

Opinions of Physical Education Teachers and Pedagogical Supervisors on Pedagogical Supervision in Brazzaville-Congo

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Abstract

The quality of teaching/learning depends on good pedagogical supervision and the positive attitude of the teachers who engage in it. The study, which is cross-sectional and has a mixed approach, aims to analyze the opinions of physical education teachers and supervisors on scheduled or unscheduled pedagogical supervision. A total of 66 teachers and 5 supervisors participated in the study, working in six public high schools in the commune of Brazzaville. A questionnaire with ten items was used to collect the teachers' opinions. Interviews were conducted with the five pedagogical supervisors; for this, a semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct in-depth individual interviews. The results obtained highlighted the good appreciation of pedagogical supervision by physical education teachers. They recognized that it represents an opportunity for collaborative learning and adjustment of practices. However, their attitudes and behaviors towards unscheduled pedagogical supervision were negative, reflected by frustrations, resistance, and discontent. It is therefore appropriate to review the planning of pedagogical supervision sessions and recontextualize the approaches adopted in order to improve teachers' capacities and skills to teach.

Keywords

Educational Supervision, Attitudes, Behavior, Programming, Teachers, Physical Education

1. Introduction

The school curricula in middle and high school in the Congolese education system give the same importance to physical education and sports (PES) as to other teach-

ing disciplines. The official instructions of 1970 state that the learner must access, through the practice of a school form, physical and sports activities (PSA), associated according to a thoughtful approach to social practices and the values they convey. In didactics, the teaching/learning process covers, on the one hand, the transmission of the content of knowledge, its structuring and its organization by the teacher, and on the other hand, the appropriation of knowledge by the learner, the action of the teacher in the classroom through the pedagogical learning situations proposed to the learner (Bru et al., 2004).

Thus, the professional development of teaching staff should be promoted in all levels of education as Larose et al. (2000) point out. Monitoring, control and support of the teacher during his or her teaching should be carried out effectively.

It is in the interest of improving the quality of teaching/learning and promoting the professional development of teachers that pedagogical supervision is brought to the forefront (Bouchamma, 2016). Pedagogical supervision consists of observing the teacher's work, checking their teaching documents, supervising them, helping them and organizing an interview at the end of the lesson relating to the observations made (Desbiens et al., 2009).

Pedagogical supervision is a concept related to the orientation of pedagogical practice by a person who, in principle, is more experienced and informed (Taptue, 2023), strongly influenced by the posture and vision of the supervisor, trying to see what happened before the supervision process, with an intelligent, responsible, empathetic, peaceful and engaging attitude. That is, the supervisor enters the process to understand it from the outside. For this, the supervisor analyzes it from his point of view and sees it beyond, based on strategic reflection, in order to improve the learning and teaching process, and contribute to a better relationship between the teacher and the learners (Mintzberg, 1998; Desbiens et al., 2009).

A teacher's professionalism develops through regular contact with a mediator who stimulates their awareness and reflection (Altet, 2002). The main mediators according to Lévesque & Boisvert (2001) are the educational supervisors (the educational inspector and the educational advisor). While the importance of educational supervision is not questioned from a theoretical point of view, on the other hand, its direct and concrete influence on the practice of teachers is questioned because educational supervision carried out in the field is frequently perceived as threatening by physical education (PE) teachers or simply useless to promote their professional growth process (La Paro et al., 2018).

