

TEACHER SUPERVISION: A STRATEGY FOR ENSURING LEARNERS' SAFETY IN GHANAIAN KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLS

Justina Adu

Department of Early childhood Education
University of Education, Winneba
Winneba

Isaac Awortwe

Lecturer, College of Distance Education and e-Learning
University of Education, Winneba
Winneba, GHANA

&

Joseph Bentil

Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba

ABSTRACT

The study sought to assess teachers' supervisory strategies towards the safety of learners in kindergarten schools within Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana. The study was situated in the Interpretivist paradigm by employing a qualitative research approach. The illustrative case study design was adopted for this study. Semi-structured interview guide and observation checklist were instruments utilized to collect data from 16 participants. The convenience sampling technique was used in selecting the participants for the study. The data were analyzed thematically with the help of an online qualitative analysis tool, Taguette. The findings of the study revealed that, kindergarten teachers do not supervise their learners during outdoor activities or at the playground. Again, this study emerged that, kindergarten teachers do not pay close attention to learners and their physical environment to detect danger and threats. The study findings also suggest that, kindergarten teachers do not maintain physical closeness supervision of their learners to promptly salvage them from occurring danger during supervision. It was recommended to the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and other Agencies in Education to periodically organize workshop training and seminars on teacher supervision and safety for kindergarten teachers. This would help the kindergarten teachers to acquire basic knowledge and skills on the ways to adopt best supervisory practices to address safety issues in kindergarten schools. It was also recommended to the Tertiary institutions like teaching Universities and Colleges of Education to mount courses specifically for Teachers' Supervision and School Safety for pre-service teachers and school administrators. These together would aid the kindergarten teachers with best supervisory skills and strategies necessary for providing effective care for their learners.

Introduction

Kindergarten schools' safety is especially important since the well-being of children is always directly influenced by their environment (Awortwe et al., 2022). Children require a safe, secure, and loving environment, as well as the appropriate nutrition and stimulation from their parents or caregivers (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, 2018). Unless children are raised in a healthy and safe school environment during childhood, their future development could be hampered (Murray, 2018; Campbell-Barr, 2019). According to the Division of Early Childhood Development (2012), children are naturally active, curious, impulsive, careless, and risk-taking during their exploration. It takes only a moment for a child

to get into a situation that may easily result in an accident or injury to himself/herself or others. Teachers work extremely hard to ensure that the learning environment is inviting and conducive to learning, materials are presented with the child's best interests in mind through which learners perceive school as an exciting and inspiring place to spend their time. Environmental practices, according to the Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices (2009), are characteristics of the space, materials, equipment, routines, and activities that teachers and families can actively change to enhance each child's learning across developmental domains. Globally, learners perform best and reach their greatest potential in classrooms that are secure and orderly (Nhlapo, 2006). Similarly, French and Murphy (2005) maintained that, it is impossible for teaching and learning to take place in an unsafe school environment for which it must be safe, hygienic, large, and bright, as well as opportunities for children to rest, play, eat, and have their bodily care requirements satisfied. Hence providing a safe and secure learning environment is critical for facilitating children's learning (Mwoma, Begi & Murungi, 2018). In addition to this, Mwoma and Pillay (2016) in their study found that, having a safe school environment policy is critical in ensuring that orphans and vulnerable children have access to basic education. National Institutes of Health defined safety as the state in which hazards and conditions that could cause bodily, psychological, or material harm are regulated to protect the health and well-being of learners and the general public (Maurice, Lavoie, Chapdelaine, Bélanger Bonneau & Ellison, 1997). Patschke (2017) stated that, supervision for school safety starts with strong leadership, taking precautions to prevent accidents in a school environment, developing a plan for disasters, and acting decisively if the unthinkable does occur. Teachers' supervision is paramount because it helps create a secure and safe school environment that reduces the likelihood of child injury (Headstart, 2021). Adequate supervision refers to continuous, active and diligent monitoring of every child in school (Fosu-Ayarkwah, Gyeabour & Awortwe, 2022). It requires that teachers always position themselves to observe each child, respond to individual needs, and immediately intervene if necessary (Early Learning Association Australia, 2019). The supervisory strategies of teachers, according to Mack, Sogolow, Strouse and Lipman (2008) includes the variables related to monitoring needs; the ability to choose the appropriate level of supervision by the teachers; respond appropriately to hazardous situations; teachers' physical proximity to children; the teacher's level of interaction with the child; and whether monitoring is continuous or intermittent. Similarly, New York State Child Day Care Regulations (2021) stipulated that, children cannot be left without active supervision at any time which involves consciousness of and duty for the ongoing interest of every child. Based on these supervisory practices, teachers' need to always be alert and responsive; recognize wherein children are; be capable of paying attention to every child; be very close to each child to render instant assistance; and provide appropriate supervision to child's age, needs and capabilities (New York State Child Day Care Regulations, 2021). When it comes to kindergarten schools, the supervisory strategies of teachers are primarily concerned with creating safe, positive learning environments for all children, as well as ensuring that no child is left alone or unsupervised by teachers (Fosu-Ayarkwah, Gyeabour & Awortwe, 2022). The importance of supervision to school-aged children cannot be overstated, since it is directly related to their safety and the prevention of injury, as well as the provision of high-quality care (Morrongiello, Ondejko & Littlejohn, 2004). A key reason for teacher supervision is to protect children not only from physical injury but also from harm that might result from abusive words, teasing, bullying and other inappropriate behaviours. Hence, teachers must keep an eye on what children do and intervene when necessary.

