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## **Exploring Administrators' Use of Instructional Advisory Approaches in Enhancing Implementation of Structured Play Activities in Tanzanian Government Pre-primary Schools in Longido and Monduli Districts**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study examines the extent to which school administrators use instructional supervisory approaches in enhancing implementation of structured play activities in government pre-primary schools in Longido and Monduli Districts, in Arusha Region in Tanzania. The study was guided by Clinical Supervision Model developed by Goldhammar (1969,1993). Convergent research design was used because it allowed the researcher to collect quantitative and qualitative data so as to understand the problem in detail and triangulate the collected information. The sample consisted of 268 participants who were obtained through stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and lesson observation. These tools were validated using triangulation and experts in the fields of research, administration and early childhood education. Reliability was ensured using Cronbach alpha and triangulation techniques. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate the school administrators' supervisory role on the implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary classes to be very low. Findings also show that school administrators used several approaches in supervising teaching and learning in pre-primary classes. These includes checking pre-primary teachers' schemes of work and lesson plans, classroom observation, monitoring of pre-primary pupils' progress and checking pre-primary pupils' works. However, the approaches were moderately used by the school administrators. Structured play activities were also sparingly used. The study recommends that school administrators have to use instructional supervisory approaches to enhance application of the implementation of structured play activities in teaching and learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** school administrators, instructional leadership, instructional supervisor approaches, structured play activities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Instructional supervision is a process of overseeing, equipping, and empowering subject teachers for effective teaching and learning in schools (Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019; Glickman, Gordan, & Ross-Gordan, 2014). It involves guiding and mentoring teachers with the aim of improving their delivery of classroom instruction to improve effective learning (Vencia, Michael, Peter & Onesmo, 2018). It provides the necessary direction, motivation, leadership, counseling, cooperation and guidance to all concerned people, although instructional supervision is one of the responsibilities of school administrators, this important work requires facilitation and collaborative strategic planning that involves all stakeholders, including parents, school board members, teachers, administrative staff and support staff (Mehta, 2022). School administrators are the individuals who oversee administrative tasks in schools, colleges or other educational institutions (Mugenyi, 2013). In view of Mabagala and Shukia (2019), instructional supervision aims at making teachers more effective in promoting pupils' learning. Instructional supervision also provides and develops a favourable environment for teaching and learning which eventually improve pupils' performance as well as institutional academic standards (Mghasse, 2016). Instructional supervision at school level demands a greater interaction between the supervisors and the supervisee where numerous aspects need to be aligned in articulating the focus, purpose and implementation of the component.

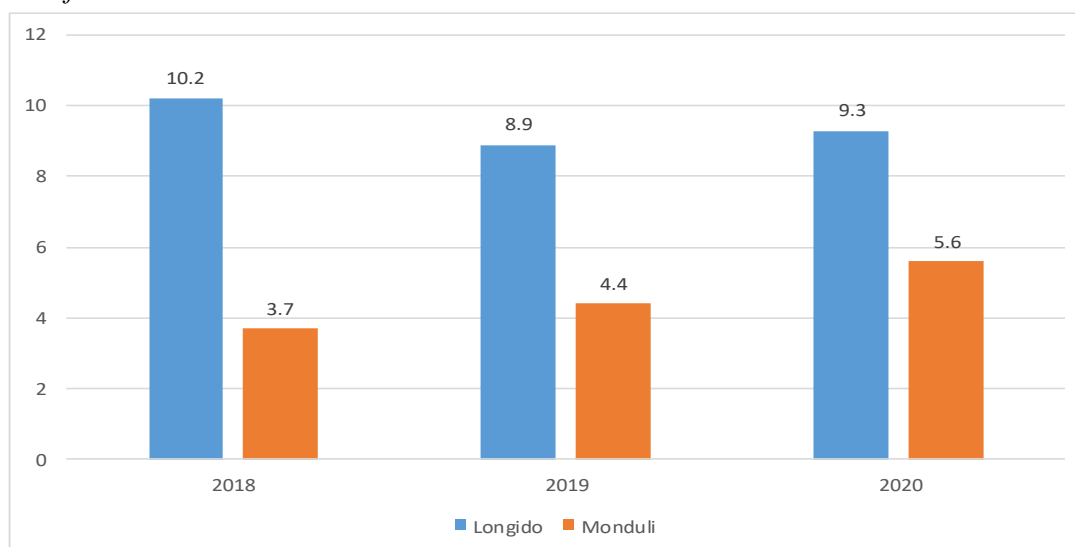
School administrators have legitimate power to influence effective teaching and learning at pre-primary, primary, and secondary education levels. This is clear in the national education policy which guides the process and procedures for supervising primary education for the purpose of improving the quality of education (TIE, 2016;2019). Based on the policy directives, the school administrators, who are the head teachers, academic teachers, and heads of departments are responsible for supervising activities to ensure effective teaching and learning processes in their respective schools (MoEVT, 2014; ADEM, 2021). Similarly, the 2014 Education and Training Policy recognises school administrators as internal instructional supervisors with the core function to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented according to the stipulated guidelines and procedures. Some of their supervisory functions include checking the preparation of lesson documents and conducting classroom observation (MoEVT, 2014; ADEM, 2021).

