Supervision of Instruction in Cameroon: Are Pedagogic Inspectors Doing their Work?

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Abstract: *This study sought to examine the adequacy with which instruction is being supervised, the quality of interpersonal relationships between supervisors and teachers and teachers' suggestions for improving the supervision of English language teachers. The sample consisted of 306 English language teachers. Measures of central tendency were used to compute and analyse collected data. The findings revealed overwhelmingly that pedagogic inspectors are not carrying out assigned functions, and that very poor interpersonal relations exist between supervisors and teachers. The findings reflect a familiar theme in research on the conditions of service of teachers, particularly the lack of adequate support from those charged with instructional supervisory responsibilities. Based on the findings, recommendations for policy and practice have been suggested.*

Introduction

Secondary education in Cameroon has witnessed increased attention since the mid-1990s, evidenced by the 1995 National Education Forum and the February 2005 technical committee meeting in Yaoundé, involving all the ministries of education (basic, secondary and higher education), with technical assistance from the ministries of economy and finance, planning and regional development, labour and professional training and UNESCO to reflect on a sector-wide approach to education in the country. A key theme running through the reports of both the National Education Forum (MINEDUC 1995) and the Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (Republic of Cameroon 2005a) is the need to strengthen teacher quality as part of a comprehensive strategy towards efforts aimed at improving the quality of educational services. Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 (based on the recommendations of the National Forum) in its Chapter III, Section 2:1, refers to teachers as the guarantors of quality education (Republic of Cameroon 1998).

Paying attention to teachers is very important against the backdrop of demographic and economic changes. According to the Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (Republic of Cameroon 2005a), the majority of the population is relatively young, with 45 per cent below 15 years and 64 per cent below 25 years. These demographic changes will translate to increased demand for secondary school education and increased demand for quality teachers. One of the strategies adopted by the government to improve and guarantee

teacher quality is the appointment of provincial pedagogic inspectors (PPIs) for each subject area. The responsibilities of PPIs are contained in Decree No. 2005/139, organising the Ministry of Secondary Education (Republic of Cameroon 2005b). Interest in the secondary education subsector aligns neatly with national and international education initiatives, notably The African Union's Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006–2015), Draft Plan of Action (African Union 2006).

Cameroon's educational system, more particularly at the level of secondary education, suffers from an acute shortage of teachers in both numbers and quality. As a result, there is heavy dependence on unqualified individuals. Many of the teachers possess subject-matter knowledge, but lack knowledge of the foundations of education as well as pedagogic content knowledge. This reality reinforces the importance of instructional supervision. If there is heavy dependence on unqualified teachers (Republic of Cameroon 2005a), it becomes logical not only to have structures aimed at strengthening teacher quality but to ensure that they are indeed performing at expected or superior levels.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the recognition of the potential contributions instructional supervision can make towards strengthening teacher quality and revitalising secondary education, a literature search reveals that little has been done to investigate empirically the extent to which instructional supervisory responsibilities are being carried out. This in the contributions we strive to make through this study. We decided to focus on pedagogic inspectors of the English language for three reasons. One of the researchers is an English language teacher and, consequently, the study has a personal significance. Secondly, English language is an academic subject that cuts across the curriculum; all other subjects, except French, are taught using the English language. Executive mastery of the English language is therefore important for overall academic achievement. Consistently poor performances in English language in the General Certificate of Education examination (GCE) at the Ordinary Level constitute the third and final reason why we decided to focus our efforts on the supervision of English language teachers. For example, Table 1 is a sample of performance data for a period of five years 2003–2008 (the statistics for 2006 were unavailable).

Table 1: Performances in English language at the GCE Ordinary Level examination, 2003–2008

Year	No. examined	No. passed	No. failed	% pass
2003	23,961	10,022	13,939	41.83
2004	32,549	13,250	19,299	40.71
2005	33,363	10,308	23,055	30.90
2007	43,063	10,323	32,740	23.97
2008	48,265	22,469	25,796	46.55

Source: Cameroon General Certificate of Education Examination Board Records

Of a total of 181,201 candidates examined from 2003 to 2008, only 66,372 (33.63 per cent) passed the English language examination.

There is evidence suggesting that PPIs may not be adequately carrying out their responsibilities. According to the Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to education

(Republic of Cameroon 2005a), pedagogic inspectors are not trained and consequently do not possess appropriate supervisory competence. For the most part, the only training some have received is in teaching. In the absence of research that captures the reality of instructional supervision in Cameroon from the perspective of teachers, this study will add to the body of knowledge of instructional supervision in general and the supervision of English language teachers from a cross-cultural perspective. It is hoped that the findings will be used by appropriate authorities in actions aimed at enhancing the practice of instructional supervision. The legislative framework makes provision for regular monitoring of various components of the educational system (Republic of Cameroon 1998). The purpose of periodic monitoring and evaluation of the educational system are twofold:

a. to create and nurture a culture of performance appraisal (which is presently grossly lacking), and
b. to provide information that can be used to improve the performance of the system.

Giving pedagogic inspectors instructional supervisory responsibilities is a commendable acknowledgement of their potential contributions to strengthening teacher quality. However, it is important to regularly ensure that they are performing as expected.

