrated into qualitative themes. The study found that the headmaster uses a blend of supervision strategies through peer supervision, classroom observation, tracking teacher performance through logbooks, and constructive feedback. A direct quotation from a teacher respondent highlights that:

At any time the headmaster is visiting my class to observe, I make sure I prepare my lessons well because I know that my work is being monitored.

These results correspond with a previous study by Nur Rochbani and Nurdianingsih (2023) and Gordon (2022), who consider classroom visitation and feedback as fundamental to effective supervision and professional development of teachers. Conversely, the principal's inclusive supervisory approach increased performance and considered teachers part of the supervision process. In line with this, Suleiman et al. (2017), Karim et al. (2021) and Cansoy et al. (2025) highlight supervision by the principal as an important part of school administration that improves teacher dedication and work ethics. Concurrently, the findings correlate with Ankoma-Sey and Maina (2016) and Mukhtar et al. (2020), who consider collegial supervision as a shared responsibility that enhances mutual respect and creates a healthy environment.

The effectiveness of supervision strategies is evident in the fact that participants reported increased teacher

attendance. A verbatim from the respondent presents that:

I am very punctual in class and I make sure that I teach students to expectations. I always try to cover every part of the syllabus because the head master often checks our lesson plans and tracks our attendance to make sure that we are following the syllabus.

The study found greater teacher ownership as a result of continuous monitoring and feedback-driven supervision that helps in the professional growth and development of teachers. This is in line with Suleiman et al. (2017) and Mukhtar et al. (2020), who identified delegating supervision as a way of initiating shared responsibility and accountability among teachers.

Despite the effective supervision process, the study found barriers that school heads encounter in supervision. These range from a lack of sufficient knowledge on content, heavy workloads, and individual bias. A quote from a teacher respondent explained that:

Sometimes I find it very hectic and difficult to supervise every teacher because I have a lot of administrative work at the office.

These results align with the findings from Cansoy et al. (2025), who state that the heavy workload of principals and nepotism may reduce effectiveness in the supervision process. Therefore, the findings suggest that effective supervision is not solely dependent on the principal's effort but on a collaborative culture. This aligns with Gordon (2022), Nur Rochbani and Nurdianingsih (2023) and Cansoy et al. (2025), who stated that a lack of knowledge may affect effective supervision.

Most importantly, the findings correspond with the Systems theory that sees the school as an interconnected system that works together to achieve a common objective. This means that in school supervision, the different departments or components of the school must work collaboratively in order to enhance good and effective school management systems. Viewed through the lens of the system theory, the use of log books, class visitation, peer supervision and external supervision represents an integral part of effective school management. As such, the findings suggest that supervision in Akiba Primary School operates as an integral system in which internal monitoring and collaboration efficiently and effectively work together to enhance the proper functioning of the school.

In addition, the results of the study agree with the Zanzibar Education Policy (2006), Zanzibar Education Development Plan II (2017/18- 2021/22) and Tanzania Education and Training Policy (2014; 2023 Edition) that highlight the role of school inspection and supervision in implementing education policies and improvement of teaching practices. These policies highlight the importance

of classroom observation, monitoring and feedback as mechanisms for effective school management systems. Therefore, the findings in accordance with these policies and the system theory highlight that supervision is a collaborative effort, which means that for effective supervision to take place, every department within the school must perform its functions effectively.

Conclusion

The findings show a strong connection between effective supervision and the school management system. It takes into consideration supervision strategies, effective supervision approaches and challenges encountered in school supervision. It is evident that when supervision is done through classroom observations, collaboration, and constructive feedback, students' performance and teacher commitment will increase. The study found that an inclusive supervisory approach enables teacher ownership, accountability and commitment to duties. However, inadequate knowledge on a specific subject, the heavy workload and unfavourable treatment from the school head were identified as barriers to effective supervision in schools. Therefore, addressing these challenges will not only improve teaching methods but will also create a positive and conducive working environment for teachers. In short, supervision requires collaborative effort and capacity development to enhance instructional leadership.

Limitations of the study

The study used a single case study design, which means that the data do not represent all schools in Zanzibar. It is therefore important for future studies to be conducted using multiple case studies in both primary and secondary schools in and out of Zanzibar.

In addition, the study was limited to a qualitative research method with a small sample size because of the nature of the topic. It is therefore recommended for future studies to use quantitative research or mixed research methods with a large sample size.

Even though the study used peer-debriefing to validate the data, the findings were limited to participants' opinions, which may be subject to some level of individual bias. In short, effective supervision is fundamental for improved school performance; however, it must be well planned, collaborative, and inclusive.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to enhance effective supervisory practices, the study recommends the following to policymakers and

school administrators.

In the first place, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training should prioritise conducting capacity development training and workshops to strengthen and equip school heads with the requisite supervisory skills. This will increase the instructional practices of school heads.

In addition, the Ministry of Education and relevant authorities should develop clear supervisory guidelines and monitoring frameworks that promote transparency, professionalism, and fairness in the supervision process. This will help reduce bias, favouritism, and subjectivity in teacher evaluation.

Finally, the school administrators should adopt collaborative supervision approaches, such as peer supervisory and shared leadership, by involving departmental heads and experienced teachers in supervisory roles. This approach will reduce the heavy workload on school heads and promote collective responsibility for school improvement.

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