Implementation of 2014 Education and Training Policy declared compulsory pre-primary education in all public schools and mandated each public primary school to establish pre-primary classes (MoEVT, 2014). The policy also emphasizes application of structured play activities to enable pupils to interact with the materials and simplify the process of developing the reading, writing and arithmetic skills (Mabagala & Shukia, 2019; Bakuza, 2019). The school administrators were also assigned additional responsibilities to ensure effective implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary classes. For instance, section 3.2.2 of the policy states that "Supervisory and administrative organs of education and training have a working relationship at all levels of education and training". The policy

also calls for school administrators to conduct assessment of the implementation of curricula at all levels to improve effectiveness in education provision (MoEVT, 2014).

Though the policy has stipulated instructional supervisory roles for school administrators, it is still unknown whether education administrators in the Tanzanian context know their roles and perform them for the purpose of enhancing implementation of structured play activities as recommended by the pre-primary curriculum since there is limited literature on this aspect. There is a growing concern about the implementation of structured play activities in public pre-primary schools. This is because of a steady increase in the number of Standard One (STD I) repeaters at the national level from 68,571 in 2018 to 75,945 in 2021. The major reason for repeating was lack of essential reading, writing and arithmetic (3Rs) skills despite attending pre-primary education which is a foundation for these skills (MoEVT, 2014; URT, 2018; 2019; 2020 and 2021). The same situation was observed in Longido and Monduli districts between 2018 and 2020, as illustrated in Figure 1.

*Figure 1: Percentage of Standard One Repeaters among Pupils in Longido and Monduli Districts from 2018 to 2020*



**Source:** URT (2018; 2019; 2020).

Considering the alarming rate of repeaters portrayed in Figure 1, it was worthwhile to raise questions whether pre-primary classes are taught to master the 3Rs or not. The poor performance suggested by these statistics also raise concerns on the effectiveness of school administration regarding their instruction supervisory approaches to pre-primary teachers to the implementation of structured play activities intended to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. It is from this background, that the current study was conducted to assess the extent to which school administrators use instructional supervisory approaches in enhancing implementation of structured play activities in government pre-primary schools in Longido and Monduli Districts.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There has been an increase in the number of pupils repeating STD I in public primary schools in Tanzania which has raised a concern among education stakeholders. Repetition occurs when an STD I pupil fails to join STD II because they are unable to read, write or perform simple arithmetic after failing to pass the 3Rs. In the year 2020, more than 9% of the pupils repeated STD I in Longido and Monduli districts due to lack of skills on the 3Rs as required by the Education and Training Policy of 2014.

To enhance development of the 3Rs, the pre-primary curriculum emphasizes application of structured play activities, which involves teaching by doing. According to competence-based curriculum for pre-primary education, the school administrators are responsible for ensuring effective implementation of structured play activities. The school administrators are expected to exercise instructional leadership approaches in order to enforce effective teaching and learning through structured play activities.

Studies that assessed implementation of structured play activities revealed a number of factors attributable to dismal performance in the pre-primary level. The factors included lack of professional pre-primary teachers, poor infrastructures and inadequate of teaching and learning materials. However, there was limited literature on to what extent do school administrators' use instructional supervisory approaches to enhance the implementation of structured play activities with a view to enhance the development of 3Rs among pre-primary pupils. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent to which school administrators use instructional supervisory approaches in enhancing the implementation of structured play activities in government pre-primary schools in Longido and Monduli Districts, Tanzania.

### **Research Question**

To what extent do school administrators use instructional supervisory approaches in enhancing the implementation of structured play activities in government pre-primary schools in Longido and Monduli districts?

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

One of the popular models of Clinical Supervision was developed by Goldhammar (1969, 1993). This model upholds that supervision is a process of improving instructional process. The model has five cyclic stages that school administrators as supervisors have to follow during the supervision process. These include: *pre-observation conference*, *observation, analysis and strategy*, *post-observation conference (supervision conference)*, and *post-conference analysis*. Under the *pre-observation conference*, school administrators are required to meet the pre-primary teachers whom they wish to supervise and then agree on matters that will be the focus of supervision. For the case of implementing structured play activities, the school administrators and teachers need to agree on the aspects of structured play activities to be observed. This enables teachers to be prepared and overcome anxiety that could happen if the administrators just enter into the classroom without prior information.

Pre-observation also creates a good relationship between subject teachers and the school administrators who conduct supervisory activities.

In the *observational stage*, school administrators are expected to visit the classrooms to observe the areas agreed upon during the pre-observation conference. All the events occurring during this stage need to be recorded while paying attention to the significant aspects of the teaching and learning process. Effective observation requires school administrators to possess classroom observation skills which will enable them to accurately observe and record the events occurring without interfering with the lesson activities. Since structured play activities are conducted in and outside the classroom, the observation also needs to be extended even to those activities conducted outside the classrooms.

During the *analysis stage*, the school administrator makes sense of the observational data and renders them in a manageable format for the teacher. The strategy time is used to plan the goals and direction for the supervision conference including data points to discuss and dividing up responsibilities for future action.

During the *post-observation conference*, the school administrators are required to meet the observed teacher and discuss the feedback from the observed lesson. When giving feedback, the school administrators have to begin with the teachers' strengths demonstrated and then gradually move on to areas that need improvements (the P-Q-P feedback approach). The approach requires an observer to praise for whatever works that has been done; question where some aspects are not clear, and polish the aspects to make them more sensible and useful or relevant. Corrective strategies have to be discussed for the purpose of improvement. This also requires the school administrators to have feedback giving skills so that their feedback may be constructive to help teachers put them into consideration application.

