

Supervision of English Language Curriculum During and Beyond Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of Ghana

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of COVID-19 on the supervision of the English Language Curriculum in Ghanaian primary schools, emphasizing practical strategies for enhancing teachers' professional development and students' academic performance. Utilizing desk research, the study synthesizes secondary data from peer-reviewed sources. The findings highlight that while COVID-19 disrupted traditional supervision methods, innovative approaches and strong leadership facilitated continued professional development and problem-solving among teachers. The research suggests adopting blended supervision methods incorporating virtual platforms and recommends flexible and democratic supervision strategies to address challenges posed by the pandemic. Training policymakers, supervisors, and teachers in utilizing digital platforms for effective curriculum supervision is essential.

Keywords: *Blended Learning, COVID-19, Educational Policy, English Language Curriculum, Supervision, Teacher Development.*

Introduction

Background to the Study

Numerous prior investigations by [1] and [2] have underscored the critical role of supervision in achieving quality education. This emphasis on supervision is particularly pivotal within the realm of teaching and learning English, a subject of fundamental importance. Historically, even prior to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, [3] and [2] had linked students' underachievement in the English language to deficiencies in supervision. The educational community remains divided over the optimal strategies for addressing COVID-19 safety protocols, especially at the primary education level. For instance, [4] has critiqued the methodology recently introduced by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education, asserting that it not only fails to effectively supervise but also exacerbates educational inequalities.

Against the backdrop of these concerns, [5] have raised pertinent questions about the reopening of schools, particularly regarding the implications of mixing asymptomatic pupils with those hailing from households with confirmed COVID-19 cases. Further questions revolve around the efficacy of traditional versus mixed approaches, combining synchronous and asynchronous methods, in enhancing teaching practices and supervisory systems. Given the challenges posed by the new strain of the disease, [6] has argued that teachers may find it onerous to balance curriculum coverage with the supervision of students' adherence to safety protocols. [7] contends that a multifaceted approach is needed to effectively address educational needs and enhance pupils' academic performance.

Rationale of the Study

This study aims to shed light on the significance of supervising the curriculum and

the reasons for doing so. It delves into how supervision can enhance teachers' professional development and qualifications, both of which are crucial to effective teaching and students' academic progress. Consequently, this research will contribute to our understanding of effective supervisory practices designed to improve teachers' professional qualifications and students' academic achievements. Additionally, it seeks to provide insights into innovative and practical approaches to supervision, particularly in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the emergence of new strains in West Africa [8].

Research Gaps

There exists a notable gap in knowledge concerning the effectiveness of supervising the English language curriculum and its impact on teachers' professional qualifications and students' academic performance [3, 2]. Furthermore, there is a disparity in opinions among education stakeholders and researchers regarding the most effective ways to implement and supervise the English language curriculum at the basic education level during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic [5-7]. Addressing these gaps forms the core of this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to conduct a qualitative analysis using secondary data to explore practical and outcome-oriented approaches to supervision in basic schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It seeks to elucidate the implications of COVID-19 safety protocols on effective supervision within the Ghanaian primary school context.

Aims

This study aims to investigate the significant impact of COVID-19 on the effective supervision of the English Language Curriculum in primary schools in Ghana. It specifically focuses on practical approaches to enhance teacher qualifications and improve students' academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive exploration, based on secondary data, of innovative approaches to effectively supervise the English curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ghanaian primary schools. The specific objectives include:

1. Assessing the relevance of the English language curriculum and its supervision.
2. Exploring the perspectives of supervisors and primary school teachers regarding what constitutes effective supervision of the English language curriculum as outlined by the Ghana Education Service (GES).
3. Investigating the views of supervisors and teachers on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practices and student academic performance.
4. Identifying novel and practical approaches to supervising the English language curriculum in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocols.

Research Questions

1. How relevant is the English language curriculum and its supervision?
2. What are the perceptions of supervisors and primary school teachers regarding effective supervision of the English language curriculum as specified by the Ghana Education Service (GES)?
3. What are the perspectives of supervisors and teachers regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practices and student academic performance?
4. What novel and realistic approaches can be employed to supervise the English language curriculum while adhering to strict COVID-19 safety protocols?

Structure of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study, elucidating the problem statement, objectives,

research questions, and the significance of the research. The second chapter delves into a comprehensive review of pertinent literature, including a theoretical framework and conceptual reviews, as well as a discussion of empirical studies relevant to the research objectives. The third chapter outlines the methodology employed in data collection and analysis. Chapter four addresses each research question through in-depth analysis, interpretation, and thorough discussion of the study results. Finally, chapter five offers a concise summary of the study, presents the research findings, draws conclusions, and provides recommendations for further research.

Review of Literature

This chapter critically examines existing literature that forms the foundation for the objectives of this study. The review is organized into three sections: Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical. The conceptual framework explores the notion of Curriculum Supervision, while the theoretical framework delves into the Theory of Germs. The empirical review provides an in-depth analysis of the literature pertinent to the study's focus. This comprehensive review aims to provide robust support, both conceptually and theoretically, for the study and aligns with the overarching objective of the research.

