

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF  
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IN EDUCATION**

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For further information, please consult our *call for papers* at the end of the Journal.

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## **EDITORIAL**

This 9<sup>th</sup> volume is the second issue since the corona virus pandemic began. We extend a very warm welcome to our authors and readers. The pandemic rages on and researchers round the globe are doing various investigations related to it. We made a call for papers in 2019 and published in June 2020. Right after that, we made another call in August 2020. We are just lucky to maintain our minimum target of one publication per year (12-month intervals). We are grateful that God is helping us to hang in there.

Our call for papers for the current issue (Volume 9) had the theme, *the Global impact of The Corona Virus Disease on Education*.

Once again, our first article of Volume 9 is written by Inaku Egere, who responded specifically to our call for papers on the corona virus. Egere investigated mobile-learning (M-Learning) of undergraduate students in private universities in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. According to him, COVID-19 protocols caused a paradigm shift of pedagogy. To evaluate students' performance based on the shift of the learning pedagogy from face to face (F2F) to m-learning, a non-experimental quantitative design was used. A questionnaire was used to gather data from undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education, Veritas University Abuja and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Catholic Institute of West Africa Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The sample of 233 was derived from a total population of 560 students. Data analysis revealed that, m-learning improved students' performance. To get even better results the study recommended the embellishment of ICT hubs with e-learning facilities throughout Nigeria.

The second article of Volume 9 was authored by Abdulai and Diedong, who examined service quality and customer satisfaction of Mobile Telecom services in Tamale Metropolis in Northern Ghana. The study employed a mixed method research design. The sample size for the study was 401 respondents. Data was sourced from key informant interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. The results showed that customers perceived service quality and satisfaction differently. While most Vodafone customers were satisfied with their service, customers of MTN were dissatisfied. The study concluded that some aspects of the operations of both MTN and Vodafone networks require improvement. Service providers need to improve service quality.

The third and final article of the ICT section was conducted by George.

George, Rahman and Ofori believe that since the development of digital media technology, students have embraced the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) creativity. However, most of the students have challenges in the use of ICT and this has a negative impact on the pedagogy of creativity in education. To address this issue George sets out to investigate the challenges of using ICT in the creative process. This qualitative approach, a purposive sampling method used a sample of 150 students from the Communication Design Programme. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that most of students lacked competence in using ICT on creativity. It is recommended that students are taught how to develop new concepts and ideas for creativity.

In the Pedagogy subsection, Nabie investigated the interactions of Circuit Supervisors (CSs) with basic school teachers in Ghana. The objective of these interactions was to facilitate the effective teaching of mathematics. The participants of the study were 55 basic school teachers (43

males 21 females). A 20-item anonymous questionnaire was used to gather data regarding CSs activities in the schools of participants. The data were descriptively analysed. The results showed that the feedback provided by CSs, which was intended to support instructional delivery was “at variance with mathematics teacher needs for effective practice and contrary to curriculum recommendations.” The researcher suggested a qualitative study involving the CSs to generate further data to analyse with a view to address the challenge of effective mathematics instruction at basic schools in Ghana.

Adiyiah, Dieudonne and Ameyaw investigated the effect of teachers’ self-efficacy on students’ performance. They asserted that lately, data on Senior High students’ Biology performance had been on serious decline nationwide. They therefore set out to examine the effect of teachers’ self-efficacy on students’ motivation and performance in biology. Six teachers and one hundred and twenty students from two Senior High schools in the Ashanti Mampong municipality of Ghana were the participants. The data collection involved the use of three instruments namely teacher self-efficacy questionnaire, students’ motivation questionnaire and photosynthesis achievement test items. The results were analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation and one-way ANOVA. The findings revealed that teacher’s self-efficacy motivated students and resulted in better academic performance in biology.

These authors conducted a quasi-experimental study using concept mapping and its closeness indices assessment scheme as an alternative learning and assessment strategy. This was necessitated by prevailing inefficient rote learning technique, which could not help students to understand concepts and perform well in biology. A sample of students in the Ashanti Region of Ghana participated in the study. Data collection involved the use of an interactive 5-Es constructivist instructional model delivery, regularly using closeness indices scores and students’

performance test scores in photosynthesis. Analysis was done via one-way Anova statistical tool of SPSS version 21 software. The findings indicated that regular use of closeness indices assessment strategy positively influenced students learning outcomes. Specifically, it promoted their critical thinking and enhanced their conceptual understanding, which resulted in improved academic performance in photosynthesis among participating students of different abilities.