In the *post-conference analysis* stage, school administrators have to make regular follow ups to check the extent to which the teachers are accommodating the suggested comments. If the administrators find that teachers are still not implementing the structured play activities as agreed during the post-observation conference; systematic diagnosis has to be conducted to determine the factors contributing to this and try to solve the problem. If teachers do not show any change despite the efforts made by the administrators, they can be reported to higher authorities for further remedy.

This model shows the process that school administrators should follow when conducting instructional supervision. This is an advantage in the current study since it enabled the researcher to find out whether school administrators were abiding to the steps needed for effective supervision. However, the model may not provide realistic outcomes especially when it creates a loophole for artificiality and pretence. The fact that the teacher knew that she or he will be observed can lead to behaving in an unnatural way. Stated otherwise, when teachers are informed about the supervision process, they may make preparations just to impress the school administrators and turn back to their ordinary ways of teaching after the supervision meetings. Despite this weakness, the model enabled the researcher to find different approaches used by school administrators when conducting instructional supervision



to enhance the implementation of structured play activities in their respective schools. The model also helped the researcher to examine the extent to which different instructional supervisory approaches were being used by the school administrators.

Other approaches to instructional supervision were developed later after Goldhammar's model and includes competency-based, systems approach, developmental approach, and process approach (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Falender, & Shafranske, 2017; Holloway, 2016). The competency-based approach emphasizes that an effective supervision rests on the pillars of competence which can be learned from the professional practice to promote the supervisee's clinical competence through the integration and application of specific knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values (Falender, & Shafranske, 2017, 2007; 2004). According to these authors, effective competence is out of four values: integrity in relationship, ethical values-based practice, appreciation of diversity, and science-informed practice. This approach to supervision recognizes the personal strengths supervisees bring to their education and clinical training.

On the other hand, the central focus of the systems' approach to supervision is the *relationship* between the supervisor and the supervisee (Holloway, 2016; Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). According to Holloway, such relationship needs to be collaborative and empowering to both the supervisor and supervisee. The proponents of this approach proposed six dimensions that may develop this relationship which are: the client, the supervisee, the supervisor, the institution or organization, the functions of supervision, and the learning tasks of supervision (Holloway, 2016). The function and the tasks are the primary dimensions for the supervisory process while the other four dimensions represent the context that will have indirect, but important influences in the supervisory process. Moreover, the model has five systemic influences and relationships to be considered which include the supervisory relationship (including phase, contract and structure); the characteristics of the supervisor; the characteristics of the institution in which supervision occurs; the characteristics of the client, and the characteristics of the supervisee (aptitudes, personal strengths, etc.).

Moreover, developmental approach to supervision states that supervision is a developmental process that passes through a number of stages. Each stage contributes to supervisee's development of (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Glickman, Gordan, & Ross-Gordan, 2014; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 2009; Stucky, Shane, & Heffelfinger, 2022). The developmental model has three levels of supervisees: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Within each level the authors note a trend. The beginner supervisee would tend to function in a rigid, shallow, imitative way and then over time one move toward more competence, self-assurance, and self-reliance. Areas of focus in observation of development include the supervisee's development in self-and-other awareness, motivation, and autonomy. For example, a beginner psychotherapist who was beginning supervision for the first time would tend to be relatively dependent on the supervisor for client diagnoses and in establishing plans for therapy. Intermediate supervisees would tend to have dependence on their supervisors to only the more difficult clients. Resistance, avoidance, and/or conflict are typical of the intermediate stage of supervisee development, because self-concept is easily

threatened. Advanced supervisees function far more independently, seeking consultation when appropriate, and take responsibility for their correct and incorrect decisions.

Process approach to supervision focuses on the supervision process itself (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). The most commonly used and researched integrative models of supervision is the Discrimination Model. This model comprised of three separate foci for supervision (i.e., intervention, conceptualization, and personalization) and three possible supervisor's roles (i.e., teacher, counsellor, and consultant) (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Brock (2018) examined the efficacy of coaching pre-school teachers to manage challenging behaviour in Virginia using an experimental research design. Two pre-school teachers received coaching focused on implementation of three evidence-based strategies referencing a visual representation of expectations, systematic monitoring and positive reinforcement, and self-management. The findings showed remarkable improvement that coincided with implementation of the three evidence-based strategies. Though Brock (2018) identified coaching as one of the approaches used by school administrators to supervise instruction in pre-primary schools, the validity of the conclusion remained questionable because the study used an experimental design while only two teachers were assessed. Moreover, the application of experimental design requires a large and randomly selected sample so as to minimize the effects of extraneous variables (Okendo *et al*, 2020). To enhance validity of the conclusions, the current study used a large sample and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The application of mixed methods approach enabled the researcher to use the strengths of one form of data collection to supplement the weaknesses of the other form.

Moreover, Öqvist and Cervantes (2018) investigated how the heads of pre-school govern teaching practice in Sweden using a survey design. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection from head teachers. The results showed an absence of governance and management among the heads of pre-schools. The study concluded that head teachers did not effectively perform their instructional supervisory roles as there was no specific approach that was used by head teachers. However, the use of questionnaire as the only tool for data collection limited triangulation of findings hence compromising validity of findings. This is because some information such as emotions, behaviours attitudes and feelings cannot be measured through questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, the current study used interview guide, observation and documentary review for data collection to triangulate the data and improve validity of the findings.

