

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ASSESSING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SISOs AND THEIR IMPACT  
ON PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN THE BIRIM  
CENTRAL MUNICIPALITY**

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**POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION**



**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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**A Project Report in the Department of Educational Foundations,  
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## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Ando Richard Danquah**, declare that this Project report, except quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Wednesday, 18 February 2026

### SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Project report as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Mr. Eric Ofosu-Dwamena (Supervisor)

Signature:

Date: Wednesday, 18 February 2026

## **DEDICATION**

To my wife, Rita Aborgeh and children Papa-Ato Danquah Ando, Nana-Yaw  
Antsaful Ando and Kobina Danquah Ando Jr.



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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated teachers' perceptions of the roles and effectiveness of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) and how these perceptions influence professional support and collaboration in public basic schools. The purpose was to assess the extent to which SISOs contribute to instructional supervision, teacher development, and collaborative practices within schools. A quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design was adopted, using primary data collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to select a sample of 276 teachers from various schools within the Birim Central Municipality. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, with the support of SPSS. The findings revealed that teachers have positive perceptions of SISOs' roles, responsibilities, recognising them as mentors who provide guidance in lesson preparation, identify training needs, and support school improvement initiatives. Teachers also viewed SISOs as providers of professional support, delivering constructive feedback, promoting knowledge-sharing and innovative teaching methods. Finally, SISOs were seen as catalysts for teacher collaboration, fostering teamwork, peer observation, and professional learning communities that enhance teaching quality and collegiality. It is recommended that educational managers provide adequate resources, training to strengthen SISOs' capacity in monitoring, mentoring and promoting collaborative professional practices.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Ghana's educational landscape has seen various reforms aimed at improving access, quality, and equity in basic education. Central to these reforms is the recognition that improving learning outcomes cannot be achieved by infrastructural development alone, but also requires strong instructional leadership and support mechanisms for teachers. One of the most significant shifts in this regard has been the transformation of the role of Circuit Supervisors (CSs) into School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). This change, initiated by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education, reflects a broader attempt to redefine school supervision from a traditional inspection model to one that promotes instructional leadership, professional support, and collaboration (MoE, 2021).

Traditionally, Circuit Supervisors functioned primarily as inspectors tasked with ensuring compliance with administrative and academic regulations. While this model allowed for routine monitoring, it was often criticised for being overly bureaucratic and punitive, with little room for genuine professional development. Teachers frequently associated supervisory visits with fault-finding, fear, and anxiety, rather than mentorship and improvement. Recognising these limitations, the GES introduced the SISO model to promote a more facilitative and supportive approach, aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning across Ghana's basic schools (Adjei-Boateng, Cobbinah & Adamba, 2023).

SISOs are now expected to serve as catalysts for school improvement through mentorship, coaching, collaborative problem-solving, and instructional support. Their responsibilities extend beyond mere compliance checks to include planning in-service training, supporting the implementation of curriculum reforms, encouraging professional learning communities (PLCs), and helping teachers reflect on and improve their instructional practices (Asim et al., 2024). The goal is to create a school culture where teachers are not only held accountable but are also empowered and supported in their professional roles.

However, the transition from CSs to SISOs has not been entirely smooth. Although the policy shift is laudable, the reality on the ground indicates significant gaps between policy and practice. Several studies in various Ghanaian districts have pointed out that many teachers still view SISOs with suspicion, associating them with the old system of judgmental evaluation rather than collaborative support. A study by Dewodo et al. (2020) found that while some teachers appreciate the potential of SISOs to enhance their professional competencies, many still experience anxiety during supervisory visits, particularly when feedback is not constructively delivered. These perceptions create tension between SISOs and teachers and can hinder the development of professional relationships necessary for meaningful collaboration.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of SISOs is influenced by systemic and logistical challenges. The National Education Reform Secretariat (NERS, 2022) reports that many SISOs lack access to reliable transportation, essential teaching and learning materials, and digital tools necessary for effective supervision. This has resulted in inconsistent school visits, reduced visibility of SISOs, and inadequate follow-up on instructional issues. In districts with difficult terrain or dispersed school networks, the

problem is even more pronounced, undermining the capacity of SISOs to provide timely and relevant support. Despite these challenges, research supports the idea that instructional leadership, when effectively executed, plays a critical role in school improvement. Instructional leaders such as SISOs can help foster a professional culture of trust, collaboration, and shared goals among teachers. Thompson (2024) argues that the nature of leadership within a school system significantly influences teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and the willingness to engage in collaborative practices. Similarly, Mensah and Opoku-Asare (2022) contend that when school supervision is conducted in a supportive and collegial manner, it fosters a sense of shared responsibility and community among teaching staff.

In many Ghanaian schools, however, collaborative teaching practices are not yet institutionalised. Professional learning communities (PLCs), which are essential for peer learning, co-teaching, joint curriculum planning, and reflective practice, are still in their nascent stages. While the Ministry of Education's 2021 Teacher Education Framework emphasises the importance of collaboration, actual implementation varies widely across regions and schools. Teachers in some districts report working in silos, with limited opportunities for professional dialogue or collective problem-solving. The presence and actions of SISOs could help bridge this gap by facilitating collaborative platforms, but only if they are perceived by teachers as supportive partners rather than authoritative figures. Additionally, the perception of fairness, competence, and empathy on the part of SISOs significantly affects how teachers respond to supervision.

Research in similar African contexts, such as Kenya and Rwanda, shows that where supervision is viewed as empowering and participatory, it leads to enhanced teacher

confidence and professional commitment (Owusu et al., 2021). On the other hand, top-down approaches often breed resistance, compliance without engagement, and, ultimately, limited improvement in instructional quality. Another dimension worth considering is the professional development of SISOs themselves. The role requires a complex mix of pedagogical knowledge, leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and logistical competence. Yet, SISOs often receive limited training beyond their initial orientation. This lack of continuous capacity-building hampers their ability to build effective relationships with teachers and to lead instructional change meaningfully. In many cases, SISOs rely on personal experience rather than structured frameworks for school support, which can lead to inconsistencies in supervision practices across districts (NERS, 2022).

Given these realities, there is an urgent need to explore teachers' perceptions of SISOs more deeply. Understanding how teachers view their roles, how they interpret their actions, and how these perceptions influence collaboration and professional learning is critical. Such insights can inform policy decisions, guide professional development for SISOs, and ultimately improve the quality of teaching and learning in Ghana's basic education system.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, Ghana's educational reforms have emphasised the importance of instructional leadership and professional support as key levers for improving teaching and learning outcomes. One such reform is the transformation of Circuit Supervisors into School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), a move intended to shift supervision from a fault-finding exercise to a developmental, teacher-support model. SISOs are now expected to act as mentors and facilitators who foster teacher

collaboration, professional growth, and school improvement (MoE, 2021; Adjei-Boateng et al., 2023).

However, despite this progressive redefinition, many teachers continue to perceive SISOs as inspectors rather than partners in instructional development. This perception is often shaped by the tone of interactions, lack of clarity in roles, and limited follow-up support after supervisory visits (Dewodo et al., 2020). In some districts, SISO visits are viewed with apprehension, and feedback is seen as critical rather than constructive, which undermines the potential for collaboration and continuous professional learning. Moreover, resource constraints, inadequate training, and logistical challenges further limit the ability of SISOs to fulfil their supportive mandates effectively (NERS, 2022; Asim et al., 2024).

This disconnect between policy expectations and practical outcomes raises important questions about how teachers actually perceive the roles of SISOs and the extent to which these perceptions influence professional collaboration and support within schools. If SISOs are to effectively contribute to sustainable school improvement, their interactions with teachers must be grounded in trust, mutual respect, and collaboration. However, there is a paucity of empirical research, particularly in the Ghanaian context, examining this critical intersection between teacher perception, supervisory effectiveness, and collaborative practices in schools. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by assessing how teachers perceive the role and effectiveness of SISOs, and how these perceptions impact professional support and collaboration among teachers in public basic schools.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how teachers perceive the role and effectiveness of SISOs in enhancing professional support and collaboration in basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality. It aims to contribute to the growing discourse on instructional leadership and school improvement within the Ghanaian context and to provide practical recommendations for educational stakeholders, including school administrators and directors, policymakers, and headmasters, to implement support systems that enhance the academic success of SISOs and teachers, as well as strengthen teacher supervision and support systems.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality.
2. Assess teachers' perceptions of the professional support provided by SISOs in enhancing teaching and learning in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality.
3. Determine teachers' perceptions of the role of SISOs in promoting professional collaboration among teaching staff in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

To achieve the stated objectives, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality?

2. To what extent do teachers perceive that SISOs provide professional support that enhances teaching and learning in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality?
3. What are teacher's perceptions of the role of SISOs in promoting professional collaboration among teaching staff in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality?

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to Basic Schools in the Birim Central Municipality, due to availability and accessibility to data required for the study, to ease the researcher's burden of some of the challenges faced by researchers as a result of embarking on the research.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is timely and important, especially in the context of ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education in Ghana. Basic schools serve as a critical bridge between basic education and tertiary institutions or the world of work. The performance of both teachers and students at this level has a direct impact on national development, as it influences the calibre of individuals who move on to higher education or the job market. Against this backdrop, the role of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) becomes central in ensuring that teachers receive the guidance, supervision, and professional support needed to deliver high-quality instruction.

By exploring how teachers perceive SISOs' contributions to their professional development and collaborative practices, this study offers valuable insights into the real experiences and expectations of educators. Teachers are at the heart of

educational delivery, and their views on supervision and support systems can serve as a reliable barometer for assessing the effectiveness of educational policies and programs. A better understanding of their perceptions can inform decision-making at various levels of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and other relevant bodies.

Moreover, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on instructional leadership, supervision, and school improvement in Ghana. While much has been written about teacher performance and student outcomes, relatively little attention has been given to how supervisory structures, especially the work of SISOs, impact the professional growth and collaborative efforts of teachers in second-cycle schools. This research fills that gap by examining how SISOs influence instructional practices, foster teamwork among teachers, and support continuous professional learning.

The significance of this study also lies in its potential to influence policy direction and implementation. Findings from the study could help reshape training and capacity-building programs for SISOs, ensuring that they are better equipped to meet the evolving needs of teachers. It could also guide the development of more inclusive and participatory supervisory approaches that promote open communication, mutual respect, and shared responsibility between SISOs and teachers.