Purpose of the Study

This study has three purposes. The first is to investigate, from the perspective of English language teachers, the adequacy with which pedagogic inspectors of English language are carrying out their responsibilities. Secondly, it seeks to investigate the quality of interpersonal relationships between English language teachers and pedagogic inspectors. Lastly, an attempt is made to capture opinions of teachers on ways of improving the performance of pedagogic inspectors.

Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives guided this study:

a. to investigate the performance of pedagogic inspectors from the perspective of teachers,
b. to investigate the quality of interpersonal relationship between teachers and pedagogic inspectors, and
c. to capture teachers' opinions of strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of pedagogic inspectors.

Significance

From a general perspective, this study is important because the provision of quality education is a priority of the nation, and teachers acknowledged as the guarantors of quality education (Republic of Cameroon 1998). By providing findings that could be used to improve supervisory practices, this study could contribute to the world of knowledge and practice, especially within the context of Cameroon. Furthermore, having teachers appraise supervisory practices, and other components of their work, is not, for the most part, a regular practice in Cameroon. In this light, the study seeks to create awareness of the need for regular monitoring of the work of education personnel in general, and pedagogic inspectors in particular. Not doing so constitutes evidence of poor management.

In addition, having teachers, the primary targets of instructional supervision, suggest strategies for improvement is a step towards encouraging greater workplace democracy and enriching the quality of the knowledge base for the improvement of supervisory practices. This way, improvement strategies are not assumed but collected from those supposed to be closest to and directly affected by supervisors. Information is important for the maintenance and growth of an educational system. For the most part, vital information in the form of indicators of the health of various components of Cameroon's educational system is hard to find (Republic of Cameroon 2005a: 53).

Theoretical Background

This work is based on the following theoretical perspectives: role theory, symbolic interactionism, change theory and theories of adult learning.

Role Theory

Role theory focuses on the work behaviour of individuals within the context of a group or organisation, formal or informal (Katz & Kahn 1978). The theory is based on the assumption that each member of a group or organisation has certain functions or responsibilities to carry out to enable the group or organisation's smooth functioning. By performing assigned roles, individuals come to be known by others (Huse 1980). Huse describes a role as 'the sum total of expectations placed on the individual by superiors, peers, subordinates … and others' (1980: 53). Furthermore, the theory suggests that successful performance in a job requires, among other things, competence (possession of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes) and mastery of the expectations of significant others.

In this study, instructional supervisors (PPIs) have specific functions to perform aimed at strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. On the other hand, teachers have certain expectations for pedagogic inspectors, and their perceptions are a function of subjective evaluations of the adequacy with which pedagogic inspectors are deemed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

Symbolic Interactionism

Coined by Blumer (1969), symbolic interactionism is a study of human interactions, and based on three main premises:

> The first premise is that human beings act towards things based on the meanings that the things have for them. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through an interpretation process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters. (Bruner 1969: 2)

Central to symbolic interactionist thinking is the idea that human beings live in the company of others whom they have the capacity to affect and by whom they can be affected in return (Prus 1996). The symbolic interactionist perspective has been used as the basis for studying subjective perceptions and meanings that people construct in interpersonal relationships with others.

With regards to this work, the theory is relevant because it deals with the perceptions of English language teachers. Their perceptions are subjective judgements that result from interactions with pedagogic inspectors. These perceptions constitute their own reality because they (the perceptions) have the potential to affect teachers' attitudes towards instructional supervision and supervisors. The theory informed the development of the questionnaire as well as the analysis of collected data.

The first object of this study is to investigate the extent to which PPIs are performing assigned functions. They have an important contribution to make towards the creation of productive teaching and learning environments. More specifically, in their interactions with teachers, they are expected to enable them enhance their instructional capacity as a prerequisite for more effective teaching within a contemporary context of great expectations for formal education at all levels. The other two objectives deal with the perceptions of teachers regarding their assessment of the quality of interpersonal relationships with PPIs and perceptions of strategies to improve the performance of PPIs. Perceptions are subjective realities that emerge as human beings interact with their environments. Against this backdrop, the perceptions of teachers about supervision will be shaped by their interactions with pedagogic inspectors, amongst other things.

Change Theory

Supervision of instruction is about changing or enhancing the capacity of teachers in the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Against this backdrop, research on the change process (Haller 1968; Fullan 2001) is essential to instructional supervision. Many experts share the view that the bottom line of instructional supervision, seen from a developmental perspective, is to enhance student outcomes through bringing about desired changes in teachers' instructional practices (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon 1998; Pajak 1990; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000). This has to do with changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to teaching and learning. Literature on the change process is therefore very relevant for supervision of instruction because it brings out pertinent issues that need to be recognised and addressed.

If many teachers are apprehensive about change it is because they do not often get actively involved in the entire process (Glickman et al. 1998; Fullan 2001). Change can be disturbing to teachers because it affects familiar ways of doing things, often with little or no support and benefits. According to Sergiovanni and Starrat (2000), the readiness of teachers to change is therefore a critical point in the process of instructional supervision. The willingness of teachers to change will partly depend on their involvement in the process, and the relevance of the change to their professional lives, as well as the perceived benefits to their students, themselves and the school as an organisation.