In the African context, Samkange (2016) examined the roles of school heads on management and administration of early childhood development (henceforth, ECD) centres in Chegetu District in Zimbabwe. Six ECD centres and primary schools were purposively selected to make a case study. The findings revealed that most of the supervisory activities were left to teachers and Teachers' In-service Commissioner. Head teachers concentrated on other managerial activities and left instructional supervision although it was one of their key

responsibilities. Though the study by Samkange (2016) revealed instructional supervision approaches, these findings may not be generalized to other places since it was a case study which dealt with a single entity only. As suggested by Cohen (2018), case studies are not primarily focusing on generalisation but they alert researchers on the possibility of having similar findings in other situations. Therefore, there was a need for the current study to be conducted to find out similarity between Zimbabwe and Tanzanian contexts.

In Tanzania, Nyambo (2017) assessed the role of primary school head teachers as internal instructional supervisors on enhancing pupils' academic performance in Singida. The study used mixed methods to examine the extent to which instructional supervision practices were conducted by head teachers and their impact on pre-primary pupils' academic performance. It was found out that head teachers were not conducting instructional supervision properly. In other words, classroom observation, provision of feedback to teachers after classroom observation, checking of pupils' works and monitoring of pupils' progress reports were not conducted by head teachers in most of the visited primary schools. Though the study sample included most of the school administrators, findings were limited only to the head teacher and left out the supervisory roles of other school administrators. Therefore, there was a need for a study to be undertaken to determine different approaches used by all school administrators to supervise instructions specifically the implementation of structured play activities.

Another study in Tanzania was conducted by Zadock (2023) to examine the teachers' perceptions on instructional supervision activities towards improving pre-primary teachers' teaching skills. Data were collected from 16 respondents using face-to-face semi-structured interview and documentary review. Findings showed that head teachers were not effective in performing instructional supervision activities. The main reason was lack of skills to conduct such instructional supervision for pre-primary education. The study by Zadock (2023) has shown that head teachers do not have the required skills to perform instructional supervision and activities. Lack of such skills also suggests that the head teachers may not have the knowledge on different approaches of conducting instructional supervision. Although the study has shown that head teachers are less skilled on instructional supervision, it leaves a gap on whether other school administrators have such skills or not. According to the Collegial Model of leadership developed by Bush (2020), instructional supervision is a shared responsibility and should not be left to the head teachers alone. This means that other administrators including the academic teachers and the Internal School Quality Assurance Team (ISQAT) members need also to be skilled for them to actively participate in instructional supervisory activities. Thus, there was a need for this study to be conducted to assess the extent of school administrators' instructional supervisory approaches on the implementation of structured play activities whereby all the three categories were included.

The reviewed studies under this section have shown that coaching is one of the approaches used by school administrators to supervise instruction (Brock, 2018). Literature has also shown that heads of schools are not very effective in conducting instructional supervision to ensure that structured play activities are well implemented in the pre-primary classes (Öqvist and Cervantes, 2018; Nyambo, 2017; Samkange, 2016; Zadock, 2022). Despite the fact that heads of schools do not effectively perform most of their supervisory roles; the literature



reviewed has shown positive impact of supervision on the implementation of ECE curriculum. However, in the reviewed studies, only a single supervisory approach (coaching) was identified. The findings solely focused on head teachers' roles and neglected other school administrators. Therefore, there was a need for another study to explore other approaches used by school administrators by involving all the categories of school administrators, focusing specifically on the implementation of structured play activities as the recommended teaching method in the pre-primary curriculum implementation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used the mixed methods approach which allowed the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. Convergent design was employed which involved collection of qualitative and quantitative data concurrently during the same phase of the research process. This design was used since it allowed triangulation of the collected information to enable drawing of meaningful and more valid conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018;2023). The target population for the current study consisted of 104 head teachers, 104 academic teachers, 416 ISQAT members and 193 subject teachers from public pre-primary schools in Longido and Monduli districts (URT, 2020).

From this population, stratified, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample of 268 respondents using Yamane formula ( $n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$ ) for sample size determination and the margin of error of 0.05 (Mweshi, 2020). The use of stratified sampling enabled the researcher to select schools from rural and urban areas of the two districts. Simple random sampling was used in order to minimize bias in the process of selecting the sample. Each school had an equal chance of being selected from each category. Criterion purposive sampling technique was used to select participants based on their position and administrative roles. The study sample consisted of 34 heads of schools, 34 academic teachers, 136 ISQAT members and 64 pre-primary teachers.

The instruments used in data collection included questionnaires, interview guides, document analysis guides, and lesson observation guides. The questionnaires containing both open and close-ended questions were distributed to pre-primary teachers, academic teachers and the ISQAT members by the researcher herself. Respondents were given enough time to read and write their responses by either ticking the response of their best choice or writing what they considered to be relevant in the spaces provided. The filled in questionnaires were then collected on the same day for analysis.

Head teachers were interviewed face-to-face in their offices. Each interview session took a maximum of 40 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Kiswahili language in order to provide more freedom to participants to express their views, opinions, and experiences. Clarification on the questions that were not clearly understood was made by the researcher. Smart phone or notebooks were used to record the conversations.

Lesson observation guide helped the researcher to collect data on the teaching and learning process in and outside the classroom. Lesson observation guides were used to collect the data

on the application of structured play activities in during the lesson and the availability of teaching and learning resources to facilitate the implementation of such plays. Teachers' interaction with structured play activities during their lessons, presence of learning corners, play grounds, and play materials were observed.

