

Filling the Feedback Gap: The Roles of Curriculum Supervisors and Supervisees in Social Studies Education

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Abstract

This study was designed to examine the roles of curriculum supervisors (curriculum leaders) and supervisees (Social Studies teachers), and the use of feedback in Social Studies education in selected senior high schools in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana. The following research questions guided the study - How do curriculum leaders and teachers use feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision? and What roles do curriculum supervisors and supervisees play in curriculum supervision in Social Studies education? Sequential mixed-method approach was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling procedure was employed to select curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers for the study. Conveniently, forty curriculum leaders and one hundred and twenty Social Studies teachers were selected for the study. Questionnaire and interview were employed to elicit responses from both curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers. *Descriptive* statistics were employed to analyse the quantitative data collected, whilst interpretative analytical technique was employed for the analyses of the qualitative data. Triangulation was employed to test the consistency of findings obtained through the different instruments used, whilst complementarity clarifies and illustrates results from one method with the use of another method. *It* was concluded that motivated staff requires less supervision and are willing to accomplish tasks in the Social Studies classroom. Also, mutual trust creates conditions for self-direction and self-confidence in supervisees. It was recommended that, ensuring compliance with established rules should be considered as a major purpose of Social Studies curriculum supervision. This would enable curriculum implementers in Social Studies education to follow what has been stipulated in the guidelines for curriculum implementation.

Keywords

Curriculum, Curriculum Leaders, Curriculum Supervision, Feedback Gap, Social Studies Education, Social Studies Teachers

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1. Introduction and Background

The article has the following arrangement: firstly, an introduction which shows the background of themes which are important to the study; secondly, it presents a review of literature on the issues on feedback and the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees; thirdly, a

methodology of the research is presented; results and its discussion are presented in the fourth part and finally, the conclusions with recommendations of the work are shown in the last chapter. There are different schools of thought about what supervision should be. "Supervision may be explained to mean an expert technical service which is primarily aimed at studying and improving cooperatively, all factors which affect institutional growth and development" (Cobbold, Kofie, Bordoh & Eshun, 2015a:21). Though, McNamara

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(2008) agrees that there are several interpretations of the term supervision, he maintains that typically it is the activity carried out by supervisors to oversee the productivity and progress of employees who report directly to the supervisors. Located at the heart of educational administration and management are, generally, school supervision, and more specifically, curriculum supervision. School supervision might be broader in scope than curriculum supervision. It generally seeks to monitor, inspect and attempt to improve upon the quality of academic and non-academic aspects of education delivery. Its tasks may include general appraisal of staff and students' academic and non-academic facilities, logistics, procurements and supplies to schools, among others. School supervision is therefore aimed at improving conditions within the school climate, as well as teaching and learning in the school. On the other hand, Cobbold, Kofie, Bordoh & Eshun (2015b) stressed that, curriculum supervision is intended to embrace those activities in the school which directly involve the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and appraisal of the school curriculum.

Cobbold *et al.* (2015a:22) further stated that:

“In our specific circumstances in Ghana, Incidental supervision of the schools is undertaken by School Management Committees (S.M.Cs), Parent-Staff Associations (P.S.As), Local managers of Religious Educational Unit Schools, Boards of Governors and Councils of Institutions. Partial supervision of the curriculum is undertaken mainly by heads of schools and heads of subject departments. Professional supervision is undertaken by personnel from inspectorate/supervisory departments within the school-district, regional and national offices of the Ghana Education Service for pre-tertiary institutions, while the National Accreditation Board (NAB), National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), and others supervise tertiary institutions / programmes alongside internal quality control and assurance outfits.”

The natural crave for autonomy and self-assertion which are inherent in humans keep manifesting in all organisational settings such as the school. More often than not, teachers and students would want to enjoy some natural freedom in the context of autonomy. However, such freedom can be lost when supervisors are perceived to be too stringent. The situation becomes even dicier in instances when both the supervisor and the supervisee possess the same level of qualification or rank and even perform similar tasks in the course of their work. For instance, in the Ghana Education Service, heads of subject departments may possess the same qualification and/or rank with supposed subordinates. In this case, it might be critical that supervision tasks, which distinguish and symbolize the authority of the head, who is

sort of ‘first among equals’, must be mutually perceived within the context of the purposes it serves rather than the attributes of players involved. In school settings where such mutual understanding and singleness of purpose do not exist or are not clearly perceived, supervision might be thought of by teachers as a tool to stifle their autonomy, and by supervisors as a means to assert their authority.

As stated by Glanz (2000), there are those who have criticized modern concepts of supervision as being bureaucratic, hierarchical, and oppressive. To post-modernists, rational-technical conceptions of supervision reduce effective supervision to routines which turn supervisors into autocratic lords with the authority to diagnose teachers' pedagogical lapses and impose solutions. On the other hand, Ovando (2000:108-109) compliments effective supervision, and maintains that it “implies that educators, including teachers, curriculum specialists, and supervisors would cooperate in order to improve instruction.” It appears the power of pre-conceived mind-sets and perceptions of curriculum supervisors in many ways influence their attitudes, and approaches to supervising the curriculum. The expectations that curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers, as well as students may have concerning Social Studies curriculum and how it should be implemented will, to large extent affect Social Studies curriculum supervision. It is worth noting that these observations have tremendous implications for the conduct of this study.

