



The relationship between the perceptions of principals and teachers concerning supervisory practices in selected high schools of Montana
by Allen Albert Herrboldt

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Montana State University

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was: (a) to discover which supervisory practices were most commonly used in Montana high schools; (b) to determine which of the supervisory practices were perceived by principals and teachers to be effective; and (c) offer suggestions based on the findings of the study that would assist Montana high school principals in establishing effective supervisory programs.

The problem was investigated by: (a) a review of literature related to the problems; (b) surveying 67 full-time principals, 41 part-time principals, 400 teachers under the supervision of full-time principals, and 100 teachers under the supervision of part-time principals with a written questionnaire; and (c) tabulation, analysis, and comparison of data gathered.

The results of the study indicated that principals and teachers in each of the investigated categories perceived the purposes of supervision similarly. The primary purpose of supervision as indicated by all groups was the improvement of instruction in the classroom.

Other findings revealed that principals and teachers differed in their perceptions regarding whether or not specific supervisory practices were being used. This was more true of full-time principals and teachers under their supervision than it was of part-time principals and teachers under their supervision.

Principals and teachers, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, differed on the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction in their schools in the following areas: orienting teachers to the job, staff development, and activities dealing with classroom observation. Principals and teachers, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, differed on the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction of the following activities if used as general procedures in Montana high schools: curriculum development, encouraging experimentation, orienting teachers to the job, staff development, classroom observation, and evaluation of the supervisory program.

Principals, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, did not feel that the degree of effectiveness would increase if the practices were used in other high schools in Montana. Teachers as a total group perceived that the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction of the great majority of the supervisory practices presently used in their schools would be increased if the practices were used in other high schools of Montana.

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by

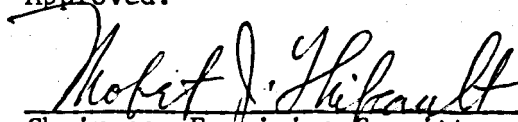
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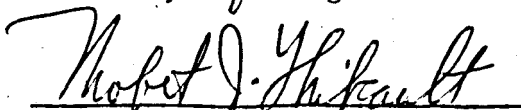
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was: (a) to discover which supervisory practices were most commonly used in Montana high schools; (b) to determine which of the supervisory practices were perceived by principals and teachers to be effective; and (c) offer suggestions based on the findings of the study that would assist Montana high school principals in establishing effective supervisory programs.

The problem was investigated by: (a) a review of literature related to the problems; (b) surveying 67 full-time principals, 41 part-time principals, 400 teachers under the supervision of full-time principals, and 100 teachers under the supervision of part-time principals with a written questionnaire; and (c) tabulation, analysis, and comparison of data gathered.

The results of the study indicated that principals and teachers in each of the investigated categories perceived the purposes of supervision similarly. The primary purpose of supervision as indicated by all groups was the improvement of instruction in the classroom.

Other findings revealed that principals and teachers differed in their perceptions regarding whether or not specific supervisory practices were being used. This was more true of full-time principals and teachers under their supervision than it was of part-time principals and teachers under their supervision.

Principals and teachers, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, differed on the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction in their schools in the following areas: orienting teachers to the job, staff development, and activities dealing with classroom observation. Principals and teachers, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, differed on the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction of the following activities if used as general procedures in Montana high schools: curriculum development, encouraging experimentation, orienting teachers to the job, staff development, classroom observation, and evaluation of the supervisory program.

Principals, collectively and in each of the investigated categories, did not feel that the degree of effectiveness would increase if the practices were used in other high schools in Montana. Teachers as a total group perceived that the degree of effectiveness for the improvement of instruction of the great majority of the supervisory practices presently used in their schools would be increased if the practices were used in other high schools of Montana.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the oldest forms of educational leadership and often the least understood has been supervision for the improvement of instruction. How a principal goes about influencing his teachers or goes about generating improvements will vary from principal to principal and from teaching staff to teaching staff. If instructional supervision requires teachers to change their behavior, then the principal must do something that will initiate a change in the teachers' behavior.