African Studies is the final section of IJOPPIE Vol 9. Dseagu's article on folktales starts the section. Dseagu's paper takes exception to Bascom's (1965) definition of African folktales as fiction that is not taken seriously in traditional societies in contrast to legends and myths. The paper adduces evidence to support the assertion that Bascom's (1965) view of African folktales is "unsustainable". It further asserts that Bascom's definition of folktales had been "discredited long ago". The paper therefore calls on African educators to discard Bascom's (1965) "fallacious" views on African folktales.

Next, under African Studies is Zuure's article on legal systems.

The study examined similarities and differences between the traditional court in Kongo and the modern state-court operating in the area. Additionally, the study explored the prospects of the traditional court in conflict resolution. This qualitative study used the case study design. Sixteen participants were purposively and conveniently sampled and interviewed for data. The findings revealed that the Kongo traditional court and the modern state court had similarities and differences in their approach to conflict resolution. It was also revealed that the Kongo indigenous mechanism to conflict resolution had great prospects. It was therefore, recommended that the two court systems in the area should collaborate for more effective conflict resolution, leading to a more peaceful and harmonious life.

In the third article under African Studies, Zuuri examined the influence of Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) on household food consumption, access to health services, and children's school attendance of persons with disabilities in the Effutu Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The study adopted the qualitative research approach. A sample of thirty-four persons was purposively and conveniently selected to participate in the study. A semi-structured interview guide was used to gather data. The findings revealed that the LEAP programme had a positive influence on household food consumption, access to healthcare, and children's school attendance among PWD beneficiaries in the Effutu Municipality. Zuuri recommended that the programme be regularly reviewed to ensure that it achieves its goals.

**Editor – in – Chief**

**September, 2021**

**QUALITY MATHEMATICS EDUCATION DELIVERY: CIRCUIT SUPERVISORS'  
SUPERVISORY PRACTICES FROM THE LENSES OF THE GHANAIAN BASIC  
SCHOOL TEACHER**

By

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**ABSTRACT**

*The study surveyed basic school teachers' perceptions of circuit supervisors (CSs) practices towards providing quality mathematics education delivery in Ghana. Using convenience sampling, 55 basic school teachers (43 male, 21 female) were selected for the study. A 20-item anonymous questionnaire was used to study participants' perceived views of CSs activities in their schools. The resulting quantitative data from the instrument were descriptively analysed. The results showed that CSs performed their traditional roles of interacting, observing teachers' practices in the mathematics classroom, and providing feedback intended to support instructional delivery. However, the study revealed that the feedback support provided by the CSs is at variance with mathematics teacher needs for effective practice and contrary to curriculum recommendations. A qualitative study of the CS in action is suggested to complete the story.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The caliber of mathematics teachers is at the heart of quality mathematics education. Mathematics teachers are the main implementers of the school curriculum. They facilitate student

learning and ensure that the relevant content of school mathematics is acquired as they progress through the educational ladder. As main implementers of the mathematics curriculum, any move towards improving educational delivery must recognize them as the center of the quality equation. In recognizing the central role of the teacher in educational delivery, the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ghana Education Service (GES) together have made several attempts to reform Teacher Education. As part of the reforms, the curriculum was reviewed to improve teacher quality and to strengthen the management and supervision of schools. The Initial Teacher Training Colleges (ITTCs) were also upgraded to diploma awarding institutions and the curriculum enhanced to improve teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge base in the various subject areas (Ampadu, 2012).

The main purpose of teacher supervision and performance assessment to improve instruction, advance the teaching profession and to provide space for teachers' professional development is well documented (Avalos, 2010; Inkegbusi & Eziamaka, 2016; Kono, 2012). Research (Avalos, 2010) suggests that supervisors provide classroom teachers with continuous professional principles that support teacher learning. In-service professional development opportunities play a significant role in developing the professional competencies of practicing teachers. Ismail, Al-Zoubi, Abdel Rahman, and Al-Shabatat (2011) suggested that a professional development model that incorporates activities and experiences relevant for classroom practice provide opportunities for teachers to develop their instructional competencies. Cognizant that Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) is a process of learning how to learn and translating what is learnt into practice for the benefits of students (Avalos, 2010), the GES provides space for highly experienced subject experts to provide continuous in-service training services through supervision and monitoring.