Theories of Adult Learning

Ensuring the continuous professional development of teachers is the primary goal of supervision of instruction, not as an end in itself but as a means to enhanced teaching and student outcomes. Supervision of instruction is based on the premise that the knowledge, skills and attitudes educational personnel begin their careers with cannot serve them till they retire. They need to keep abreast with new knowledge, skills and changing attitudes in order to provide quality educational environments for students. To do this will require a comprehensive human development strategy which will be grounded on research on adult learning.

The review of literature dealing with adult learning will not be exhaustively examined because this is better done in textbooks on psychology. Rather, key concerns and ideas emerging from knowledge of adult learning and the characteristics of adult learners will constitute the focus of this review as well as the implications of these ideas and concerns for supervision of instruction. According to research on adult learning (e.g., Loevinger 1976; Levinson 1977; Neugarten 1977; Havighurst 1980), adults are capable of learning new content as long as the conditions are enabling. They learn best when they see the benefits to themselves, their students and the school as an organisation (Fullan 2001). Besides teaching, adults have other responsibilities that need to be considered during the planning and delivery of training. Furthermore, they are characterised by great diversity: they come from different backgrounds, and have different professional experiences, developmental concerns and other responsibilities (Glickman et al. 1998). Recognition of this diversity constitutes a challenge for those who work with adults and particularly those, such as pedagogic inspectors, charged with the responsibility for ensuring the continuing professional development of teachers.

Knowledge of adult learners is essential to the design and implementation of instructional supervisory activities. This is because of the need to match instructional support to the concerns of teachers and thereby increase the relevance of supervision of instruction. The message here is that teachers need to be treated differently based on their level of experience and associated concerns. Adults do not come to learning situations as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge, skills and attitudes by supervisors. Over the years, they have accumulated valuable experience (knowledge, skills and attitudes) which is related to educational issues, and they cherish the opportunity to share this with others, especially supervisors.

In addition to bringing out the above characteristics of adult learners, Glickman (Glickman et al. 1998: 43) advises that:

> Knowledge of how teachers can grow as competent adults is the guiding principle for supervisors in finding ways to return wisdom, power, and control to both the individual and the collective staff in order for them to be true professionals.

To reinforce this point, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) in its 1992 yearbook asserts that adult learning theories are instructive because they provide guidelines to supervisors on how to relate with adults (teachers) in the process of instructional supervision. Though there is great diversity among teachers as adult learners, Sergiovanni (1987) argues that very little attention gets paid to applying to adults what we know about theories of adult learning. Adult learning theories have profound implications for designing and implementing instructional supervisory activities, from the determination of needs to the evaluation of outcomes and outputs (Knowles 1980; Baiyin 2004).

Literature Review

Purposes of Supervision

Instructional supervision is widely recognised as an important component of a comprehensive strategy for the continuing professional development of teachers (MINEDUC 1996). The primary goal is to provide support to teachers so that, in turn, they

can provide more enabling learning environments for students (MINEDUC 1996). In their overview of the literature on supervision and staff development, Wanzare and da Costa (2000) identified nine inter-related purposes of supervision of instruction. These include:

a. improving instruction (Beach & Reinhartz 1989; Glickman et al. 1998; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000);
b. enhancing the professional development of teachers as individuals and groups (Wiles & Bondi 1996);
c. creating awareness among teachers about the potential consequences of their teaching behaviours (Glickman et al. 1998);
d. creating a supportive environment within which teachers, as individuals and groups, can experiment with new instructional approaches (Nolan & Francis 1992);
e. enhancing curriculum development (Glickman et al. 1998);
f. strengthening norms of collegiality among teachers and supervisors (Glickman et al. 1998; Wiles & Bondi 1996);
g. increasing the motivation and commitment of teachers (Glickman et al. 1998); and
h. creating and nurturing norms of collective inquiry among teachers and supervisors (Glickman et al. 1998; Nolan & Francis 1992).

Sergiovanni (1992: 204) vividly summarises the reasons why instruction should be regularly supervised:

> We supervise for good reasons. We want schools to be better, teachers to grow, and students to have academically and developmentally sound learning experiences; and we believe that supervision serves these and other worthy ends. But all the benefits that we seek can be obtained more easily and in enhanced ways in the natural course of events as teachers and students live and learn together in schools. Supervision, in other words, can just as easily come from the inside as the outside.

Supervision of instruction is a process that must be embedded within a comprehensive staff development and school improvement effort.

Supervision/Evaluation

Knowledge of the related concepts of supervision and evaluation is important for this study. Both concepts are said to vary in their intents (Glatthorn 1990; Glickman et al. 1998; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000; Glanz 2000), though many people treat them as though they are synonymous. Acheson and Gall (1997: 209), bring out the difference between supervision and evaluation:

> One of the most persistent problems in supervision is the dilemma between (1) evaluating a teacher in order to make decisions about retention, promotion, and tenure, and (2) working with the teacher as a friendly critic or colleague to help develop skills the teacher wants to use and to expand the repertoire of strategies that can be employed.