Among the many reasons given and which seem to be at the root of the failures of educational supervision include the negative perception of educational supervision among teachers, the difficult relationships between supervisors and supervisees (Kiebieche, 2017). The rejection of supervision when it concerns evaluation and when it is unexpected is also found. Indeed, teachers have a very poor perception of the interest of a process of reflective analysis, control and inspection of their practice. The negative perception of teachers with regard to educational supervision, the climate of mistrust and suspicion seem to be at the root of the great

malaise of educational supervision experienced by teachers (Collins & Ting, 2017). The impact is felt on their attitude and behavior often characterized by absence from class, the evocation of various unfounded reasons, etc. However, the feelings of PE teachers towards pedagogical supervision and in particular the impact it has on their attitude and behavior when it is carried out remains to this day a practically unexplored field in the Republic of Congo. To shed light on this problem, we started from a central question formulated as follows: What are the effects induced by scheduled or unscheduled pedagogical supervision on the behavior of PE teachers when it is carried out? To answer this question, we adopted the hypothesis that pedagogical supervision carried out in a scheduled or unscheduled manner can have resistance effects on the behavior of PE teachers. The aim of this study is to analyze the links between the implementation of scheduled or unscheduled pedagogical supervision on the behavior of PE teachers in Congo. Its interest is to allow the different PE partners to understand better and to realize the need for pedagogical supervision while promoting its smooth running.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Framework and Type of Study

The study, cross-sectional and mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative), was conducted in Brazzaville (Congo) in high schools (technical and general). Among the twenty high schools identified (14 general educations and 6 technical educations), due to a lack of financial resources, it was not possible to round up all the schools surveyed, so six schools (4 general and 2 technical) were selected by drawing lots by 1/3.

Sampling

In total, we counted in these schools 156 subjects: 138 PE teachers and 18 educational supervisors assigned by service note from the General Direction of Physical Education and School and University Sports for the monitoring, control and educational supervision of said teachers. The inclusion criteria for the study were: 1) for teachers, be a certified PE teacher or assistant PE teacher, teach in one of the selected high schools; 2) for supervisors, be an active and regular supervisor at the high school during the study period, agree to participate in the interview, have more than 5 years of professional experience at the time of the survey. The exclusion criteria for teachers were: be an assistant PE teacher and regular at the high school, be an inactive PE supervisor (perform administrator functions). At the end of this procedure, 103 subjects were selected (87 teachers and 16 supervisors). However, written consent was required to participate in the study. In addition, poorly completed questionnaires were discarded. Ultimately, the sample consisted of 71 subjects divided into 66 PE teachers (40 men and 26 women) and 5 educational supervisors (3 men and 2 women).

2.2. Data Collection Tools and Experimental Protocol

The study was conducted in the six selected public high schools from February 11

to April 23, 2022. It consisted of three phases. First, a pre-survey was conducted in the last week of February. It consisted of contacting separately the administrative authorities of the selected high schools and the teachers of the PE departments. The survey was extended to the educational supervisors responsible for the control, monitoring and orientation of teachers working in these establishments. These preliminary interviews made it possible to determine the scope of investigation and obtain the information necessary for drafting the questionnaire for teachers. Subsequently, the supervisors' interview guide was developed. The questionnaire was tested with six teachers for internal and external validation purposes (reliability, fidelity, homogeneity and clarity of questions) using Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients, $\alpha = 0.81$. Second, the survey was conducted with teachers. The questionnaire, which included ten questions (open and closed), made it possible to collect personal and professional information on the participants, as well as individual reflections on educational supervision (scheduled and unscheduled: years of practice in the profession, role played in the practice of the profession, professional representations of pedagogical supervision, motivations, feelings and expectations. Third, interviews with pedagogical supervisors took place the day after the questionnaire was administered to teachers. Participation in the interview was based on the availability of the respondents. The interview, lasting 30-45 minutes, was conducted using a dictaphone. A semi-structured interview guide, designed in French, was used to conduct the in-depth individual interviews. Questions from the interview guide were constructed based on reflexive, iterative and dialogic processes. Basic demographic data of the participants (age, gender) and the reasons why pedagogical supervision was scheduled were recorded. Sub-questions were developed, such as knowledge about pedagogical supervision, support provided to teachers, scheduling of supervision sessions, etc. These open-ended questions were used to guide the interview.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