Statement of Problem

Children learn and thrive in safe and secure environments (Mwoma, Begi & Murungi, 2018). According to Woden Community Children's Services (2020), effective teacher supervision is integral to creating environments that are safe and responsive to the needs of all children. The centrality of active supervision is about creating a safe environment in achieving a holistic development of children (Mahon, 2018; O'Keefe, Hooper & Jakubiec, 2019). Active supervision of teachers in kindergarten schools has been a very big challenge for schools and this has caused a plethora of threats to learners' safety. Morrongiello, Ondejko, and Littlejohn (2004) found that when young children are left unsupervised, they sustain more injuries. Hazel (2010) also confirmed that, basic school learners in a marginal elementary school have reported being unable to concentrate in class as a result of fear of an unsafe school environment. Nyakundi, Zablon, Areba, Onguti and Mikuro (2014) stated that, the main causes of accidents in schools are human-related, caused by carelessness, inattentiveness, ignorance, irresponsibility or negligence on the part of the learners and teachers. Many of the incidents that occur in childcare centres occur on the playground, and the majority of the more serious ones may be attributed to a lack of adequate supervision (Early Childhood News, 2008). Study by Peaceful Playgrounds (2014) also indicated that, over 70% of school injuries occur during out-door physical activities, with a key contributing factor to more than 40% of playground injuries being a lack of adequate supervision. Other studies confirmed that, about 10-25% of the dangers and injuries suffered by children occur on school grounds (Posner, 2000; Sleet, Ballesteros & Borse, 2010). As a result, teacher supervision and school safety become an absolute need (Simpson, 2001). With these traumatic events that young children go through, Carpman, Grant, and Simmons (2005) presented their understanding of unsafe school practices and the impact that fear has on children's learning skills at a young age in their study. The fact that teachers are not responsible for building up structures for schools is undeniably true; nonetheless, their primary responsibility is to ensure that learners are protected from threats and harm. This is supported by a story from Ghana, in which six kindergarten learners died and many others were injured when an abandoned school building collapsed during break time in Breman Jamera, in the Breman Asikuma Odoben-Brakwa district of the Central Region of Ghana (Ansah, 2017). According to Donkor (2018), the human element of ensuring that teachers and other school personnel have their ears to the ground as well as their eyes wide open daily is the most effective way of determining whether or not there are potential problems in the school building or environment, which constitute supervision. A school in Accra was claimed to have experienced a similar incident of peril when a child was said to have fallen into the school's pit latrine, resulting in his death (Azure, 2013). The researcher's personal observation during His National Service period in the posted school in the K.E.E.A Municipality identified that; kindergarten learners were not accompanied by their teachers to supervise them during break time. These learners as researcher observed daily return to class either having bruises, crying, fighting or with serious injuries. Information obtained from some head teachers and some School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) within the K.E.E.A confirmed that, most teachers do not attend to children and oversee their play during break time at their playground, leaving children vulnerable in their chaotic mobility and play scenario. The researcher's field study identified a particular incidence as confirmed by a Head teacher and Kindergarten teachers of Nana Kwame Essoun Memorial MA Basic School in the Essaman Circuit reported a serious jaw injury by a KG 2 learner who was pushed by another KG learner during break time ended her in Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital. From the field study, several cases had happened in most schools but were not recorded or logged for records. These incidences are as a result some teachers' carelessness which diverts them from active supervision, resulting in a delay in reaction to save children from hazards and accidents if they occur. Woodhead (2014) confirmed that, the provision of Kindergarten and Basic school educational

services in many developing countries including Ghana, still falls short of the global standards of teacher supervision. On the heels of these incidence, study have shown that learners who do not feel safe at school stay home and when they are not in school, they do not perform academically (Chen, 2007). As a consequence, the findings of this study would provide a better understanding of safety issues in kindergarten schools with an emphasis on improving teacher supervision to ensure learners' safety and participation at school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to find out the strategies adopted by teachers for supervising kindergarten learners for safety within Komenda Edina Eguafo Abrem Municipality in the Central Region of Ghana.

Research Question

What are the strategies adopted by teachers for supervising kindergarten learners for safety within K.E.E.A. Municipality?

Supervisory Strategies of Kindergarten Teachers

Supervisory skills and strategies are some of the most important caregiving strategies and abilities that teachers must learn and master to provide effective care. Teachers' supervision is standard practice in schools, but caregivers and kindergarten teachers go beyond to monitor children who have been characterized as risk takers, sensation seekers, or impulsive (Morrongiello, Corbett, McCourt & Johnston, 2006). Supervising children's play requires a combination of listening to and watching them play, being aware of their surroundings and any potential dangers they may be exposed to, weather conditions, the time of the day, managing small and large groupings of children, and having a thorough understanding of child development, including theories about how children learn (Tanah Merah Child Care Centre in Australia's report on Supervision Policy, 2011). Teacher supervision is the act of keeping an eye on, listening to, and instructing children while they are in the service to ensure that they are safe, engaged, and learning about the world in which they reside. According to Dodge, Colker, and Heroman (2010), teachers must supervise children at all times and intervene when dangerous behaviour or injuries are observed to prevent them from becoming ill.