Continuous in-service support for basic school teachers is the rationale for the establishment of the Inspectorate Division of the Ghana Education Service of the Ministry of Education. Personnel at the inspectorate division of the GES supervise in different capacities external and internal. External inspectors from the National Headquarters and Regional offices are responsible for supervising senior high schools while the internal supervisors (District Director and Circuit Supervisors) are for basic schools. The supervisors inspect school facilities and provide support services to teachers and headteachers for their professional growth. External supervision keep teachers alert, organized in their work and contribute to their professional growth (Inkegbusi & Eziamaka, 2016). In addition, the District Education Oversight Committees (DEOCs), the School Management Committees (SMCs), District Teacher Support Teams (DTSTs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) are established to complement the efforts of external supervisors from National, Regional and District Education offices (Baffour-Awuah, 2011).

Oppoku-Asare (2006) traced the history of supervision in Ghana to the colonial times when the first inspector of schools for British West Africa was appointed in 1853. A timetable for supervision of schools was provided for supervisors to regularly supervise activities in schools in 1890. Since then, school inspection became an integral part of education delivery. The school supervisor's traditional role of an evaluator, a professional guide and a helper has since not changed. In this capacity, school supervisors assess both teachers and students to determine whether standards are being met. In addition, they make administrative and professional suggestions aimed at improving the professional performance of teachers, provide professional support, guidance and leadership to teachers and headteachers to ensure quality learning. Also, they ensure the judicious and effective use of resources, ensure teachers teach the content of the syllabus, discuss pupils



performance with teachers and foster positive relationships within the school community (GES, 2002).

As a means of improving educational quality, school supervision provides strategic space of checking completion rates, improving student learning and teacher quality (Opoku-Asare, 2006). Continuous support for teachers' professional growth to ensure quality education delivery is the basis for the Ghana Pre-tertiary Teacher Professional Development and Management (GPTPDM) policy. In this policy framework, instructional supervision is a quality assurance measure, requiring that teachers are adequately prepared in content, curriculum and pedagogy to respond to the challenging needs and instituted teacher appraisal (MOE, 2012). Supervisors operate at all levels of the school system in line with the government's decentralization policy of governance and management. Circuit Supervisors play a critical role in supporting quality mathematics education delivery in schools. They have positive impact on teacher effectiveness as they clarify policies, offer instructional strategies for effective implementation of the curriculum (Inkegbusi & Eziamaka, 2016). By the GPTPDM policy (GES, 2012), the CS collects relevant information to inform and advise the curriculum implementation process.

Although the GES (2002) encourages both traditional and clinical supervision practices, emphasis is on the latter. Traditional supervision places emphasis on teacher defects and CS is seen as a fault finder. Clinical supervision, rooted in the works of Robert Goldhammer and Morris Cogan (cited in Baffour-Awuah, 2011) on the other hand, places emphasis on teacher growth with focus on the instructional process. Clinical supervision, developed to address the weaknesses of traditional supervisory methods, views the teacher as a collaborator (GES, 2002, p. 1). Circuit supervisors who may play the role of general and subject leaders must collaborate with teachers in ways that enable

the best use of the available facilities in the mathematics classroom, enhance their professional capacity for teaching mathematics, and drive towards achieving quality mathematics education.

### **Research on school supervision in Ghana**

Fletcher (2001) investigated the validity of Ghana's teacher appraisal system and how it is perceived in helping to improve mathematics teaching. His findings indicate that although supervisors are expected to appraise teachers in their areas of specialization, most of the officials who appraised mathematics teachers were not specialists in mathematics. Furthermore, some of the non-mathematics specialists had no training in appraising mathematics teaching. Many of the supervisors at the secondary level lacked the expertise to help teachers improve their teaching. Teachers perceived qualification as critical to accepting feedback from supervisors. Participants called for the replacement of most of the circuit supervisors. These findings suggest that the reform efforts in supervision do not seem to have the intended positive effects.