The distinction between the two concepts is very important because teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision will depend on how it is conceptualised and practised. It is widely

recognised that teachers are apprehensive about supervision because it is often viewed as an evaluative stance (Sullivan and Glanz 2000). Pedagogic inspectors, by the nature of their positions (they have higher hierarchical positions relative to teachers) can be caught in the middle between supervision from a formative process and supervision from a summative stance (Glickman et al. 1998; Zepeda & Ponticell 1998; Zepeda 2003). This partly explains why Glickman emphasises what is done is to enable teachers to acquire greater competence rather than an official position.

Research on supervision of instruction has come up with reasons why teachers may be apprehensive about supervision. This is likely to be the case when it is approached from a top-down perspective with the supervisor assumed to know everything and the teacher as recipient (Glatthorn 1990; Blasé and Blasé 1998). Many experts caution that supervision should not be approached from a 'one size fits all' perspective. Rather, it must be differentiated and approached from a developmental perspective because teachers vary in many ways (Glatthorn 1990; Glickman et al. 1998; Blasé & Blasé 1998; Zepeda 2003). As Glatthorn (1990: 179) puts it, it should be 'a process approach, in which each school develops its own home-grown model, one responsive to its special needs and resources'.

Differentiated supervision allows supervisors to focus on teachers with greatest needs as perceived by the teachers themselves, 'rather than performing perfunctory classroom observations of all teachers merely to satisfy district policies' (Glatthorn, 1990: 179). This is very pertinent to the Cameroon context within which pedagogic inspectors for the most part surprise teachers as if their role is to satisfy Ministry of Education officials rather than strengthening teacher instructional capacity. To be successful, supervision needs to be based on norms of collaboration and mutual respect.

The intent of instructional supervision is to enhance the instructional capacity of teachers by enhancing their existing repertoire of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Glickman et al. 1998; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000; Zepeda 2003). In order to be effective, the supervisor must be perceived by the teacher as a colleague who can be trusted, someone who is ready to be open to a different perspective. Developmental and differentiated supervision (Glickman et al. 1998; Glatthorn 1997), is sensitive to the needs of teachers. Only when the needs of individual teachers are known can supervisors approach supervision from a meaningful perspective.

Interpersonal Relationships between Teachers and Supervisors

Good interpersonal relationships between teachers and pedagogic inspectors are essential for effective supervisory activities. The relationship between teachers and supervisors is supposed to be a very cordial one, characterised by norms of trust, openness and mutual respect (Blumberg 1980; Sergiovanni 1987; Hoerr 1996; Huffman & Jacobson 2003; Hord 2005). However, relevant literature reveals that the word supervision conjures up negative images among many teachers (Sergiovanni 1987). When this is the case, the intended benefits accruing to teachers, schools as organisations, students and society as a whole are likely to be compromised. The interpersonal skills needed by a supervisor of instruction include those of communication, motivation, decision-making, problem-solving, conflict management (Goldhammer 1969; Glickman et al. 1998; Chell 2000) and culture building (Hoerr 1996; Hord 2005). Poor interpersonal relationships between teachers and supervisors are likely to result when supervisors approach supervision from a judgemental, top-down perspective, rather than seeing it as a learning process during which teachers are supposed to be active participants (Sergiovanni 1987; Blumberg 1980; Jackson 2000; Lezotte 2005).

As Glickman (Glickman et al. 1998) puts it, supervision of instruction is not an official position but what is done to help teachers to reflect on their instructional practices in order to grow as individuals, and as a group. According to Sergiovanni (1987) supervisors should practise the principle of power investment because teachers need to be empowered to act – that is, to be given the necessary responsibility that releases their potentials and make their actions and decisions count. Teachers desire input into supervisory decisions that affect their professional growth and development rather than have others make the decisions for them. Sergiovanni & Starrat (1988, 2000), further add that teachers learn by taking risks and trying out new ideas within an enabling environment.

Methodology

Data for this study were collected from a random sample of 306 English language teachers from the southwest and northwest regions of the country using a questionnaire with open- and closed-ended items. Items were derived from the review of related literature and the functions of pedagogic inspectors of English language. Items designed to address the first two research objectives were closed-ended. In addition to items related to each research objective, subjects were also required to provide demographic information dealing with gender, highest academic qualification, and length of secondary-school teaching experience.

The questionnaire was pilot tested using graduate students enrolled in the masters' programme in the Faculty of Education and also some secondary-school English language teachers. They were required to peer review the questionnaire for clarity and relevance to the research objectives. Their feedback was used to revise the instrument. Data collection was facilitated because one of the researchers is a secondary-school English language teacher and her peers, spread out in the various schools, facilitated data collection.

Data Analysis and Findings

The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 12.0 for Windows was used to analyse data from closed Likert-type items. The results of the analysis are presented using measures of central tendency – more specifically, percentages, means, frequencies and standard deviations. Open-ended responses were subjected to the technique of content analysis whereby the researchers used recurrent themes to organise the analysis.

Demographic Data

Our study sample consisted of 306 secondary-school English language teachers (male n=138; female n=168) from the south and northwest regions. Distribution of the subjects based on highest academic qualification is: DIPES I (n=115, 37.6 per cent), DIPES II (n=105, 34.3 per cent), bachelor's degree (n=55, 18 per cent), master's degree (n=15, 4.9 per cent) and Grade I (n=7, 2.3 per cent) (information not provided by 9 subjects). Length of teaching experience was: 5–10 years (n=121, 39.5 per cent), 11–15 years (n=101, 33 per cent), less than 5 years (n=43, 14.1 per cent), 16–20 years (n=29, 9.5 per cent) and above 20 years (n=12, 3.9 per cent).

