

# Teachers' Clinical Supervisory Experiences with Regional Pedagogic Inspectors (RPIs) and Their Effects on the Quality of Instruction in Wouri Division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon

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**Abstract:** Clinical supervision of teachers in this context involves the face to face overseeing of the teaching or instruction of teachers (supervisees) by Regional Pedagogic Inspectors (supervisors). The clinical supervision process involves three main stages: the pre-observation conference between the supervisor and supervisee; the actual classroom observation during which the supervisor observes the teaching or lesson delivery of the teacher and the post-observation conference between the supervisor and teacher. This study had three specific objectives: 1) To investigate teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching. 2) To investigate teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching. 3) To investigate teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching. These objectives were coined into research questions and hypotheses. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. A sample of two hundred teachers (who had experiences clinical supervision by RPIs) was selected for this study. The study used a questionnaire for teachers as the instrument to collect salient data. The findings of this study revealed that: teachers had a negative experience with RPIs because they did not carry out the pre-observation and post-observation conferences as required by the norms of clinical supervision. These experiences had a negative effect on the quality of teachers' instruction. However, the teachers had a positive experience with RPIs during their classroom observation stage and this had a positive mark on the quality of teachers' instruction. It was recommended that more experienced and competent teachers should be appointed as RPIs to clinically supervise teachers regularly, while carrying out all the three main stages of clinical supervision as required.

**Key points:** clinical supervision, clinical supervisory experiences, regional pedagogic inspectors, quality of instruction.

## Introduction

The word Supervision comes from two Latin words, "super" which means over and "visere" meaning to see or to watch. Thus the etymological meaning of supervision is overseeing. Supervision of instruction is therefore the process of overseeing the instructional process of teachers before, during and after classroom activities to ensure that the envisaged goals and objectives of the learners, classroom, school, country and society at large are attained.

Glickman et al. (1996) view supervision as a developmental process which involves five supervisory tasks – direct assistance to the teacher, in-service training, curriculum development, group development, and action research. These tasks are to be carried out by supervisors to improve on the instructions of teachers and consequently students' learning. The task looked at in this article is direct assistance to the teacher which is done in the form of clinical supervision.

Clinical supervision is the face to face process of overseeing the instructional process of teachers before, during and after their instruction in a bid to improve on their instruction and consequently students' learning, which is the core course of the schools' goals and objectives. The original clinical supervision model has five stages (Al-Abdali, 2016) which have been reduced or summarized into three stages by most practitioners or supervisors (Acheson & Gall, 2011). These stages include: The pre-observation conference between the supervisor and teacher; the actual classroom observation; and the post-observation conference between the supervisor and the teacher.

Clinical supervision is seen as a means to personally assist teachers to carry out effective teaching which will lead the learners to effectively acquire the required knowledge, skills, competences, attitudes and values for the realization of educational goals and objectives. However, a remarkable degree of failure is still noticed on the part of students in our schools. In Cameroon in general and Wouri division in particular, clinical supervision is mainly done by Regional Pedagogic Inspectors (RPIs) and to a lesser extent Divisional Pedagogic Inspectors (DPIs) and Heads of Departments (HODs). These personnel (RPIs who are the focus of this study) who are in charge of the supervision of specific subjects are based in the Regional delegations of secondary education. They are supposed to move round to all the schools in the region to supervise teachers' lessons regularly in order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in their instruction.

### **Problem statement**

Clinical supervision is a tool which has been used by most supervisors in overseeing the teaching of teachers and ensuring that they improve in their instructions and in effect escalate students learning by meeting the schools and societal objectives. However, teachers' instruction or teaching still leaves very little to be admired as the class participation if students, their participation in exercises, test and exam scores are low or mediocre. These scenarios leave teachers in a state of dilemma since the envisaged objectives are not satisfactorily attained to keep the standards high. Thus the work or role of clinical supervision in improving the instructional practices of teachers in order to yield the required students' outcomes remains inert and inconspicuous. This brings this researcher to investigate teachers' clinical supervisory experiences with RPIs and how they affect their instruction.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To investigate teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching.
2. To investigate teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching.
3. To investigate teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs and their effects on the quality of teaching.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the effects of teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs on their teaching quality?
2. What are the effects of teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs on their teaching quality?
3. How do teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs affect their teaching quality?

### **Research hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant effect of teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs on their teaching quality.