According to Garubo and Rothstein (1998), research indicates that lack of skills in expressing sentiments through feedback constitutes a factor in the resistance and antagonistic behaviour of both curriculum supervisors and teachers. They therefore suggest the development of better interpersonal relationships and open communication as the way forward to resolving problems and issues in curriculum supervision.

Whether such conditions exist or not success criteria and flaws of Social Studies curriculum implementers and learners should be shared through feedback. Teaching and learning of Social Studies is aimed at knowledge acquisition and development of right attitudes, values and skills. Reflecting on the pre-instructional, instructional and post-instructional activities is necessary in providing feedback to teachers and students on appropriate and best practices that can aid scholarship (Bekoe, Attom & Eshun, 2017). The seemingly, lack of these conditions in the Ghanaian Senior High Schools provide the springboard for the current study. The issue arises as most Ghanaians apparently hold the view that effective curriculum supervision is a key explanatory factor for high academic performance in schools. In many school settings, observations tend to show that the issues involving

curriculum supervision have proved quite contentious and even acrimonious, sometimes leading to feuds between leadership and the rest of the staff and students. Quite often, Social Studies teachers and students whose tasks and functions are mostly supervised by school and subject heads tend to complain about how such leaders have become so interested in inspecting and criticising their work instead of concentrating on sourcing logistics and providing worthwhile feedback to make work easier or more manageable.

According to Bekoe, Attom and Eshun (2017), the rationale for the teaching of Social Studies at the first cycle, second cycle and the tertiary institutions in Ghana is to equip learners with problem solving skills. On this note, content and topics are thoughtfully selected to ensure that learners acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to be able to solve individual and societal problems. This notwithstanding, worthwhile feedback which is very essential in closing the yawning gap between curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education seems to be poor.

This and other red lights in the Ghanaian Senior High Schools provide the trigger for the study which is - Filling the feedback gap: The roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education. The research was guided by the following questions: How do curriculum leaders and teachers use feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision?; and What roles do supervisors and supervisees play in curriculum supervision in Social Studies education? The scope of the study covered the roles of curriculum supervision at the senior high school level. It is confined to the filling of the gap between the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees using feedback technique.

2. Review of Literature on Feedback and Roles in Curriculum Supervision

Eshun, Bordoh, Bassaw and Mensah (2014:46) stated that, “the presence of mere feedback is insufficient for judging the guidance of learning and that feedback should rather help learners to assess themselves whether they are doing well or not.” To the teacher, Eshun and Mensah (2013) stated that, there is the need to make appropriate educational decisions, and refocus students’ learning to make it more efficient and effective. In addition, the continuous monitoring of students’ learning will provide teachers with feedback about their effectiveness as curriculum implementers, and then the results of the assessment can be used to enhance teaching. This suggests that feedback about the specifics of individual work is best addressed to the individual in a way he/she can

understand. “The clarion call for effective teaching and the use of feedback to boost teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts will not be possible if the curriculum is not properly supervised” (Bekoe, Attom & Eshun, 2017:30).

This notwithstanding, Eshun, Bordoh and Kofie (2015:146) asserted that, “various issues relating to curriculum supervision have proved quite controversial. The controversy stems from the different conceptions held by curriculum leaders and teachers about the nature, approaches, importance, and practice of curriculum supervision within different educational delivery settings.” On this note, Cobbold et al. (2015a) stated that a leader whose perceptions of leadership are underpinned by equal participation, group thinking and liberal ideals is likely to pose a democratic attitude to goal achievement and supervision as well. However, an autocratic minded leader is likely to pursue supervision with an attitude of self-centredness and fault finding without giving concrete feedbacks. The essence of feedback which can be used to close the gap between the supervisor and the supervisee seems to be missing in institutions.

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback is information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding. This clearly shows that feedback for teaching/learning is should be provided to the teacher/learner with the intended purpose of improving teaching/learning by a curriculum agent. Ramaprasad (1983:4) describes feedback as a tool that provides information that has an impact on the performance, stating, “Feedback is information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system’s parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way.” Feedback, in the view of Cobbold et al. (2015a) can simply be regarded as information a teacher/learner receives on how he/she is doing in his/her efforts to reach the desired goal. Both teaching and learning aim at achieving targeted goals. While the teachers/learners strive to reach these goals, they constantly need information on how well or otherwise they are on course. Such information must be descriptive enough to direct the teachers/learners to achieve their goals. Thus, feedback is not advice, evaluation or judgments, neither is it a grade as these cannot possibly tell the learners what to do next time to improve their performance.

According to Wiggins (2012), information becomes feedback if, and only if, I am trying to cause something and the information tells me whether I am on track or need to change course. Thus, the purpose of feedback is to help teachers / students to develop their understanding and improve their performance in relation to the expected standard. Feedback should identify the gap between expected outcome and

teachers' / students' current achievement and give assistance on how to close the gap in future. When feedback functions this way, scholars prefer to regard it as feed forward because it is future work that would be improved (Walter, 2013 cited in Bekoe *et al.*, 2017). It therefore, means that, learners must be engaged in activities that are goal-oriented and somebody assesses the work and gives feedback that informs them the extent to which they are succeeding or not and what needs to be done to reach the goal (Udosen & Jude, 2014). The quality of feedback is judged by its characteristics and attributes towards its purpose. Given the definitions and characteristics of feedback, it is then seen to be an important component of curriculum supervision. Descriptive feedback rather than evaluative feedback can focus on strength or weakness of supervisors and supervisees. Feedback is most effective when it points out strength in the work as well as areas needing improvement (Bekoe, Attom & Eshun, 2017).