For quantitative data, descriptive statistics indices were calculated. The comparison of the two (02) percentages used the test of Sokal & Rohlf (1995), the Student t test was used to compare two means. For qualitative data, to analyze the corpus we first conducted a content analysis. A first content analysis grid was constructed from three interviews in order to avoid long interview durations while focusing on precise information allowing us to delve deeper into the different themes studied thanks to our numerous reminders. Our analysis categories and subcategories were then enriched during our work of processing the verbatim of the different interviews, which allowed us to develop our final analysis grid. Subsequently, a classification of the data collected was carried out on several content analysis sheets corresponding to each theme and sub-theme. This step was followed by a cross-sectional analysis of the verbatim of all the dropouts surveyed corresponding to each theme and sub-theme. Quantitative data processing was carried out using SPSS software version 25.0. The statistical significance threshold was set at 5%.

3. Results

3.1. Teacher Data

Socio-Demographic Profile of Teachers

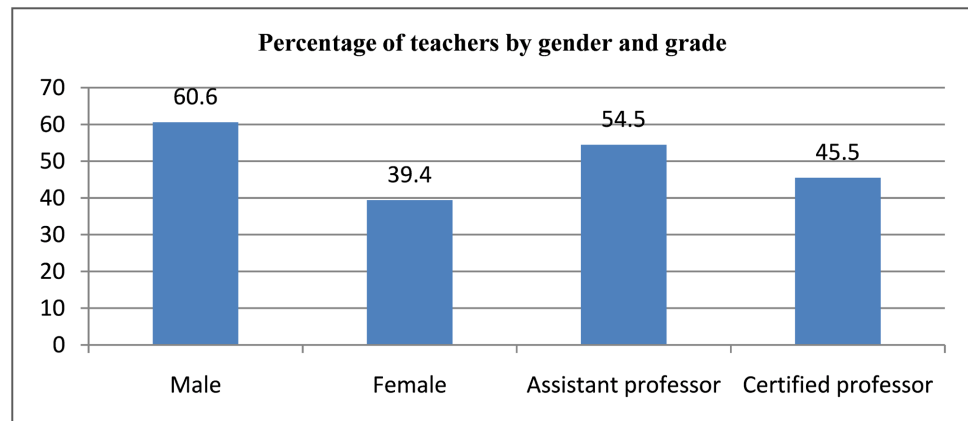


Figure 1. Reports on the percentages of teachers by gender and grade.

There were more males with a staff of 40, a rate of 60.6% compared to 26 females (39.4%). As for the rank, there were more assistant professors ($n = 36$; 54.5%) compared to 30 certified professors (45.5%) (**Figure 1**).

3.2. Teachers' Knowledge and Attitudes towards Supervision Scheduling

Table 1 shows teachers' opinions on the existence of notification of the pedagogical supervision session.

Table 1. Opinions on scheduled or unscheduled educational supervision.

Variables	Programming Notification	Lack of notification	Total	χ^2 ; p
Knowledge				
Yes	50	40	90	3.61; NS
No	16	26	42	
Attitudes				
Yes	52	38	90	3.29; NS
No	31	11	42	

The application of the Chi-2 test highlighted the absence of influence of the scheduling or not of the pedagogical supervision session on the knowledge and attitudes of the teachers.

3.3. Teachers' Views on Unscheduled Supervision

The scheduling of the unscheduled pedagogical supervision session induced frustration in 68.2% of the teachers, and it was found to be unimportant in 87.8% of them (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Subjects' opinions on the negative effects of unscheduled educational supervision.

	Effective (n)	Percentage (%)
Negative effects		
Frustration	45	68.2**
Absence of frustration	21	31.8
Assessment of unscheduled educational supervision		
Important	58	87.8***
Not important	8	12.2

** : very significant difference at $p < 0.01$; ***, highly significant difference at $p < 0.001$.

Teachers' opinions on the impact of the unscheduled educational supervision session on professional activity are recorded in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Teachers' opinions on the impact of unscheduled pedagogical supervision at the level of professional action.