In practical terms, the study offers recommendations that can strengthen the supervisory process in schools, enhance teacher morale, and ultimately improve student learning outcomes. For education directors, circuit supervisors, headteachers, and policymakers, the study provides a clearer understanding of what works and what does not when it comes to teacher support and instructional leadership. For teachers, the research affirms their voices and creates an opportunity to reflect on their own professional journeys and the systems that support or hinder their progress.

In conclusion, the study not only contributes to academic knowledge but also has real-world implications. It provides a framework for rethinking how teacher supervision is carried out in Ghana's second-cycle schools and opens the door for reforms that are responsive, context-specific, and sustainable. By doing so, it supports the broader national goal of delivering quality education for all, in line with Ghana's Education Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

With respect to this research, data collection is limited to Senior High School teachers and SISOs in the Birim Central Municipality. The study may be limited by the number of participants, affecting generalizability. Also, the study was dependent solely on the information provided by the respondents of the questionnaire and interview. Therefore, the reliability of the findings will depend on the integrity of the respondents. Data will be collected once, and hence, findings may not reflect future phenomena. More so, the study captures data at a single point in time, limiting causal inferences.

### **1.9 Delimitations of the Study**

The focus of the study is to examine teachers' perceptions of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) and how these perceptions affect professional support and collaboration in senior high schools. Only the Basic School in Birim Central Municipality will be surveyed, making the findings specific to this context.

### **1.10 Organisation of the Study**

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One takes into account the introductory part of the study and comprises the background to the study, the problem

of the study, the purpose and objectives of the study, the significance of the study, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Two focused on a literature review where the historical precedence is established by summarising research works done on the topic.

Chapter Three was also devoted to the research methodology used in gathering data from the field, sample, sampling procedure and data collection method. Chapter Four will deal with the discussion analysis, presentation of data, and Chapter Five is concerned with the summary, conclusion and offers recommendations.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews existing literature relevant to the study on how teachers perceive School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) and how these perceptions influence professional support and collaboration in Ghanaian basic schools. The review is structured into three key sections: theoretical literature, empirical literature, and a review of key themes, including the roles of SISOs, professional support, collaboration, and contextual factors that affect their effectiveness. The chapter concludes with a synthesis that highlights the research gap this study seeks to address.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Literature Review**

A suitable theory to underpin this study is Transformational Leadership Theory (TLT). This theory, introduced by Burns (1978) and further developed by Bass (1985), focuses on how leaders can inspire and motivate followers to achieve exceptional outcomes while fostering professional and personal growth. Transformational leaders are characterised by their ability to build trust, instil vision, challenge the status quo, and provide personalised support to subordinates. Within the educational context, SISOs play a transformational role when they go beyond mere inspection to provide mentorship, build teacher confidence, and cultivate a collaborative school culture.

Bass and Riggio (2006) outline four dimensions of transformational leadership that can be applied to SISOs:

1. Idealised Influence – where SISOs act as role models for teachers.
2. Inspirational Motivation – where they provide a clear vision and purpose for instructional improvement.
3. Intellectual Stimulation – where they encourage teachers to innovate and reflect on their practices.
4. Individualised Consideration – where they offer tailored support and recognise teacher needs.

This theory is appropriate for analysing how SISOs can influence teacher collaboration and professional development, and it frames the understanding that effective supervision is not just hierarchical but participatory and developmental (Leithwood & Sun, 2018).

## **2.3 Conceptual Review**

### **2.3.1 The role of SISOs in Ghana's basic education system**

SISOs, formerly known as Circuit Supervisors, are education officers tasked with ensuring effective school performance through monitoring, instructional support, and supervision. The rebranding of Circuit Supervisors to SISOs was aimed at shifting their roles from fault-finding inspectors to facilitators of teacher improvement (MoE-GES, 2020).

According to the Ministry of Education (2019), SISOs are responsible for promoting continuous teacher development, coordinating school improvement plans, collecting data on school performance, and facilitating community involvement in education. These functions align closely with the goals of instructional leadership and school

accountability. Furthermore, Instructional Supervision and Monitoring, which is one of the primary roles of SISOs, is instructional supervision. This involves classroom observation, providing feedback to teachers, ensuring lesson plans are aligned with the national curriculum, and encouraging the use of learner-centred methodologies. According to Asare and Danquah (2020), effective instructional supervision by SISOs leads to improved teaching practices and better learner outcomes. Through consistent school visits, SISOs identify instructional gaps and help address them through professional guidance.

**Capacity Building and Professional Development:** SISOs serve as facilitators of continuous professional development (CPD). They organise in-service training sessions, workshops, and peer learning communities for teachers. These capacity-building activities are designed to improve pedagogical skills, classroom management, and subject mastery. Agyekum and Boateng (2022) found that schools with active SISO engagement recorded higher teacher motivation and innovation in teaching practices. This role helps bridge the gap between policy and practice in the classroom.

**Data Collection and Reporting:** SISOs are also responsible for collecting, analysing, and reporting data related to school performance, enrolment, teacher attendance, infrastructure, and learning outcomes. These reports are crucial for informing district-level planning and resource allocation. Their monitoring ensures that headteachers and teachers are accountable for school performance (GES, 2019).

**Support to School Leadership and Governance:** SISOs provide technical support to headteachers in areas such as instructional leadership, preparation of school performance improvement plans (SPIPs), budget management, and stakeholder

engagement. Through these efforts, SISOs contribute to building effective school leadership. According to the National Inspectorate Board (NIB, 2018), schools with strong leadership support from SISOs tend to perform better academically and maintain stronger community ties.

**Impact of SISOs on Education Quality:** The presence of committed SISOs has shown a positive influence on teacher performance and student achievement. A study conducted by Teye and Baah (2021) in the Eastern Region of Ghana revealed that SISOs played a vital role in reducing teacher absenteeism and improving classroom engagement. By regularly visiting schools and offering mentoring, SISOs help to create a culture of accountability and professional discipline. Furthermore, SISOs facilitate collaboration among teachers by encouraging the formation of School-Based In-Service Training (SBI) groups and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These platforms foster peer mentoring and sharing of best practices, which contribute to improved instructional quality (Donkor & Ababio, 2020).

However, a study by Osei and Duah (2021) found that although SISOs are expected to play developmental roles, many still operate with a traditional top-down approach that creates tension with teachers. This misalignment often affects how teachers perceive the usefulness of SISOs in their schools.

### **2.3.2 Professional support in education**

Professional support refers to all structured and informal activities designed to improve teacher competencies, confidence, and effectiveness. It includes in-service training, classroom observation with feedback, mentoring, coaching, and peer learning (Guskey, 2020). In Ghana, SISOs are mandated to offer such support. However, the reality on the ground is often different. Studies show that many teachers

receive limited instructional support from SISOs due to logistical constraints, limited training, and high SISO-to-school ratios (Ampadu, 2022). These shortcomings have led to a decline in teacher motivation and professional growth, especially in rural districts. Research by Boateng and Adjei (2021) noted that meaningful professional support fosters teacher confidence, enhances subject mastery, and improves learner outcomes. Teachers who are regularly engaged in feedback sessions and professional dialogues tend to be more reflective and innovative in their teaching.

### **2.3.3 Teacher collaboration and school improvement**

Collaboration among teachers refers to the shared practices of planning lessons, co-teaching, peer observations, and sharing of teaching strategies. Effective collaboration leads to a positive school culture and sustainable instructional improvement (Fullan, 2020).

In the Ghanaian context, SISOs are expected to foster such collaboration by creating opportunities for teamwork and knowledge exchange among teachers. However, findings from Yeboah-Appiagyei et al. (2020) suggest that collaboration is often informal and driven more by individual effort than systemic support from SISOs. Teachers are more likely to collaborate when they feel trusted and supported, and when supervision focuses on growth rather than control. A study by Konadu and Frimpong (2019) highlights that SISOs who create spaces for reflective discussion and shared learning often inspire stronger professional networks among teachers.

## **2.4 Empirical Literature Review**

### **2.4.1 Teachers' perception of supervision in Ghana**

The perception of supervision among teachers in Ghana is a critical factor influencing its effectiveness and, by extension, the quality of education. This perception is not

formed in a vacuum but is profoundly shaped by the lived experiences of teachers regarding the nature, frequency, purpose, and interpersonal dynamics of supervisory practices within their schools. A growing body of research indicates that the prevailing view is often negative, casting supervision as a bureaucratic impediment rather than a catalytic force for professional growth.

An exploratory study by Tetteh and Owusu Mensah (2021) in the Central Region provided a foundational understanding of this dynamic. Their research confirmed that while teachers are universally aware of the presence and official role of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), a significant gap exists between this awareness and the felt support in instructional matters. Teachers in the study consistently described supervisory visits as routine and bureaucratic, characterised by a primary focus on inspecting lesson notes, syllabi coverage, and other administrative paperwork. This audit-oriented approach relegates the improvement of pedagogical skills to a secondary concern. Consequently, the researchers found that teachers predominantly perceived supervision as a form of high-stakes inspection, a judgmental process designed to catch shortcomings, rather than a collaborative effort aimed at fostering professional development. This perception fosters an environment of apprehension and defensive teaching, where the goal becomes avoiding censure rather than embracing innovation.

This view of SISOs as administrative enforcers is further solidified by the work of Amponsah and Amoah (2020). Their study in public basic schools concluded that teachers often see SISOs as officers whose primary mandate is to ensure compliance with top-down directives from the Ghana Education Service (GES). The role is perceived as one of policing rather than mentoring. This perception critically limits

the potential value of supervision. When teachers view the process as a compliance check, they are less likely to engage in reflective practice, experiment with innovative teaching methodologies, or see supervision as a component of continuous professional learning. Amponsah and Amoah (2020) argued compellingly that unless SISOs undergo a fundamental role reorientation, shifting their emphasis from inspection to instructional coaching and adopting a posture of participatory communication, their presence will continue to be viewed as supervisory in the punitive sense, rather than supportive.