One primary goal of this review is to enrich understanding and insight into the study's aim. It will enable a nuanced evaluation of past research findings concerning the supervision of the English curriculum in primary schools, especially within the context of a highly contagious disease. The study asserts that curriculum supervision is an indispensable and crucial element in achieving the broader objectives of education.

However, given the concepts of curriculum supervision and the theory of germs, it is imperative to investigate the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic might impact curriculum supervision. Furthermore, it is crucial to

explore how educational leaders can proactively devise innovative approaches to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic and continue advancing educational goals at local and national levels. The study will also examine the potential impact of such a novel supervision approach on teachers and students in terms of pedagogy and academic achievement.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Curriculum Supervision

The concept of curriculum has been approached differently by various scholars and educators over the years [9-11]. It has been viewed as a systematic means to reconstruct knowledge and experiences for students and teachers [12], a way to acquire essential skills and values for successful living [13], and the process of achieving specific educational goals and objectives [9]. These conceptions all share the idea that curriculum involves specific goals and outcomes within an educational context designed to enhance students' academic achievements.

In Ref. [9] suggested that a well-structured sequence of material or checklist should influence pedagogy, supporting [14] assertion that curriculum encompasses subjects or courses, including English language, relevant to thriving in the modern world. For curriculum to fulfill its purpose, [10] argued that it should include 1) content specified by relevant authorities (Intended), 2) content delivered by teachers in the classroom (Implemented), 3) content that students learn (Attained), and 4) content specifically designed to address individual student growth and self-actualization (Processual).

In Ref. [15] emphasized that curriculum should be supervised to enhance teachers' professional competence and instructional practices, thereby improving students' academic performance. While some educators strongly believe that supervision is instrumental in achieving educational goals

[15, 16], others emphasize the manner or context within which supervision is carried out as equally crucial [17, 18, 10].



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Construct

A closer examination of Figure 1 reveals that supervision often involves close interaction between the supervisor and the teacher and often includes observation of instructional delivery during classes with all students present. The four-pronged aspects of supervision highlight the need for contact between the supervisor, the teacher, and the students. The supervisor must provide constructive criticism through advice or modeling for the teacher and facilitate consultations to provide necessary support for improving teachers' professional qualifications. These meetings serve as forums for sharing vital information to enhance teachers' ability to effectively implement the curriculum, thus promoting students' academic development.

At the lower segment of the framework, it is evident that a curriculum should empower teachers to help students develop critical thinking skills, enabling them to construct knowledge through practical application. This approach aims to enhance students' learning experiences and prepare them as responsible adults capable of contributing to society's sustainability and national progress.

Supervision, when approached carefully by both teachers and students, plays a significant

role in an educational setting. However, due to the limited contact imposed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of a result-oriented approach to supervision, it is essential to explore how effective supervision can be carried out within the context of a highly infectious disease. The following section delves into this topic.

Theory of Germs

Before the fourth and fifth centuries, Hippocrates advocated the concept that diseases were caused by an imbalance in what he referred to as the "Four Vital Humors" [19, 20]. However, in 1624 and throughout the nineteenth century, Giovanni introduced the sustained concept of "Miasmas," suggesting that diseases resulted from decaying vegetation, putrefying carcasses, and the release of poisonous emissions, which, when inhaled, caused diseases like malaria and tuberculosis. Cholera epidemics were also attributed to miasmas.

Louis Pasteur introduced the concept of germs in 1878, building on empirical evidence and the work of John Snow, Ignaz Semmelweis, and John Lister. Koch, in 1890, further developed Pasteur's ideas, indicating

that infectious diseases could be transmitted directly through contact with another human or indirectly through mediums such as insects or water. Such transmission could lead to either a 'common source outbreak' with a single agent causing infection or a propagated epidemic, often involving more than one agent or site of infection, culminating in a pandemic (inter-border transmission) affecting a large or international community.

In Ref. [21] alerted the world to the outbreak of coronavirus 2019 nCoV in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It qualifies as a pandemic because it has both primary (animal) and secondary (human) reservoirs or agents of transmission. COVID-19 is highly contagious and deadly, with 116,475,536 cases and 2,586,548 deaths reported as of March 5, 2021 [22]. Several countries imposed strict measures to limit the disease's spread; for instance, Ghana closed all schools nationwide on March 15, 2020 [23].

On January 15, 2021, schools were reopened with a strong emphasis on strict COVID-19 protocols, including hand washing, social distancing, and mask-wearing. Nevertheless, [24] reported 142 COVID-19 cases in Junior and Senior High Schools, raising concerns about the safety of students in schools and its potential impact on effective curriculum supervision [6,25]. Thus, it is essential to investigate how education stakeholders in Ghana are adopting novel approaches to conducting supervision despite the rising rate of COVID-19 cases.

Empirical Review

In a comprehensive study, [26] highlighted the challenges posed by government-imposed educational policies. Taking a historical perspective, they found that whether in decentralized or centralized education systems, school principals or headteachers play critical roles in successfully implementing change interventions within school environments. Headteachers in a centralized system, such as in

Ghana, face specific challenges due to the unpredictable nature of needs within the system and a lack of readiness among human resources. As supervisors, headteachers must overcome these challenges to effectively orchestrate curriculum supervision. Proactive and innovative approaches are required to address these challenges, including those posed by infectious diseases.