The literature contains a vast amount of information concerning supervision and supervisory techniques. However, little has been written about the fact that differences in the perceptions of the supervisory process may exist among the participants. The improvement of instruction has a considerable dependence on teacher attitudes toward the supervisory program and on teacher perceptions of how effective they feel the supervisory practices are in helping them improve their instruction. It seems necessary that there be close agreement between the supervisor and the teachers concerning the techniques and practices that are seen to be effective for the improvement of instruction (Marquit, 1968:2).*

The object of this study was to identify successful supervisory techniques and practices used in Montana high schools and to reveal the

*Numbers in parentheses refer to date of publication of references in the bibliography; those after the colon are page numbers.

feelings and attitudes of the high school principals and high school teachers toward these techniques and practices. It is hoped that this study will aid high school principals in setting up successful supervisory programs describing behaviors expected by teachers and hopefully insuring good instructional programs for youngsters.

Statement of the Problem

Newton (1972:52) felt that supervision could easily contribute a great deal to teachers' understanding and competence. However, this did not happen. Rather, supervision has often been avoided and resisted by teachers. The reason for the lack of supervisory performance was given by Johnson (1971:34) as the fact that supervisors lacked an understanding of the purpose of instructional supervision. Therefore, the problem has been a lack of understanding and agreement among participants in the supervisory process concerning the purpose of supervision and which supervisory practices are effective for the improvement of instruction.

Before teachers and principals attempt to improve supervision, each must be aware of how the other perceives the supervisory process. Due to the need for effective supervision and the need for understanding of supervisory practices, the purpose of this study was to: (a) discover which supervisory practices were most commonly used in Montana high schools; (b) determine which of the most commonly used supervisory practices were perceived by principals and teachers to be effective;

and (c) offer suggestions based on the findings of the study, that would assist Montana high school principals in establishing effective supervisory programs.

Need for the Study

As society has rapidly changed, so has education. Many of the changes that have come about have been the result of pressure from organized teacher groups, school district reorganization, governmental involvement in educational programs, and increased and advanced teacher preparation. These changes have influenced and affected the practices and behaviors of supervisors.

Ogletree (1972:507) pointed out that supervision is not like it used to be. Experienced supervisors were aware that changes in their roles and responsibilities had been less clear than a decade ago. Also supervisors recognized that the pressures and demands made upon them required a knowledge and skills for which many had not been prepared for either by formal preparatory programs or by experience. Practicing supervisors recognized that what had been expected of them had been changing just as rapidly as their organizations' attempts to respond to the demands and pressures placed upon them by society and by an increasingly professional and militant staff.

Ogletree (1972:508) further stated that teacher professionalism and its resulting militancy has affected the role of supervisors. More

and more states and local boards of education have been granting professional organizations the right to negotiate. These negotiations do not only include salaries but also working conditions, in-service programs, classroom size, discipline, academic freedom, and in some instances curriculum and instruction.

With the passage of negotiation laws and with increased teacher militancy, there has been increased pressure from instructional personnel to become involved in administrative decision making. These actions have only complicated the credibility gap which has existed in supervision. Walden (1968:11) stated:

The credibility gap in supervision exists, not by design, but for the simple reason that when teachers, administrators, and supervisors view the functions of supervision they each develop different perceptions. Current literature in this area recommends certain supervisory techniques and practices as being highly effective in improving the teaching-learning process. However, improvement of this process is dependent upon the teacher attitudes toward supervision. Although much has been written about supervision, it has not been emphasized that teachers and supervisors simply do not agree on what effective supervision is.

Teachers today have been better prepared. They also have been granted input into the administrative process. Therefore, it is imperative that supervisors become aware of and understand the teachers' expectations of the supervisory program. Neville (1966:637), after analyzing numerous investigations concerning supervision, concluded that teachers viewed supervision as follows:

1. Teachers do not see supervision as focusing on the improvement of instruction.
2. Teachers do not see supervision as having a "human relations" base.
3. Teachers do not see supervisors as being prepared to help them in the study of teaching.
4. Teachers want supervision that will help them attack instructional problems.

In order to determine the attitudes and expectations of Montana high school teachers and high school principals concerning high school supervisory programs, it appeared necessary that a study of supervisory practices and how they are perceived by high school principals and teachers should be conducted.

General Questions To Be Answered

The questions considered in this study were:

1. What were the purposes of supervision as perceived by high school principals and high school teachers?
2. Based upon the high school principals' and high school teachers' perceptions, what were the supervisory practices being used in the sampled Montana high schools?
3. Which supervisory practices did principals and teachers perceive to be most effective for the improvement of instruction in their schools?
4. Which stated practices, if used as general supervisory procedures in Montana high schools, did principals and teachers perceive

to be most effective for the improvement of instruction?