The significance of these interpersonal and procedural factors is powerfully underscored by the research of Addae and Nyarko (2018). Their study provided empirical evidence that both the frequency and, more importantly, the quality of supervisory visits are paramount in shaping teachers' attitudes. They found a clear dichotomy in outcomes. In schools where teachers experienced regular, predictable, and constructive supervisory interactions, where feedback was specific, actionable, and delivered respectfully, there were reports of improved teacher motivation, more refined lesson planning, and the development of stronger classroom management abilities. In stark contrast, irregular, unpredictable visits that were predominantly fault-finding resulted in high levels of teacher frustration, anxiety, and overt or covert resistance to the entire supervisory process. This research highlights that inconsistency and a critical tone can poison the well of trust, making any form of professional dialogue nearly impossible.

Further research corroborates and deepens these findings by exploring alternative models. Adjei and Mensah (2019) conducted a comparative analysis that highlighted the transformative potential of a dialogic approach to supervision. They observed that

in instances where supervisors engaged teachers in genuine dialogue, where they acted as facilitators, asking probing questions and jointly reflecting on classroom challenges, teachers demonstrated a significantly stronger sense of agency and ownership in their instructional improvement. This collaborative model stands in direct opposition to the traditional top-down, transmission model of supervision, which their study found often creates anxiety, undermines teacher autonomy, and erodes professional confidence. The work of Adjei and Mensah (2019) suggests that the very structure of the supervisory conversation is a key determinant of its success or failure.

Expanding on the concept of collaboration, Boateng (2022) argued that effective supervision cannot be an isolated event but must be integrated into a broader ecosystem of professional support. He posited that for supervision to translate into meaningful classroom outcomes, it must be part of a continuum that includes structured mentoring, sustained peer collaboration, and active professional learning communities (PLCs). In this model, the SISO's role evolves from a solitary inspector to a facilitator of these wider professional networks. Boateng (2022) emphasised that this kind of supportive, integrated supervision has a demonstrable positive impact not only on teacher performance and self-efficacy but also on the ultimate goal, improved student engagement and academic achievement. This perspective aligns with global best practices that view teacher development as a collective, ongoing process rather than a series of episodic evaluations.

Adding a crucial historical and systemic dimension, a study by Asare and Osei (2023) traces the roots of the current supervisory culture to the colonial era, where inspection was primarily a tool for control and standardisation. They argue that despite post-

independence reforms, the legacy of this inspectorate model continues to influence the mindset and practices of many SISOs, as well as the expectations of teachers. This historical context helps explain the deep-seated resistance and suspicion that reform efforts often encounter. Furthermore, research from Quansah (2021) in the Northern Region highlights the impact of logistical constraints. Her study found that SISOs are often responsible for an impractically large number of schools across vast geographical areas, leading to infrequent visits and a rushed, superficial engagement when they do occur. This systemic overload forces SISOs into the very compliance-checking role that teachers resent, as there is simply no time for meaningful instructional coaching.

In conclusion, the perception of supervision among teachers in Ghana is not a fixed attribute but a direct consequence of how supervision is enacted on the ground. The evidence overwhelmingly indicates that when supervision is supportive, continuous, dialogic, and centred on instructional improvement, teachers are more likely to view it as a valuable asset to their professional lives. However, when it is infrequent, inspection-driven, compliance-focused, and delivered within a top-down, critical framework, it is perceived as a punitive, demoralising, and unhelpful exercise. For supervision in Ghana to finally achieve its stated developmental intent, a multi-pronged approach is necessary. This must include a fundamental redefinition of the SISO role from inspector to instructional leader, intensive training in coaching and communication skills for supervisors, systemic reforms to address logistical challenges, and the active promotion of professional learning communities to decentralise and democratize support. The transformation of teachers' perception from one of apprehension to one of anticipation is essential for unlocking the full potential of educational supervision as a lever for school improvement.

#### **2.4.2 SISOs and teacher professional development**

School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) are positioned to play a vital role in strengthening teachers' professional capacities at the basic school level in Ghana. As the primary link between national educational policies and classroom practice, their function is theoretically developmental, aimed at enhancing instructional quality and, by extension, student learning outcomes. However, the extent to which they effectively support teacher development varies considerably across districts and schools, influenced by a complex interplay of capacity, resources, and methodological approach.

A study by Agyeman and Asante (2022) provides compelling evidence for the positive impact SISOs can have when conditions are favourable. Their study reported that teachers who participated in structured professional development activities, such as workshops and focused service training sessions facilitated by SISOs, demonstrated noticeable improvement in their pedagogical skills. Specifically, these teachers became more proficient in employing learner-centred instructional strategies, implementing varied formative assessment methods, and designing lessons that incorporated differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learning needs. The study crucially emphasised that these improvements were most evident in contexts where the supervisory relationship was continuous, supportive, and grounded in a philosophy of shared problem solving rather than fault-finding. This suggests that the methodology of engagement is as important as the content being delivered. However, the same study highlighted a significant systemic challenge: SISOs in many districts operate under severe constraints. These include heavy workloads, often being responsible for an impractical number of schools; limited transportation, which impedes regular visits; and insufficient teaching and learning support materials to

demonstrate new techniques effectively. These logistical and resource challenges frequently hinder their ability to provide the sustained, meaningful professional guidance that the policy envisions.

The capacity of the SISOs themselves is a central factor in this equation. A broader national study conducted by the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with UNICEF (2020) revealed a critical training deficit. The study found that only about 40% of SISOs had received recent, substantive training in core areas such as instructional leadership, reflective coaching techniques, and contemporary pedagogical models. This gap in professional capacity means that a significant portion of SISOs are inadequately equipped to translate broad supervisory expectations into practical, actionable classroom support for teachers. Lacking the tools and confidence for instructional coaching, their engagements naturally default to what they know and can easily verify: administrative oversight. Consequently, for many teachers, the supervisory experience is reduced to a ritual of task checking, such as the inspection of lesson notes and scheme of work, rather than being embraced as an avenue for professional growth and collaborative reflection. This perception fundamentally undermines the developmental purpose of supervision.

These findings align with the earlier work of Osei Amankwah (2019), who established a direct correlation between a SISO's own expertise and their credibility with teachers. The study observed that in districts where SISOs lacked updated content knowledge and modern pedagogical skills, teachers were less likely to view supervision as professionally beneficial. The visits were seen as irrelevant to their actual classroom challenges. Conversely, in schools where SISOs moved beyond inspection to engage in hands-on activities like classroom demonstrations, co-teaching

sessions, and post-teaching feedback dialogues, teachers reported significantly higher instructional confidence and motivation. This active, participatory approach transforms the SISO from a critic into a colleague and a mentor.

Similarly, the research of Danso and Gyan (2021) reinforces the power of modelling and dialogue. Their study found that teachers were more willing to adopt and persist with new instructional strategies when supervisors first modelled these strategies in authentic classroom settings and then engaged teachers in reflective discussions about the practical challenges and successes of implementation. This approach demystifies new techniques and provides teachers with a concrete reference point, making the abstract practical. It fosters a sense of shared inquiry into effective teaching, which is far more powerful than a one-way transmission of directives.

Beyond individual teacher development, SISOs have the potential to catalyse collaborative learning structures. Adomako and Frimpong (2021) noted that ongoing professional development led by SISOs can serve as a springboard for fostering vibrant professional learning communities (PLCs) within schools. When SISOs facilitate the formation of these communities, teachers can move beyond isolated practice to collaboratively analyse student work, share successful instructional strategies, and build collective expertise. However, the study cautions that these communities are most successful in schools where SISOs intentionally facilitate collaboration and create a safe space for peer learning, rather than simply instructing teachers on what to do. The SISO's role shifts from being the sole source of knowledge to being a facilitator of shared professional capital.

Furthermore, for any professional development to be effective, it must be perceived as relevant by its recipients. Amoako and Fosu (2023) strongly argued that continuous

professional development must be meticulously aligned with the real, expressed instructional needs of teachers. They emphasised that professional development becomes meaningful and impactful only when teachers see its direct relevance to their daily teaching realities and the specific challenges they face with their students. SISOs who take the time to conduct needs assessments, observe classrooms diagnostically, and engage teachers in conversations about their struggles are better positioned to tailor support accordingly. This teacher-centred approach is more likely to gain genuine teacher cooperation and buy-in, which is a prerequisite for sustained instructional improvement.

In summary, the evidence indicates that SISOs can significantly contribute to teacher professional development, but this potential is often untapped due to systemic and methodological limitations. They are most effective when they transcend their traditional role as administrative supervisors to become true instructional leaders. To enhance their effectiveness, a multi-level strategy is required. This includes investing in ongoing, high-quality training for SISOs in instructional coaching and modern pedagogies; providing adequate logistical support and manageable workloads to enable regular and meaningful school visits; and championing a national policy shift from compliance-oriented inspection to mentorship-based supervisory models. When these conditions are met, SISOs can truly become the catalysts for sustained instructional quality and improved student learning outcomes that the Ghanaian educational system needs. The transformation of this role is not merely an administrative adjustment but a fundamental prerequisite for achieving educational excellence.

### **2.4.3 SISOs and teacher collaboration**

Teacher collaboration is widely recognised as a cornerstone of effective instructional delivery and continuous professional growth. In the Ghanaian basic school context, the extent and quality of collaboration among teachers is significantly shaped by the leadership practices of School Improvement Support Officers and headteachers. These educational leaders possess the potential to either cultivate a vibrant culture of professional sharing or inadvertently reinforce patterns of isolation and individualism among teaching staff. Research increasingly demonstrates that the strategic facilitation of collaborative practices by SISOs can transform school environments, leading to improved teaching quality and better student outcomes.

A seminal study by Ofori and Koomson (2019) provided compelling evidence of how SISOs can actively foster productive collaboration in school settings. Their comparative research between high-performing and low-performing basic schools revealed striking differences in supervisory approaches. In high-performing schools, SISOs systematically facilitated teacher collaboration through several structured mechanisms. These included regular cluster-based professional learning communities that brought teachers together across grade levels and subjects, organised group lesson planning sessions where educators could co-create instructional materials, and team-led instructional projects that encouraged collective responsibility for school improvement. Teachers in these collaborative environments consistently described supervision as collective and supportive rather than solely directive. The researchers found these professional environments were associated with several positive outcomes, including stronger teacher retention rates, improved instructional consistency across classrooms, and measurably higher student academic achievement.

This suggests that the SISOs' role in creating collaborative structures directly contributes to overall school effectiveness.