Opoku-Asare (2006) examined the policy and practice of school at the basic school level in Ghana. He found that teachers selected for supervisory roles were those of professional excellence not below the rank of Principal Superintendent. The number of supervisors per circuit depended on whether it was urban, semi-urban or rural. No matter where a supervisor is assigned, the responsibilities are the same: assessing the needs of schools, organizing in-service training opportunities in subjects where teachers require assistance, solving pedagogic and managerial problems, and attending all in-service training workshops in the circuit. In addition, they are expected to submit written reports on the progress of activities in the schools to the Directors of Education for onward submission to the headquarters. His study suggests that there were challenges in the recruitment of supervisors. In their study of factors prompting pupil's academic performance in

Ghana, Okyerefo, Fiaveh, and Lamptey (2011) identified supervision as one factor associated with high academic performance. Effective supervision at all levels that provide checks and balances for effective teaching was found to be one attribute of success in private schools. Based on their findings, they argued that academically and professionally qualified teachers would be less productive if supervision is ineffective. The NEA Report (2011) therefore recommended that circuit supervisor interventions should focus more on reforming teacher practices designed to reach lower-performing students.

### **Challenges of school inspection**

The circuit supervisor as a school leader has the responsibility of removing pedagogical bottle-necks that may prevent teachers from maximizing their instructional efforts (Too, Kimutai, & Kosgei, 2012). Removing instructional constraints can be achieved if the supervisor consistently examines unit and lesson plans and conducts pre- and post-evaluation conferences (Opoku-Asare, 2006). This requires supervisors to arrive early in schools to examine teachers' instructional plans to map out efficient observation, post-conferencing, and evaluative procedures to provide effective feedback. Effective supervision is hindered by inadequate inspection personnel and lack of vehicles to transport supervisors to and from schools on time (Opoku-Asare, 2006). As a result, supervisors spend little time in individual classrooms and supervise only a tiny bit of teaching. Besides, teachers are often pre-informed about supervisors' visits. Consequently, the teacher will put on a game face and supervision becomes atypical rather than typical (Fletcher, 2001; Marshall, 2005). Also, supervision reinforces teacher isolation and raises the tension and anxiety levels of teachers that make it more difficult for them to admit errors, listen, and talk openly about areas that need improvement (Marshall, 2005).

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Despite the Ministry of Education's policies to monitor and supervise schools to improve quality in Ghana, there are concerns that supervision in public schools is weak (Agbodza, 2014; GNA, 2011; Karim, 2013). According to the NEA (2011) report, although circuit supervisors can be an avenue for improving learning outcomes, they "seem to have little effect on students reaching minimum performance levels" (p.15). Circuit supervisors seldom activate a supervisory voice to guide teachers to work with students. As a result, quality control in educational delivery is both inefficient and ineffective as most teachers do not attend school regularly or leave the classroom at will or deliver poor teaching (Agbodza, 2014; Okyerefo, Fiaveh, & Lamptey, 2011; Opoku-Asare, 2006). Thus, supervisors' inactions create an instructional vacuum and a growth of emptiness in professional relationship with teachers (Marshall, 2005). Consequently, teachers continue to teach the same way and students continue to perform poorly.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The Government of Ghana and educational partners continue to invest in mathematics and science education with the belief that their investments will bring about the needed scientific development. However, if teachers are not supervised effectively, the investments in education will be in the drain. Fletcher (2001) called for the replacement of most circuit supervisors because they were unable to help teachers improve upon their mathematics teaching practices. The study was therefore designed to examine basic school teachers' perceptions of circuit supervisors' supervisory practices in mathematics education.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Circuit supervisors play a critical role in the provision of quality educational delivery. However, little is known about how their practices contribute to the provision of quality mathematics education in Ghana. Consequently, the current study was designed to answer the following question: What supervisor practices (strategies, behaviours, formal/informal conversations on instructional matters regarding request for assistance, materials procedures and policies, attitudes, and goals) influence teachers' classroom mathematics instruction? Specifically:

1. How often do circuit supervisors visit schools to offer support to teachers in mathematics teaching?
2. What are circuit supervisors' supervisory activities with basic school mathematics teachers before, during and after supervision?
3. Which areas in mathematics education delivery do basic schoolteachers need support the most?
4. To what extent do circuit supervisors address the mathematics teaching needs of basic schoolteachers?