Research Objective 1: To investigate if provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language perform their functions at acceptable levels

Fourteen items of the questionnaire were designed to address this objective. Analysis has been carried out for the first two items and is presented in Table 1, using frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage breakdown of responses to the statement 'Item 1: On average, I am formally supervised:'

Response option	Frequency	%
0 times per year	103	33.7
Once a year	121	39.5
2–4 times per year	72	23.5
5 or more times a year	4	1.3
Missing	6	2
Total	**306**	**100**

From Table 1 above, 103 (33.7 per cent) teachers report that they have never been supervised, 121 (39.5 per cent) were supervised once a year, 72 (23.5 per cent) supervised 2–4 times a year and only 4 (1.3 per cent) were supervised 5 or more times. Subsequently, the analysis will be based on those who were supervised at least once per year (197 of them).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'Item 2: How many times have you been supervised since you started teaching English language at the secondary-school level?

Reponses	Frequency	%
Missing	13	6.4
One time	81	39.9
Two times	52	25.6
Three times	37	18.2
Five times	11	5.4
Seven times	5	2.5
Nine times	1	0.5
Eleven times	1	0.5
Thirteen times	2	1
Total	**203**	**100**

Table 2 reveals that throughout their secondary-school teaching careers, the majority of teachers, 133 (65.5 per cent) have only been supervised one or two times.

Table 3 summarises all the responses to the questionnaire items related to the first research objective. Strongly agree and agree responses are combined into one column, while the same is done for strongly disagree and disagree responses.

Table 3: Presentation of summaries of all the responses to questionnaire items related to research question 1

Item no.	Statement	Strongly disagree / Disagree	Strongly agree / Agree
2	I am satisfied with the amount (frequency) of supervision being provided by PPIs.	186	13
3	I am satisfied with the quality of supervision being provided by PPIs.	193	7
4	The supervision I receive helps me to improve my teaching.	168	30
5	PPIs regularly ensure that teachers teach following the syllabus provided.	139	53
6	PPIs usually monitor teaching methods.	175	25
7	PPIs make regular classroom visits to observe teachers at work.	149	39
8	PPIs usually encourage teachers to share their work-related problems with them.	100	99
9	PPIs ensure that teachers continuously update their knowledge and skills by organising workshops and seminars.	64	132
10	PPIs encourage teachers to regularly come together to discuss and find solutions to problems affecting their work.	106	91
11	PPIs of English language prepare and demonstrate model lessons to teachers.	189	10
12	PPIs of English language regularly monitor and check teachers' log books (*cahiers de textes*).	196	5
13	PPIs of frequently monitor the appropriate use of teaching materials.	193	7

Judging from the frequencies and percentages it can be concluded that provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language are grossly ineffective in performing their functions. They are PPIs in name only.

Table 4 presents the same information using means and standard deviations. To interpret the analysis, a cut-off point is set at a mean of 3.00. This means that any item with a mean below 3.00 reveals inadequate or ineffective performance.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of items for research objective no. 1

Statement	Mean	Std. dev.
PPIs ensure that teachers continuously update their knowledge and skills by organising workshops and seminars.	2.77	0.34
PPIs usually encourage teachers to share their work-related problems with them. 1.98 0.52 PPIs encourage teachers to regularly come together to discuss and find solutions to problems affecting their work.	.88	0.72
PPIs regularly ensure that teachers teach following the syllabus provided.	1.25	0.44
PPIs make regular classroom visits to observe teachers at work.	0.88	0.76
The supervision I receive helps me to improve on my teaching.	0.69	0.57
PPIs usually monitor teaching methods.	0.55	0.81
I am satisfied with the amount (frequency) of supervision being provided by PPIs.	0.33	0.67
PPIs prepare and demonstrate model lessons to teachers.	0.27	0.63
PPIs frequently monitor the appropriate use of teaching materials.	0.20	0.21
I am satisfied with the quality of supervision being provided by PPIs.	0.19	0.46
PPIs regularly monitor and check teachers' teaching records.	0.14	8.41

The means of items related to the first research objective in Table 4 once more reveal that PPIs of English are not carrying out their responsibilities. But for one item with a mean of about 2.8, the rest have means below 2, grossly below the cut-off mean of 3.00 on a scale of 1–4.

Research Objective 2: To investigate if good interpersonal relationships exist between teachers and provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language.

Seven questionnaire items were designed to address this objective. Subjects were either to choose 'Yes' or 'No' to respond to the items (some chose not to answer). Their responses are presented in Table 5 using frequencies and percentages.

Table 5: Frequencies and percentages of responses to items related to research objective 2.