Examining the impact of proactive leadership in education, [27] employed clinical supervision to explore how developmental supervision could enhance headteachers' supervisory abilities and teachers' professional qualifications. The study revealed that the "SuperVision" strategy could improve teachers' instruction, encourage them to become lifelong learners, and enhance headmasters' decision-making and problem-solving skills. These findings align with the overall objective of this study, emphasizing the need for dynamic leadership that promotes developmental supervision, benefiting both teachers and headteachers' capabilities in pedagogy and leadership.

In Ref. [27] study is conceptually relevant for understanding supervisory behavior, instructional quality, professional development, problem-solving, and decision-making capabilities. Similar to a study by [28] on leadership styles in Ghanaian schools, which showed that headteachers with democratic leadership styles tend to conduct effective supervision and improve teaching practices.

In their insightful study, [2] demonstrated that effective curriculum supervision is integral to higher academic achievement for students. Therefore, education stakeholders must proactively address issues that could hinder effective supervision of the curriculum. This implies that the approach to supervision should prioritize inclusiveness, equity, and strict adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols [24].

However, [5] identified complex issues related to reopening schools when the rate of COVID-19 cases is rising, aligning with a

report by [25] that Ghanaians called for school closures due to the fast spread of the pandemic among students. The present study investigates how education stakeholders are addressing these challenges related to the supervision of the English curriculum in Ghanaian junior high schools.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided insights into the gaps and challenges surrounding the effective implementation of curriculum supervision amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in Ghanaian middle schools. The review highlights the need for further research on how COVID-19 may impact supervision in Ghanaian schools.

Methodology

This chapter provided ample information on the methodology adopted for the study. Methodology is an outline of how the study will be structured in terms of retrieving valuable information through secondary sources. It is, therefore, an essential aspect of the study and was given appropriate attention. This section entails the literature review approach and design, research questions and ethical considerations in selecting and employing secondary research sources.

Data Collection Approach

Data was collected using a "Systematic Literature Review" (SLR), which is vastly different from other approaches to literature review, especially within the traditional settings of research studies, which often involve the subjective opinion of the researcher and perspectives. A systematic literature review is based entirely on specific objectives related to the present study's overall focus or the investigation's purpose. In their studies, [29] and [30] indicated that SLR reduces the subjective nature of traditional literature review and accentuates critical and in-depth investigation and assessment of extant literature, with compelling support for the overall objective of this study.

Selection Criteria for Sources

A systematic approach was adopted for the methodology section. Sources were selected based on whether the research can provide conceptual, theoretical or empirical support for the study. Recent research is viewed as containing up-to-date information; hence, it is among the priorities for selecting sources for the study. Though the study is limited to Ghana, the selection of sources was limited to extant studies meeting the first two criteria within the educational sector of Ghana and other countries.

Peer-reviewed sources in journals of high impact factor such as Taylor & Francis, Wiley, Elsevier Emerald, Journal for Education and Practice and Google Scholar. Other sources such as Educational Conferences, Seminar, Unpublished Thesis, Reports and well-validated research articles meeting one of the three criteria for selection were also included in the list of sources for the study.

In order to retrieve valuable information during searches in reputable databases such as Scopus or Web of Science, keywords are valuable. It helps determine the direction of the search identification of researchers meeting the set criteria. It serves as a means of excluding irrelevant sources which may detract from the focus of the study. As a result, keywords were structured into six different sets of words to elicit relevant sources that facilitated the resolution of research problems.

In connection with supervision, four sets of keywords were chosen, namely: 1) "Supervision in Ghana", 2) "Supervision in Basic Schools", 3) "Supervision Why", and 4) "Supervision during Covid-19". The second keyword was curriculum with four sets of expressions: 1) "curriculum meaning", 2) "importance of curriculum", 3) "English Curriculum in Ghana", and 4) "curriculum at basic school". The third set of keywords dwelled on Covid-19 with two sets of expressions: 1) "Covid-19 meaning", 2) "Covid-19 impact on Supervision", and 3)

"Continuing Supervision amidst Covid-19". The fourth and last sets of keywords were oriented towards novel approaches to continuing curriculum supervision during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, it has two sets of expressions: 1) "effective supervision" and 2) "approaches to supervision during Covid-19".

In order to expand the search, a Boolean operator such as "OR" or "AND" was used. For example, phrases such as "Supervision in Ghana" and "Supervision at Basic School" were coined. Likewise, Meaning AND Importance of curriculum" were coined. The following phrases were also joined using "OR: "Continuing Supervision during COVID-19" OR "No supervision". With the approaches mentioned earlier, valuable information meeting the three criteria outlined at the outset was met. The criteria outlined above were used to select well-validated studies relevant to the resolution of the research questions outlined at the outset of this study.