Ramaprasad (1983), cited in Bekoe, Attom and Eshun (2017:30) emphasised that "information is only considered feedback when it is used to alter a gap." This means that the feedback generated from curriculum supervision must be used to make changes in the supervisors and supervisees task performance. This will help them close the gap between their current status and intended supervisory goals. Among the strategies suggested to achieve high quality feedback by Brookhart (2008), include: timing, amount of feedback, mode, and the audience meant for. This suggests that feedback about the specifics of individual work is best addressed to the individual in a way he/she can understand.

It was on this that, Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski, (1993) proposed a pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed even before the supervision session and then a post-observation conference between the parties afterwards. On this, Cobbold, Kofie, Bordoh, & Eshun (2015b:128) stressed that "supervisors have to develop better interpersonal relationships with those they serve, helping them to see that problem solving can only work well in a friendly and trusted school environment." Also, Glatthorn *et al.* (2006) are of the view that teachers should, collaborate with administrators and supervisors to analyse the job of teaching and the research on effective teaching.

On qualities of good feedback, Wiggins (2012) pointed out that a helpful feedback is goal referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly; timely; on-going; and consistent. There are all indications that the provision of feedback in curriculum supervision is indispensable in our modern times, although there are differences in perception of the concept and how it is carried out.

Different countries organise their supervision service in

different ways depending on role expectations of supervisors such as regular advice and support to teachers and external control of schools (UNESCO, 2007). It is just logical that the structure is organised in sync with a country's educational management studies and lines of authority such as the national, regional / city-state, school district and institutional levels of administrative controls. Interests, and for that matter intensity of supervision by curriculum supervisors at each level may however differ greatly from country to country.

With all of their differences, there should be singleness of an ultimate purpose to produce a sound and functional curriculum delivery. However, there is an obvious lack of professional unity among supervisors and supervisees on effective and acceptable scope and approaches to curriculum supervision (Eshun *et al.*, 2015). This clearly shows that the history of curriculum supervision seems to be inundated with controversy, power struggle and subservience to administrative convenience, which has resulted in some form of resistance from teachers who view supervisors as system executioners.

Curriculum supervision takes the form of in-classroom observations, assisting teachers' professional and group development, evaluation of teachers and students' academic performance, research and revision of curriculum. It identifies, mainly, academic problems and works towards promoting academic achievement (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009). This seeks to describe the whole concept of curriculum supervision as a multi-task concept geared towards improvement in educational delivery. From this background comes a description of curriculum supervision as services which may be both technical and flexible towards the achievement of enabling conditions for effective and efficient curriculum delivery in Social Studies education. It therefore, stands to reason that, rather than the usual narrow and limited aim of improving teachers in-service performance in Social Studies education perked on their students passing examinations, curriculum supervision in Social Studies should aim at improving the total teaching and learning process that will results in building positive attitudes and reforming corrupted characters.

Also, the International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO, 2007) explains curriculum supervision to mean a part of an overall quality monitoring and improvement system, which includes other devices such as examinations and achievement test, and self-assessment practices by schools and teachers. It was further stated that the concept supervision services should be viewed by, and understood as covering all the services whose main functions include: to inspect, control, evaluate and/or advise, assist and support school leaders and teachers. This plethora of services and tasks will definitely require skills, knowledge and other

competencies of the curriculum supervisor who tries to work with the entire staff, specialists and administrators alike.

In a breath, there seems to be emerging what may be termed the reformists approach to curriculum supervision. This is in sync with the vision of UNESCO to reform school supervision for quality improvement. Many times, countries have attempted to reform their curriculum supervision services to improve educational quality. This desire for reform is inspired by disappointment with the effectiveness of supervision and by the recent trends towards more school autonomy (UNESCO, 2009). These shades of opinions expressed in the literature seem to corroborate the conviction that curriculum supervision is primarily services provided through a number of tasks with the aim of improving all factors that go into facilitating growth and development in the teaching and learning process.

In an abstract to a publication, Brooks, Solloway and Allen (2007) posit that the gulf between educational leadership and contemporary curriculum scholarship is not only gloomy, but also, it is becoming increasingly problematic, now that principals have been legally mandated to add curriculum monitoring to their duties as instructional leaders. They contend that lacking familiarity with curriculum theory and practice, many overburdened administrators are turning to Management By Walking Around (MBWA) as a simple way of dealing with their burgeoning list of responsibilities. In our opinion, the challenges that curriculum leaders may face place a demand on them to handle curriculum supervision tasks based on the perceptions of their authority and roles as against the position of the supervisee. The support, collaboration and learning opportunities yielded by supervision may therefore be limited. It is, however, the belief of Brooks et al. (2007) that this should provide one example of the ways that dialogue between fields of curriculum studies and educational leadership may augment possibilities for lasting and positive reform of instructional supervision.

Another trend, posited by Glanz and Neville (1997), has been towards a significant involvement of teachers in peer supervision and programme development. Along with this trend comes an increasing differentiation in the available options by which teacher supervision may be conducted.