Statement	Yes	%	No	%
PPIs relate with teachers not as colleagues but as bosses.	169	83.2	33	16.3
PPIs do not have respect for teachers.	182	89.7	18	8.8
PPIs often create conflicts with teachers	177	87.2	19	9.4
When teachers hear the word PPI, most of them are afraid.	167	82.3	32	15.8
PPIs do not involve teachers in joint planning before supervision.	194	95.6	9	4.4
PPIs spend more time criticising teachers rather than recognising positive things teachers do.	188	92.6	13	6.4
The relationship between PPIs and teachers is not built on mutual trust.	172	84.7	31	15.3

From the above descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages), it can be appropriately concluded that good interpersonal relationships, essential for effective supervision, do not exist between English language teachers and provincial pedagogic inspectors of the same discipline. A range of 82 per cent to 95 per cent of the subjects report poor interpersonal relationships with PPIs.

Research Objective 3: To investigate what teachers of EnglishlLanguage think can be done to improve the performance of pedagogic inspectors of English anguage

Table 6 presents strategies (in descending frequencies and percentages) suggested by teachers to improve the performance of provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language.

Table 6: Teachers' suggestions for improving the performance of PPIs

Strategy	Freq.	%
They should regularly hold seminars to improve on their performance.	143	70.4
Many experienced teachers should be appointed as PPIs .	128	63.1
PPIs should explain the purpose of instructional supervision to teachers.	124	61.1
PPIs should hold meetings with teachers to agree on the aspects to be supervised. 78 38.4 PPIs should provide other supervisory options to teachers.	73	35.9
PPIs should interact with teachers as colleagues of the same profession.	61	30
They should regularly hold meetings with teachers to know their pedagogic problems and recommend solutions to them.	60	29.6
They should be provided with transportation facilities to ease their movements in the province.	60	29.6
Finances should regularly be made available to ease their work.	59	29.1
PPIs should act as a link between the teacher and the hierarchy for educational matters.	38	18.7
Adequate information should always be given to them to encourage them.	36	17.7
They should develop a calendar of activities for their work schedule and make sure they follow it.	25	12.3
They should regularly update themselves on new issues of pedagogy before going out for supervision.	25	12.3
They should master teaching methods very well and transmit same to teachers.	13	6.4
They should regularly demonstrate sample lessons and provide sample lesson notes to teachers.	3	1.5
They should regularly monitor the use of teaching materials.	1	0.5
They should regularly check the record of work books.	1	0.5

The analysis reveals 17 strategies teachers think could be used to improve the performance of provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language. The first three on the list, mentioned by above 60 per cent of teachers, are: the need for the organisation of regular seminars to improve the performance of PPIs; the appointment of PPIs based on experience, and the need for PPIs to explain the purpose of instructional supervision to teachers.

Summary of Findings, Implications and Conclusion

The section is organised to reflect the three research objectives.

Research Objective 1: To investigate if provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language are performing their duties at acceptable levels.

The findings overwhelmingly reveal that pedagogic inspectors are not doing what they are expected to do. The sample of this study was made up of 306 teachers of which 103 (33.7 per cent) reported that, on average, they do not get supervised even once per year. Of the 197 teachers who have received some supervision, 170 (86.3 per cent) have only been supervised once, twice or three times during their careers as English language teachers; 186 (94.4 per cent) are not satisfied with the frequency with which they are supervised; 193 (98 per cent), are not satisfied with the quality of supervision compared to only 7 (3.6 per cent) who are satisfied. All the items related to the first objective have means grossly below the cut-off point of 3 (the range is 0.44–2.77). The same trend of ineffectiveness is reflected for the second research objective dealing with the quality of interpersonal relations between teachers and pedagogic inspectors.

What the findings tell us is that the potential individual and organisational benefits of instructional supervision are not being enjoyed by English language teachers within the secondary school subsystem, at least from the perspective of the subjects of this study. Sergiovanni (1992: 204) vividly summarises the reasons why instruction should be regularly supervised:

> We supervise for good reasons. We want schools to be better, teachers to grow, and students to have academically and developmentally sound learning experiences; and we believe that supervision serves these and other worthy ends.

These findings reflect findings by other researchers as well as correspond with suggestions of the Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (Republic of Cameroon 2005a). The findings constitute a challenge. If teachers, as acknowledged by Law No. 98/004 of April, 1998 (Republic of Cameroon 1998), are going to be guarantors of quality education, they deserve better in terms of instructional supervisory support. Many reasons from the literature suggest why PPIs may be so grossly ineffective. These include a poor conception of supervision that equates it with evaluation (Sergiovanni and Starrat 2000), a lack of supervisory competence (possession of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes) and an inadequacy of essential material inputs (Republic of Cameroon 2005a). Against this backdrop, there is urgent need to pay greater attention to the work of PPIs, to ensure that they have what it takes to be more productive.

Research Objective 2: To investigate the quality of interpersonal relationship between teachers and pedagogic inspectors.

A prerequisite for effective supervision of instruction is healthy interpersonal relations

between teachers and supervisors (Blumberg 1980; Glickman et al. 1998). Once more, an overwhelming majority of respondents were of the opinion that good interpersonal relationships do not exist between teachers and provincial pedagogic inspectors of English language. Of the 203 teachers:

- 169 (83.2 per cent) report that PPIs function more like bosses than colleagues;
- 182 (89.7 per cent) are of the opinion that PPIs do not respect teachers;
- 167 (82.3 per cent) feel the mention of the word PPIs instills fear;
- 194 (95.6 per cent) are of the opinion that PPIs do not involve teachers in collaborative planning prior to actual supervision;
- 107 (84.7 per cent) report that PPIs, when they do show up for supervision, do not trust and respect teachers, and spend more time criticising teachers for mistakes rather than recognising positive things they do.