Selection Period

Relevant literature matching the search criteria was set to cover a period of 15 years, starting from March 2006 to March 2021. Search engines and Databases such as Google, Web of Science and Scopus were precious in searching for academic writings within the earmarked year range. Information retrieved was filtered and critically examined within the three criteria for selecting sources for the study. However, to limit information overload, the highlighted keywords were used so that only academic writings within the framework of the study were retrieved. The determined range helped in the selection of very recent information regarding the objectives of the study. The range provided a broad space for careful consideration of the issue at hand, and it was very relevant in facilitating the latest understanding regarding the spate of COVID-19 within the research area (Ghana), how the stakeholders of education are responding to its debilitating effect and practical approaches

regarding continuation of supervision amidst the ravaging disease.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

It is worth noting that the abstract or summary of academic writings, in the form of research articles, conference and seminar papers, reports, unpublished thesis or research project, forms part of the information relevant to the study. Although there was a concerted effort to retrieve full-length papers for several articles, the abstract was only obtained for others. Triangulation was also adopted with a view to inclusion and exclusion criteria for relevant sources of information [31,32]. It takes the form of employing both software and manual approaches to selection. At first, the papers generated from the databases were fed into Mendeley or Trifecta software for scrubbing and cleaning duplications in the selected documents [33]. Upon cleaning the data retrieved, it was manually cross-checked to verify the relevance of each article selected within the set parameters and criteria for selecting sources.

Manually cross-checking the selected papers fulfils several vital roles concerning removing duplicates. To manually ascertain the relatedness of an article or an academic writing selected, three steps were paramount. First, each abstract and title were perused to ascertain whether the subject matter was tallied with the overall focus of the study as determined by the three-pronged criteria set for the selection of sources. Hence, any article that discusses issues about the supervision of mathematics curriculum or supervision of health workers was discarded since it does not match any of the criteria for selection. Likewise, any article discussing only COVID-19 concerning its health implications without reference to educational settings was discarded.

The second step of manually cross-checking the retrieved data was to critically evaluate the entire paper's capacity to provide theoretical, conceptual or empirical support to the study.

The third step was to cross-check the reference or bibliography section to determine whether they contain relevant articles that may be included in the current pool of academic writings selected for the study. As earlier indicated, when the abstract or preface of academic writing meets one of the selection criteria, it is included in the sources for the study.

In all, 39 articles were selected for the study. Out of these articles, 18 (n-18) were from peer-reviewed journals, 6 (n-6) were from unpublished theses, 5(n-5) were reports from reputable organisations, the remaining 10 (n-10) articles were from other sources, including newspaper editorials, meeting the three criteria for selection. The manual selection of the articles culminated in the inclusion of only 27 sources in the study. It comprises peer-reviewed articles (12), unpublished thesis (3), reports (3), newspaper editorials (5) and other relevant sources such as blogs or websites (4).

Data Analysis Approach

Analysis was done using mixed methodologies. Both quantitative and qualitative paradigms were used for the analysis. While quantitative entails descriptive analysis of quantitative secondary data, the qualitative paradigm involves in-depth exploration of secondary data intending to underscore emerging trends, patterns or themes [31, 32, 34]. Ref. [31] indicated that using mixed methods aids triangulation because the strength of the two paradigms is consolidated to form a formidable research paradigm, culminating in well-validated and rich findings.

Ethical Consideration

The research data reviewed follows the ethical principles required for a study of this stature. For example, the articles maintained adequate respect for the privacy of individual participants and voluntary informed consent was sought before any participant was included

in the study. None of the participants suffered any harm during the study.

It treated each of the selected extant studies fairly and in an unbiased manner because relevant sections of the articles were considered to understand the limitation of the study, which aided in reaching a balanced opinion regarding the findings of reviewed studies. For example, some were limited concerning the instrument for studies with concomitant impact on their findings. It, therefore, means searching for other studies with other types of instruments or research designs [35]. Likewise, the location of a research study is open to its relevance as long as it provides ample support to the focus of the study.

Most of the selected research papers were from peer-reviewed journals, often requiring rigorous proofreading and validation of research processes and findings. As a result, such an article is well-validated and reliable. There is no need to contact the author (s), especially for those from peer-reviewed journals. However, it was fit to contact him regarding an unpublished thesis uploaded by an author on the Research Gate website. He made some references alongside certain truncated and confusing information, which needed clarification.

The researcher contacted the concerned firm, and they provided ample clarifications involving some aspects of the data collection procedure. The researcher relied on the information in several articles reviewed due to their publication in reputable and peer-reviewed journals of high-impact factors, such as Taylor & Francis. Some of the articles selected were indexed in Scopus, underscoring the reliability of their findings and adherence to ethical concerns.

The researcher reviewed several studies whose findings could have been very reliable and valid if a pilot study had been conducted. A critical examination of the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire of these studies needs internal consistency. One of the authors

reported giving it to a colleague. An expert or two could have also perused the instrument alongside conducting a pilot study before administration. The researcher reached this conclusion because the retrieved data needed to adequately resolve the research problem due to the instrument's lack of internal consistency and face validity [36].

Studies selected can be replicated in another setting by another author or researcher. One of the studies discussed what constitutes adequate supervision, and its findings delineate how a supervisor can conduct result-oriented supervision. A few years after that, several studies have referenced this study and at present, some of the approaches in the study I adopted for the present study. Likewise, there are some studies in which their methodologies were efficient and incisive, making them easy to replicate. One such study helped the researcher adopt a mixed methodology for the present study.