According to Garubo and Rothstein (1998), recent research indicates that lack of skills in expressing feelings constitutes a factor in the resistance and antagonistic behaviour of both curriculum supervisors and teachers. They therefore suggest the development of better interpersonal relationships and open communication as the way forward to resolving problems and issues in curriculum supervision. They further stated that, lack of trust is very apparent in public schools,

where, in general, relationships between administrators and teachers are very poor (Garubo & Rothstein, 1998). The Education Encyclopaedia (2009), states that there are varieties of issues in the field of supervision that need resolution, or at least significant attention. Very crucial to the discourse is the paradigm debate between those supervisors who accept a functionalist, decontextualized, and over-simplified realist view of knowledge as something to be delivered, and those who approach knowledge as a phenomenon to be actively constructed and performed by learners in realistic contexts (Education Encyclopaedia, 2009). This, in our opinion, greatly influences the formation of perceptions for quality education delivery.

Should curriculum supervision as a field of professional and academic enquiry and of relatively unified normative principles continue to exist as a discernible field? In response to this question, the Education Encyclopaedia (2009) stipulates that many scholars and practitioners have suggested that supervisory roles and responsibilities should be subsumed under various administrative and professional roles. In this case, heads of schools for instance, acting as instructional leaders should just include a concern for quality curriculum instruction under the rubric of instructional leadership so as to forego the use of the term supervision, for terms like monitoring, coaching, professional development, and curriculum development. Perhaps the clash of varied ideas, perspectives and convictions about the nature of curriculum leadership and supervision are what has kept the field of curriculum supervision in a state of dynamic development. However, according to the Education Encyclopaedia (2009), a lack of attention to the implications of these issues will most certainly cause the field to atrophy and drift to the irrelevant fringes of the educational enterprise.

Hawkins and Shohet (1989) describe what they perceive to be the primary focus of supervision which also represents purposes of curriculum supervision. They catalogue them broadly under educational purposes and administrative / supportive purposes.

Within educational purposes of curriculum supervision lays the provision of regular space for supervisees to reflect upon the content and process of their work. There is also the development of understanding and skills, receiving information and other perspective concerning the teacher's work, as well as giving feedback. This is to ensure that the teacher is validated and supported both as a person and as a teacher, and making sure that as a person and as a worker, the teacher is not left to carry unnecessary difficulties, problems and projections alone.

On administrative / supportive purposes, curriculum

supervision enables space to explore and express personal distress, re-stimulation, transference or counter-transference that may be brought up by the work. It is, again, to allow for planning and utilization of the personal and professional resources of teachers better. It also calls for being pro-active, rather than re-active and to ensure quality of work.

Specific references to functions/purposes of curriculum supervision therefore include improvement in classroom teaching and learning, assisting teachers in professional and group development, evaluation of teachers' work output, research and revision of the curriculum. It is also meant for maintaining standards or benchmarks, meeting delivery targets within timeframes, as well as checking recalcitrance in teachers and learners.

In a peer-reviewed case study research report, Hsiao, Chen and Yang (2008) attempted to comprehend the traits and behaviours of vocational high school principals in implementing curriculum reform. In-depth interviews with experienced principals of three vocational high schools sought to identify the leadership roles and tasks that led to successful curriculum reform for vocational high school programmes. Key interview findings are that, curriculum leadership roles of vocational high school principals can be classified into advocate, navigator, coordinator, consolidator, mentor, caretaker, monitor, and feedback provider. The curriculum leadership tasks for principals can be categorized into shaping school vision, constructing organisational operation, providing and integrating resources, facilitating coordination and communication, leading curriculum design, cultivating curriculum specialization among staff, building organisational culture, solving implementation problems, conducting supervision, and promoting curriculum evaluation.

Within and around the school, several players can support teaching and control what goes on in the school. According to UNESCO (2007) principals, senior teachers, parent representatives and school board members are, for example, in such positions related to an aspect of curriculum supervision. Again, in what was categorized into core functions of supervisors, UNESCO (2007) states that generally, they are: supervision staff control and evaluate, give support and advice and act as liaison agents in institutions. These, they say are quite different, yet complementary in function.

Also, different ways to reach the heart of curriculum programming and effecting significant educational change lies with curriculum leaders as well as school heads. School heads and other curriculum leaders have to know how to write and direct curriculum, as well as possessing the ability to locate and obtain needed materials (Glatthorn, Boschee &

Whitehead, 2006).

According to the Education Encyclopaedia (2009) for instance, principals may not only supervise the work of teachers, but also monitor the work of counselors, secretaries, librarians, health personnel and others, alongside the work and behaviour of students. It is worth noting that this work requires much more tactfulness, sensitivity, diplomacy and humanism to be effective. In this regard, a conscious effort should be made to demonstrate trust, care, support, and compassion with supervisees.

In a six-point catalogue, the Education Encyclopaedia (2009) states what is termed specific responsibility of the supervisor: (1) Mentoring or providing for mentoring of beginning teachers to facilitate a supportive induction into the profession; (2) Bringing individual teachers up to minimum standards of effective teaching (quality assurance and maintenance functions of supervision); (3) Improving individual teachers' competencies, no matter how proficient they are deemed to be; (4) Working with groups of teachers in a collaborative effort to improve student learning; (5) Working with groups of teachers to adapt the local curriculum to the needs and abilities of diverse groups of students, while at the same time bringing the local curriculum in line with state and national standards; and (6) Relating teachers' efforts to improve their teaching to the larger goals of school-wide improvement in the service of quality learning for all children.