The documents collected and analyzed were teachers' lesson plans, schemes of work, lesson notes and time tables so as to explore implementation of structured play activities. Analysis of lesson plans, schemes of work, and lesson notes focused on the extent to which these documents reflected the use of structured play activities. That is, the extent to which teachers considered the application of structured play activities as their major methods of teaching pre-primary pupils. In the time tables, analysis focused on whether adequate time was allocated for pupils to be engaged in structured play activities.

The tools were prepared by the researcher and validated by three experts in educational research, school administration, and early childhood education. The experts provided suggestions for improvement which were incorporated in the final version of the instruments. The tools were then piloted in four pre-primary schools, two from Longido and two from Monduli. The pilot test aimed to ascertain whether the tools could adequately yield the data anticipated and improve their clarity and reduce ambiguity to the targeted respondents. Data from the pilot study were analysed in accordance with the research questions. Most of the items in the instruments were well answered indicating that they were understood by the respondents in the anticipated manner. However, a few necessary adjustments were made. Thereafter, the data collection exercise proceeded after obtaining permission from relevant authorities and consent form from the respondents.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics where by SPSS computer software version 26 was used. Descriptive statistics were used to compute means, frequencies and percentages. Since the calculated values for data from the Likert scales were in two decimal places, the interpretation was based on the scale suggested by Pimentel (2019). In this scale, 1.00 –1.79 represented “never”; 1.80–2.59 represented “rare”; 2.60 – 3.39 represents “sometimes”; 3.49 – 4.19 represents “often”, and 4.20 – 5. 00 represent “always”. The researcher retained the standards but synonyms to the scales were used whereby; very high extent stood for always; high extent stood for often; moderate extent stood for sometimes; low extent stood for rare and very low extent stood for never. The mean scores for each category of respondents together with the grand mean scores across all the items were calculated.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. Coding and themes development was done using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Model. The themes that emerged from the data were identified basing on the research question. Tables were used to summarize quantitative data while qualitative data were supported by verbatim quotations. The researcher adhered to the ethical principles in all the stages of the research process.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The extent school administrators use instructional supervisory approaches

Data analysis examined the extent of school administrators in supervising the implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary classrooms. Data were mainly collected using questionnaires that were filled in by ISQAT members, academic teachers, pre-primary teachers, and head teachers. The questionnaire contained items with five-point rating scale with ten supervision approaches requiring the respondents to rate the extent to which each of the approaches was being applied by school administrators to enhance teachers facilitate the implementation of structured play activities. The rating scale ranged from “very low extent” to “very high extent” (five points). The responses from all the three categories of respondents were then quantified to generate the mean scores. The findings are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Academic Teachers, Pre-primary Teachers and ISQAT Responses on the Performance of Instructional Supervision Approaches (n = 205)*

Instructional Supervision Approaches		X <sub>1</sub>	X <sub>2</sub>	X <sub>3</sub>	Grand Mean
i.	Checking pre-primary teachers' lesson plans and schemes of work	3.85	3.82	3.64	3.77
ii.	Classroom observation	3.61	3.65	3.51	3.59
iii.	Frequent classroom visits	3.34	3.26	3.15	3.25
iv.	Checking pre-primary pupils' works	3.18	2.85	3.06	3.03
v.	Supervision of teaching and learning process	2.75	2.79	3.55	3.03
vi.	Motivating pre-primary teachers who use structured play activities in their lessons	2.65	2.82	1.62	2.36
vii.	Ensuring effective communication between pre-primary teachers and parents	1.90	1.65	2.72	2.09
viii.	Training pre-primary teachers on the use of structured play activities	2.14	1.94	1.55	1.88
ix.	Advising teachers on the use of structured play activities	2.11	1.68	1.60	1.80
x.	Delegation of duties	1.70	1.47	1.68	1.62
<b>Average mean score</b>		<b>2.72</b>	<b>2.59</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>2.64</b>

**Source:** Field data, (2022)

**Key:** X<sub>1</sub> = Mean Score for Internal School Quality Assurance Team Members; X<sub>2</sub> = Mean Score for Academic Teachers; X<sub>3</sub> = Mean Score for Pre-Primary Teachers.

Data in Table 1 show that the grand mean score for all the ten statements were 2.64, which falls within the moderate zone. This means that, in general, most of the supervisory approaches were used moderately during the implementation of structured play activities in

the surveyed schools. This implies that school administrators to a moderate extent used instructional supervisory approaches to ensure the implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary schools. Out of the ten items, respondents indicated only two instructional approaches were used by school administrators at high extent level. These are checking lesson plans and schemes of work and conducting classroom observation which had the mean scores of 3.77 and 3.59 respectively.

### **Classroom observation**

As shown by the data in Table 1, the first approach used by school administrators to supervise instruction so as to enhance implementation of structured play activities was classroom observation which had a grand mean score of 3.59. This falls within the range of *high extent*. This shows that school administrators in pre-primary schools in Monduli and Longido Districts do conduct classroom observations to determine the level at which structured play activities are implemented. These findings imply that school administrators conform to the responsibility of school administrators stipulated in the curriculum in which they are required to ensure structured play activities are implemented (URT, 2016). Quantitative findings above were also triangulated against interview data from head teachers. With regard to classroom observation, the head teachers said that they had tendencies of moving around classrooms to see whether the teachers were teaching as required by the pre-primary syllabus. For instance, one of them said:

I like to visit the pre-primary class a lot; I know that this class should have the best learning environment so as to attract the pupils to like school. We also conduct evaluations on monthly basis to see what is missing and when capitation is not enough. We request the village council to help us (*Head Teacher 4, Personal Communication, 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*).