**Ha1:** There is a significant effect of teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs on their teaching quality.

**Ho2:** There is no significant effect of teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs on their teaching quality.

**Ha2:** There is a significant effect of teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs on their teaching quality.

**Ho3:** Teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs do not significantly affect their teaching quality.

**Ho3:** Teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs significantly affect their teaching quality.

### **Literature review**

Clinical supervision was propounded by Morris Cogan in the 50s. According to Goldhammer (1969), it originally has five stages which include: Pre-observation conference between the teacher and supervision; Classroom observation; Analysis and strategy session; post-observation Conference stage; Post- conference analysis. These stages have been summarized by many practitioners or supervisors into three stages, which include: the pre-observation conference, the classroom observation and the post-observation conference.

The pre-observation conference between the supervisor and teacher requires both persons who are presumably well rooted in the Pedagogic-content knowledge to be delivered to students to actively participate in order to make the teaching effective. It is supposed to take place a few minutes before the teacher's lesson. During this conference, the teacher is expected to mentally summarize his or her lesson and verbally explain to the supervisor what he/she is about to present to the students. Areas of presentation may include the class to be taught, the students' average age, the enrollment or class size, the objectives of the lesson or expected outcome from the students, the content, the teaching strategies and methods, the duration of the lesson among others.

The supervisor on his/her part keenly listens to the mind and explanations of the teacher and asks probing questions to the teacher in order to make the teacher's explanations clearer. It should however be noted that, the teacher is at the center of the clinical supervision process thus the supervisory approach should be more collaborative (Glickman, 1985). Corgan (1973) underscores that in all the stages and interactions between the supervisor and supervisee during clinical supervision, there should be sound interpersonal relationship between them to prevent conflicts that may likely distort the psychological state of the teacher and hamper the supervision cycle. When both the teacher and supervisor are clear on what is to be taught and how the classroom interactions between the teacher and students is going to look like, they delve into the next stage, the classroom observation.

The classroom observation requires the supervisor to sit in the teacher's class and observe him deliver his/her lesson. The function of the teacher during this phase is to teach the students as effective as possible as discussed during the pre-observation conference in order to ensure that the objectives of the lesson are met, by ensuring that effective learning takes place and students participate actively on the lesson. The supervisor on the other hand meticulously observes the teacher's instruction and takes down salient notes pertaining to the lesson delivery of the teacher. He collects relevant data to be discussed during the post observation conference.

The post-observation conference is an evaluation meeting between the supervisor and the teacher based on the data collected by the supervisor during the classroom observation. It should be noted by the supervisor that, this stage does not warrant the condemnation of the practices showcased by the teacher during his/her instruction, which the supervisor think are wrong. However, the supervisor has the responsibility to applaud the good practices demonstrated by the teacher during his teaching and ask questions on activities which were not clear to him/her during the teaching. The teacher on his part agrees with the supervisor on his good practices during the lesson and

explains why he/she carried out some practices which were not discussed during the pre-observation conference as requested by the supervisor. Based on the data collected by the supervisor and agreed upon by the teacher, the two collaboratively, with sounds interpersonal relationship come out with a clear data and evaluation on how the lesson was delivered, the corrections agreed upon and how the subsequent lesson should be in order to improve on the quality of teaching and smoothly continue with the clinical supervisory cycle.

Clinical supervisory in Cameroon secondary education is mainly carried out by regional pedagogic inspectors in charge of particular subjects. A subject such as Physics may have two or more RPIs in charge of clinically supervising the instructions of all physics teachers within the region. That is, each secondary school subject has a set of inspectors at the regional delegation of secondary education who are supposed to supervise its teachers within the region. The activities of these RPIs within the region are immediately controlled by an inspector coordinator (IC) for each broad field. For instance, there is an inspector coordinator for social sciences who coordinates the supervisory activities of RPIs in charge of Economics, Geography, Commerce etc. Worthy of note is that the RPIs of each subject have a higher supervisor at the level of the ministry of secondary education, the National Pedagogic Inspectors (NPIs). The National Pedagogic Inspectors of each subject coordinate and evaluate the activities of all RPIs for that subject in all the ten regions of the country. The NPIs also assist the RPIs in the organization of refresher courses at the level of the regions.