This section can be concluded that, curriculum supervision in Social Studies, therefore, involves in-class observation of teaching and learning, assisting teachers and learners, professional and group development, evaluation of teachers/learners, research and revision of the Social Studies curriculum. In effect, these responsibilities require much complex, collaboration and developmental effort with Social Studies teachers, instead of the hitherto, more strictly inspectorial tasks. The foregoing analogy shows that, the purported gap between supervisors and supervisees role in Social Studies education can be bridged through feedback technique. This is because the current period of sweeping changes in curriculum reforms in educational delivery is necessitating corresponding changes in the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees. In helping to define the role of supervisees in Social Studies education, Bekoe, Attom and Eshun (2017:30) asserted that "the current period of all-encompassing changes in curriculum reforms within the context of post-modern educational delivery is necessitating corresponding changes in the roles of Social Studies teachers. The roles of Social Studies teachers have assumed more complex dimensions, perhaps, because the Social Studies curriculum of today and its process of delivering have become much more complex on the premise

of solving individual and societal problems.”

3. Methodology

This study employed a sequential mixed-method approach to determine the feedback on the roles of supervisors and supervisees concerning curriculum supervision in Social Studies education. The population for the study was the membership of the academic staff of selected senior high schools in the Western and Central Regions of Ghana. This included heads of institutions, assistant headmasters / mistresses, heads of Social Studies units under the Social Science Departments and the teachers within the Social Studies units.

Purposively, a sample size of forty (40) curriculum leaders, comprising headmasters, assistant headmasters/mistresses, and heads of the Social Studies units were selected. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to select the one hundred and twenty (120) teachers. This constitutes the total number of teachers selected from the forty selected schools teaching Social Studies.

In consonance with the purpose of the study and issues raised in the research questions, two categories of questionnaires were used; one set for curriculum leaders and the other for teachers. These were used to collect the quantitative data for the study. Each of the two sets of questionnaires had three sections (A - C). Items under section ‘A’ sought to obtain information on the personal profile and experience of respondents within the Ghana Education Service (GES). Section ‘B’ sought to elicit information on respondents’ perception of feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision. Section ‘C’ was designed to obtain data on the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education. The substantive items on feedback and the roles in curriculum supervision within sections B to C were the same for both curriculum leaders and teachers. There were all close-ended likert-type scale items. Five curriculum

leaders and ten teachers were also interviewed on the essence of feedback and the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education. The questionnaires were administered to forty school leaders and one hundred and twenty Social Studies teachers from the forty public and private senior high schools selected from the Western and the Central Regions of Ghana. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyse the quantitative data collected, whilst interpretative analytical technique was employed for the analyses of the qualitative data. Triangulation was employed to test the consistency of findings obtained through the different instruments used, whilst complementarity clarifies and illustrates results from one method with the use of another method.

4. Findings and Discussions

This study was conducted purposely to determine how best feedback can be used to fill the gap between the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education in the senior high schools. This was discussed under two sub-themes. These are: (4.1) feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision and (4.2) the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education.

4.1. Feedback in Social Studies Curriculum supervision

In order to achieve the purpose of this section, data were collected on some basic issues relating to feedback in curriculum supervision. The research question - *How do curriculum leaders and teachers use feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision?* was formulated to seek answers from the respondents. They were asked to indicate their extent of agreement and disagreement in a 1-5 Likert Scale. Their responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision.

Items	Curriculum Supervisors					Curriculum Supervisees				
	SA	A	U	D	SD	SA	A	U	D	SD
	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %
1) Immediate feedback is most important for effective Social Studies curriculum supervision.	21	15	1	3	0	46	59	6	5	4
	52.5	37.5	2.5	7.5	.0	38.3	49.2	5.0	4.2	3.3
2) Feedback should always be at the personal level in Social Studies curriculum supervision.	9	20	3	8	0	55	56	3	4	1
	22.5	50.0	7.5	20.0	.0	45.8	47.5	2.5	3.3	.8
3) Occasionally, feedback should be through supervision conferencing in Social Studies education.	12	21	5	2	0	40	64	6	7	3
	30.0	52.5	12.5	5.0	.0	33.3	53.3	5.0	5.8	2.5
4) All feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision should be a dialogic interaction between the supervisor(s) and the supervisee(s).	15	23	0	2	0	47	64	5	4	0
	37.5	57.5	.0	5.0	.0	39.2	53.3	4.2	3.3	.0
5) Both supervisors and supervisees should keep records of all formal and informal supervision sessions in Social Studies education.	19	19	2	0	0	55	57	5	3	0
	47.5	47.5	5.0	.0	.0	45.8	47.5	4.2	2.5	.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2017. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 1 revealed the extent to which curriculum leaders agree or otherwise on the issues of feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision. Significantly, 36 (90%) of the curriculum leaders agreed that immediate feedback is most important for effective Social Studies curriculum supervision, while 3 (7.5%) disagreed. In a similar vein, 105 (87.5%) of the Social Studies teachers supported the view, while 9 (7.5%) disagreed. For clarification of the quantitative outcome, curriculum supervisors and supervisees were asked - *Why do you think immediate feedback should be employed in Social Studies curriculum supervision?* The following are the interpretative summary of the curriculum leaders and teachers - When a supervisee is performing a new task, immediate feedback is better to sustain the interest in executing the desired mission. Immediate feedback after tasks delivery is better for supporting effective goal-oriented curriculum supervision in Social Studies education. Supervisors should provide immediate positive feedback to supervisees for achieving difficult tasks. This gives emulating platform for others to do better. Low-achieving supervisees value immediate feedback, particularly when they are seen improving in their classroom activities. These imply that the view of the majority is in line with the views of Glatthorn *et al.* (2006), that when feedback is immediate, then the observer's smile, as a gesture of approval may be motivating enough to spur the observed on. It also follows that where there are concerns, clarifications are sought to inform and guide future actions.