Conversely, the same study by Ofori and Koomson (2019) documented that in low-performing schools, meaningful collaboration was notably minimal. In these contexts, SISOs seldom initiated peer learning activities or facilitated follow-up dialogue after classroom observations. The supervisory visits tended to be brief, administrative, and concluded without creating opportunities for professional exchange among teachers. Educators in these schools reported feelings of professional isolation, a noticeable lack of collegiality, and limited access to shared teaching resources. Such environments naturally discouraged professional experimentation and reflective practice, often leading to repetitive teaching methods and general stagnation in instructional improvement. This stark contrast between high-performing and low-performing schools underscores the pivotal role SISOs play in either breaking down or reinforcing walls of professional isolation.

This divergence in collaborative cultures finds further support in recent work by Danquah and Twum (2023), who explored the relationship between shared leadership models and teacher collaboration. Their research found that when SISOs actively encourage shared leadership structures where teachers meaningfully participate in departmental and school-level decision making, there is a corresponding increase in teacher buy-in and ownership of instructional reforms. Schools that implemented shared leadership models demonstrated more vibrant and sustainable collaborative practices, including regular team teaching arrangements, systematic peer lesson reviews, and joint student assessment moderation exercises. The study emphasised a crucial insight: collaboration does not occur spontaneously in most school settings. It

must be consciously nurtured through deliberate leadership actions that value teacher voice and promote professional interdependence. SISOs who create formal channels for teacher input in curriculum planning and resource allocation effectively signal that collaboration is not merely encouraged but expected.

The importance of modelling collaborative behaviour is highlighted in research by Owusu and Armah (2021). Their findings revealed that SISOs who explicitly model collaborative problem-solving approaches during supervisory visits help establish strong norms of collegiality, trust, and reflective dialogue among teaching staff. When teachers observe their supervisors engaging in genuine inquiry, actively listening to concerns, and working together to develop solutions, they are more likely to adopt similar approaches with their colleagues. The study documented that teachers become significantly more willing to observe each other's lessons and discuss classroom challenges openly when supervision is framed as a joint learning process rather than as compliance monitoring. On the other hand, supervisor-led criticism or authoritarian oversight was found to weaken trust and actively discourage peer support, as teachers become defensive and protective of their classroom practices.

Further evidence from Mensah and Larbi (2022) suggests that collaboration flourishes most effectively in schools where SISOs provide not only encouragement but also concrete structural support. Their research focused on the importance of scheduling sustained cluster meetings and ensuring these engagements maintain a sharp focus on pedagogical inquiry rather than administrative matters. The study found that collaborative spaces are most productive when they prioritise co-planning activities, examination of student work, and analysis of teaching strategies. Such structured collaborative encounters help teachers align instructional approaches across grade

levels, share effective classroom practices that have demonstrated results, and collectively develop responses to learning difficulties observed among students. The researchers noted that SISOs who merely mandate meetings without ensuring their qualitative substance miss the opportunity to deepen professional collaboration.

Expanding on these findings, a study by Ankomah and Asare (2023) investigated the resource dimensions of collaboration. Their research indicated that SISOs who facilitate access to shared instructional materials and digital platforms for resource sharing significantly lower the practical barriers to collaboration. When teachers have ready access to a common pool of teaching resources, lesson plans, and assessment tools, they are more inclined to work together and build upon each other's efforts. This resource facilitation role emerges as an important, though often overlooked, aspect of the SISO's function in promoting collaboration.

Additionally, research by Boadi and Asante (2022) examined the temporal aspects of collaborative practices. Their work highlighted that SISOs who successfully protect time for teacher collaboration within the school schedule send a powerful message about its institutional priority. In schools where SISOs worked with headteachers to designate specific, uninterrupted periods for professional learning community meetings and collaborative planning, teachers were more likely to engage deeply with the process. Conversely, when collaboration time was frequently sacrificed for administrative tasks or meetings, teachers perceived it as less valuable.

The collective evidence from these studies presents a consistent narrative: School Improvement Support Officers play a pivotal role in cultivating teacher collaboration. Where SISOs provide ongoing encouragement, strategic mentorship, and active facilitation of professional learning communities, teacher collaboration becomes

embedded in the school culture as a natural and valued aspect of professional practice. However, in contexts where SISOs are disengaged, under-resourced, or overly administrative in their approach, teacher collaboration remains weak and fragmented, resulting in inconsistent instructional practices across classrooms. To strengthen this crucial aspect of school improvement, targeted interventions should focus on enhancing SISO capacity in collaborative leadership techniques, providing necessary logistical support to enable regular teacher interactions, and systematically institutionalising professional learning community structures within and across schools. Through these concerted efforts, SISOs can transform from compliance officers into catalysts of professional cooperation, ultimately driving sustained school improvement and enhanced educational outcomes for all students.

## **2.5 Contextual Challenges Facing SISOs**

While the intentions behind the SISO framework are laudable, the implementation faces several contextual challenges:

1. **Logistical Limitations:** Most SISOs are assigned to multiple schools and lack transportation and technology to perform their duties effectively (GES, 2021).
2. **Inadequate Training:** Many SISOs have limited exposure to modern supervisory techniques, especially in instructional coaching and teacher mentoring (Mensah & Opoku, 2022).
3. **Limited Teacher Buy-in:** Some teachers are sceptical of SISOs' capabilities, especially when they perceive them as less qualified or less experienced.
4. **Policy-Practice Gaps:** There is often a disconnect between the SISO policy guidelines and what actually happens on the ground.

Despite these challenges, opportunities exist to strengthen the SISO framework through professional development, increased resources, and stronger accountability systems.

## **2.6 Synthesis and Research Gap**

From the reviewed literature, it is clear that SISOs have the potential to play a transformative role in teacher development and school improvement. However, their impact largely depends on how they are perceived by teachers and how effectively they carry out their roles. Most existing studies have focused on the general effectiveness of school supervision but have not thoroughly explored the nuances of teachers' perceptions, especially in terms of professional support and collaboration. Also, while there is some attention to challenges facing SISOs, there is limited research on the enabling factors that can help them succeed.

This study, therefore, fills an important gap by providing a deeper understanding of how teachers in basic schools view SISOs, how those perceptions influence their willingness to engage professionally, and what can be done to improve supervision practices in the Ghanaian education system.

## **2.7 Summary of Literature Review**

This literature review has highlighted the theoretical foundations and practical realities surrounding the role of SISOs in Ghana's basic education sector. Using the lens of Transformational Leadership Theory, the review shows that SISOs can be change agents who not only supervise but also inspire and support teachers. However, logistical constraints, inconsistent training, and weak teacher engagement continue to hinder their effectiveness.

Empirical studies support the idea that positive teacher perceptions and collaborative practices can be fostered through targeted professional support and inclusive supervision strategies. This study will contribute new insights by centring on the voices of teachers and exploring both the limitations and opportunities within the current SISO framework in Ghana.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section outlined the methodology employed for the study, structured into several sub-sections. It covered the study area, the chosen research approach and design, the target population, sampling size and procedure, methods of data collection (highlighting sources, techniques, and instruments), approaches to data analysis and presentation, as well as the ethical considerations that guided the research process

#### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Churchill (2019), a research design specifies the plan, methods, and procedures to be used in addressing the research problem effectively. It serves as a blueprint that guides how the study is structured and conducted to achieve its objectives systematically and coherently.

In line with the purpose of the present study, which was to investigate how teachers perceive the role and effectiveness of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) in enhancing professional support and collaboration in basic schools within the Birim Central Municipality, a descriptive survey design was adopted within the quantitative research paradigm. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to gather quantifiable data on teachers' views regarding the supervisory practices of SISOs, the professional support they provide, and the extent to which they influence collaborative practices among teachers. Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2019) explain that descriptive research seeks to obtain information about existing

conditions or relationships among variables, while Merriam (2019) notes that it provides an accurate and factual account of phenomena as they naturally occur.

The descriptive survey design was particularly suitable because it allowed the researcher to measure and analyse teachers' perceptions objectively, using numerical data to identify trends and patterns in how SISOs contribute to professional growth and collaboration. This approach also enabled the use of statistical analysis to examine possible associations between supervision practices and teacher outcomes. As Best and Kahn (2019) point out, descriptive research offers a realistic portrayal of educational conditions and is beneficial in informing educational stakeholders, including teachers, SISOs, school leaders, and policymakers, about practices that can improve teaching and learning.

By employing this descriptive quantitative design, the study ensured that data were collected within the natural school environment, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the findings. This methodological approach supported an evidence-based interpretation of how SISOs influence professional support and collaborative culture among teachers in basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality.

### **3.3 Research Area**

The Birim Central Municipality is one of the administrative districts in the Eastern Region. It was carved out of the former Birim South District in 2007 under Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 1863. The municipality has seven (7) communities and three (3) Zonal Councils. The Birim Central Municipality is one of the thirty-three (33) administrative districts in the Eastern Region. It was carved out of the former Birim South District in 2007 under Legislative Instrument (L.I.) 1863. It covers an estimated area of about 158.099 sq. km. The Municipality shares boundaries with

Akyemansa District to the North, Birim South District to the West and Asene-Manso District to the East. The municipal capital is Akim Oda. There are 7 communities in the Municipality, with Akim Oda being the capital. The Municipality is centrally located, well-connected to the neighbouring districts and serves as the economic hub within the enclave. The Municipality is undulating and lies within the semi-deciduous forest zones.

The estimated municipal population stood at 100,594 in 2021. The male population accounts for 47.8% (48,084), and the female population constitutes 52.2% (52,510) of the total population of the municipality. The annual population growth rate for the municipality is 2.4%. The municipality is predominantly urban, having 68,102, representing 67.7% of the population and 32,492, representing 32.3% living in rural areas. The large proportion of people living in the urban communities means that a lot of resources must be shifted towards improving socio-economic facilities for the use of the increasing urban population, while support must be directed at upgrading facilities and expanding economic opportunities in rural communities to minimise the migration of people to urban areas. The sex ratio for the municipality is 91.7, which means that for every 100 females, there are about 92 males.

There are 57 Kindergarten (KG), 63 Primary, 61 Junior High Schools (JHSs), four Senior High Schools (SHSs), one Nursing Training Institution (public) and one College of Education in the municipality. About 95% of the educational institutions are located in Akim Oda. Of these figures, 22%, 24%, 13% and 33% of the school buildings at the KG, Primary, JHS and SHS levels, respectively, are in poor condition. Net enrolment ratios at the KG, Primary and JHS, respectively, are 65.0%, 73.0% and 53.3%.