To investigate the role of teacher supervision in reducing the risk of injury among young children, Saluja, Brenner, Morrongiello, Haynie, Rivera, and Cheng (2004) developed the following conceptual model of supervision as strategies for ensuring learners' safety.

1. **Attention:** Attention refers to paying full visual and auditory attention to a child's activity and behaviour. It can range from complete undistracted attention to complete absence of attention to the activity and behaviour of the child. As well as the visual and auditory components, attention encompassed a supervisor's level of engagement with a child, which ranged from direct visual contact with the child to have no visual contact with the child (Saluja et al. 2004). Injury risk was also predicted by attention, but only for more severe injuries and only in cases where the patient was admitted to the hospital for observation.
2. **Proximity:** Physical proximity to the child is defined by Saluja et al. (2004) as the caregiver's closeness to the child, which can range from physical contact to very long distances away. The distance between the supervisor and the child was denoted by proximity, which ranged from being within touching distance to being out of reach and beyond reach at long distances. When a caregiver is near a youngster, it is referred to as "proximity." According to the findings of the research, the proximity

of teachers and caregivers to their learners predicts the likelihood of an accident occurring (Saluja et al. 2004).

3. **Continuity:** This means maintaining constant visual and auditory attention. Continuity of supervision can range from uninterrupted visual and auditory attention to intermittent visual and auditory checks on the child's behaviour (Saluja et al. 2004). When it comes to continuity, it describes how well the supervisor demonstrates the first two dimensions in a continuous, intermittent, or non-existent approach.

Also, the Woden Community Children's Services (2020) suggested the strategies and practices for teachers to ensure children are adequately supervised which include the following:

1. learners must be within eyesight and earshot of the teacher at all times.
2. play zones must be arranged to ensure learners are well supervised.
3. teachers conduct regular safety checks of the school building, equipment and general school surrounding for potential dangers.
4. teachers must be in proximity to children taking part in activities that involve some risk, such as wood work, cooking, playground equipment.
5. be alert to sounds that might indicate a problem or the need for assistance or intervention.
6. and be attentive to children within their school environment (p.1).

The multitude of supervisory approaches used by teachers in childcare centres was again noted in the Tanah Merah Child Care Centre in Australia's report on Supervision Policy (2011). These were some of the supervisory approaches:

1. **How the Teacher Positions Himself or Herself in The Environment:** When supervising children, teachers must examine how they place themselves in both the outdoor and inside environments. Teachers position themselves in such a way that they are aware of their entire environment and see as many children as they can in one class period. The safety of all children is ensured at all times by visual or auditory monitoring methods. The teachers must maintain close supervision over all learners in areas where there is a risk of injury due to potentially hazardous equipment. This will ensure that learners do not become ill or injured while at school and that they are kept secure, comfortable, and under careful observation at all times.
2. **Scanning the Environment and Determining the Number of Children:** When supervising children, scanning is extremely important. Make frequent eye contact with all learners while maintaining a high position on the head. The awareness that students are aware of where a teacher's eyes are located is necessary for this to happen. Teachers are required to conduct regular scans of the school environment, both inside and outside. For this reason, teachers must develop a system of regular headcounts that mark each child's arrival and departure to ensure that they are always fully aware of where each child is. When learners believe that the teacher is not observing, they are more likely to engage in inappropriate behaviours (Everett, Olmi, Edwards, & Tingstrom, 2005). Therefore, strategies for maintaining active scanning have been proposed by Haydon, Hunter and Scott (2019), including constant turning and head swivelling, as well as frequent glances around the room.
3. **Teachers Must Be Aware of Children and The Noises They Make When They Are Playing:** Teachers must listen carefully when children play. To determine the state of the children under their supervision, an attentive teacher is ready to listen. For example, an attentive teacher will be able to determine whether a child is crying, being choked, gasping, using offensive or aggressive language, or simply remaining silent in a class setting.

4. **Establishing the Environment:** Establishing the environment means creating an environment that is conducive to children interacting and playing. It is possible to prevent accidents and danger by removing obstacles and hazardous materials from children's paths. Teachers should be aware of where children will be and how they will use the equipment for supervision when setting up the environment.
5. **Knowledge Of the Children in Care, As Well As an Understanding of How Groups of Children Interact and Play Together:** Teachers must have a clear understanding of the age groups that they are responsible for monitoring. In difficult situations, children will benefit from observing their peers' play and anticipating what may happen next.

Theoretical Framework

The Heinrich's Domino Theory of Accident Causation (1959)