Ineffective instructional supervision hurts teachers, students and schools as formal organisations. It deprives teachers of in-service development opportunities, especially within a context wherein many teachers have not received any professional training prior to assuming teaching responsibilities (MINEDUC 1995). To the extent that PPIs carry out assigned responsibilities as expected, the potential of achieving these outcomes is enhanced. The reverse is true when instruction is not supervised as expected.

These findings are at variance with the recommendations for effective supervisory practices emerging from the literature, and reinforce research in other contexts that concludes that poor interpersonal relations exist between supervisors and teachers (Blumberg 1980; Sergiovanni 1987; Glickman et al. 1998; Blasé & Blasé 1998). The title of Blumberg's book *Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War* vividly describes the quality of interpersonal relations existing between supervisors and teachers. The practice of instructional supervision is supposed to be built on norms of collaboration, trust, openness to mistakes and mutual respect, amongst others. Sergiovanni (1987) reveals that the relationship between teachers and supervisors is characterised by fear, that it lacks trust, respect for one another and collaboration. According to him, supervisors are to be blamed for this poor relationship because they spend time criticising teachers and fail to see anything good in what teachers do. Blasé and Blasé (1998) reiterate that there is no establishment of trust and collaboration between teachers and supervisors, and that supervisors do not provide teachers with an opportunity to make professional decisions regarding their own development.

Sergiovanni (1992) further comments on the kind of supervisory relationship that causes negative stereotypes. He puts the blame on supervisors who see teachers not as colleagues but as subordinates whose professional performance is to be monitored and improved. Beach and Reinhartz (2000) also describe this type of relationship as one in which teachers are lacking and deficient while only supervisors can fix the deficiency. McGreal (1983) concludes that, when supervisors act as critics rather than partners, teachers become closed and a good relationship between them and teachers cannot be formed. The negative relationship between teachers and supervisors can be attributed to the blend of supervisory and evaluation functions. Because of this blend, supervisors find it difficult to establish effective working relationships needed to aid teachers grow in their profession.

The implication is that when teachers feel alienated – and perceive themselves not as part of a larger enterprise, complementing and working together with each other and supervisors to

educate students – negative consequences will accrue to students, teachers and schools as well as to the larger society. Strengthening interpersonal relationships between teachers and those charged with instructional supervisory responsibilities constitutes a challenge that must be addressed to create more enabling conditions for teacher capacity-building.

Research Objective 3: To capture teachers' opinions of strategies that can be adopted to improve the performance of pedagogic inspectors.

Responses to the third research objective aimed at capturing teachers' perceptions of strategies to improve the performance of PPIs provide some of the reasons for PPI ineffectiveness and the existence of poor interpersonal relationships with teachers. Seventeen strategies are suggested to enhance the performance of PPIs, with frequencies ranging from 1 to 143. Three strategies are particularly noteworthy because they are mentioned more than 100 times (range 124–143). The first is the need for seminars to strengthen the performance of PPIs, followed by the need to appoint experienced teachers to serve as PPIs and the need for PPIs and teachers to be clear about the purpose of supervision.

Glickman (Glickman et al. 1998) asserts that the number of teachers that a supervisor is supposed to supervise will influence the frequency with which he or she works with them. It is therefore difficult for a PPI who has to visit many schools to meet and observe each teacher during the school year to do so effectively. In addition to the low supervisor–teacher ratio, the time available to supervisors, amount of training provided them, and the diverse nature of the teaching act itself explains why supervisors may not be effectively carrying out their responsibilities (McGreal 1983). Furthermore, Ndongko (1989) concludes that PPIs cannot operate at acceptable levels due to limited resources, lack of knowledge and skills, and lack of incentives, among other things. This aligns with one of the main recommendations from the subjects which are that PPIs need capacity-building opportunities to strengthen their performance.

Strategies emerging from this study align with recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of pedagogic inspectors (e.g., McGreal 1983; Glickman et al. 1998; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000). Blumberg (1980), McGreal (1983), and Sergiovanni and Starrat (2000) all stress the need to give teachers a greater voice in the supervision process. According to these researchers, when supervisors stop being critics and assume the role of co-creator of knowledge about teaching and learning, their performance will improve because teachers will be willing to grant them access to those core issues and dilemmas of teaching that they face on a daily basis. Sergiovanni and Starrat (2000) support this view by suggesting that supervisors should provide supervision that makes sense to teachers, that teachers will be part of and that will help teachers improve in their classroom practices. McGreal (1983) concludes that teachers will only change when they feel that they are part of a process that is designed to help them.

The research is full with strategies for enhancing supervision of instruction (e.g., Blumberg 1980, McGreal 1983; Popham 1988; Sergiovanni & Starrat 2000). Common to these experts' views is the need for all stakeholders to have a shared meaning or understanding of the purpose and objectives of supervisory initiatives; the need for supervisors to be less dogmatic and to acknowledge teachers as critical partners in the process, from conception to implementation, institutionalisation or continuation and evaluation of outcomes.