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Successive governments have called for pragmatic measures to curb the dwindling fortunes of education in Ghana. Thus, an exploratory study on circuit supervisors' practices in building the professional capacities of teachers is warranted. The study would identify the contribution of circuit supervisors towards transforming mathematics education in Ghana. In addition, the results would provide useful information for decisions on the policy and practice of supervision in basic schools. Furthermore, the results of the study would provide scientific evidence as to how supervisory

functions can be strengthened. It may also lead to further research in understanding circuit supervisors' practices towards improving quality mathematics delivery in schools. Finally, the results from this study could identify new ways of supporting teachers' professional delivery, as envisioned by the GPTPDM policy (G.E.S, 2012). To date, there is no publication exploring how the supervisory practices of circuit supervisors affect teachers' delivery of mathematics instruction in Ghana. Current educational reforms in the country, aimed at increasing the quality of education makes the study of circuit supervisors' supervisory practices paramount.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to explore circuit supervisors' supervisory practices towards improving classroom teachers' pedagogical capacity for teaching mathematics in basic schools. This design also enabled a wider coverage of participants' perceived thoughts and feelings about supervisors.

### **Research participants**

A convenience sampling technique was used to select 55 (34 males, 21 females) basic school teachers across the country from both urban and rural school communities. Participants were prospective applicants who had reported at one of the public universities in Ghana for an entrance examination. Out of the 55 basic school teachers, 13 taught at the lower primary level (Basic 1-3), 26 at the upper primary level (Basic 4-6), and 16 taught at the JHS level. The basic school level is where teachers really need more support services from experts to build foundation concepts for quality mathematics education delivery.

## **Instrument**

A 20-item anonymous questionnaire consisting of single and multiple response type items (Hosker, 2008) was used. The questionnaire allowed participants to choose only one item or choose/provide more than one response to an item where applicable. Out of the 20 items in the questionnaire, items 1-7 sought for bio-data, 8-12 sought circuit supervisors' mode of visits to school, 13-15 were on CSs' practices before, during, and after supervision, and 16 - 20 sought for the nature of feedback, support service needs, and role assessment provided by supervisors. The questionnaire was vetted by two experienced circuit supervisors to ensure content validity. In recognition that wording of items, the structure, and the way items are introduced can affect participants responses and willingness to respond (Hosker, 2008), the questionnaire was pilot tested for reliability and structural modifications.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Responses to the questionnaire yielded quantitative data. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. Simple counts of the number of times an item is indicated (Absolute frequency counts) were applied to the number of participants' responses to each item. Frequency counts were summated and transformed into relative frequencies ( $f_r$  is a fraction of the total frequencies) and converted into percentages.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The present study examined basic school teachers' perceptions of circuit supervisors' supervisory practices in mathematics education. The data presented in this section are consistent with the bio-data and research questions for the study.

## Background data

Items 3 and 4 on the questionnaire sought for participants' academic and professional qualifications. Participants' responses to the items were descriptively summarised and presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
Teachers' qualifications by professional rank

<b>Academic</b>					
<b>Professional Rank</b>	Untrained	3-Year Post- Sec	Diploma	Bachelors	Total
No Rank	5(9.1%)	1(1.8%)	1(1.8%)	3(5.5%)	10 (18.2%)
Superintendent	0	4(7.3%)	4(7.3%)	1(1.8%)	9(16.4%)
Senior Superintendent	0	1(1.8%)	21(38.2%)	2(3.6%)	24 (43.6%)
Principal Superintendent	0	3(5.5)	0	8 (14.5%)	11(20.0%)
Assistant Director	0	1(1.8%)	0	0	1(1.8%)
Total	5 (9.1%)	10(18.2%)	26(47.3%)	14(25.4%)	55(100%)

Table 1 indicates that the teachers' qualifications ranged from teachers with no rank to Assistant Director and from non-professional to professional. Majority of the teachers (91%) in the sample were professionally trained while only 5 teachers representing 9% were untrained. Also, 21 (38.2%) of the participants were Senior Superintendent with Diploma and 8 (14.5%) were principal Superintendents' with a Bachelor's degree. Only 1(1.8%) was an Assistant Director with a 3-Year Post-Secondary Certificate.

## Circuit supervisors' notification and frequency of visit

Teachers' responses to an item as to whether they were pre-informed of a supervisor's visit to their schools and how often they visited were aggregated and converted to percentages in Tables 2a and 2b.