The municipality has a total of 1,443 teachers, comprising 836 males and 607 females teaching in both public and private schools. There are 156,530,360 and 397 teachers at the KG, Primary, JHS and SHS, respectively. The pupil/teacher ratios are 1:23, 1:21, 1:14 and 1:19 for KG, Primary, JHS and SHS, respectively. The ratio is favourable and efforts are being made to ensure it reflects in pupils' performance (<http://www.bcma.gov.gh/about.html>). The study was conducted in the Birim Central Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana, with its capital at Akim Oda. The municipality has a large number of public and private basic schools supervised by various SISOs within educational circuits. The area was chosen because it presents a diverse mix of urban and peri-urban schools, providing a suitable context to examine how SISOs influence teachers' professional development and collaboration.

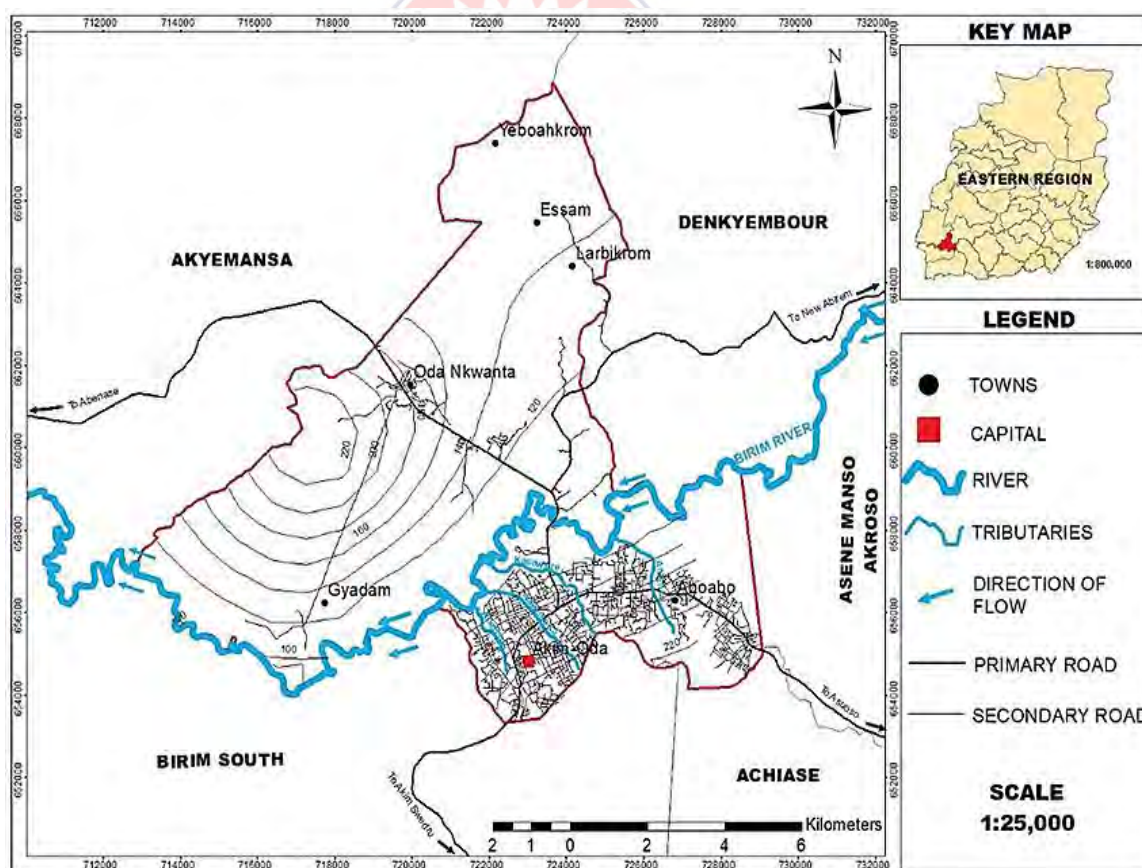


Figure 1: Map of Birim Central Municipality

Source: <http://www.bcma.gov.gh/about.html>

### **3.4 Population**

The target population for the study comprised all basic school teachers in the Birim Central Municipality. The teacher population includes both male and female instructors across lower and upper primary levels, as well as junior high school teachers. In general, there are 890 teachers, 530 and 360 teachers at Primary and JHS, respectively.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample is a subset of the overall population chosen for observation and analysis (Owu-Ewie, 2021). The primary aim of sampling is to ensure representation; thus, the sample should be constructed to accurately reflect the population from which it is drawn (Jennings, 2021). The sampling method employed for the selection of the teachers was a multi-stage sampling technique. This technique was used because the representative sample exhibits characteristics typical of those possessed by the target population and hence can generalise the findings to a large population.

With the first stage, the schools were grouped into ten strata according to the number of educational circuits in the municipality. These educational circuits served as strata, from which simple random sampling was employed to select teachers from each circuit. This approach guaranteed that all schools are adequately represented in the sample.

The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's formula (1967), which provides a simplified method for calculating the required sample size based on the total population and a desired margin of error. Refer to Appendix B for Yamane's formula and computation done for this research.

Based on these parameters, the sample size is calculated to be two hundred and seventy -six (276) respondents. From there, simple random sampling, the lottery method were used to select 28 teachers from each circuit.

### **3.6 Data Collection Instruments**

A research instrument is any type of written or physical device which is used to measure variables (Koo & Yang, 2025). This study used mainly primary data with the help of self-developed questionnaires. Researchers use questionnaires to gather confidential and sensitive data from respondents who are given enough time to carefully consider their responses (Hwang, 2023). Taherdoost (2022) defined questionnaires as a series of questions that are usually refer to as a particular set of issues or similar issues that interest the researcher.

Questionnaires offer a relatively cheaper means for collecting primary data, makes it easy for researchers to get a large data from a large population, enables researchers to carry out straightforward analysis of responses to closed questions (Shearer, 2021; Fadele & Rocha, 2025). Furthermore, with the use of questionnaires, there is minimum pressure for an instantaneous reply from the respondent, the respondent's identity and confidentiality are protected, there is no interviewer bias, questions are standardised and can give suggestive data to test hypothesis (Shearer, 2021; Fadele & Rocha, 2025).

The questionnaire was organised into four distinct sections to align with the study's objectives. The first section gathered demographic information of respondents. The second section focused on teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs. The third section examined teacher's perception on professional support provided by SISOs. Finally, the fourth section examined the perceived impact of

SISO activities on collaboration. The items on the questionnaire were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Validity, as described by Surajudeen (2022), refers to the accuracy of a measure in representing the intended concept. The degree to which a test assesses the intended content area ascertained by expert judgement rather than quantitative techniques is known as content validity, according to Almanasreh, Moles & Chen (2019). The researcher's supervisor reviewed the interview schedule and questionnaire to verify validity, who provided feedback to enhance clarity and eliminate potential biases. Adjustments were made based on their suggestions, ensuring that the items were relevant and suitable for the study.

Reliability, on the other hand, concerns the consistency of measurement (Almanasreh, Moles & Chen, 2019). The reliability of a scale indicates how free it is from random error (Fuller et al., 2020) and reflects the extent to which the scale yields consistent results across repeated measurements (Rose & Johnson, 2020).

In this study, a pilot test as conducted at Birim South District, utilising a simple random sampling procedure to select 40 teachers. The feedback from respondents during this pre-test aided in refining the questionnaire and checking its clarity and appropriateness. Necessary alterations and redesigns were made based on this feedback. Conducting the pilot test with students enabled the researcher to identify unclear or ambiguous questions and made improvements to the questionnaire. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2018) emphasize that pilot testing is essential for evaluating the clarity of questions, the appropriateness of response options, and the overall reliability of the instrument. The diverse academic cohort at Birim South District

provided an ideal sample for assessing the instrument's relevance and effectiveness prior to its administration to the larger respondents.

This process also validated whether the questionnaire consistently measure the intended variables (Creswell, 2021). Although the feedback from respondents may not be entirely generalizable, it yielded critical insights into the design and effectiveness of the instrument. Additionally, pilot testing helped gauge respondents' reactions to sensitive questions, ensuring that the wording encourage honest and accurate responses. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the items on the subscales was analysed. The detailed results are presented in the Table 1.

*Table 1: Reliability Statistics for the instrument*

<b>Subscales</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Roles and responsibilities of SISOs	8	0.904
Professional support provided by SISOs	8	0.899
Impact of SISO activities on collaboration	8	0.683
<b>Overall</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0.927</b>

Source: Field data (2025)

The reliability coefficients obtained from the instrument indicate the degree to which the items within each subscale consistently measured their intended constructs. As presented in Table 1, the subscale on the *Roles and Responsibilities of SISOs* recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.904, demonstrating excellent internal consistency in assessing teachers' perceptions of the supervisory and administrative functions of School Improvement Support Officers. The subscale on *Professional Support Provided by SISOs* yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.899, reflecting a high level of reliability in measuring how effectively SISOs offer professional guidance, mentoring, and

instructional support to teachers. The *Impact of SISO Activities on Collaboration* subscale produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.683, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency in capturing teachers' views on how SISO initiatives promote teamwork and collaborative practices among staff. The overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.927 signifies that the entire instrument is highly reliable, confirming that the items collectively provide a consistent and dependable measure for examining teachers' perceptions of SISOs' roles, professional support, and impact on collaboration in basic schools.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Before the data collection process began, an introductory letter was obtained from the coordinator of the College for Distance and e-Learning of the University of Education, Winneba. Subsequently, permission was sought from the headmasters of selected basic schools. The data collection process commenced with a briefing session in which the researcher outlined the study's objectives, significance, and the roles of respondents to encourage cooperation and voluntary participation. Respondents were assured that they had the right to withdraw at any time, and that their confidentiality would be maintained. Self-administered questionnaires, designed to gather data, were distributed. These questionnaires featured closed-ended questions to facilitate quantitative data collection. Respondents were allotted 20 to 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires, and the researcher was on standby to address any queries without influencing the respondents' responses. This meticulously planned and ethically sound procedure ensured the collection of reliable and valid data. The findings provided valuable insights into this complex dynamic.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

This study utilised descriptive statistics to analyse the data gathered from the field. Initially, the collected data was sorted and organised. Next, it was coded to help the researcher identify relevant codes for potential responses to each item on the questionnaire. The coding process was carried out using SPSS version 27. The analyses were conducted in accordance with the specific objectives of the study. To answer the research questions formulated to guide the investigation, descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were applied in the data analysis. Specifically, research question 1 was analysed using means, and standard deviations, research question 2 was analysed using means, and standard deviations and research question 3 was also analysed using means, and standard deviations.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher adhered to standard ethical principles throughout the study. Permission was obtained from the Municipal Education Directorate and heads of schools before data collection. In addition, the study adhered to three key ethical principles: informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Respondents were made aware of the research's purpose and its objectives. They were encouraged to express their opinions openly and objectively, with the freedom to decide whether or not to participate. Additionally, they had the right to withdraw their consent at any time without facing any negative consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured, and the research is designed to avoid causing harm or psychological distress to respondents.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the study's findings. The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The analysis was conducted using the Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### **4.2 Demographic and other characteristics**

The purpose of the study is to assess how teachers perceive the role and effectiveness of SISOs, and how these perceptions impact professional support and collaboration among teachers in public basic schools. An overview of the demographic information characteristics of the study participants is provided in Table 2. A total of two hundred and seventy-six (276) teachers were chosen for the study; all 276 respondents completed the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 100%.