Responses from this school administrator imply that classroom observation was considered an important role for ensuring effective implementation of structured play activities. Classroom observation done by the school administrators enable them to determine whether teachers use structured play activities as recommended by the curriculum or not. By observing the teaching and learning process, the head teachers can see discrepancies within the learning environment and suggest how they can be resolved.

School administrators who make use of observation method are in a good position to enhance the application of structured play activities in the pre-primary classes. It is important for the head teachers to collaborate with academic teachers as well as members of quality assurance team so as to ensure that structured play activities are well implemented. Through implementing structured play activities, pupils become motivated in the learning process and their school attendance is likely to be improved. This is proved by one respondent who said:

I make observations first and then find the time to eyewitness. I can't just leave things go anyway. I enter in the classroom particularly because I know they are small children. The children also become so interested when they see me. (*Head Teacher 19, Personal Communication, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2022*).

This response from the head teacher generally suggests that classroom observation is an important instructional supervision activity that can be done by the school administrators to enhance the implementation of structured play activities by teachers in government pre-primary schools. However, the study found out that head teachers did not dedicate enough time in performing this activity. This was supported by a respondent who said: “You cannot go to the classroom every day to witness how the teacher teaches. But we do it after every couple of weeks or so” (*Head Teacher 29, Personal Communication, 31<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*). Another head teacher also added that “Sometimes if I get chance, I go to the classroom and see how they are learning” (*Head Teacher 33, Personal Communication, 04<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*). These responses signify that despite the fact that classroom observation is an important activity that can help ensuring the implementation of structured play activities; some head teachers and other school administrators do not make much use of the technique. Similar findings were observed in Zimbabwe by Samkange (2016) who found out that head teachers did not put much efforts in supervising the implementation of structured play activities. Lack of classroom observation skills may be one of the factors for this low level of using the strategy.

### **Checking teachers’ instructional documents**

As data in Table 1 show, the second approach used by school administrators to supervise instruction so as to enhance the implementation of structured play activities was checking teachers’ instructional documents which had a grand mean score of 3.77. This falls within the range of *high extent*. Interview data also supported these findings. Head teachers showed the importance of making follow up to ensure that teachers prepared lesson plans, schemes of work and lesson notes which in totality reflect application of structured play activities, as substantiated by the quotation:

It is very important to make a follow up on the teacher's work plan. They have long and short-term work plans. In short-term work plans, there is lesson preparation, but there is also attendance in the classroom and assignments given in the classroom. Being the Head teacher, I have to follow up and see what has been done (*Head Teacher 15, Personal Communication, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*).

The response from the head teacher confirms that there was a tendency of checking the implementation of what the teachers had indicated in the lesson plans, schemes of work and lesson notes. However, these head teachers only ended up assessing whether the teachers prepared the documents or not while little attention was paid on whether the prepared documents included application of structured play activities. This was further clarified by a respondent who remarked:

Sometimes it is cumbersome to establish if a teacher is teaching or not. Some teachers get well prepared to teach, but others teach very well even without making any preparation. Being the Head teacher, I have to ensure that teachers make preparations and implement them (*Head Teacher 19, Personal Communication, 21<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*).



The quote implies that the head teachers were serious in matters of preparing lesson plans and schemes of work. They collaborated with academic teachers to ensure that each teacher prepares these documents. However, there was little or no attention paid by the school administrators to ensure that the prepared documents integrated structured play activities. This is because majority of teachers prepared, lesson plans and schemes of work to be submitted to the office but they did not include the structured play activities in those documents. By using document analysis guide, further analysis of the lesson plans, schemes of work, lesson notes, and school timetables for pre-primary classes was made to triangulate findings using questionnaires and interview guides. Findings are as presented in Table 2

**Table 2:** *Document Analysis Results on the Preparation of Schemes of Work, Lesson Plans, and Timetable for Pre-primary Pupils*

Document Analysed	Number of Schools	Findings
Scheme of work	31	Schemes of work were available but did not include structured play activities.
	3	No schemes of work were prepared.
Lesson plan	28	Lesson plans were available but did not have structured play activities.
	6	No lesson plans were found.
Timetable	24	Time tables were prepared and indicated specific time for structured play activities.
	7	Time tables were prepared but did not indicate specific time for structured play activities.
	3	No time tables were prepared.
Lesson notes	34	Lesson notes were prepared but did not include structured play activities.

**Source:** Field data, (2022)

In Table 2, data show that in 31 out of 34 schools, teachers prepared schemes of work but did not include structured play activities in those schemes of works. This means that most pre-primary teachers in Longido and Monduli districts were aware of the significance of schemes of work in teaching and learning for this level of education that is why they prepared them, but they did not know the importance of including structured play activities. This in turn implies that pre-primary teachers and school administrators in most of the schools were serious with preparation of schemes of work but less concerned with inclusion of structured play activities because none of the analysed schemes of work included structured play activities. Given that the prepared schemes of work did not have such activities, the implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary schools was inadequate since it was somehow difficult for a teacher to implement what they had not planned to do.