5. What was the degree of agreement or disagreement between the perceptions of the high school principals and classroom teachers concerning: (a) the purposes of supervision, (b) which specific supervisory practices are being used, and (c) the degree of effectiveness of the stated practices if they were extensively used in high schools of Montana for the improvement of instruction?

6. Was there a difference in the perceptions that teachers had concerning the effectiveness of the stated practices used in their schools as compared to the potential effectiveness of these practices if used for supervisory purposes in Montana high schools?

7. Was there a difference in the perceptions that principals had concerning the effectiveness of the stated practices used in their schools as compared to the potential effectiveness of these practices if used for supervisory purposes in Montana high schools?

General Procedures

The procedures followed in this study began with an extensive review of literature which provided a background for the study. A survey questionnaire was developed to gather data on supervisory practices used in selected high schools of Montana. The questionnaire was developed to survey the attitudes and opinions of teachers and principals regarding supervisory practices in selected schools. Comparisons were

made between teachers' and principals' perceptions regarding the practices being used and those considered most effective for the improvement of instruction. The findings were analyzed and evaluated. From the analysis of the findings, the researcher drew conclusions and made recommendations for effective supervisory practices and for further study.

Delimitations

Within the delimitations outlined below, this study was conducted to attempt to identify the supervisory practices most commonly utilized in Montana high schools and those perceived to be most effective.

1. This study was limited to the academic year of 1974-1975.
2. The study was constructed to consider only supervisory programs of Montana high schools.
3. Only those educators who were employed as high school teachers and high school principals were considered in this study.
4. Only high schools that had a designated principal as indicated in the 1974-1975 Montana Education Directory were selected for participation.

Definition of Terms

In order to provide clarity of meaning, the items as they were used in the study are defined as follows:

Classroom teacher. A member of the school faculty who spends at least one-half of the regular school day in a teaching-learning situation with high school students.

High school principal. An administrative and supervising officer in charge of a high school. He may be full time or may carry a teaching load (Good, 1959:414).

High school. An organizational unit composed of any of the combinations which follow (Standards For Accreditation of Montana Schools, 1973-74):

1. Senior High School: Grades 10-12 operating in conjunction with a junior high school and an elementary school.
2. Six-year High School: Grades 7-12 operating in conjunction with an elementary school.
3. Four-year High School: Grades 9-12 operating in conjunction with an elementary school.

Supervising high school principal. A high school principal who has been relieved of instructional duties such that he may devote half time to the supervision of instruction.

Supervision. All efforts of designated school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers

for the improvement of instruction.

Summary

Recent developments in educational administration have made the high school principal an important figure in supervision for the improvement of instruction. The principal's professional preparation and experiences have not always provided an adequate background for him to set up an effective supervisory program. He must now have special skills and knowledge in order to deal with a more highly trained and professional staff.

The need for this study was predicated upon a rapidly changing society which has influenced changes in the educational system. Teachers have been asking for more voice in the administrative decision making process and have been receiving the right to do so through legislated laws. Teacher militancy has also presented a new challenge to supervising principals. Attitudes and perceptions concerning supervisory functions and practices need to be researched in order for the supervisor to become more aware of and understand the teachers' expectations of the supervisory program.

It was the purpose of this study to determine effective supervisory practices as perceived by practicing educators in the field.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An examination of the professional literature was made to provide a better understanding of supervision for the improvement of instruction. In order to facilitate this understanding, the literature has been reviewed in the following areas:

1. Origins of Supervision
2. Purposes and Functions of Supervision
3. Perceptions of Supervisory Leadership
4. The Principal's Responsibility for Supervision
5. Perceptions of Supervisory Practices and Techniques
6. Need and Necessity for Supervision

Origin of Supervision

Historical knowledge has provided us with insight into the nature of supervision, because we have been wedded in our practices to the thought of other eras. Such a perspective has also focused attention upon what has been going on today under the name of supervision (Lucio and McNiel, 1969:3). Therefore, in order to understand supervision as being performed in today's schools, it was necessary to review the many aspects of supervision.

Almost as soon as schools were established in the New England Colonies, the selectmen of the towns were directed by the General Court