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the 276 respondents who participated in the study. The results indicate that the majority of respondents, 130(47.1%), were aged between 30 and 39 years, suggesting that most teachers were in their early to mid-career stages. This was followed by 104(37.7%) teachers who fell within the 40–49-year age range, showing a considerable number of experienced teachers in the teaching workforce. A smaller proportion, 24(8.7%), were within the 20–29-year age group, indicating relatively few younger or newly recruited teachers.

*Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age Group</b>		
20 – 29 years	24	8.7
30 – 39 years	130	47.1
40 – 49 years	104	37.7
50 years and above	18	6.5
Total	276	100.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	173	62.7
Female	103	37.3
Total	276	100.0
<b>Educational Background</b>		
Diploma/HND	166	60.1
Bachelor's Degree	96	34.8
Masters	14	5.1
Total	276	100.0
<b>Years of Teaching</b>		
1 – 5 years	28	10.1
6 – 10 years	91	33.0
11 – 15 years	113	40.9
16 – 20 years	42	15.2
21 years and above	2	0.7
Total	276	100.0

Source: Field data (2025)

The least represented age category comprised those aged 50 years and above, with only 18(6.5%), implying limited representation of older and possibly nearing-retirement teachers.

With regard to gender distribution, 173(62.7%) of the respondents were male, while 103(37.3%) were female. This finding suggests that the teaching profession in the

study area is male-dominated, which may have implications for gender balance in staffing and leadership positions within the basic school system.

In terms of educational background, the results reveal that 166(60.1%) of the respondents held Diploma or Higher National Diploma (HND) qualifications, making them the largest group. Ninety-six (34.8%) respondents possessed Bachelor's degrees, indicating a substantial number of teachers with advanced academic qualifications. Only 14(5.1%) respondents reported having Master's degrees, implying that relatively few teachers have attained postgraduate education. This trend may reflect the limited progression to higher levels of academic and professional development among teachers in the municipality.

Concerning teaching experience, 113(40.9%) of the respondents had taught for between 11 and 15 years, representing the largest cohort and indicating a predominance of mid-career professionals. Ninety-one (33.0%) had been teaching for 6–10 years, showing a strong representation of moderately experienced teachers. Forty-two (15.2%) respondents reported having 16–20 years of teaching experience, while 28(10.1%) had between 1 and 5 years of experience, suggesting a smaller number of early-career teachers. Only 2(0.7%) respondents had more than 21 years of teaching experience, indicating that long-serving teachers form a very small minority in the sample.

Generally, the demographic data suggest that the majority of teachers in the study were male, held Diploma or Bachelor's degree qualifications, and had moderate teaching experience, predominantly within the 30–49-year age range. These characteristics may influence their perceptions and engagement with supervisory and

professional development activities led by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs).

### **4.3 Research questions**

#### **4.3.1 Research Question 1: What are teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality?**

The study explored teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs in the Ghanaian basic education system. The result was analysed and discussed using frequencies and percentages. The findings are presented in this section.

The following criteria were used for interpreting the mean scores: values ranging from 1.00 to 1.79 were classified as *Strongly Disagree*, 1.80 to 2.60 as *Disagree*, 2.61 to 3.41 as *Neutral*, 3.42 to 4.22 as *Agree*, and 4.23 to 5.00 as *Strongly Agree*. Items with mean scores above 3.41 had respondents agree with the assertion, whereas items with mean scores below 2.61 were disagreed with by respondents.

Table 3 presents the results on teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). The findings show generally high mean scores across all items, indicating positive perceptions of SISOs among the respondents. The statement that SISOs play a key role in monitoring and supervising teaching and learning activities recorded a mean of 4.14 with a standard deviation of 0.937, corresponding to an agree decision. This suggests that teachers recognise SISOs as key actors in overseeing instructional delivery and maintaining teaching standards in schools.

The statement that SISOs ensure adherence to professional standards among teachers had a mean of 4.37 and a standard deviation of 0.874, which reflects a strongly agree decision.

*Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions of the Roles and Responsibilities of SISOs*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
SISOs play a key role in monitoring and supervising teaching and learning activities	4.14	0.937
SISOs ensure adherence to professional standards among teachers.	4.37	0.874
SISOs' roles contribute to maintaining discipline and professionalism in schools.	4.27	0.966
SISOs guide teachers in preparing lesson notes and instructional materials.	4.26	0.952
SISOs' visits motivate teachers to improve instructional performance.	4.20	1.003
SISOs serve as mentors and advisors to teachers on professional matters.	4.21	0.958
SISOs play a role in identifying teacher training needs within the circuit.	4.31	0.978
SISOs help ensure that school improvement plans are implemented effectively.	4.23	0.971
<b>Mean of Means /Std. Dev</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.955</b>

Source: Field data (2025)

This result implies that teachers highly value SISOs' contribution in promoting professionalism and compliance with educational policies. Similarly, the item indicating that SISOs' roles contribute to maintaining discipline and professionalism in schools produced a mean of 4.27 and a standard deviation of 0.966, also rated as strongly agree, demonstrating teachers' acknowledgement of SISOs as custodians of ethical and professional conduct.

Teachers also strongly agree that SISOs guide them in preparing lesson notes and instructional materials, with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.952. This indicates that SISOs play a supportive role in assisting teachers with planning and resource preparation to enhance instructional quality. The statement that SISOs motivate teachers through school visits yielded a mean of 4.20 and a standard deviation of 1.003, corresponding to an agree decision. This reflects that teachers perceive SISO visits as encouraging, though not as strongly as other aspects of their role.

Furthermore, the item stating that SISOs serve as mentors and advisors to teachers on professional matters recorded a mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.958, also rated as agree. This demonstrates that teachers consider SISOs as valuable sources of professional guidance and support. The statement that SISOs play a role in identifying teacher training needs within the circuit attained a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.978, corresponding to strongly agree, suggesting that SISOs are seen as instrumental in assessing and addressing teachers' developmental needs. Similarly, the item indicating that SISOs help ensure that school improvement plans are implemented effectively recorded a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of 0.971, also categorised as strongly agree, which points to teachers' confidence in the contribution of SISOs to institutional growth and development.

The overall mean of means of 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.955 reflects a strongly agree decision. This suggests that, in general, teachers held very positive perceptions of SISOs' roles and responsibilities. The high overall mean implies that SISOs are widely regarded as effective instructional leaders who contribute

meaningfully to supervision, teacher development, and school improvement within the educational system.

#### **4.3.2 Research Question 2: To what extent do teachers perceive that SISOs provide professional support that enhances teaching and learning in public basic schools in the Birim Central Municipality?**

The study assessed the extent to which teachers believe SISOs provide professional support that enhances teaching and learning. The result was analysed and discussed using means and standard deviations. The findings are presented in this section.

Table 4 presents the results on teachers' perceptions of the professional support provided by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). The findings show that teachers generally held positive views regarding the quality and relevance of professional support received from SISOs. The statement that SISOs organise in-service training to update teachers' professional skills recorded a mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.986, corresponding to an agree decision. This indicates that teachers perceived SISOs as playing an active role in facilitating continuous professional development through training and capacity-building initiatives.

The statement that SISOs promote knowledge-sharing among teachers during supervision produced a mean of 4.18 and a standard deviation of 1.046, also rated as agree. This suggests that teachers viewed SISO-led supervisory processes as collaborative and conducive to the exchange of pedagogical ideas. Similarly, the item on SISOs providing effective feedback after classroom observations yielded a mean of 4.19 with a standard deviation of 1.000, corresponding to an agree decision. This implies that teachers considered the feedback from SISOs to be constructive and useful in improving instructional practices. The statement that teachers receive

adequate mentoring from SISOs had a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 0.937, rated as strongly agree.

*Table 4: Teachers' Perception Of Professional Support Provided By SISOs*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
SISOs organise in-service training to update teachers' professional skills.	4.21	0.986
SISOs promote knowledge-sharing among teachers during supervision.	4.18	1.046
SISOs provide effective feedback after classroom observations.	4.19	1.000
Teachers receive adequate mentoring from SISOs.	4.28	0.937
SISOs assist teachers in identifying and solving classroom challenges.	4.33	1.136
Professional support from SISOs enhances teaching effectiveness	4.26	0.905
SISOs' visits have improved my confidence in teaching.	3.99	0.372
SISOs help teachers integrate new teaching methods and instructional resources.	4.29	0.895
<b>Mean of Means/Std. Dev</b>	<b>4.22</b>	<b>0.910</b>

Source: Field data (2025)

This finding suggests that teachers recognised SISOs as effective mentors who provide valuable professional guidance and emotional support. Likewise, the statement that SISOs assist teachers to identify and solve classroom challenges recorded a mean of 4.33 and a standard deviation of 1.136, corresponding to strongly agree, demonstrating that teachers viewed SISOs as instrumental in addressing instructional difficulties and improving problem-solving capacities in teaching.