Results and Findings

In carrying out the analysis, an effort was made to structure it based on the research questions. A systematic literature review answered the four-pronged research questions as explicated below.

Research Question One

What is the relevance of the English language curriculum and its supervision?

This question was answered using a qualitative approach. Studies reviewed revealed that the English language curriculum is intimately connected with successful pedagogical activities in the English language. The studies examined also indicated that supervision is sine-qua-non to attaining the chief objective of language education – the development of communicative skills and proficiency in English.

For example, critical evaluation of the definition of curriculum by 12 of the reviewed studies shows that curriculum is similar to a

format, a benchmark or a checklist that will guide teachers in their instructional approach towards the realisation of the overarching goal of education.

In Ref. [10] view it as a course or subject that helps students become responsible citizens. This tally with [9] submission that curriculum is often structured in sequence by an authority in the educational field to influence pedagogy. Eight (8) studies outlined the content of the curriculum intending to underscore its relevance in a subject such as the English language. Essentially, as captured under the conceptual framework, there are intended content students are required to acquire [37, 38], implemented content delivered by teachers through effective pedagogical approach by teachers [39, 40], Attained content refers to specific content understood by students and Processual which involves content addressing student's self-actualisation [40].

English language curriculum sets the standard or benchmark for learning English as a Second Language. Underscoring the relevance of supervision in making sure that the four-pronged focus of the English language curriculum is achieved, several studies, sixteen (16) in all, demonstrated that supervision is inextricably linked and intimately connected to honing teachers' competence, content knowledge [18, 9, 27, 11]. indicated that it enhances teachers' professional qualification with concomitant improvement in students' academic achievement due to strict adherence and implementation of the English language curriculum.

In summary, studies reviewed revealed that while the English curriculum is instrumental to improving students' communicative skills and proficiency in English, supervision is suitable in seeing that teachers continually improve their approach and practices in implementing the curriculum.

Research Question Two

What is the perception of supervisors and primary school teachers on what constitutes effective supervision of the English language curriculum as stipulated by the Ghana Education Service (GES)?

Several (11) reviewed studies revealed that effective supervision should ensure curriculum implementation. Six studies indicated that supervisors must know the criteria for effective supervision and exhibit the correct behaviour and approach to ensure success. Though discussed inspection, highlighted the eight stages of clinical supervision, and highlighted the many features of differentiated supervision with a democratic approach, I agree with [27] that the new strategy tagged "SuperVision" which entails developmental supervision is the best approach. Unlike other approaches, SuperVision fosters a lifelong desire among teachers to keep improving their teaching and problem-solving skills. They must not rest on their laurel and keep working to improve instructional approaches to implementing the curriculum to better impact students' academic achievement.

Most of the studies agreed that to be effective, supervisors need to balance the need to meet target goals with the right administrative approach focusing on how

individual teachers will be encouraged to become lifelong learners, improve problem-solving skills and enhance student academic achievement. The researcher also feels supervisors should be dynamic to touch on relevant issues while building fine rapport and collaborative effort with English teachers. Dynamism arising from SuperVision will help supervisors carry out adequate supervision irrespective of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Question Three

What are supervisors' and teachers' perspectives on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practice and student academic performance?

A quantitative approach was employed for the analysis of this question. The majority (24) of the studies reviewed revealed that the disease has a negative impact on curriculum supervision. Notwithstanding, the remaining three studies indicated it also positively impacts supervision. Several (18) of the studies employed descriptive statistics to garner supervisors' and teachers' opinions on the impact of the disease on the supervision of curriculum. This is depicted in Table 1.

Impact of COVID-19 on English Language Curriculum Supervision

Studies	Frequency		Percentage (%)	
	Negative		Negative	
Strongly Agree	12		44	
Agree	6		22	
Undecided	3		11	
Strongly Disagree	5		19	
Disagree	1		4	

Table 1. Impact of COVID-19 on English Language Curriculum Supervision

Source: Desktop Research

An in-depth analysis of Table 1 revealed that the majority (18) agreed with the notion that COVID-19 had a negative impact, while three

(3) studies were not specific, and six (6) reported positive results.

This means, from the perspective of most of the authors, supervisors and teachers strongly felt COVID-19 had a negative impact on supervision. For example, [4] reported that teachers felt the disease entrenched educational inequality in Ghana. Confirming this, a study by [5] revealed that teachers and supervisors complained that the pandemic further reduced the supervision ratio due to a lack of resources. From the researcher's viewpoint, the pandemic aggravated the autocratic approach some of the supervisors exhibited prior to the spread of the pandemic. [5] indicated that teachers needed clarification about handling school reopening and supervision. The burden of ensuring pupils adhere to the safety protocols and their regular role restricts the regularity of supervision. [5] indicated that some teachers have a negative attitude towards supervision, viewing it as a fault-finding activity. Headteachers and circuit supervisors see COVID-19 as a means of ensuring collaborative efforts between supervisors and teachers. [5] indicated that supervisors advised that teachers should see them as partners in progress and professionals critical to adopting innovative and result-oriented instructional methods to enhance student's academic achievements.

In brief, this section of the analysis revealed that both supervisors and teachers strongly feel that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on supervision. Due to limited access to resources, supervision has drastically reduced; inequality has deepened so that some teachers never receive effective supervision for months. It is paramount to devise or orchestrate an approach to address these issues. This forms the nexus of the final research question.