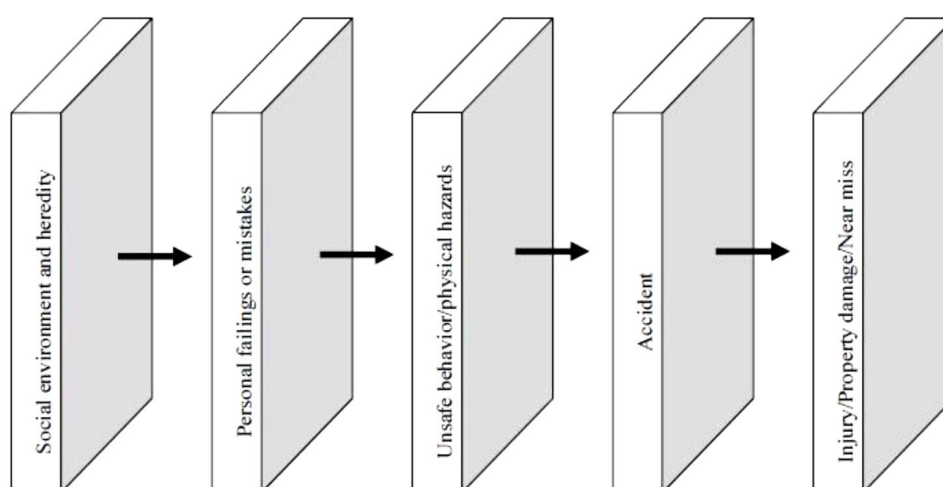


Figure 1: Heinrich's Domino Theory of accident causation

Source: (Heinrich, 1959 cited in Othman, et al., 2018)

Workplace safety researcher Herbert Wilbert Heinrich developed this theory to illustrate how an accident occurs in workplaces and schools. With the development of this theory, Heinrich (1959) claimed that accidents might be caused by a variety of factors. Each of these arguments may be compared to a line of dominoes; if one is knocked down, the others will fall in line after it. It is only by eliminating one of the dominoes before the disaster that a catastrophe may be avoided. In this way, the sequence is interrupted, ensuring that the accident does not take place. The five sequential variables, which were subsequently referenced by Othman, Majid, Mohamad, Shafiq, and Napiah (2018) as follows:

1. **Ancestry and social environment:** This refers to the process of gaining knowledge about workplace traditions and abilities. The author explains that undesirable personality traits, such as stubbornness and greed, can be passed along through inheritance or developed as a result of a person's social environment contribute to Faults of the Person. In addition, a lack of knowledge and abilities necessary to accomplish jobs effectively, as well as unsuitable social and environmental situations, will result in the next domino falling: the fault of the individual.
2. **The fault of a person (carelessness):** It shows bad qualities of a person's nature, even though these undesirable attributes may have been acquired by the individual in question. Heinrich says that character defects such as a poor temper, inconsiderateness, stupidity, and recklessness, whether inborn or acquired, contribute to accident causation at a single level of separation. According to Heinrich, secondary faults of a person are

- caused by natural or environmental flaws in the worker's family or life. These flaws, in turn, contribute to the next domino: the commission of unsafe acts or conditions.
3. **Unsafe act or physical situation:** This includes human errors and/or technology faults, which sets in motion the next domino, resulting in an accident. Heinrich identifies four reasons why individuals engage in dangerous behaviour. These include bad attitude, lack of knowledge or competence, physical unsuitability and inappropriate mechanical or physical environment.
 4. **Accidents:** These are caused by dangerous activities or situations which result in injuries. Accidents are an unwelcome and unavoidable event that results in bodily damage. Heinrich stated that, the occurrence of a preventable injury is the natural culmination of a series of events or circumstances that invariably occur in a fixed and logical order. Examples of accidents as events such as falls of people or being struck by flying objects, which are examples of accidents that cause injury.
 5. **Injury:** It is a result of an accident. The injury is the result of one's body being damaged in some way (Sabet, Aadal, Jamshidi & Rad, 2013). Among the sorts of injuries, Heinrich identified cuts and fractured bones as the major physical accidental injuries in schools.