Table 2a

Teachers' response on circuit supervisors' notification of visits

Category of action	Number of teachers (%)
Pre-inform teachers before visit (Yes)	4 (7.3%)
Pre-informs sometimes (Sometimes)	25 (45.4%)
No information before visit (No)	26 (47.3%)

Table 2a:

Frequency of Circuit Supervisors visits to Schools

Number of observations	Number of teachers (%)
Once a week	0 (0%)
Once a month	33 (60%)
Once a term	15 (27.3%)
Once a year	2 (3.6%)
Other (No visit)	5 (9.1%)

Table 2a indicates that 26 (47.3%) of the teachers did not receive any information of the supervisor before a visit while 25 (45.4%) indicated they were sometimes pre-informed of the visit. Only 4 (7.3%) indicated CSs always informed them before they visited. From Table 2b, 33 participants (60%) of the CSs visited their schools once a month while 15 indicated they visited once a term. Interestingly, while 2(3.6%) indicated the CSs visited once a year, 5 (9.1%) indicated no CSs visited their schools.

### **Circuit supervisors' activity before, during, and after supervision**

An item requested participants to describe the circuit supervisor's activities before, during, after supervision. Participants' descriptions were categorised and frequency counts applied to the categories that were converted to percentages and presented in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that CSs were engaged in setting the space for supervision, act of observing, and providing feedback in the process of supervision. Before supervision, 37 (67.27%) of the participants indicated the Circuit Supervisor engaged in activities that set the space for the classroom. The activities ranged from personally coming to inspect the attendance register, lesson notes, and other teaching resources [37(41.82%)] or asking few questions [2 (3.6%)] to pre-informing about the visit [2 (3.64%)]. Whereas 10 (18.18%) stated that the CS acted as a mentor and gave reasons for the visit, 18 (32.73%) teachers indicated they never had any interaction or pre-information to the CS interaction, observations and note-taking and providing feedback before, during and after supervision respectively.

Table 3 indicates all the teachers who had CSs in their schools were observed during supervision. Many teachers, 17 representing 30.91% indicated CSs observed and took notes during the supervisory process. Twelve (21.82%) of the teachers reported CSs observed and monitored instructional process and activities, while 11(20.00%) indicated the CSs observed and checked teaching and learning resources. Few 8(14.54%) indicated CSs observed and offered support where necessary and fewer 7(2.73%) said they were observed without comments.

After supervision is feedback to the system, most CSs (36.36%) gave written comments. Most of the written comments were general comments without recommendations (16.36%) followed by comments with recommendations (12.73%). One-fifth (20.00%) of the CSs had discussions with the teachers while 7.27% had discussions with the headteacher or both. The data further showed that approximately 30% of the circuit supervisors did not provide any form of feedback to teachers after supervision.

Table 3

Supervisors' activity before, during, and after supervision (n=55)

Period of activity	f (%)
<b>Before Supervision</b>	
Setting the space of supervision	37 (67.27)
Inspects register lesson notes, and other teaching resources	23 (41.82)
Acts as a mentor & give reasons for his visit	10 (18.18)
Pre-informs me about his visit	2 (3.64)
Asks few questions	2 (3.64)
No form of pre-supervision activity /interaction	18 (32.73)
<b>During supervision</b>	
The act of observation	
Observing and making notes	17 (30.91)
Observing and checking teaching and learning resources	11(20.00)
Observing and offering support where necessary	8 (14.54)
Observing and monitoring instructional processes and activities	12 (21.82)
Observe without comment	7 (2.73)
<b>After Supervision</b>	
Feedback to the system	19.(34.55)
Have discussion	
With teacher	11 (20.00)
With headteacher	4 (7.27)
With both	4 (7.27)
Give written comments	20 (36.36)
Comments & recommendations	7 (12.73)
General comments without recommendations	9 (16.36)
Corrects mistakes & advise	4 (7.27)
Give no feedback	16 (29.09)

In terms of needs assessment for teaching mathematics, eight areas were listed for participants to indicate the area they needed support. Descriptive statistics were computed for participants selected needs and presented in Table 4.

From Table 4, over 50% of participants indicated they needed support in five (5) out of the eight (8) areas listed. All the participants indicated they needed support in ICT skills for teaching mathematics and knowledge and understanding of current instructional practices, while 10 participants, representing less than 20% indicated they needed support in classroom management. While slightly over 90% of the participants needed support in identifying and handling students with special challenges, 72.6% indicated they needed support in knowledge and understanding of mathematical content. Less than 30% of the teachers indicated they needed support on how to teach in multicultural classrooms.