The item stating that professional support from SISOs enhances teaching effectiveness produced a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 0.905, also rated as

strongly agree. This suggests that teachers believed the interventions and guidance offered by SISOs contributed positively to the overall quality of classroom instruction. The statement that SISOs' visits have improved teachers' confidence in teaching recorded a mean of 3.99 with a standard deviation of 0.372, resulting in an agree decision, indicating that supervisory visits from SISOs helped strengthen teachers' self-assurance and professional competence. Similarly, the statement that SISOs help teachers integrate new teaching methods and instructional resources recorded a mean of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.895, corresponding to strongly agree, which reflects teachers' perception of SISOs as key agents in promoting innovative teaching practices and resource utilisation.

The overall mean of means of 4.22 with a standard deviation of 0.910 corresponds to an agree decision. This indicates that, in general, teachers expressed favourable perceptions of the professional support provided by SISOs. The high overall mean implies that SISOs are widely regarded as supportive facilitators of teacher development, contributing meaningfully to instructional improvement and professional growth within the school system.

#### **4.3.3 Research Question 3: What are teachers' perceptions of the role of SISOs in promoting professional collaboration among teaching staff in public schools in the Birim Central Municipality?**

The study examined how teachers perceive the influence of SISOs on fostering collaboration among teaching staff in their schools. The findings were analysed and discussed using mean values and standard deviations.

Table 5 presents the results on teachers' perceptions of the perceived impact of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) on teacher collaboration. The findings

show generally high mean scores, suggesting that teachers viewed SISO activities as positively influencing collaboration and collegiality among teaching staff.

*Table 5: Perceived Impact of SISO Activities on Collaboration*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
SISOs encourage teamwork among teachers within the school.	4.35	0.883
SISOs facilitate joint problem-solving sessions that enhance cooperation among teachers.	4.05	0.607
SISO-led workshops foster collaboration between teachers of different schools.	4.09	0.684
SISOs encourage teachers to observe one another's lessons and share ideas.	3.96	1.192
SISO activities have improved communication among teaching staff.	4.36	0.909
SISOs create opportunities for peer learning and mentorship.	4.29	0.912
Collaboration promoted by SISOs has led to improvement in teaching quality.	4.37	0.879
SISOs help establish and sustain professional learning communities (PLCs) among teachers.	4.24	0.946
<b>Mean of Means/Std. Dev</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>0.877</b>

Source: Field data (2025)

The statement that SISOs encourage teamwork among teachers within the school recorded a mean of 4.35 with a standard deviation of 0.883, corresponding to a strongly agree decision. This indicates that teachers perceived SISOs as effective in fostering teamwork and collective participation in school-based activities.

The statement that SISOs facilitate joint problem-solving sessions that enhance cooperation among teachers recorded a mean of 4.05 with a standard deviation of 0.607, corresponding to an agree decision. This suggests that teachers believed SISO-

led supervisory interactions encouraged open exchange of teaching ideas and pedagogical experiences among colleagues. The item indicating that SISO-led workshops foster collaboration between teachers of different schools had a mean of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 0.684, also rated as agree, reflecting teachers' recognition of SISOs' efforts in promoting inter-school professional networks and shared learning opportunities.

The statement that SISOs encourage teachers to observe one another's lessons and share ideas recorded a mean of 3.96 with a standard deviation of 1.192, which corresponds to an agree decision. This implies that while teachers generally acknowledged SISO influence in peer observation practices, the relatively higher variability suggests differing levels of implementation across schools. The statement that SISO activities have improved communication among teaching staff recorded a mean of 4.36 with a standard deviation of 0.909, resulting in a strongly agree decision, indicating that teachers perceived improved interpersonal communication and coordination among staff as a result of SISO initiatives.

The item that SISOs create opportunities for peer learning and mentorship yielded a mean of 4.29 with a standard deviation of 0.912, corresponding to strongly agree. This shows that teachers viewed SISOs as facilitators of supportive professional environments where teachers learn from one another. Similarly, the statement that collaboration promoted by SISOs has led to improvement in teaching quality recorded a mean of 4.37 with a standard deviation of 0.879, also rated as strongly agree, suggesting that teachers believed enhanced collaboration translated into better instructional practices and classroom outcomes. The statement that SISOs help establish and sustain professional learning communities (PLCs) among teachers

produced a mean of 4.24 with a standard deviation of 0.946, again corresponding to strongly agree, indicating that SISOs were seen as instrumental in institutionalising structures that encourage continuous collaboration and reflective teaching practice.

The overall mean of means of 4.21 with a standard deviation of 0.877 corresponds to an agree decision. This indicates that, overall, teachers held positive perceptions of the impact of SISO activities on professional collaboration. The high overall mean implies that SISOs play a significant role in building collegial working relationships, promoting knowledge-sharing, and strengthening cooperative learning cultures within and across schools.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

##### **4.4.1 Teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs**

The first objective of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of SISOs in the Ghanaian basic education system. The findings reveal that teachers held highly positive perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of School Improvement Support Officers. They viewed SISOs as key figures in monitoring instruction, promoting professionalism, and maintaining discipline within schools. Teachers also recognised SISOs as mentors who provide guidance in lesson preparation, identify training needs, and support the implementation of school improvement plans. The results suggest that SISOs are regarded as effective instructional leaders who play a vital role in enhancing teacher performance and school development.

The findings of this study, which reveal highly positive teacher perceptions of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) as instructional leaders and mentors, present a compelling contrast to a significant portion of the existing empirical literature on

supervision in Ghana. This divergence suggests a critical variability in SISO practice and effectiveness across different contexts, highlighting that the prevailing negative perceptions documented elsewhere are not universal. For instance, the positive view of SISOs as mentors who support lesson preparation and identify training needs stands in direct contrast to the work of Tetteh and Owusu Mensah (2021), who found that teachers primarily perceived supervisory visits as routine and bureaucratic, focused on administrative compliance rather than pedagogical support. Similarly, the characterisation of SISOs as effective instructional leaders challenges the findings of Amponsah and Amoah (2020), who reported that teachers often view SISOs as administrative enforcers policing compliance with top-down directives, a perception that limits the potential for reflective practice.

However, the positive outcomes observed in this study are not without precedent and find strong corroboration with research that identifies the specific conditions under which supervision thrives. The constructive role of SISOs noted here aligns with Addae and Nyarko (2018), who established that the quality and frequency of supervisory interactions are paramount. This study's findings appear to exemplify the positive end of their dichotomy, where regular, constructive, and supportive engagement leads to improved teacher motivation and performance. Furthermore, the recognition of SISOs as facilitators of guidance and implementation support resonates with the dialogic model advocated by Adjei and Mensah (2019), which found that genuine dialogue and joint reflection foster a greater sense of teacher ownership and agency in instructional improvement.. This is further supported by Agyeman and Asante (2022), who demonstrated that structured professional development facilitated by SISOs leads to noticeable pedagogical improvements, particularly when the supervisory relationship is grounded in shared problem-solving.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings offer robust corroboration for the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory. The teachers' perceptions of SISOs as mentors who inspire, support individualised consideration through identifying training needs, and stimulate intellectual growth by guiding school improvement plans, reflect core dimensions of transformational leadership. This stands in stark contrast to the transactional leadership model, which is characterised by compliance monitoring and fault-finding, a style that is frequently reported in other studies and which fosters apprehension and resistance among teachers (Ofori & Koomson, 2019). The positive results observed in this study suggest that where SISOs exemplify transformational leadership behaviours acting as change agents who motivate and elevate teachers' professional goals, they are perceived as highly effective and vital to school development. This refutes any notion that supervisory roles are inherently punitive and instead positions them as potentially transformative when aligned with the right leadership approach.

The implications of these findings for policy and practice are substantial. For policymakers, this study provides a powerful evidence base to advocate for a nationwide shift in the official mandate and training of SISOs from inspectors to instructional leaders and mentors. The current findings demonstrate that the transformational model is not merely theoretical but is achievable and effective in practice. Therefore, policy should mandate and fund ongoing, high-quality training for all SISOs in transformational leadership, reflective coaching, and contemporary pedagogical models, directly addressing the capacity gap identified by the Ghana Education Service and UNICEF (2020). Furthermore, practical measures must be taken to enable this shift. This includes reviewing and reducing SISO workloads to manageable levels to allow for the sustained, meaningful engagements documented

here and ensuring they have the necessary logistical support and resources. For headteachers and SISOs, the study underscores the profound impact of adopting a collaborative, dialogic, and supportive posture. It validates the investment in building professional learning communities and prioritising instructional leadership over administrative oversight, as these practices are directly linked to fostering the positive perceptions that ultimately enhance teacher performance and school development.

#### **4.4.2 Teacher's perception of professional support provided by SISOs**

The second objective of this study was to assess the extent to which teachers believe SISOs provide professional support that enhances teaching and learning. The findings reveal that teachers generally held positive perceptions of the professional support provided by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). Teachers viewed SISOs as effective mentors who facilitate continuous professional development, provide constructive feedback, and assist in addressing classroom challenges. SISO-led supervision was seen as collaborative, promoting knowledge-sharing and the adoption of innovative teaching methods. Teachers perceived that the guidance and interventions offered by SISOs enhanced teaching effectiveness, strengthened professional confidence, and contributed significantly to instructional improvement and teacher growth.

The findings of this study, which indicate generally positive teacher perceptions of the professional support provided by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs), offer a significant and encouraging perspective within the broader discourse on educational supervision in Ghana. While these results present a contrast to several studies that report a prevalence of inspection-oriented and bureaucratic supervision, they simultaneously corroborate and validate the conditions for effective support

identified in other literature. The perception of SISOs as effective mentors who facilitate professional development aligns with the aspirational model proposed by Boateng (2022), who argued that supervision must be integrated into a broader ecosystem of professional support, including mentoring and peer collaboration, to translate into meaningful outcomes. This study provides empirical evidence that such an integrated model is being successfully enacted in certain contexts, leading to enhanced teaching effectiveness and professional confidence.