Conceptual Framework

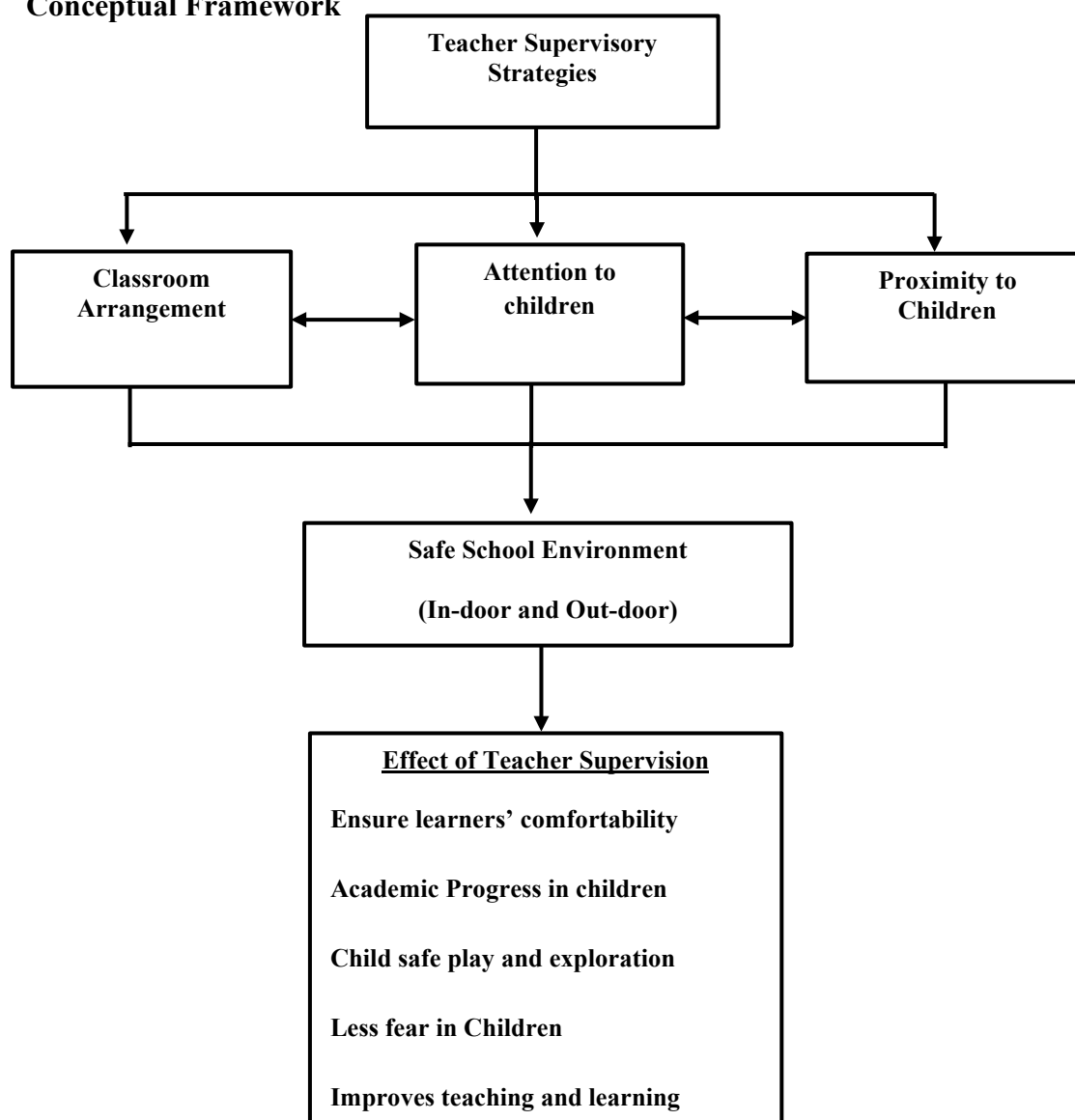


Figure 2: Conceptual framework on teachers' supervision of learners' safety, Source: Construct developed by the Researcher

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the variables in the study. From the framework, teachers' supervisory practice in kindergarten schools involves classroom arrangement, paying attention to children and ensuring proximity to children. This can lead to a safe school environment; both in-door and out-door. Creating a safe school environment ensures that, there is proper and sufficient school infrastructure, less teacher workload, proper maintenance culture, limited teacher distraction, an equivalent teacher-learner ratio and adequate training for teachers. When learners are well-safe and secure in their school environment can lead to learners' comfortability, academic progress in children, child-safe play and exploration, less fear in children, improvement in teaching and learning and support behaviours guidance. Milan, Furr-Holden, and Leaf (2010) in their study on the linkages between perceived school and safety and academic achievement suggested that, it was students' fear of and anxiety about violence or danger that affected their academic performance, rather than their actual experiences of the issue. Chen and Weikart (2008) stated that if learners believe they are unsafe, it affects their attendance as well. Therefore, learners who do not feel safe at school stay home. And when students are not in school, they do not perform academically which then affects other areas of development of the child.

Methods and Instruments

The philosophical underpinning of this study was based on interpretivism. Using Qualitative approach, the study employed Illustrative Case Study Design. Illustrative case studies are descriptive studies that depict one or more circumstances of an event to explain the situation. According to Hayes, Kyer, and Weber (2015), this type of case study is used to “describe a situation or a phenomenon, what is happening with it, and why it is happening” (p. 8). Illustrative case studies are particularly useful when the targeted audience knows little if anything about the topic because these case studies describe every aspect of the case for example, what the participants did and their involvement in the case, where the case occurred, and the like in great detail (Davey, 1991). The intent is to provide the reader with visually descriptive details to understand the relationship that exist between teachers' active supervision, how the participants involved acted and reacted during the study to ensures learners' safety were assured. The goal of an illustrative case study is to paint a picture about the topic for the reader (Hayes et al., 2015). Thus, through this study, the data gained from participants would help expose how teachers supervise their Kindergarten learners to ensure their safety in school. At this point of the illustrative case study, the study that depicts one or more circumstances of an event to explain the safety situation. The illustrative case study was employed to help the researcher through interaction gain a greater understanding of what is required to ensure the safety of learners and the role teachers play in the creation of a safe school environment for their learners hence, choosing illustrative case study for this study.

The accessible population consisted of 227 Kindergarten teachers within the K.E.E.A Municipality. In establishing a sample size for qualitative studies, Bertaux (1981) recommended fifteen (15) as the smallest acceptable sample. Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommended between 12 and 20 participants in interview studies. Hence, the sample size of 16 kindergarten teachers out of 227 Kindergarten teachers was drawn to maximize understanding of the phenomenon. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample for the study. Convenience sampling used by the researcher involved selecting participants that happen to be available and are willing to participate in the research at the time (Omona, 2013). Kuranichie (2016) explained convenience sampling as a technique which involves the use of elements of a target group that a researcher has access to or is available to serve as a participant. Baased on the homogeneity of the participants, the researcher collected data from kindergarten teachers in a school within the K.E.E.A Municipality. The semi-

structured interview guide and observational checklist were utilized in collecting data for this study. In determining the trustworthiness of this study, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were used to authenticate the reliability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data were analyzed thematically. The analysis of the data was done with the help of online qualitative software, Taguette. Using the Taguette, the researcher highlighted quotes and phrases from the interviews that were significant to the study.