For the case of lesson plans, 28 of out the 34 teachers in the visited schools had prepared lesson plans for specific lesson and also there were lesson plans for previous lessons while 6 teachers had no lesson plans for the day or previous days. These findings mean that teachers in most of the visited schools knew the importance of lesson planning. This also implies that school administrators in most of the studied schools emphasized and ensured that their pre-primary teachers prepared lesson plans. Preparing lesson plans simplifies teachers' work, making them knowledgeable of what to teach, when, how, and with what resources. However, analysis of collected lesson plans indicated that none of them integrated structured play activities in those plans. This implies that school administrators failed to ensure that teachers prepared lessons which integrates structured play activities although they were sensitive to lesson plans preparation. In the worst-case scenario, there were school administrators in some schools who did not bother at all with preparation of lesson plans.

Moreover, data in Table 2 show that, pre-primary teachers in all 34 visited schools had lesson notes to facilitate the learning process. This is an indication that at least teachers took time to get prepared before going to class with lesson notes. This is a credit to the school administrators since they ensured that every teacher develops a habit of preparing the lesson notes to guide them during the teaching and learning process. However, none of the analysed lesson notes were found to include structured play activities. This suggests that school administrators in Longido and Monduli districts were more concerned about teachers' preparation of lesson notes but not the inclusion of structured play activities in those prepared lesson notes.

### **Pre-primary school timetable**

The other supervisory approach that was examined was the school timetable for pre-primary education. It was found that 24 out of 34 visited schools had timetables for pre-primary pupils and 3 lacked the timetable as indicated in Table 2. The implication is that most of the school administrators in Longido and Monduli districts ensured that timetables for pre-primary education were prepared. This also indicates that pre-primary education has been formalized in Longido and Monduli districts. Formalizing pre-primary education means that teachers delivered that pre-primary education systematically. Regarding whether the available timetables for pre-primary education included structured play activities, it was found out that 24 out of the 34 schools had their timetables with time indicated for structured play activities and 7 of the analysed timetables had no specific time allocated for structured play activities.

The specification of time for structured play activities shows that most of the school administrators in Longido and Monduli districts were aware with the role of structured play activities in pre-primary curriculum. Nonetheless, although the school administrators ensured the inclusion of structured play activities in the timetables, they did not bother whether the pre-primary teachers followed the timetables as indicated. This is because the analysed documents (including schemes of work, lesson plans and lesson notes) indicated little or no application of structured play activities. During the analysis of the mentioned documents, the researcher observed that most of the prepared documents were signed by head teachers and academic teachers. Lack of structured play activities in most of these documents suggested that either the school administrators were not aware on presence of structured play activities

in pre-primary curriculum or they did not take time to verify the documents before signing them.

### Pre-primary learning environments

By using Lesson observation guide, further observation was made on lessons and learning environments for pre-primary pupils in all the 34 visited schools. The observation centred on five areas which were application of structured play activities in the classrooms; presence of playing areas in the classrooms; presence of facilities in the learning corners; presence of facilities outside the classroom; and presence of play grounds. Findings are as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** *Results of Lesson Observation*

Aspect Observed	Number of Schools	Findings
Application of structured play activities in the lesson	30	The teacher did not apply structured play activities in the lesson
Playing areas in the classrooms	4	Structured play activities applied to a lesser extent
	34	The classrooms had no special areas for pupils to play
Facilities for learning corners	31	No facilities for learning corners
	2	Too limited facilities
	1	Traditional and modern facilities observed
Playing facilities outside the classroom	18	Few and traditional facilities observed
	15	No facilities for structured play activities outside the classroom
Playing grounds	1	Traditional and modern facilities
	27	Playing grounds are present but not specific for pre-primary pupils
	7	No playing grounds

**Source:** Field data, (2022)

Data in table 3 show that, in 30 out of the 34 observed lessons, teachers did not apply structured play activities aimed to enhance the development of reading, writing and arithmetic (3Rs) skills. Lack of structured play activities in the lesson plans and lesson notes might be some of the reasons that made teachers' failure to use structured play activities. This implies that although the school administrators responded that they observed classrooms, this did not enhance the implementation of structured play activities. In the remaining four lessons, the teacher applied structured play activities but with less connection to the development of the 3Rs. The findings suggest that these teachers lacked adequate knowledge on the application of structured play activities, or did not put much emphasis to apply what they learned about structured play activities.

The presence of playing areas within the classrooms was also investigated and the findings are as presented in Table 3. In all the 34 classrooms observed, none of them had pupils' play

spaces. Lack of playing spaces in the classroom reduced the possibilities for pupils 'engagement in structured play activities which constrained learning of the 3Rs. It was difficult for the structured play activities to be implemented. Most of the 34 observed classrooms had more than 100 pupils per class. It was impossible to have playing areas and because of that, implementation of structured play activities was low. Having classrooms without areas for pre-primary pupils to play suggests that school administrators in Longido and Monduli districts did not effectively play their role in relation to this aspect.

A class examination on the presence of facilities for learning corners indicated that 31 out of 34 observed classes had no such facilities; only two schools had too limited facilities; and only one school had both traditional and modern facilities. The implementation of structured play activities requires playing facilities where pupils can learn in different corners. According to the pre-primary teachers' guide of 2019, "In pre-primary class, there should be learning corners with various teaching and learning aids which the children can use during classroom learning or at their own time according to their interests" (TIE, 2019, p. 7). It is responsibility of the school administrators to ensure that the environment in which pre-primary pupils learn are supplied with a good number of facilities for the purpose of engaging the pupils in learning corners. However, school administrators in Longido and Monduli districts failed to ensure the availability of teaching and learning as well as playing facilities for pupils to be engaged in structured play activities outside or inside the class.