	Effective (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	28.8
No	47	71.2**
Total	66	100

** : very significant difference at $p < 0.01$.

The scheduling of the unscheduled educational supervision session did not impact the professional act of 71.2% of teachers.

Teachers' opinions on the impact of unscheduled pedagogical supervision on their professional skills are contained in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Teachers' opinions on the impact of unscheduled pedagogical supervision on professional skills.

	Effective (n)	Percentage (n)
Yes	51	77.3**
No	15	22.7
Total	66	100

** : very significant difference at $p < 0.01$. No improvement in professional skills was reported by 77.3% of teachers.

3.4. Data from Interviews with Educational Supervisors

3.4.1. Opinions Choosing the Profession of Educational Supervisor

Interview 1: I chose educational supervision to help PE teachers improve the way they teach body movements to students.

Interview 2: It was for solving the problems that I faced myself when I was in the field as a teacher that I opted for educational supervision.

Interview 3: The choice of supervision comes to me from the fact that I want to

provide some solutions to the problems that undermine PE teaching such as the squabbles between supervisors and teachers.

Interview 4: I have never been inspected in my educational interventions, which is why I opted for educational supervision.

Interview 5: I would like to support and guide teachers in carrying out their profession on a daily basis...

3.4.2. Strategies Adopted for Changing the Image of Supervision towards Teachers

Interview 1: by making exchanges and relationships between the supervisor and teachers friendly.

Interview 2: by considering the teacher as a collaborator, avoiding being a policeman for him.

Interview 3: by avoiding unscheduled visits, which inevitably lead to stress, fear and contempt for educational supervision.

Interview 4: by making the teacher responsible, by involving him in the programming of the visits, by giving him more freedom of speech and by helping him improve his skills regarding with the PE teaching.

Interview 5: by giving the teacher the freedom to express himself freely on the choice of exercises proposed to the students.

3.4.3. Contributions from Supervisors to Teachers

Interview 1: the educational supervisor provides the teacher with professional skills that he lacks, the strategies, processes and essential means to improve and teach well.

Interview 2: the educational supervisor provides assistance, knowledge, know-how and know-how to the teacher.

Interview 3: solutions to the teacher's difficulties, amendments in his way of doing things, of keeping his documents and his teaching classes.

Interview 4: help with the teacher's teaching activities, necessary information on PE teaching.

Interview 5: knowledge on a professional, administrative and social level, also pushing the teacher to improve himself daily in the exercise of his task.

3.4.4. Procedures for Carrying out Educational Supervision Sessions

Interview 1: Most of the time we make a program of descents in different establishments.

Interview 2: We follow a schedule, but sometimes we surprise teachers in their establishments, which sometimes leads to tensions between us and certain teachers.

Interview 3: Before supervising a teacher, we notify the hierarchy of his establishment and the teacher of course, but unannounced visits sometimes occur.

Interview 4: Obviously, all educational descents are scheduled in advance to avoid making the teacher uncomfortable and to maintain the atmosphere of collegiality.

Interview 5: Sometimes without informing the teacher we go to the field for supervision.

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to describe the effects of pedagogical supervision on the attitudes and behaviors of physical education teachers in Brazzaville. The data obtained confirmed our initial hypothesis. The analysis of the results in **Table 1**, relates the representations that teachers of both sexes have a knowledge and a good understanding of pedagogical supervision, especially when it is programmed. Their beliefs, their personal theories and their values expose them to an adhesion to the idea of understanding this practice well, is strongly suggested in all the literature reviewed. Pedagogical supervision is materialized by the pedagogical supervision of physical education teachers as well as all the projects and programs relating to the practice of physical education in schools (Gervais & Correa Molina, 2004).