The work of clinical supervision in schools is normally supposed to be primarily carried out by Heads of departments for different subjects and by colleagues within the department in a particular school. However this exercise is seldom practiced in schools by the former. Also, school principals who are called instructional leaders and have a pedagogic function (Mbua, 2003) to supervise teachers rarely carry out the function of clinically supervising teachers in their classrooms because they may not have the content knowledge in subjects which are out of their specialty. This leaves the supervision in the hands of RPIs who are very small in numerical value compared to the number of teachers (for a particular subject) in a region. Worthy of note is that, the RPIs do not only supervise teachers in Public secondary schools, but also supervise teachers in confessional or mission schools and lay private schools within the region. This buttresses the fact that the supervisory job is overwhelming for the RPIs to effectively carry out in more than one session to improve upon the quality of teachers' instruction in all schools within the national territory and Wouri division in particular.

## **Methodology**

A description survey design was used in this study. A sample of two hundred secondary school teachers was randomly selected from secondary schools in Wouri division of the Littoral region of Cameroon. A well structured closed-ended questionnaire was utilized to collect the required data from teachers vis a vis their supervisory experiences with RPI and their effects on the quality of their teaching. The questionnaire had a four points Likert's scale. The scale ranged from Strongly Agree (SA) with a score of 4, through Agree (A) with a score of 3, through Disagree (D) with a score of 2 to Strongly Disagree (SD) with a score of 1. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations (St D) were used to analyze the collected data in order to answer the research questions. The chi square was the inferential statistics used to test the veracity of the research hypothesis, which were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## **Findings**

The findings were presented based on research objectives The data collected from teachers' questionnaire was analyzed and the following findings ware arrived at:

### **Findings based on the first research objective: Teachers' Experiences with RPIs during pre-observation conference and effect on Quality of Instruction**

The data for this objective was gotten from the first five items of the teachers' questionnaire. The data was analyzed and the results summarized in table 1.

**Table 1: Frequency distribution table on teachers' responses for the first research objectives.**

SN	Items	SA(4) f %	A(3) f %	D(2) f %	SD(1) f %	Total	Mode	Median	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	St D
1	When RPIs visit to supervise me they meet with me before my lesson.	20 10.0	32 16.0	82 41.0	66 33.0	200 100	2	2	2.03	0.17
2	During the meetings, the RPIs ask me to explain what the class is all about	14 7.0	31 15.5	92 46.0	63 31.5	200 100	2	2	1.98	0.17
3	During the meeting the RPIs give their inputs to better my lesson	11 5.5	33 16.5	72 36.0	84 42.0	200 100	1	2	1.86	0.18
4	During the meeting, the RPIs collaborate with me with sound interpersonal relationship	10 5.0	27 13.5	68 34.0	95 47.5	200 100	1	2	1.76	0.19
5	The quality of my Instruction is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings	2 1.0	25 15.5	71 35.5	102 51.0	200 100	1	1	1.64	0.20
6	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings.	7 3.5	19 9.5	77 38.5	97 48.5	200 100	1	2	1.68	0.20
7	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings.	4 2.0	10 5.0	75 37.5	111 55.5	200 100	1	1	1.55	0.21
MRS for the relationship between variables (item 5 - 7)		13 2.2	54 9.0	223 37.2	310 51.6	600 100	1	1	1.61	0.12

Source: Field Work

Findings on the first research question generally revealed that majority of the teacher did not have the required supervisory experiences with their RPIs during their pre-observation conferences and that led to a low effect on the quality of their instructions showcased by low students' participation in their classes and low or mediocre tests scores after their supervision.

### Findings to prove the veracity of the first research hypothesis

**Decision rule for all the hypotheses:** Reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) if the chi square calculated value ( $x^2_{cal}$ ) is greater than the chi square critical value ( $x^2_{crit}$ ), otherwise retain the null hypothesis (Nworgu, 1991).

The data collected from items 5 to 7 of the teachers' questionnaire were analyzed to prove the veracity of this hypothesis. The results of the analysis were summarized in table 2.

**Table 2: Contingency table of teachers' responses based on the first research objective.  $F_o$  and  $F_e$  stand for observed frequency and expected frequency respectively while df stands for the degree of freedom.**

SN	Items	SA(4) $F_o$ $F_e$	A(3) $F_o$ $F_e$	D(2) $F_o$ $F_e$	SD(1) $F_o$ $F_e$	Total	Df	$x^2_{cal}$	$x^2_{crit}$
5	The quality of my Instruction is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings	2 4.3	25 18.0	71 74.3	102 103.4	200	6		
6	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings.	7 4.3	19 18.0	77 74.3	97 103.4	200	6		
7	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the pre-observation meetings.	4 4.3	10 18.0	75 74.3	111 103.4	200	6		
MRS for the relationship between variables (items 5-7)		1	54	223	310	600	6	14.9 3	2.1 4

**Decision:** Since the  $x^2$  calculated value (of 14.93) is greater than the  $x^2$  critical value (of 2.14), the null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained.