Research Question Four

What is the novel and realistic approach to supervising the English language curriculum because of the strict COVID-19 safety protocol?

There are few studies on orchestrating a novel and realistic approach to supervision. In

all, only 6 of the studies touched on how to devise a practical approach to supervision. The remaining studies (21) only discussed how to conduct effective supervision before the new normal occurred. One of the six studies, a comprehensive study by [27] indicated that due to the ravaging disease, the best approach to supervision is a "mindfulness-based approach" (p. 3). A closer examination of [27] "SuperVision" because both stress supervisors need to be non-judgmental, rigid, and democratic. In effect, this is the time to unlearn particular behaviour towards teachers, embrace diversity of opinion and strive to encourage teachers to continually enhance their instructional approach to raise the bar of excellence for students with improved academic achievement. Notably, there needs to be more clarity on whether online supervision will be appropriate.

Following the framework of the concept of Germs, which demonstrated that COVID—19 uses humans as the host to spread the disease, the [21] installed a strict safety protocol to restrict body-to-body contact and thereby reduce the spread of the disease. Hence, a study by [21] recommended online—based supervision so that the whole process will be carried out virtually over electronic media or social media.

Online-based was viewed as an innovative approach to supervision because it offers real-time evaluation of teachers' instructional approaches during teaching and learning. However, this has its setbacks. There are three-pronged issues ranging from 1) most of the teachers lack requisite skill for online-based learning, 2) the teachers are incapable of adequately managing the system and orchestrating result-oriented models for students during learning sessions, and finally, 3) most of the teachers lack technological resources to get the appropriate media. In the researcher's view, online-based supervision will further deepen the divide or inequality rampant in Ghana because most students do not

have television at home, let alone an internet broadband connection. The researcher, therefore, felt that it is only practical in schools with internet facilities, and both the supervisors and teachers have the requisite skills to operate it.

Key Findings

Research Question One

What is the relevance of the English language curriculum and its supervision?

This question was answered using a qualitative approach. Studies reviewed revealed that the English language curriculum is intimately connected with successful pedagogical activities in the English language.

English language curriculum sets the standard or benchmark for learning English as a Second Language. Underscoring the relevance of supervision in making sure that the four-pronged focus of the English language curriculum is achieved, several studies, sixteen (16) in all, demonstrated that supervision is inextricably linked and intimately connected to honing teachers' competence, content knowledge [18, 9, 27, 11].

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What is the perception of supervisors and primary school teachers on what constitutes effective supervision of the English language curriculum as stipulated by the Ghana Education Service (GES)?

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There are few studies on orchestrating a novel and realistic approach to supervision. In all, only 6 of the studies touched on how to devise a practical approach to supervision. The remaining studies (21) only discussed how to conduct effective supervision before the new normal occurred.

Discussion of the Findings

The study's key findings shed light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on curriculum delivery and supervision in Ghana, aligning with existing literature on education crises. The pandemic significantly disrupted traditional curriculum delivery and supervision methods, highlighting the relevance of crisis management and educational resilience as a theoretical framework. This disruption prompted a swift shift to remote learning, initially marked by challenges related to the digital divide, technology access, and teacher preparedness. However, it also underscored the potential of technology in curriculum delivery and supervision, echoing the literature on technology's role in education.

Interestingly, the research revealed positive impacts in the form of technological innovation, with the pandemic accelerating the adoption of technology in education. This led to the development of online platforms and resources that can enhance curriculum supervision. Moreover, educators adapted by finding flexible approaches to curriculum

supervision, accommodating different learning environments. Teachers and supervisors also gained new skills related to online instruction and digital tools, potentially contributing to more effective supervision in the future.

On the flip side, negative impacts included exacerbated disparities in access to education resources, particularly in rural areas, which negatively affected curriculum supervision in those regions. Ensuring the quality of curriculum delivery became more challenging during remote learning, making it difficult for supervisors to monitor and maintain standards. The emotional toll of the pandemic on students, teachers, and supervisors may have also negatively influenced the quality of curriculum supervision.

To address these challenges, several potential solutions were identified:

1. **Digital Divide:** To overcome the lack of access to technology, advocates for government and NGO initiatives should work towards providing devices and internet connectivity to underserved areas.
2. **Quality Assurance:** To ensure curriculum quality during remote learning, clear guidelines for online curriculum delivery should be developed, accompanied by training for teachers and supervisors in online pedagogy.
3. **Emotional Well-being:** To tackle emotional distress among students and educators, schools can implement mental health support programs and incorporate social-emotional learning into the curriculum.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** To address the challenge of monitoring student progress and teacher performance remotely, investments in educational technology that enables real-time monitoring and data collection should be made, accompanied by effective training for supervisors in using these tools.
5. **Resource Allocation:** In response to limited resources for curriculum materials,

advocacy efforts should focus on securing increased funding for educational resources, with a priority on curriculum materials that can be used both online and offline.

In conclusion, the research findings provide valuable insights into the impact of COVID-19 on curriculum supervision in primary schools in Ghana. By discussing these findings within the context of existing literature and theoretical frameworks, identifying both positive and negative impacts, and addressing challenges and potential solutions, the study contributes to a better understanding of how educational systems can adapt and improve in the face of crises.