Again, Table 1 indicated that 29, representing 72.5 per cent of curriculum leaders agreed that feedback should always be at the personal level in Social Studies curriculum supervision. This was against the views of 8 (20%) who disagreed. On the part of the teachers, 111 (93.3%) indicated their support, while 5 (4.1%) disagreed. For clarification of the questionnaire outcome, curriculum supervisors and supervisees were asked - *Why should feedback always be at the personal level in Social Studies curriculum supervision?* Social Studies curriculum supervisees suggested that it is better supervisors avoid giving open/public feedback in the presence of colleagues and students, especially, when the outcome is unwholesome, except in an agreed or routine curriculum supervision conference. Feedback should be what supervisees can cope with and this should vary with the individual concerned. It should not be done in an exaggerated and discriminatory manner. Curriculum supervisors narrated that, feedback is normally done in a fair but firm, not too much, not too little, but just on point and right on the bases of realising the intended curriculum goals.

It is further revealed in Table 1 that while 33 (82.5%) of curriculum leaders agreed that, occasionally, feedback should

be through supervision conferencing in Social Studies education, 2 (5%) disagreed. This was not contrary to the views of the teachers. While 104 (86.6%) were in support of the view that occasionally, feedback should be through supervision conferencing in Social Studies education, 10 (8.3%) disagreed. Curriculum supervisors and supervisees were also interviewed for clarification of the questionnaire outcome. Chiefly, Social Studies teachers suggested that, curriculum leaders should exert their authority by giving variety of friendly supervisory feedback bearing in mind the temperament of the teacher. This will prevent spiteful relationship among curriculum leaders and teachers. Oral, written, demonstration exercise, rewards, discussion and explanation of tasks could be used in giving quality feedback. The supervisor should best know the supervisee he/she is talking to. Feedback should be explicit about an individual's work. On the quality of feedback message in supervision conference, supervisors should focus their efforts on strengthening the skills of self-evaluation in their supervisees with laid down target setting. In supervision conferencing in Social Studies education, feedback should be addressed to an individual in a way he/she can understand. This has a twofold benefit of providing information as well as communicating to the learner that the teacher cares about his/her advancement and to the teacher that the curriculum supervisor/leader is fair-minded in dealing with him/her.

Also, the curriculum leaders were almost unanimous on the issue that all feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision should be by a dialogue between supervisors and supervisees. On that, 38 (95%) agreed, with only 2 (5%) disagreeing on the issue. This was not different from the views of the teachers. While 111 (92.5%) agreed, 4 (3.3%) disagreed. Both curriculum supervisors and supervisees also agreed in the interview that, Social Studies curriculum supervision be a dialogic interaction between the supervisor(s) and the supervisee(s) since friendly feedback has the potential to influence teaching and learning positively. This happens when feedback information is given on one-on-one and in an interactive manner by the supervisor and supervisee to help shape their actions. Interactive dialogue between curriculum supervisors and supervisees gives the platform for each to think and express their ideas about Social Studies curriculum supervision. This makes discussions to be thoughtfully reflective, focus to evoke and explore understanding on the purpose of improving teaching and learning in Social Studies.

Both curriculum leaders and teachers shared similar views on the issue of record keeping of supervisors and supervisees on both formal and informal supervision sessions. This represents 38 (95%) of curriculum leaders and 112 (93.3%)

of teachers. However, none of the curriculum leaders disagreed but 3 (2.5%) teachers disagreed. For clarification of the quantitative outcome, curriculum supervisors and supervisees were asked - *What techniques should supervisors and supervisees used to keep records of formal and informal supervision sessions and why?* Curriculum leaders and teachers suggested the use of different modes of formal and informal curriculum supervision techniques or activities like personal observation, conversation, oral questions and answers, monitoring, evaluating, directing and on the task discussion. For the reasons of keeping records of all formal and informal supervision sessions, supervisors and supervisees suggested that, the building of worthwhile dossier of performances and queries will guide supervisors and supervisees to realise curriculum supervision goals. This will provide feedback to both curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers on how much they fall short of being abreast of record keeping in Social Studies curriculum supervision and how much still needs further consolidation.

The outcome of the interviews conducted for the clarification of the issues on the essence of feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision skewed in favour of the outcome of the questionnaire administered.

4.2. The Roles of Curriculum Supervisors and Supervisees in Social Studies Education

In order to realise the objective of this section, data were collected on some basic issues relating to the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education. The research question *two* - *What roles do curriculum supervisors and supervisees play in curriculum supervision in Social Studies education?* was geared towards finding responses from the respondents with regard to the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees play in Social Studies curriculum supervision. They were, therefore, asked to indicate their extent of agreement and disagreement in a 1-5 Likert Scale. Their responses are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education.