Results and Discussions

Results On Teachers' Supervisory Strategies of Kindergarten Learners

The research question sought to find out the strategies teachers adopt for supervising their learners in the kindergarten schools. To achieve this, information was sought from participants for the study. The participants were asked about their supervisory strategies in the kindergarten schools including their in-door supervision, outdoor-supervision, constant supervision, closeness supervision and their attentive supervision. The most pertinent issues that were collected from the participants through an in-depth interview have been described and interpreted in the following sub-themes.

In-door Supervision

The responses from most participants were positive in terms of their in-door supervision and their learners' safety. However, few participants were more particular to supervision of learners' academic activities such as learners' proficiency in literacy and numeracy lessons rather than of their safety. A participant has this to say:

Immediately you start teaching, you go round to see if everybody is in class. So, we do registration that's they pick their names. We have a place for it and then you place it where it's supposed to be. Teacher ensures that, everybody that he or she is present will pick his or her name and place it there. (KT 4)

Another participant also said this:

We are normally two so whiles one is teaching, the other one will sit at the back to make sure that every child is concentrating at the same time their safety because some of their chairs are not good. They are very bad so we make sure that one teacher is at the back watching them. (KT 5)

Similarly, on the in-door supervision, another participant shared her view this way:

In the classroom activities, I supervise them by going round most especially in the morning, normally we have our community time. So, I supervise them like they come together, I go round, I check on them, how they are feeling and the classroom too. There are some objects that can injured them in the classroom, which is not safe for us too, that can injure a child and we check it remove it from the classroom. (KT 13)

To corroborate this statement, a participant also noted the following:

I make sure they are not holding any sharp object, especially pins. For the girls most of them brings pins in the class. So, I told them not to bring pin, it is better to tie than tied it using the pins, because when they bring the pins, they remove it, they try to fix it back and they can be injured, so that one is one. And have told them not to raise the chair, most of them, at first, they like doing it, so have warned them not to do that and also have advise them not to be fighting in the classroom. If someone offends you, you have to report to me, thus the right way. (KT 15)

Out-door Supervision

One of the most critical areas for learners' safety is the out-door environment or the playgrounds. Because this is where learners play or engage in rigorous activities on their own and in their ways and so play areas must be safe at all times. For the play areas to be safe for children, then active supervision of teachers must be considered. So, participants were asked to share their views about how they supervise their learner during out-door activities and why they think it is important for teachers to supervise their learners to ensure their safety during out-door activities. Almost all the participants indicated that, they do out-door supervision but as to how they do it well remain a question to answer. However, some participants had this to say:

The reality is that sometimes looking at the situation is not even easy. So, while you are here sometimes during break that the teacher will have to eat something after teaching yeah, so whiles you are eating you also have to be watching. Sometimes too you just go around, then you will be watching. And so that is it. The reality is that is not easy. We are trying our best. (KT 2)

Similarly, to the earlier submission by KT 2 on the out-door supervision, another participant made it clearer that, they do not mostly supervise their learners during out-door activities. This is what the participant has to say:

For

the outdoor we don't do much, because sometimes you have to write home work for them. Even sometimes break time, I will be eating and I will be writing at the same time during outdoor because I'm a lefty, so the supervision is too low. Sometimes too, I go round and tell the learners, you move from that place, come here, come and be here, and I go back. (KT 6)

Again, another participant responded this way:

We normally sit with them. Sometimes we the teachers sit on the corridor to supervise them, because we can't be running after them on the field so we sit on the corridor. So, any casualty they report to the teacher or maybe you realize that they are going to maybe places that they can easily be hurt we just call them back. (KT 5)

Another participant who seems to be overly protective of her learners shared this:

I don't allow them to go out. Sometimes you know children, they say am going to my brother, my sister at the primary block. But for inside, at first, we were having swing here, the merry-go-round too, so when they are on the swing, I go round to make sure they form queue, they take time to sit on the swing and to the merry-go-round. Because I noticed that, they all want to be on the merry go round and at the same time so, I go and supervise them to take time to sit on it, when they finish then another batch go. (KT 15)

Constant Supervision

Teacher supervision of learners must be one that is uninterrupted visually or auditorily. During this activity, no room is given to intermittent visual and auditory checks on the learners' behaviour for safety (Saluja et al., 2004). Most of the participants admitted that constant supervision is very essential practice at the kindergarten levels. However, they stated that, they find it challenging to ensure constant supervision of their kindergarten learners in school. Some participants pointed out how they constantly supervise their learners to ensure their safety. One participant stated this:

Now you are not going to be there trying to tell them this is what we are supposed to do or this is not what we are supposed to do but constantly you be watching them. So, you will be a director, you also guide and direct them. But you know children the moment that you leave them, there is a problem. So constant supervision, a way to watch over the children, a way to ensure that they are safe. (KT 2)

This further was corroborated by another participant who added:

I supervise them (learners) continuously because they are kids and anything can happen, we don't know, so every time you have to let your eyes be broad most especially when they are playing. You have to look around, watch what they are doing even sometimes eating, we do watch them so, we supervise them continuously. It is not time to time, we do every minute, every time. (KT 13)

In addition to these, another participant remarked this way:

Because the children are many, I cannot supervise them all, I may not know what the pupils at the end there. So, I have set them as their own spies or supervisors, so they will come and report to me, and I know what is going on there. And also, we have classroom rules so if someone breaks the rule, I call them to order. (KT 15)

Simply, this participant commented on how she does constant supervision like this:

"Well, I make sure that I'm not distracted, like my eyes are always on them." (KT 5)

On the same angle, this participant commented this:

We usually advise them not to go far, for instance, if is time for break, we usually advise them to play at our playground here, because some will be going to the JHS block, and we are not there to supervise what is going on there, so sometimes some of the primary teachers and JHS teachers do draw our attention that our kids are going far, so we should just call them, for them to come closer. (KT 9)

Closeness Supervision

When teachers supervise children, they must examine how they place themselves in both the out-door and in-door environments. Through that, the safety of all children would be ensured at all times by visual or auditory monitoring methods. This will ensure that, learners do not become ill or injured while at school while they are kept secure, comfortable and under careful observation at all times. Participants explained how they closely supervise their learners during in-door activities. Most participants were of the view that, normally don't sit down except only when they are marking. Generally, most participants were very close to their learners during in-door supervision. Some participants had this to say:

I am not too close because they are many. So, you can be closer to some of them, some too will pass some where you will not even see them. So, I will be closer to some kids but some I can't be too close to them. (KT 3)

This was further corroborated by another participant who said that:

We allow them, we give them the chance to just play around and as they are playing, we make sure that we are watching them. The distance is specifically, is not that close. If it is close then it means that when they are running around, we the teachers too are running after them or be on the field with them. (KT 5)

Similarly, another participant remarked this way:

"Not too close. If am to say, 8-10 metres away so that they feel free to play. If am much in them, they may think that I don't want them to play. So, I give them space." (KT 13)

This participant also responded this way:

We sit there, we don't let them go far away from where ever we are. We are normally close with them and doing observation and sometimes too when they are playing and we see that they can be hurt you just call their attention to whatever they are doing and then they come to their senses. Even during break, they want to give the rules. (KT 8)

Attentive Supervision

Teacher must supervise their learners by keeping eye on, listening to, and instructing them while they are in the service to ensure that they are safe, engaged, and learning about the world in which they reside. Participants were asked to share their knowledge on how they attentively supervise their learners to ensure their safety. Generally, most responses from the participants were similar with exception of some who tried to exhibit some attitude within the aspect of attention supervision. Some participants noted that:

"I do normally become absent minded sometimes but I always just pay attention to whatever they have been doing." (KT 3)

Another participant responded that:

I listen to whatever they tell me, because they are kids, it may be what they are telling me is very necessary, so even when am doing something and a kid comes; madam, madam, this child is doing this thing, I just say, where is He/She? And I just go and see whether is true or not because it may be, I may be sitting there but my mind may not be there (KT 9)

Another participant further noted that:

If I am close to them then my attention is there, unless maybe am here that I will not get much attention for them. But if am with one table, my attention will not be at the other table, my attention

will be at the specific table. My attention is divided when attending to children at a particular table. (KT 15)

Similarly, this is what another participant shared on attentive supervision:

Once they are kids, that one you have to be very vigilant, because once they are children. If you are marking their exercise books, when you are teaching, your eyes may go round in the class. Yes, so that if someone is misbehaving, you know it fast in early stage, that one you correct the person before it becomes too late. (KT 11)

Observation Results on Teachers' Supervisory Strategies of Kindergarten Learners

Findings from the researcher's observation in relation to teacher supervision strategies for learners' safety in kindergarten schools revealed that, most of the teacher fall short in their role as supervisors for their learners' safety. It was observed that, majority of participants do not pay close attention to their learners and their environment at both in-door and out-door. During observation, the researcher found harmful materials such as kebab sticks, exposed nails in broken desks and stones at the playground which were not properly checked. Few participants who tried to pay attention to these learners does it poorly with constant distractions. Also, it was revealed that, almost all kindergarten teachers do not supervise learners during out-door play activities to ensure their safety. From the participants' disposition, they seem not care or were engaged so much that, they cannot supervise their learners at all during out-doors. However, some few teachers who tried to assume their supervisory role when learners are trapped in harmful situation or about to experience that risk. Again, findings from the observation in relation to closeness supervision shows that, few participants who supervised their learners were most of the time so distant from them. The distance is wide that, teachers cannot salvage a child if the child should plunge into danger or be harmed. More so, the observation showed that, very few participants constantly supervised their learners. These participants tried to break the barriers of intermittent supervision rotating their roles to ensure continuity in supervision. From the observation again, some classrooms had one teacher handling the learners. Some classrooms too, has two teachers with a huge number of learners in class. These observations reflected the responses given by participants during the interview sessions.

Results and Discussions on Teachers' Supervisory Strategies of Kindergarten Learners

Teachers' everyday activities include overseeing pupils both in and out of class settings, as well as maintaining an adequate personal touch with them while carrying out their other school responsibilities (Gwambombo, 2013). And so, to ensure the safety of children, increased teacher supervision plays a protective role and is associated with fewer child injuries or harm to learners (Morrongiello, Ondejko & Littlejohn, 2004). Results of the study revealed that most kindergarten teachers appear to have fair knowledge in terms of in-door supervision. Participants assumed their supervisory roles by going around to check on learners, and how they are feeling including inside the classroom. Objects that were not safe for learners in the classroom were checked and removed from the classroom. Other participants also made sure learners do not hold any sharp objects, especially pins and blades. For orderliness in the classroom, teachers enforced rules that deter learners from fighting in the classroom. And those learners who were offended were advised to report to their teachers. This agrees with Tanah Merah Child Care Centre in Australia's report on Supervision Policy (2011) which stated that, in teachers' attempt to create a conducive environment for children, they must prevent accidents and dangers by removing obstacles and hazardous materials from children's paths.