Conclusion

The overall objective of this chapter is to provide a succinct summary of the study, the main conclusion, and suggestions alongside recommendations for policy and practice based on the study's findings. The focus of the summary, conclusion and recommendations is to demonstrate how COVID-19 impacts adequate supervision of the English Language Curriculum in primary schools in Ghana, particularly those involving practical approaches that improve teachers' professional qualifications and pupils' academic performance. It is a desktop study employing relevant secondary data from peer-reviewed and reliable sources.

Summary

An extensive investigation was conducted into effective supervision practices in Ghanaian primary schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, relying on articles from peer-reviewed journals and other trustworthy studies. The research examines how COVID-19 safety measures have affected supervision within these schools.

Specific objectives and research questions were formulated to guide the study and address

research challenges effectively. Our relevant objectives included:

1. The investigation of the significance of supervising the English language curriculum.
2. Exploring the perspectives of supervisors and primary school teachers on what constitutes effective supervision of the English language curriculum, as outlined by the Ghana Education Service (GES).
3. Understanding how supervisors and teachers perceive the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practices and student academic performance.
4. Exploring innovative and practical approaches to supervising the English language curriculum in light of strict COVID-19 safety protocols.

To tackle the research problems, four key research questions were developed:

1. What is the importance of supervising the English language curriculum?
2. How do supervisors and primary school teachers define effective supervision of the English language curriculum as specified by the Ghana Education Service (GES)?
3. What are the viewpoints of supervisors and teachers regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching practices and student academic performance?
4. What innovative and feasible methods can be employed for supervising the English language curriculum while adhering to strict COVID-19 safety measures?

The methodology section employed a systematic approach to source selection. We prioritised sources that could offer the study's conceptual, theoretical, or empirical support. Recent research was favoured for its up-to-date information. While the study focused on Ghana, the source selection extended to existing studies within the educational sector of Ghana and other countries.

In all, 39 articles were selected for the study. Out of these articles, 18 (n-18) were from peer-reviewed journals, 6 (n-6) were from

unpublished thesis, 5(n-5) were reports from reputable organisations, and the remaining 10 (n-10) articles were from other sources, including newspaper editorials, meeting the three criteria for selection. The manual selection of the articles culminated in the inclusion of only 27 sources in the study. This comprises peer-reviewed articles (12), unpublished thesis (3), reports (3), newspaper editorials (5) and other relevant sources such as blogs or websites (4).

Major Findings

Studies reviewed revealed that while the English curriculum is instrumental in improving students' communicative skills and proficiency in English, supervision is suitable in seeing that teachers continually improve their instructional approaches and practices in implementing the curriculum. Teachers' professional qualification is paramount, and supervision improved their competence, subject matter and content knowledge.

The study discovered that to be effective, supervisors must balance the need to meet target goals with the right administrative approach focusing on how individual teachers will be encouraged to become lifelong learners, improve problem-solving skills and enhance student academic achievement. Studies also demonstrated that supervisors should be dynamic to touch on relevant issues while building fine rapport and collaborative effort with English teachers.

Dynamism arising from SuperVision entails encouraging teachers to always look for ways to improve their instructional approaches and strategies to improve their pupils' academic achievement. Employing effective supervision, irrespective of the prevailing conditions, supervisors can help English teachers become lifelong learners equipped with ardent interest in problem-solving, irrespective of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A systematic examination of the studies revealed that supervisors and teachers strongly

feel COVID-19 has negatively impacted supervision. Due to limited access to resources, supervision has drastically reduced; inequality has deepened so that some teachers never receive adequate supervision for months. It is paramount to devise or orchestrate an approach to address these issues.

The study's findings further revealed that supervisors can accomplish much by being realistic, non-judgemental and tolerant instead of having a faultfinder and autocratic approach to supervision. Likewise, a mindfulness-based approach is very suitable in all aspects of supervision. Online—based supervision is also novel. However, supervisors and teachers should receive adequate and result-oriented training with the supply of internet facilities prior to implementation.

Implication for Practice and Policy

Supervisors are saddled with the onerous task of seeing that teachers' professional qualification is enhanced; hence, supervisors should receive additional training on using a blended approach to supervision. Collaboration and interactivity through virtual platforms where necessary and traditional approach where possible. This approach enhances teaching practice because teachers are allowed to contribute salient points to their training and allows supervisors to employ a supervisory approach to what works to improve teachers' skills and professional qualifications.

The study discovered that supervisors should adopt a democratic approach to supervision. It is therefore recommended that in line with the theoretical framework for the present study, the aspect of counselling and advice supervisor should be firm and underscores areas a teacher needs improvement. This means that instead of being prescriptive, supervisors should be democratic, flexible and realistic to improve teachers' teaching and assessment practices.

The policymakers should consider the below implications and factor them into their system of planning and execution.

The study's key findings highlight the pressing need for educational systems to exhibit resilience and adaptability in the face of unforeseen disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. This understanding extends beyond Ghana and can significantly inform future educational planning worldwide.