Items	Curriculum Supervisors					Curriculum Supervisees				
	SA	A	U	D	SD	SA	A	U	D	SD
	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1) Making the effort to supply teaching and learning resources to supervisees is part of the supervisor's task.	18	13	4	4	1	67	44	2	5	2
	45.0	32.5	10.0	10.0	2.5	55.8	36.7	1.7	4.2	1.7
2) Curriculum supervisors must guide subordinates in the course of their work.	21	17	2	0	0	64	46	3	5	2
	52.5	42.5	5.0	.0	.0	53.3	38.3	2.5	4.2	1.7
3) Mentoring of beginning Social Studies teachers to facilitate a supportive induction into the profession is the task of the curriculum supervisor.	29	11	0	0	0	48	60	7	4	1
	72.5	27.5	.0	.0	.0	40.0	50.0	5.8	3.3	.8
4) Social Studies teachers collaborate with supervisors in an effort to improve students learning.	19	20	1	0	0	64	54	2	0	0
	47.5	50.0	2.5	.0	.0	53.3	45.0	1.7	.0	.0
5) Subordinates should make inputs into feedback and/or supervision decisions in Social Studies education.	21	17	2	0	0	52	61	7	0	0
	52.5	42.5	5.0	.0	.0	43.4	50.8	5.8	.0	.0
6) Teachers must provide vital information to facilitate the Social Studies curriculum supervision process.	21	14	1	4	0	50	65	5	0	0
	52.5	35.0	2.5	10.0	.0	41.7	54.2	4.2	.0	.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2017. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 2 revealed that 31 (77.5%) of curriculum leaders agreed that one major role of curriculum supervisors is making effort to supply resources to supervisees. This was contrary to the views of 5 (12.5%), who disagreed. On the part of the teachers, while 111 (92.5%) agreed, 7 (5.9%) disagreed. For explanation of the questionnaire outcome, curriculum supervisors and supervisees were asked - *Is the supply of resources to supervisees part of the supervisor's task and why?* Both curriculum leaders and the teachers recognised the need that, although, the supply of looked-for teaching and learning resources to supervisees is part of the supervisory role, teachers ought to be resourceful especially in terms of the acquisition of teaching and learning resources/materials by looking for those that can be visibly found in their environment and improvising for others that can be done with ease. This implies that the views of the curriculum leaders and teachers support the assertion of

Hsiao, Chen, and Yang (2008) which indicated the role of the curriculum supervisor as providing and integrating resources, facilitating coordination and integrating resources, facilitating coordination and communication, leading curriculum design, cultivating curriculum specialization among staff, building organisational culture, solving implementation problems, conducting supervision, and promoting curriculum evaluation. To explain this further, Glatthorn et al. (2006) defined the role of the curriculum supervisor to include providing all the resources needed to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum: the time allocated to the curriculum, the personnel assigned to plan and implement the curriculum and the instructional materials required for the curriculum.

Table 2 also indicated that majority, 38 (95%) believed that curriculum supervisors must guide subordinates in the course

of their work. This was not different from that of the teachers. One hundred and ten representing (95%) agreed, while 7 (5.9%) disagreed. In addition, an interview was conducted for the curriculum supervisors and supervisees to explain the questionnaire outcome. The common words from both the curriculum leaders and supervisees were that, guidance and descriptive feedback should be given to subordinates focusing on a well design curriculum supervision guidelines or code of ethics of the profession. Guidance and worthwhile feedback must points out strength in the supervisees' work as well as areas needing improvement. This is in line with the view of McNamara (2008) that, a good supervisor places a high priority on coaching supervisees. Good coaching involves working with supervisees to establish suitable goals, action plans and time lines. The supervisor delegates and also provides on-going guidance and support to the supervisees as they complete their action plans. Also, Holloway (1995), states that supporting and sharing functions of the supervisor require empathic attention, encouragement and constructive confrontation with the supervisee(s). Holloway went ahead to suggests that the supervisor should function as a model of professional behaviour and practice, both implicitly in the supervisory relationship and explicitly by role-playing for the supervisee.

With regard to the mentoring of beginning Social Studies teachers to facilitate a supportive induction into the profession, Table 2 indicated that all the curriculum leaders agreed. On the part of the teachers, 108 (90%) were in support. This was different from the view of 7 (5.8%) Social Studies teachers who were indecisive and 5 (4.1%) who disagreed on the issue. For clarification of the questionnaire outcome, curriculum supervisors and supervisees were asked - Is mentoring of beginning Social Studies teachers by curriculum supervisors necessary and why? Interpretatively, it was deduced that, modeling and providing beginning teachers with descriptive feedback on teaching and learning is a crucial part of increasing achievements. This helps beginning teachers to ascertain and self-assess where they need improvement in their classroom activities. Equally important in feedback practice is the need to groom supervisees to have good teaching and evaluative skills. When mentoring teachers are put at the centre of curriculum supervision practice with worthwhile feedback, they actively involved in the supervision process, thereby checking and regulating their performance, which in turn promote teaching and learning. In support of the majority view, the Education Encyclopaedia (2009) stated that, mentoring or providing for mentoring of beginning teachers to facilitate a supportive induction into the profession is a role of the curriculum supervisors.

Table 2 further revealed that there was a consensus between the curriculum leaders and the teachers with regard to Social Studies teachers collaborating with supervisors in an effort to improve students learning. This is indicated by 39 (97.5%) of curriculum leaders and 118 (98.3%) of teachers. Also, the outcome of the interviews is summarised as - the implications of the intent of both curriculum supervisees and supervisors collaborating with each other helps in closing the feedback gap between them. This results in teachers exerting their best in teaching by urging students to achieve their potentials in Social Studies curriculum delivery. The Education Encyclopaedia (2009) supports this view when it stated that, curriculum supervision involves working with groups of teachers in a collaborative effort to improve students learning.