### Inference

At an alpha level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 6, there is a significant effect of teachers' experiences during pre-observation conferences with RPIs on their teaching quality in Wouri division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon. The effect is a negative one since more teachers disagreed of having their teaching quality improved because of the supervisory experiences they had with their RPIs during the pre-observation conferences.

### Findings based on the second research objective: Teachers' Supervisory Experiences with RPIs during classroom observation and effects on Quality of Instruction

The data for this objective was gotten from items 8 to 14 of the teachers' questionnaires. The frequency distribution for the responses gotten from teachers was presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Frequency distribution table on teachers' responses for the second research objectives**

SN	Items	SA(4) f %	A(3) f %	D(2) f %	SD(1) f %	Total	Mode	Median	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	St D
8	The RPIs usually sit in my classroom to observe my teaching when they come to supervise me.	97 48.5	98 49.0	2 1.0	3 1.5	200 100	4	3	3.45	0.21
9	The RPIs take down notes or data during my instruction	99 49.5	65 32.5	20 10.0	16 8.0	200 100	4	3	3.24	0.19
10	The RPIs do not interrupt my teaching during observation	125 62.5	45 22.5	17 8.5	13 6.5	200 100	4	4	3.41	0.20
11	The RPIs does not portray any verbal or sign language to distract me during teaching	64 32.0	105 52.5	20 10.0	11 5.5	200 100	3	3	3.11	0.18
12	The quality of my teaching is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during classroom observation.	66 33.0	77 38.5	34 17.0	23 11.5	200 100	3	3	2.93	0.17
13	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the classroom observation	64 32.0	105 52.5	20 10.0	11 5.5	200 100	3	3	3.11	0.18
14	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the classroom observation.	67 33.5	56 28.0	53 26.5	24 12.0	200 100	3	3	2.83	0.16
MRS for the relationship between variables (Item 12-14)		197 32.8	238 39.7	107 17.8	58 9.7	600 100	3	3	2.96	0.10

Findings on the second research question generally revealed that, majority of the teachers experienced appropriate classroom observation with their RPIs, which generated a remarkable high effect on the quality of their instructions showcased by high students' participation in their classes and an increase in tests scores after their supervision, as attested by majority of the teachers.

### Findings Based on the Second Research Hypothesis

The data collected from items 12 – 14 of the teachers' questionnaire were analyzed to prove the veracity of this hypothesis. The results of the analysis were summarized in table 4.

**Table 4: Contingency table of teachers' responses based on the second research objective**

SN	Items	SA(4) Fo Fe	A(3) Fo Fe	D(2) Fo Fe	SD(1) Fo Fe	Total	Df	$\chi^2_{cal}$	$\chi^2_{crit}$
12	The quality of my teaching is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during classroom observation.	66 65.7	77 79.3	34 35.7	23 19.3	200	6		
13	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the classroom observation	64 65.7	105 79.3	20 35.7	11 19.3	200	6		
14	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the classroom observation.	67 65.7	56 79.3	53 35.7	24 19.3	200	6		
MRS for the relationship between variables (items 12-14)		197	238	107	58	600	6	34.7 7	5.0 2

**Decision:** Since the  $\chi^2$  calculated value (of 34.77) is greater than the  $\chi^2$  critical value (of 5.02), the null hypothesis was thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained.

### Inference

At an alpha level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 6, there is a significant effect of teachers' experiences during classroom observation by RPIs on their teaching quality in Wouri division of the Littoral region of Cameroon. The effect was a positive one since from the frequency distribution, majority of attested of good experiences with RPIs which improved their quality of teaching..

### Findings based on third research objective: Teachers' supervisory experiences with RPIs during post-observation conference and effect on quality of Instruction.

The data for this objective was gotten from items 15 to 21 of the teachers' questionnaire. The frequency distribution for the responses gotten from teachers was presented in table 5.