Table 4:  
 Proportion of teachers needing support in the various areas

Area	f <sub>r</sub> (%)	f (%)
Student assessment techniques	35(12.5)	35(63.6)
Classroom management techniques	10(3.6)	10 (18.2)
Knowledge and understanding of mathematical content of the syllabus	40(14.3)	40 (72.7)
Knowledge and understanding of current instructional practices	55(19.6)	55 (100)
ICT skills for teaching mathematics	55(19.6)	55 (100)
Identifying and handling students with special challenges	50(17.9)	50 (90.9)
Student discipline and behaviour problems	20(7.1)	20 (36.4)
Teaching in multicultural classrooms	15(5.4)	15 (27.3)
Total frequency	280(100)	

f<sub>r</sub>= relative frequency; f =absolute frequency

## Types and nature of supervisor feedback

A table of options was provided for the teachers to indicate where they often received feedback after supervision and to describe and/or provide examples of the nature of feedback received. Participants' responses were aggregated and presented in the Table 5.

The highest percentage of feedback provided teachers was related to classroom management (34.5%), followed by assessment (32.7%). Sample CS comments (see Table 5) on classroom management included: class control, student motivation, and creating conducive classroom environments. Excerpts from CSs' feedback on assessment included: assess pupils regularly, check pupils for understanding, and provide pupils with encouraging comments. Conversely, the lowest percentage of CSs' feedback was in professional growth (3.6%) followed by instructional coherence (5.5%).

Table: 5

Types and nature of feedback provided to teachers after supervision (n=55)

Category of Activity	f (%)	Descriptions/nature of feedback
<b>Student engagement</b>	16 (29.1)	Teachers' descriptions include:
<b>Exercises in every topic</b>	7 (12.7)	involve students in the lesson.
<b>Solving problems on the board</b>	5 (9.1)	use child-centred techniques in which all pupils are
<b>Discuss observations</b>	3 (5.5)	engaged and to ensure full participation.
<b>One-on-interactions</b>	1 (1.1)	involve more students in the lesson by providing space to
		many pupils to solve problems on board in turns,
		encourage group practice among others
<b>Classroom management</b>	19 (34.5)	Descriptions of classroom management measures
<b>Class control</b>	9 (16.4)	include teacher should:
<b>Motivation</b>	5 (9.1)	have student control, class control, minimising shouts on
<b>Seating arrangement</b>	2 (3.6)	students, and observing students during lessons.
<b>Disability</b>	1 (1.8)	be observant and know how to control emerging student
<b>Assigning roles</b>	1 (1.8)	behaviours especially during discussions;

<b>Others</b>	1 (1.8)	acknowledge positive practice with the terms such as good keep it up, good whiles avoiding demotivating sentiments, such as poor and less engaged. ensure the classroom is conducive— an attribute for classroom management. Attending to seating arrangement—pupils with weak vision to sit in front; and pupils are assigned roles
<b>Clarity</b>	5 (9.1)	Examples in this category include teacher:
<b>Pace</b>	2 (3.6)	taking time using simple words to enable most children
<b>Language</b>	2 (3.6)	to understand,
<b>Discussion</b>	1 (1.8)	engaging children to discuss observations, and use a language they understand
<b>Planning</b>	9 (16.4)	Descriptions of examples here include:
<b>Pre-lesson planning</b>	6 (10.9)	Pre-planning: Plan appropriately ahead of the lesson on
<b>Lesson notes</b>	3 (5.5)	TLMs, pupils RPK; and Lesson notes: write comprehensive lesson notes;
<b>Instructional coherence</b>	3 (5.5)	Descriptions of examples include; use TLMs appropriately, teaching from known to unknown, and discussing observations after activity.
<b>Use of alternative instructional strategies</b>	7 (12.7)	Examples of feedback include: vary teaching methods to meet lesson goals,
<b>Strategies that reflect diversity</b>	5 (9.1)	recognize the principles of Multiple Embodiment and
<b>Discovery learning</b>	1 (1.8)	draw pupils’ attention to the alternative strategies.
<b>Discussions</b>	1 (1.8)	use “discovery learning” and discuss observations
	f (%)	Descriptions/nature of feedback
Category of Activity		
Content knowledge	7 (12.7)	Descriptions of feedback include:
Mastery of content	5 (9.1)	good command of subject matter, core points going with objectives,
Mastery of pedagogy	2 (3.6)	

systematic delivery and advise to study the topic and prepare adequately and discuss observations.