On the views on subordinates making inputs into feedback and/or supervision decisions, Table 2 indicated that 38 (95%) of curriculum leaders and 113 (94.2%) of teachers agreed. This was contrary to the views of 2 (5%) curriculum leaders and 7 (5.8%) teachers who were indecisive as to whether subordinates' inputs into feedback and supervision decisions are required in Social Studies education. Curriculum supervisors and supervisees were also asked - *Should subordinates make inputs into feedback and/or supervision decisions in Social Studies education and why?* The outcome of the interview is summarised in an interpretative manner. Subordinates allowed to make inputs into feedback by supervisors give them the sense of belonging and recognition. This helps teachers to modify their thought about supervision seen as a tool by curriculum leaders to suppress their autonomy, while they exert their authority. The perceived singleness of purpose helps teachers to give their lots for the purpose of improving teaching and learning. Curriculum supervisors' response to supervisees' grievances/questions can be done at any point in time in the Social Studies curriculum supervision process by acknowledging their responses, reinforcing comments, invitation to react, building on responses, and avoiding responses that affect them negatively. The effective usage of these techniques by supervisors during curriculum supervision process helps teachers to make input into feedback that provide the needed information to enhance teaching and learning in Social Studies. Again, the majority view is supported by Glatthorn *et al.* (2006) that, teachers should collaborate with administrators and supervisors to analyse the job of teaching and the research on effective teaching.

Table 2 finally revealed that, while 35 (87.5%) of curriculum leaders agreed, 4 (10%) disagreed that Social Studies teachers must provide vital information to facilitate the curriculum supervision process. This is not different from the

views of the teachers. One hundred and fifteen representing (95.9%) of teachers supported the view. In an interview conducted by the researchers, curriculum leaders advised that, not all of them are abreast of the reasons for the Social Studies introduction in the school curriculum. For that matter, Social Studies teachers need to provide the vital information to facilitate the subject curriculum supervision process, since they know the philosophy of the subject and the need to impart it to realise its core mandate. This provides curriculum supervisors with more opportunities to think about their actions and reactions, and to adopt conscious plans to improve the teaching and learning process. In sync with this view, Ovando (2000) states that, modern supervision implies that educators, including teachers, curriculum specialists, and supervisors would cooperate in order to improve instruction. Also in support is the view of Garubo and Rothstein (1998), that curriculum supervision is a method of teaching the staff to act in more conscious ways. Its goal is to provide teachers and supervisors with more information and deeper insights into what is happening around them. This increases the options teachers have as they work with students. If there is a cordial partnership between supervisors and teachers, teachers learn to identify and resolve their classroom problems, while supervisors get a better idea about what is happening in different classrooms.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

It can be concluded that motivated staff requires less supervision and are willing to accomplish tasks in the Social Studies classroom. Also, mutual trust creates conditions for self-direction and self-confidence in supervisees. Again, curriculum supervisors must guide and supply Social Studies teachers with the needed resources in the course of their work. Teachers must provide vital information and make inputs into feedback to facilitate the Social Studies curriculum supervision process. These are favourable conditions for curriculum supervision in Social Studies education.

There was a strong consensus among curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers that, the major purpose of Social Studies curriculum supervision are the monitoring of performance, sharing of information/feedback and solving problems. Curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers should collaborate with each other in an effort to improve students learning. Mentoring of beginning Social Studies teachers to facilitate a supportive induction into the teaching profession is the role of the curriculum leader. Modeling and providing beginning Social Studies teachers with descriptive feedback on teaching and learning is a crucial part of increasing achievements. This helps to ascertain and self-

assess where they need improvement in their classroom activities.

It was also revealed that effective curriculum supervision thrives on both supervisors and supervisees keeping records of all formal as well as informal supervision sessions and providing immediate feedback. Immediate feedback is most important for effective Social Studies curriculum supervision. Feedback should always be at the personal level in Social Studies education. Occasionally, feedback should be through supervision conferencing in Social Studies education. All feedback in Social Studies curriculum supervision should be a dialogic interaction between the supervisor(s) and the supervisee(s).

Provision of worthwhile feedback is seen as the centerpiece of delivering the Social Studies curriculum supervision process. Formulation of worthwhile feedback mechanisms will close the yawning gap between curriculum leaders and Social Studies teachers.

The wide-yawning gap between the roles of curriculum supervisors and supervisees in Social Studies education can be bridged through worthwhile feedback technique, whereby feedback is seen as descriptive on the purpose of finding solutions to challenging situations and not evaluative, whereby it is seen as fault finding.

Based on the findings, it was recommended that, the procedure to be used by the curriculum supervisors should be discussed with, and agreed upon by the supervisees. It is also recommended that, ensuring compliance with established rules should be considered as a major purpose of Social Studies curriculum supervision. This would enable curriculum implementers in Social Studies to follow what has been stipulated in the guidelines for Social Studies curriculum implementation.

In order to ensure effective curriculum supervision in Social Studies education, it is also recommended that, persuasion and dialogue which normally elicits cooperation in curriculum supervision should be introduced. Finally, since sanctions ensure compliance in curriculum supervision, it must be enforced, but in a reasonable manner, bearing in mind the ethos of the Social Studies teaching profession.

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