**Table 5 Frequency distribution table on students' responses for the third research objectives**

SN	Items	SA(4) f %	A(3) f %	D(2) f %	SD(1) f %	Total f %	Mode	Median	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	St D
15	The RPIs usually meet with me after my lesson after observing my	16 8.0	42 21.0	58 26.0	84 42.0	200 100	1	2	1.90	0.18

	teaching.									
16	The RPIs applaud some practices I showcase during my instruction	9 4.5	25 12.5	92 46.0	74 37.0	200 100	2	2	1.85	0.18
17	The RPIs ask me to explain why some practices which were not discussed in the pre-observation meeting were demonstrated during my lesson	20 10.0	28 14.0	73 36.5	79 39.5	200 100	1	2	1.95	0.18
18	The RPIs collaborate and discusses with me on how to better the proceeding supervisory session	16 8.0	27 13.5	88 44.0	69 34.5	200 100	2	2	1.90	0.18
19	The quality of my teaching is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during post-observation conference.	12 6.0	18 9.0	69 34.5	101 50.5	200 100	1	1	1.71	0.19
20	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the post-observation meetings.	22 11.0	27 13.5	60 30.0	91 45.5	200 100	1	2	1.90	0.18
21	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the post-observation meetings.	8 4.0	34 13.0	71 35.5	87 43.5	200 100	1	2	1.82	0.19
MRS for the relationship between variables (items 19-21)		42 7.0	79 13.2	200 33.3	279 46.5	600 100	1	2	1.86	0.18

Findings on the third research question generally revealed that majority of the teacher did not have the required clinical supervisory experiences with their RPIs during their post-observation

conferences and that led to a low effect on the quality of their instructions showcased by low students' participation in their classes and low or mediocre tests scores after their supervision.

### Findings based on the third research hypothesis

The data collected from the items 19 to 21 of the teachers' questionnaire were analyzed to prove the veracity of this hypothesis. The results of the analysis were summarized in table 6.

**Table 6: Contingency table of students' responses based on the third research objective**

SN	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	Total	Df	$\chi^2_{cal}$	$\chi^2_{crit}$
		F <sub>O</sub> F <sub>E</sub>	F <sub>O</sub> F <sub>E</sub>	F <sub>O</sub> F <sub>E</sub>	F <sub>O</sub> F <sub>E</sub>				
19	The quality of my teaching is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during post-observation meetings.	12 14.0	18 26.3	69 66.7	101 93.0	200			
20	Students' participation during my lessons is always improved after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the post-observation meetings.	22 14.0	27 26.3	60 66.7	91 93.0	200	6		
21	Students' test scores always increase after the visit of RPIs due to my experiences with them during the post-observation meetings.	8 14.0	34 26.3	71 66.7	87 93.0	200	6		
MRS for the relationship between variables (items 19-21)		42	79	200	279	600	6	<b>16.40</b>	<b>2.41</b>

**Decision:** Since the  $\chi^2$  calculated value (of 16.40) is greater than the  $\chi^2$  critical value (of 2.41), the null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

**Inference:** At an alpha level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom of 6, Teachers' experiences during post-observation conferences with RPIs significantly affected their teaching quality in Wouri division of the Littoral Region of Cameroon. The effect was very a negative one since most teachers disagreed of having the required supervisory experiences with their RPIs, which left very little to be admired on the quality of instruction.

**Conclusion:** This study concluded that the RPIs who are clinical supervisors based at the regional delegation of secondary education in Cameroon visit secondary schools in the region and clinically supervise the various teachers teaching their subjects. Teachers have varied supervisory experiences with these RPIs at the various stages of clinical supervision which yielded diverse effects on their quality of instruction. Majority of teachers did not have the required supervisory experiences during the pre-observation and post-observation conferences which led to low teachers' instructional quality indicated by poor participation of students during lessons and low test scores. Most teachers however had a positive supervisory experience during their classroom observation which led to improvement in the quality of their instruction, showcased by high class participation and improved test scores of students.

**Recommendations:** 1. More experienced teachers should be appointed as RPIs in order to increase the coverage of clinically supervising teachers in the regions by rigorously following the three main stages of clinical supervision in order to improve upon teachers' instruction.

2. RPIs should be drilled with the techniques of clinical supervision at all the stages so that they can effectively follow all the stages and improve on teachers' instructional practices.

3. Heads of departments for different subjects should be empowered by the school principals to carry out regular clinical supervision of teachers within their departments to increase output since the visits of RPIs are not frequent.

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