Use of TLMs	14 (25.4)	Feedback reflecting TLMs include:
Use concrete/real materials	5 (9.1)	use real materials such as the Dienes blocks, Abacus, more chalkboard illustrations, improvising more TLMs for pupils
Pre-Demonstrate	3 (5.5)	
Suggestion to improvise	2 (3.6)	pre-teaching with the TLMs before the actual lesson,
Quantity of materials	2 (3.6)	handling TLMs in class, appropriate use of TLMs, and providing enough TLMs for pupils to participate
Use semi-concrete materials	1 (1.8)	
Not always	1 (1.8)	
Professional growth	2 (3.6)	Examples that reflect supervisors' feedback on teachers' professional growth were:
Workshops	1 (1.8)	attending workshops in math; and
Further studies	1 (1.8)	going for further studies.
Assessment/Evaluation	18 (32.7)	Examples that reflect assessment /evaluation include:
Frequent assessments	8 (14.6)	giving constant assessment of pupils,
Frequency of feedback (marking exercises)	5 (9.1)	more exercises—four or more exercise on each topic and marking all exercises;
Motivation	2 (3.6)	checking pupils' exercises with focus on understanding, before giving them to students
Focus on understanding	1 (1.8)	encouraging comments

## DISCUSSION

The study investigated basic schoolteachers' perceptions of circuit supervisors' supervisory practices in mathematics education. Circuit supervisors attempt to fulfill their mandate in providing support services to practicing mathematics teachers in the classroom to improve their practice. They

visit schools to carry out their mandate however there is no well-defined pattern of their visitation schedule. Some circuit supervisors in the current study visited their schools once a month or once a term while others (10%) did not visit their schools during the academic year. This irregularity enhances teacher isolation (Marshall, 2005) and teachers operate in the dark. As there are untrained and inexperienced teachers in the classrooms, the failure of Circuit supervisors to visit schools denies teachers the opportunity for professional improvement towards providing quality mathematics education. The finding that many teachers are pre-informed before the visit is consistent with earlier studies (Fletcher, 2001; Marshall, 2005) in that it creates tension and anxiety among teachers as they prepare for the CS. Teachers will do all that they can to impress the CSs and conceal their actual practice of teaching.

The results indicate that CSs performed three key roles in supervision. They engaged in briefing interaction, observations with note-taking and providing feedback before, during and after supervision respectively. These roles reflect the GES (2002) traditional and clinical supervision. In briefing interactions, the supervisors officially announce their presence through various protocols and casually asking few questions as they perform the generic role of checking available teaching resources, including attendance register, student exercises, TLMs, class arrangement, and reading and vetting lesson notes/plans.

The majority of CSs in the present study provided feedback on classroom management and on assessment and evaluation while very few provided feedback on teachers' professional growth, instructional coherence, content knowledge and instructional strategies. However, the results suggest that what CSs provided teachers was at variance with the teachers' needs for effective practice. Teachers in the study needed support in specific areas such understanding of current instructional practices including ICT skills and skills for identifying and handling students with special



educational needs (ref. Table 4). Unfortunately, CSs supporting comments did not reflect these domains and therefore might not have enabled teachers to maximize their instructional efforts (Too, Kimutai, & Kosgei, 2012) towards providing quality delivery. This finding suggests that CSs' contributions, to a large extent, did not address the needs of mathematics teachers which is at variance with the NEA's (2011) recommendation that circuit supervisors focus on reforming teacher practices to enhance student performance. We suggest a replication of this study using a qualitative methodology. This would allow in-depth investigation into CSs' supervisory practice. Another suggestion for future research would be to examine CSs' perceptions of their supervisory practices.

## **CONCLUSION**

Circuit supervisors perform their mandatory duty of supervising schools to inform policy practice. However, the types and nature of supervisory practices were inconsistent with effective practices as most CSs did not regularly visit schools to support mathematics teachers. Those who visited schools did not address pertinent areas in which teachers needed support. Overall, CSs supervisory practices were at variance with the curriculum recommendations of reforming the mathematics teacher for quality mathematics education delivery.

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