Also, the study indicated that kindergarten teachers do not supervise learners' outdoor activities. Almost all participants said they barely attend to the learners during outdoor activities or break time. This study found that, a teacher used that time to eat since it is the only time to relax after teaching. Subsequently, other participants revealed that, they do not supervise their learners' outdoor activities because it is the only moment, they use to write their home works and exercises. In congruence with the study findings, Davies (1996) noted that, because outdoor time is perceived as a break from classroom activities, teachers frequently believe that play is not essential to the learning process. To some teachers, to avoid outdoor supervision, learners are made to remain in-door without going out. However, the finding of the present study discovered that, some teachers intermittently and poorly supervised learners during outdoor activities as they sit aloof with the claim that, they cannot run after the learners when they are playing.

Again, results on the teachers' constant supervision revealed that, some teachers constantly supervise their learners for their safety. Some participants interviewed suggested that, they constantly guide and direct their learners because the moment that they leave them, problem result. Some participants supported that, they constantly keep their eyes on their learners when they are playing and even when they eat. This confirms the study by Dodge, Colker and Heroman (2010) which confirmed that, teachers supervise children at all times and intervene when dangerous behaviours or injuries are detected to prevent them from becoming ill. Nonetheless, the study found some participants who used the learners as their spies to constantly report cases to them since they are many. Other participants from the interview suggested that, when they report to a school, they tried to avoid any distractions that would affect their active supervision. The finding of the current study affirms those found in the previous study by Saluja et al. (2004) that, during constant supervision, no room should be given to intermittent visual and auditory checks on the learners' behaviour for safety.

This segment of the results reveals how participants closely supervise their learners to ensure their safety. As part of the role teacher play in supervising their learners, it emerged in the study that, all participants interviewed do not maintain a close distance from learners when supervising them. It was revealed also that, as a result of the lack of proximity in supervision participants could not promptly salvage the learners when they find themselves in danger. This statement is in agreement with the report made by Tanah Merah Child Care Centre in Australia's report on Supervision Policy (2011) which suggested that, teachers must maintain close supervision of all learners in areas where there is a risk of injury due to potentially hazardous equipment. It was also observed that, some teachers do not maintain close supervision because it is a source of distraction to children's play. Similarly, it was observed that, for learners to be close, some teachers made learners play around them thereby restricting them from playing at their comfortable places. This statement seems to disagree with the findings of research made by Saluja et al. (2004) that explained that, teachers' closeness to their learners predicts the likelihood of an occurring accident.

Finally, the result of the study on attentive supervision suggests that, most teachers do not pay attention to both learners and their environment. The study observed that, some teachers are sometimes absent-minded. This statement was cautioned by Everett, Olmi, Edwards and Tingstrom (2005) who stated, when learners notice that the teacher is not looking, inappropriate behaviours may likely occur. Some participants maintained that, being attentive to the learners places the teacher to be a good listener. Some participants, give attention to learners when they are closer. To corroborate this statement, Donkor (2017) advanced that, the human element of ensuring that teachers and other school personnel have their ears to the ground as well as their

eyes wide open daily is the most effective way of determining whether or not there are potential problems in the school building or environment. Subsequently, however, the study found that some participants are vigilant and attentive for the reason that, the learners are young and even when busy, eyes must constantly go around to oversee them. The findings of this study can be related to a study conducted by Saluja et al. (2004) which suggested that, being attentive encompassed a supervisor's level of engagement with a child, which ranged from direct visual contact with the child to have no visual contact with the child. To maintain attentive supervision, Haydon, Hunter, and Scott (2019) also confirmed that, such practices include constant turning and head swivelling, as well as frequent glances around the room.

Findings

1. The study found that kindergarten teachers do not supervise their learners during outdoor activities or at the playground, thinking it is the available time to relax after learners are out to play.
2. Findings again revealed that, kindergarten teachers do not pay close attention to learners and their physical environment to detect danger and threats.
3. Lastly, kindergarten teachers do not maintain physical closeness supervision of their learners to promptly salvage them from occurring danger during supervision.

3. Recommendations and Conclusions

1. The Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and other Agencies in Education should periodically organize workshop training and seminars on teacher supervision and safety for kindergarten teachers. This will help them acquire basic knowledge and skills on how to adopt the best supervisory practices to address safety issues in kindergarten schools.
2. Also, Tertiary institutions like teaching Universities and Colleges of Education should mount courses specifically for Teachers' Supervision and School Safety for pre-service teachers and school administrators.

The study concludes that, supervisory skills and strategies are the most essential caregiving strategies and abilities that every kindergarten teacher must learn and master to provide effective care for their learners. In this sense, supervising learners requires a combination of listening to and watching, being aware of their surroundings and any potential dangers learners may be exposed to. This is essential because it makes teachers aware of the entire environment where each learner is and to position closer to each learner to salvage timely for likely danger and threats they may encounter.

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