### **Motivating pre-primary teachers**

Data in Table 2 show, another useful approach for supervising instruction to enhance the implementation of structured play activities was motivating pre-primary teachers which had a grand mean score of 2.36. This falls within the range of *low extent*. This implies that school administrators do not highly motivate pre-primary teachers. These findings are in agreement with what was collected from the interviews as one of the informants said:

Regarding motivating teachers to use the method of games, I encourage them and one of my motivations is to go and play with them. For example, when I find the teachers are in those games, maybe recognizing numbers, or playing with the cards, I get in between them. They are always very happy to see me joining them. However, I do not do it all the time but rarely (Personal interview). (*Head Teacher 1, Personal Communication, 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2022*).

These responses show that head teachers as school administrators are aware that the implementation of structured play activities is a demanding task and that is their responsibility to encourage and motivate the pre-primary teachers. Though the head teachers were found to be aware of this role, not all of them had set encouragement and motivation schemes for pre-primary teachers. Thus, the responses from head teachers concerning motivation for the teachers and pupils in the teaching and learning through structured play activities are in agreement with what was indicated by other respondents in the questionnaires. Generally, the responses show that motivation by the school administration is not done always. Since the implementation of structured play activities is challenging and

demanding, the process of implementing such activities may be affected negatively if teachers are not motivated and encouraged.

### **Training of pre-primary teachers**

In Table 2 data show that, training pre-primary teachers is another approach for the supervision of instruction to enhance implementation of structured play activities which had a grand mean score of 1.88. This falls within the range of *low extent*. These findings imply that there were no training opportunities offered to pre-primary teachers in order to update their knowledge on the application of structured play activities which would lead them to improve on how to implement structured play activities effectively. Lack of training constrains teachers to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective implementation of structured play activities. Bawani *et al.* (2021) underscore that training of pre-primary teachers has a great impact on the implementation of curriculum. Likewise, Mabagala and Shukia (2019) observed that failure of the school administrators to identify training needs and recommend teachers for further training makes these teachers remain with limited knowledge and hence their efficiency in implementing structured play activities remains stagnated.

### **Ensuring effective communication between pre-primary teachers and parents**

As shown in Table 2, effective communication is another approach for supervision of instruction to enhance implementation of structured play activities which had a grand mean score of 2.09. This falls within the range of *low extent*. This means that school administrators do not ensure effective communication among the teachers, parents and other stakeholders needed for effective implementation of structured play activities. Moshel and Berkovich (2023) opine that ensuring effective cooperation between teachers and parents creates good learning environment in which structured play activities can effectively be implemented. It was also recommended by UNICEF (2017) that school administrators are required to facilitate good communication between the school and the community from which pre-primary pupils come.

### **Ensuring the availability of instructional material for structured play activities**

Data in Table 2 show another approach used by school administrators to supervise instruction so as to enhance the implementation of structured play activities was ensuring availability of instructional materials for structured play activities which had a grand mean score of 1.80. This falls within the range of *very low extent*. This shows that school administrators in pre-primary schools in Monduli and Longido Districts put very low emphasis in ensuring the availability of instructional materials for structured play. This means that the school administrators are not much bothered about the availability of instructional material for structured play activities in their respective schools. This may be due to a number of factors including lack of skills on pre-primary education and thus the school administrators are not aware of the required instructional material (Ndijuye, 2020). Since the school administrators are less concerned with the availability of such resources, there is a possibility for the schools



to lack such facilities and hence negatively affect the implementation of structured play activities in schools.

### **Delegation of duties**

As shown by data in Table 2, another approach used by school administrators to supervise instruction so as to enhance the implementation of structured play activities was delegation of duties which had a grand mean score of 1.62. This falls within the range of *very low extent*. This shows that school administrators in pre-primary schools in Monduli and Longido Districts practice delegation of duties to a lesser extent. This means that school administrators rarely delegate duties about improving the implementation of structured play activities in the pre-primary classrooms. When administrators do not delegate duties, they may be overwhelmed with a lot of activities to perform and hence reduce their efficiency. According to the closed system theory, each component of the system needs to perform its functions properly for the purpose of improving performance of the whole system (Mugenyi, 2013).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Deducing from the findings, the study concludes that school administrators moderately enhance the implementation of structured play activities in pre-primary curriculum which is within the framework of their legitimate authority. Most of the instructional supervisory approaches recommended by TIE and the pre-primary curriculum were not much emphasized by the school administrators when supervising the implementation of structure play activities by pre-primary teachers during teaching pre-primary pupils. Therefore, as per instructional supervision models, school administrators in the two districts constrained the development of competence in implementing structured play activities. They also constrained the development of good relationship and collaboration, and development in self-and-other awareness, motivation, and autonomy among pre-primary school teachers.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the school administrators should stress on mandatory implementation of structured play activities in public pre-primary schools to equip learners with the 3Rs skills. The study also recommends that school administrators in collaboration with the government should emphasize training more teachers in the field of pre-primary education, and provide regular in-service training to the existing teachers so that public pre-primary schools can have teachers who are well versed in pedagogy, knowledge and skills required in pre-primary education.

### **Recommendation for Further Studies**

Find out the impact school administrators supervision approach on the implementation of structured play activities as a teaching method

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