The supervision of the teacher in the practice of his profession by the supervisor represents a complex action that requires more from a good teacher a positive attitude based on calm and commitment (Gervais & Correa Molina, 2004). Such a point of view is similar to that of Taptue (2023) who point out that many teachers think they are experienced. However, pedagogical supervision is an action carried out by the pedagogical supervisor, which is required of all teachers. Scheduled or not, it takes on its full meaning, because it contributes to the improvement of the work of the teacher who must adopt a reflective and participative attitude. This attitude becomes subject to several reservations when it occurs unexpectedly, that is to say unscheduled. Indeed, in such a context, the supervisor makes an impromptu field trip, based on his experience, to inquire about the teacher's skills because many of them believe that they have good and strong experience that allows them to live up to their teaching practice. In addition, the state of teacher supervision remains problematic, especially in secondary school, and teachers are poorly supervised (Morissette et al., 1990). Similarly, this author confirms the authoritarian nature of educational supervision as perceived by Quebec teachers. They feel devalued by supervisors who do not consider the professional autonomy of teachers (White & Forgasz, 2017).

The results in **Table 2** are indicative of the fact that until now the process of pedagogical supervision remains confused with that of the supervision of the pedagogue (the evaluation) because on the question of whether the respondents knew about non-scheduled pedagogical supervision, the differences between the subjects' responses were not significant.

Furthermore, 52 teachers (78.8%) state that unscheduled pedagogical supervision is ineffective. If pedagogical supervisors consider themselves infallible leaders, this perception leads them to permanent attitudes and behaviors of evaluation, control, transmission of knowledge, holders of solutions to almost everything. For these same reasons, the observation of a teacher in his class can occur without notice. Then, the facilitators, advisors and educational inspectors often

remain fixed on the statements contained in the observation grid, the existence of which escapes the practitioners in the field. Thus, for the vast majority of teachers, the pedagogical supervision of teachers remains in the order of prescribed roles and it is very weakly present in practice. In addition, for the rare observations that take place, not only are they done by authority, but the decisions are taken unilaterally by the pedagogical supervisors. Furthermore, for teachers, the assessments of supervisory staff are not objective because they are not based on proven observation instruments, but rather on value judgments.

We can think that supervising a teacher through a scheduled or unannounced visit could have positively influenced the teacher's representation of this practice as stipulated in the results of a study conducted by [Zeichner et al. \(2015\)](#). However, our results clearly show that the attitudes of supervisees towards this form of supervision create resistance, frustration, and discontent, so the negative attitude of teachers is real. This resistance is explained in particular by the fact that a good majority of teachers in the environments surveyed take refuge behind the argument of professional autonomy, the interference of school management in teaching. Therefore, the results obtained support the position of researchers who fear that educational supervision will turn into evaluation ([Blase & Kirby, 2010](#); [Bouchamma, et al., 2016](#); [Lafortune, 2008](#)). It is considered a threat to teaching staff. Moreover, this observation converges with the analysis of [Guillemette \(2016: p. 6\)](#) when she suggests that "the distrust of teaching staff towards pedagogical supervision as well as the unease of those who practice supervision are a consequence directly linked to this postulate". Faced with these remarks, a stimulating line of thought emerges on the pedagogical level which justifies this programmed supervision and does not justify unprogrammed supervision.

In addition, in our work, the teachers surveyed have a very good appreciation of pedagogical supervision ([Table 2](#)). These observations are consistent with those of several authors who show that pedagogical supervision is closely linked to the professional development of teachers ([Nolan & Hoover, 2011](#)) with the ultimate goal of increasing student success ([Bouchamma, 2004](#)). In addition, school principals in Quebec are mandated by the Education Act (EIA) and by the Ministry of Education to encourage teachers in their professional development.