Blumberg (1980) and Sergiovanni and Starrat (2000) note that, no matter how capable and dedicated supervisors may be, as long as teachers conceptualise supervision as something

being done to them, its potential to improve teaching and consequently student learning will not be fully realised.

The need to provide other supervisory options to teachers also emerges from the literature. In order to improve their performance, supervisors need to devise ways in which they can foster a culture of collegiality in which teachers working together with other teachers can identify and solve their own problems (Popham 1988; Sergiovanni and Starrat 2000). While Sergiovanni and Starrat (2000) recommend the use of other supervisory options depending on their needs of teachers at a given time (e.g., collegial supervision, mentoring, peer coaching, amongst others), Popham (1988) suggests that the word 'supervision' itself is part of the problem because of its hierarchical and pejorative connotations, and could be replaced by adopting expressions such as teacher growth programmes, capacity enhancement, and personal improvement initiatives.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies is the need to separate, or make a clear distinction between, formative and summative supervision. Formative supervision is developmental in its focus. The goal is not to catch and punish incompetent teachers but to identify areas of weaknesses that need to be strengthened. On the other hand, summative supervision is carried out at the end of a school term or year with the aim of making high-stakes decisions such as firing teachers, promoting them or recommending them for other kinds of rewards. Popham recommends that this separation should be officially authorised and widely publicised so awareness is created among all stakeholders, especially teachers.

The primary long-term strategy for the professional development of teachers, from a formative stance, is to create and nurture supportive conditions that enable teachers to be what Schon (1983) describes as reflective practitioners, or to attain a level whereby teachers, with minimal support from supervisors, can assume most of the responsibility for their own professional development (Glickman et al. 1998). There are many reasons why teacher development must constitute a primary focus of supervision from a developmental perspective. Teachers at higher levels of cognitive development are likely to adopt a wider range of effective teaching behaviours and strategies; they are also more likely – as a result of their own higher levels of cognitive, moral and conceptual development – to create enabling learning environments for their students; and more likely to embrace norms of collegiality or what Glickman (Glickman et al. 1998: 19) describes as 'a cause beyond oneself'.

Implications and Conclusion

Given the fact that PPIs of English language do not perform their functions at acceptable levels, as portrayed by the results of this study, a lot of negative effects on the educational system are bound to occur. Firstly, teachers are deprived of learning opportunities, and students of quality education, and the nation is not likely to achieve the targets of quality secondary education for all by the year 2015 and the objectives set out in Law No. 98/004 of 14 April 1998 (Republic of Cameroon 1998). Secondly, another implication of the above findings is that if teachers are not well supervised they will not be able to teach well. This will not only hurt students' achievement but also the educational system because it will produce students who cannot express themselves very well in English language, a subject that cuts across the curriculum. According to Ndongko (1989), pedagogic inspectors are not performing their responsibilities as expected because they do not have the relevant competence in the domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as basic material inputs. Furthermore, the problem of instructional supervision in Cameroon is compounded

by the large geographical dispersion of its secondary schools. However, with the appropriate political will, the challenges of supervision of instruction in the country can be addressed if there is a stronger belief in teachers as the guarantors of quality secondary-school education.

Another key implication from this study is the need to devote more resources to strengthening the capacity of pedagogic inspectors. The government needs to increase its budgetary allocation for supervision of instruction and devoting more resources to monitoring and evaluating what is going on in the world of practice. In its Draft Document of the Sector-Wide Approach to Education (Republic of Cameroon 2005a), the government of Cameroon envisages accomplishing the following objectives by the year 2015:

a. increasing access to quality education for all children regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or physical or other disabilities;
a. reducing wastage in the form of repetition and school drop-out by increasing the completion rate from 27 per cent in 2003 to 35 per cent by 2015 in the first cycle of secondary education and from 11 per cent to 13 per cent in the second cycle for the same period.

These are commendable objectives that must be accompanied by concrete actions aimed at increasing the holding power of schools on students so that most, if not all, can stay in school from admission to graduation. Adopting policies and practices aimed at strengthening teacher quality through supervision of instruction is one of the ways forward. However, the system must first pay attention to enhancing the capacity of those charged with supervisory responsibilities.

We share Glickman's (Glickman et al. 1998) view that supervision of instruction is not an official position but what is done to provide needed support to teachers as they wrestle with instructional responsibilities in an increasingly changing and complex environment. If the resources are not available to enable PPIs to regularly visit all schools, there are other options. One of them is to foster norms of collegiality among teachers to enhance their capacity to identify and solve their problems. If pedagogic inspectors cannot provide supervision on a regular basis to all teachers, then there is need to have teachers provide help to each other. Within each secondary school there is great diversity in terms of teaching experience, level of education, and so on. For example, more experienced teachers could be mandated to carry out regular supervisory responsibilities and in-service professional development opportunities provided to strengthen teacher quality. Our focus has been on the pedagogic inspectors of English language and teachers in the same discipline. Similar research needs to be carried out in other subject areas.

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