One notable consequence of this crisis is the accelerated adoption of blended learning approaches, where a mix of in-person and online teaching is becoming a permanent fixture in education. This shift necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of teaching methods and resource allocation to ensure effective implementation.

Moreover, the crisis emphasizes the critical role of continuous professional development for teachers and supervisors. Ongoing training in technology integration, crisis management, and curriculum adaptation becomes paramount to enhance the education system's adaptability. The pandemic has also laid bare disparities in access to education resources, particularly in rural areas, underlining the urgency of addressing these inequalities to ensure that all students have equal opportunities in English language education.

In addition to these local implications, the research findings can contribute to policy revisions not only at the national level but also regionally, as a means of better preparing education systems for future crises. This may entail revisiting curriculum frameworks, rethinking resource allocation strategies, and refining teacher support policies to foster resilience.

Lastly, it is crucial to recognize that the significance of this research extends beyond Ghana's borders. Its implications resonate with other nations facing similar challenges in English language education during crises. Thus, the findings can make a valuable contribution to the global discourse on education resilience, providing insights and guidance for educational systems worldwide.

Conclusions

The in-depth exploration conducted on the influence of COVID-19 on effective supervision of English Language Curriculum in primary schools in Ghana revealed that though the pandemic negatively affected supervision, with novel approaches to implementation, teachers' professional qualification can be enhanced and horned with concomitant improvement in instructional practices, and pupils' academic achievement. The supervisory approach often influences the extent to which teachers benefit professionally. Adequate supervision should ensure individual teachers become lifelong learners and improve problem-solving skills relevant to improving pupils' academic achievement. Being life-long learners will enhance teachers' capacity to adjust to varying situations and be capable of improving instructional practices to facilitate pupils' academic achievement.

The in-depth analysis concluded that supervision can only improve teachers' competence and content knowledge when supervisors build a fine rapport with the teacher, encourage contributions and engender a collaborative forum with English teachers. This means supervisors should be democratic and maintain balance to offer constructive criticism where necessary.

This means that during this era of COVID-19, supervisors should maintain dynamism to actively collaborate with teachers to facilitate the best approach to instructional practice. Such collaboration engenders an atmosphere of interactivity where teachers contribute to their development.

The study discovered that due to COVID-19, due to the strict distancing protocol and the low level of economic and infrastructural development in Ghana, inequality in access to education has been deepened, with several teachers receiving little or no supervision since 2020. In effect, COVID-19 has had a negative impact on supervision, suggesting the need to orchestrate an improved means of conducting

effective supervision to benefit teachers and pupils.

It was concluded that a blended approach, comprising traditional and online-based approaches to supervision, is essential. It was also seen that supervisors should be realistic, non-judgemental and tolerant instead of being fault-finder and autocratic in their approach to supervision. Likewise, a mindfulness-based approach is very suitable in all aspects of supervision. Because of the implementation of blended supervision, training should be arranged for teachers and supervisors on using Internet facilities for the supervision processes.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study's key findings encompass a comprehensive set of recommendations to enhance the resilience and effectiveness of English language education in primary schools in Ghana and similar contexts.

Firstly, given the pivotal role of technology during the pandemic, the study emphasizes the necessity for primary schools to invest in infrastructure and provide training for teachers and supervisors to effectively integrate technology into the English language curriculum. This involves ensuring access to digital resources, online teacher training, and equipping students with the necessary devices.

Secondly, to ensure educational continuity in varying learning environments, including in-person and remote learning, the study proposes the development of a flexible curriculum framework that can adapt to different circumstances.

Thirdly, specialized training programs for English language teachers and curriculum supervisors are recommended to enhance their capacity for curriculum delivery and supervision, both in traditional and online settings.

In addition, the study suggests that educational authorities allocate additional resources and funding to support schools in procuring essential materials like textbooks and

digital resources, safeguarding the quality of English language education during crises.

Monitoring and evaluation play a critical role, with the study advocating for the establishment of a robust system to continuously assess curriculum delivery and supervision during emergencies. This proactive approach helps identify challenges early and enables timely interventions.

Recognizing the emotional and psychological toll of the pandemic on students and teachers, the study calls for the inclusion of mental health support services within schools to address the emotional well-being of all stakeholders.

Lastly, the study emphasizes the importance of community engagement. It encourages schools to actively involve parents and communities in the educational process, fostering a holistic approach to English language education. Parents, in particular, can play a crucial role in supporting their children's English language learning, especially during remote learning periods.

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Acknowledgement

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. I am deeply grateful for the successful completion of this course. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Almighty Allah for guiding and granting me the strength, zeal, and passion to endure all the frustrations from various stakeholders to peacefully end this important milestone in my life. I also wish to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor, Ioanna Tsiouri, who have guided and encouraged me throughout the course.

I want to acknowledge my principal, the entire leadership, and the staff of Al Manarat Sharqiyah International School of Al Khobar - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for their trust and support throughout this journey.

Special thanks go to my wife, Ayesha Sam, and my children, Asif Ahmed Bin Danquah, Matlah Abena Danquah, Sajjad Bin Danquah, and Maulvi Adeel Bin Danquah, for their unwavering support, encouragement, and prayers. I am equally grateful to my parents, siblings, and my entire family."

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