Finally, examination of [Table 3](#) reveals that educational supervisors are willing to play their role as trainers in this way: providing security, listening to the teacher's needs, sharing their experiences and knowledge, providing feedback and providing tactful advice. This description takes into account some of the expectations of teachers. Teachers also attach importance to the act of supervision. In this sense, they all favour maintaining a healthy relationship with the supervisor, in a climate of trust and learning ([Gervais & Correa Molina, 2004](#)). Teachers' representations also seem to be strongly characterised by the sharing of experiences, knowledge and advice. In this way, the supervisor also sees himself as a man of experience. This is consistent with the point of view of [Taptue \(2023\)](#) who points out that the supervisor shares his experiences.

Furthermore, the comments of the supervisors collected during the interviews are in line with those highlighted previously. Indeed, pedagogical supervision was chosen by the teachers “to help PE teachers improve their way of teaching body movements to students”, “to solve the problems that I myself had when I was in the field as a teacher that I opted for pedagogical supervision”, “I want to provide solutions to the problems that undermine PE teaching such as; the squabbles between supervisors and teachers”; “I would like to support, guide teachers in the exercise of their profession on a daily basis”. Generally speaking, the teachers interviewed unanimously recognize that the application of the pedagogical supervision process represents an opportunity for collaborative learning and adjustment of practices. Moreover, they all express the wish for greater availability of supervisors in the establishments in order to counter the feeling of isolation and abandonment felt on both sides.

Regarding the strategies to adopt to change the image of supervision among teachers, according to the supervisors, it is appropriate to make: “the exchanges, the relationships between the supervisor and the teachers friendly”, by considering “the teacher as a collaborator, by avoiding being a policeman for him”, by avoiding “unannounced visits, which necessarily lead to stress, fear and contempt for educational supervision”, “by making the teacher responsible, by involving him in the scheduling of visits, giving him more freedom of speech and helping him improve his skills regarding with the PE teaching”. Supervisors add that they can provide teachers with “professional skills that they lack, strategies, processes and essential means to improve and teach well”, “help, knowledge, interpersonal skills and know-how for teachers”, “solutions to teacher difficulties, amendments in their way of doing things, keeping their documents and their teaching classes”, “knowledge on a professional, administrative and social level, also pushing teachers to improve themselves daily in carrying out their tasks”.

Finally, regarding educational visits to schools, supervisors say they do so. *“most of the time by developing a programme of visits to different establishments”, “by respecting a timetable of visits, but sometimes we surprise teachers in their establishments which sometimes leads to tensions between us and certain teachers”, “by warning the hierarchy of his establishment and the teacher of course, but, unannounced visits sometimes occur”, “by scheduling educational visits in advance to avoid making the teacher feel uncomfortable and to maintain the atmosphere of collegiality”*. A teacher supervisor acts as a guide rather than a role model if he or she wants to support the development of the teacher's professional skills (Portelance, 2008), a view shared by teachers.

As for the lack of impact of unscheduled educational supervision on the professional act and reported by 71.2% of teachers against 28.8%, non-programming can create confusion as to the objectives and purposes targeted by these two processes among both teaching staff and educational supervisors, thus generating incomprehension, resistance and refusal in the environment (Bilodeau, 2016; Blase & Kirby, 2010; Bouchamma et al., 2005).

5. Conclusion

Our results reveal that physical education teachers have a very good appreciation of pedagogical supervision, but their attitude towards unscheduled pedagogical supervision is negative. According to them, this creates resistance, frustration and discontent...Nevertheless, they recognize that the application of the pedagogical supervision process represents an opportunity for collaborative learning and adjustment of practices. As for supervisors, they think they help teachers by organizing educational supervision sessions, whether scheduled or not. Pedagogical supervision should be well planned and better implemented in schools in order to avoid anything negative for the teacher (frustration and dissatisfaction), enabling him or her to gain confidence and carry out the physical education lesson well and better meet the expectations of the pupils. Our results thus highlight the complexity of opinions of physical education teachers and pedagogical supervisors on pedagogical supervision in Brazzaville. It is therefore appropriate to review the planning of pedagogical supervision sessions and recontextualize the approaches adopted in order to improve teachers' capacities and skills to teach.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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