However, this positive portrayal stands in stark contrast to other empirical findings. For instance, the collaborative nature of supervision described here diverges significantly from the routine and bureaucratic visits characterised by a primary focus on inspecting lesson notes, as found by Tetteh and Mensah (2021). Furthermore, the view of SISOs as facilitators of constructive feedback contradicts the work of Amponsah and Amoah (2020), which concluded that teachers often perceive SISOs as administrative officers enforcing compliance, a perception that limits reflective practice and innovation. The positive outcomes observed in this study, such as the adoption of innovative teaching methods, suggest that the SISOs in this context have successfully avoided the fault-finding approach that Addae and Nyarko (2018) associated with teacher frustration and resistance. Instead, they appear to be enacting the dialogic model advocated by Adjei and Mensah (2019), where genuine dialogue and joint reflection foster a stronger sense of teacher ownership. This is further supported by the fact that the SISO-led supervision described here mirrors the effective practices observed in high-performing schools by Ofori and Koomson (2019), where collaboration was actively facilitated and associated with stronger instructional consistency.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings provide strong corroboration for the principles of Transformational Leadership Theory. The perception of SISOs as mentors who provide individualised consideration, stimulate intellectual growth through the adoption of innovative methods, and inspire higher levels of professional confidence and effectiveness reflects the core dimensions of transformational leadership. This stands in direct opposition to a transactional leadership approach, which is based on compliance monitoring and contingent rewards, a style that underpins the negative perceptions documented in other studies. The results demonstrate that when SISOs embody transformational leadership behaviours, they are perceived not as bureaucratic enforcers but as catalysts for professional growth and instructional improvement, thereby fulfilling the developmental intent of their role.

The implications for policy and practice are profound. For policymakers, these findings serve as powerful evidence to justify and accelerate a national policy shift from compliance-oriented inspection to a mentorship-based supervisory model. It underscores the urgent need to address the systemic barriers, such as heavy workloads and logistical constraints identified by Agyeman and Asante (2022), that prevent many SISOs from providing this level of support. Investment in large-scale, continuous training programmes focused on instructional leadership, reflective coaching, and collaborative practices, as previously recommended by the Ghana Education Service and UNICEF (2020), is essential to replicate this success universally. For practice, the study provides a clear model for SISOs and headteachers to emulate. It validates the impact of prioritising constructive feedback over fault-finding, of framing supervision as a collaborative process of knowledge sharing, and of focusing interventions on building professional confidence and capacity. By

institutionalising these practices and creating the structural conditions for their success, the Ghanaian education system can work towards ensuring that positive perceptions of SISO support become the norm rather than the exception, thereby unlocking their full potential as agents of instructional improvement and teacher growth.

#### **4.4.3 Perceived impact of SISO activities on collaboration**

The third and final objective of this study was to examine how teachers perceive the influence of SISOs on fostering collaboration among teaching staff in their schools. The findings indicate that teachers generally perceived School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) as positively influencing collaboration among staff. Teachers viewed SISOs as effective in fostering teamwork, promoting knowledge-sharing, facilitating peer observation, and encouraging professional networks across schools. SISO initiatives were seen to enhance communication, create mentorship opportunities, and support professional learning communities, ultimately contributing to improved teaching quality. SISOs were regarded as key facilitators of collegiality, cooperative learning, and a collaborative professional culture within and between schools.

These results offer a robust corroboration of the theoretical potential of SISOs to transform school cultures, while simultaneously highlighting a significant divergence from the more common realities documented in other research. The perception of SISOs as effective facilitators of teamwork, knowledge sharing, and professional networks aligns directly with the seminal work of Ofori and Koomson (2019), who identified that in high-performing schools, SISOs actively structured collaborative mechanisms such as professional learning communities and group lesson planning, leading to improved outcomes. This study empirically validates that model,

demonstrating that where such facilitation occurs, it is recognised and valued by teachers. Furthermore, the findings strongly support the research of Danquah and Twum (2023), which posited that collaboration flourishes under shared leadership models, and that of Mensah and Larbi (2022), which emphasised the importance of SISOs providing concrete structural support for collaborative activities like sustained cluster meetings focused on pedagogical inquiry.

Conversely, the positive collaborative culture described in this study stands in stark contrast to the professional environments documented in other contexts. The active facilitation reported here directly contradicts the findings from low-performing schools in Ofori and Koomson's (2019) research, where SISOs seldom initiated peer learning activities, resulting in teacher isolation and stagnant instructional practices. The successful fostering of collegiality and cooperative learning also challenges the findings of Owusu and Armah (2021), which warned that supervisor-led criticism and authoritarian oversight can weaken trust and actively discourage peer support. The positive outcomes observed in this study suggest that the SISOs in question have successfully avoided the pervasive administrative and compliance-focused approach that Tetteh and Owusu Mensah (2021) found breeds apprehension, instead embracing the role of a collaborative partner. This effective facilitation also addresses the resource and temporal barriers to collaboration identified by Ankomah and Asare (2023) and Boadi and Asante (2022), implying that these SISOs have proactively managed to provide both the material resources and protected time necessary for meaningful professional exchange.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings offer strong corroboration for Transformational Leadership Theory. The SISOs' role in inspiring collective purpose

through building professional networks, stimulating intellectual stimulation by facilitating knowledge sharing and peer observation, and providing individualised consideration by creating mentorship opportunities, embodies the core tenets of transformational leadership. This stands in direct opposition to a transactional leadership approach, which would focus on individual, compliance-based interactions. The results demonstrate that when SISOs enact transformational leadership behaviours, they successfully move beyond being isolated inspectors to become architects of a collaborative professional culture, thereby fostering the conditions for sustained instructional improvement.

The implications for policy and practice are substantial. For policymakers, these findings provide a clear mandate to institutionalise the conditions that enable SISOs to act as collaborative leaders. This necessitates a fundamental policy shift that explicitly defines and resources the SISO role as a facilitator of professional learning communities, both within and across schools. Concerted efforts must be made to address the systemic constraints, such as excessive caseloads and lack of transportation, that prevent many SISOs from engaging in this deep, relational work. Furthermore, pre-service and continuous professional development for SISOs must be radically redesigned to build their capacity in group facilitation, conflict resolution, and the management of professional learning networks. For practising SISOs and headteachers, this study provides an evidence-based model to emulate, underscoring the profound impact of prioritising the cultivation of collegiality and cooperative learning over bureaucratic oversight. By intentionally creating structures for collaboration and embodying transformational leadership principles, SISOs can fulfil their potential as key levers for building collective capacity and enhancing teaching quality across the educational system.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter concludes the study by presenting a summary of the key findings, drawing conclusions based on these insights, providing recommendations, and identifying areas that require further exploration.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The purpose of the study is to assess how teachers perceive the role and effectiveness of SISOs, and how these perceptions impact professional support and collaboration among teachers in public basic schools. Primary data were collected through a questionnaire, employing a quantitative approach and a descriptive design. Utilising a multi-stage sampling method, a sample of two hundred and seventy-six (276) respondents was used for the study. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyse the data, with assistance from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### **5.3 Key Findings**

The key findings of the study are:

1. The findings reveal that teachers held highly positive perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of School Improvement Support Officers. They viewed SISOs as key figures in monitoring instruction, promoting professionalism, and maintaining discipline within schools. Teachers also recognised SISOs as

mentors who provide guidance in lesson preparation, identify training needs, and support the implementation of school improvement plans.

2. The findings reveal that teachers generally held positive perceptions of the professional support provided by School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). Teachers viewed SISOs as effective mentors who facilitate continuous professional development, provide constructive feedback, and assist in addressing classroom challenges. SISO-led supervision was seen as collaborative, promoting knowledge-sharing and the adoption of innovative teaching methods.
3. Moreover, the findings indicate that teachers generally perceived School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) as positively influencing collaboration among staff. Teachers viewed SISOs as effective in fostering teamwork, promoting joint problem-solving, facilitating peer observation, and encouraging professional networks across schools. SISO initiatives were seen to enhance communication, create mentorship opportunities, and support professional learning communities, ultimately contributing to improved teaching quality. SISOs were regarded as key facilitators of collegiality, cooperative learning, and a collaborative professional culture within and between schools.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that teachers hold overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the roles and contributions of School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs). Teachers viewed SISOs as pivotal in monitoring instruction, providing professional guidance, and fostering discipline, while also serving as mentors who support lesson preparation and the implementation of school improvement initiatives.

Furthermore, SISOs were seen as instrumental in promoting collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and professional learning communities, contributing to enhanced teaching quality, collegiality, and a culture of cooperative professional practice within and across schools.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

The following suggestions are offered for your consideration in light of the study's conclusions.

1. Managers and educational stakeholders should ensure that SISOs are adequately supported and resourced to carry out their monitoring, mentoring, and school improvement functions effectively. Training programs should be reinforced to strengthen SISOs' capacity in instructional guidance, lesson preparation support, and identification of teacher training needs, ensuring that their role in promoting professionalism and discipline is optimally leveraged across schools.
2. Educational leaders should institutionalise structured mechanisms for continuous professional development led by SISOs. This could include regular workshops, feedback sessions, and collaborative supervision models that encourage knowledge-sharing and innovation in teaching practices. Stakeholders should also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives to ensure that SISOs continue to provide constructive and impactful support to teachers.
3. Managers and policymakers should prioritise programs and policies that enhance the collaborative functions of SISOs, such as establishing professional learning communities, peer observation opportunities, and inter-school networks. Stakeholders should encourage SISOs to facilitate

communication, mentorship, and team-based problem-solving, thereby fostering a culture of collegiality, cooperative learning, and shared professional responsibility across schools.

### **5.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

Future studies should explore the long-term impact of SISO interventions on student learning outcomes to determine the direct effect of teacher support and collaboration on academic performance.



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## APPENDICES

### A

#### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

#### UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

You are kindly invited to complete this questionnaire on the research study titled “ASSESSING TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SISOS AND THEIR IMPACT ON PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN THE BIRIM CENTRAL MUNICIPALITY”. This study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Post Graduate Diploma (Education).

*Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured.*

**Participant No:** .....

#### INSTRUMENT 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Purpose: This questionnaire seeks to collect information from basic school teachers in the Birim Central Municipality on their perceptions of the roles, responsibilities, and professional support provided by SISOs, as well as their impact on collaboration among teachers.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections (A–D). Each item in Sections B–D should be rated on a 5-point Likert Scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1).

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender:  Male  Female
2. Age Range:  20–29  30–39  40–49  50 and above
3. Educational Qualification:  Diploma  Degree  Master's  Other (specify) \_\_\_
4. Teaching Level:  Lower Primary  Upper Primary  JHS
5. Teaching Experience:  1–5 yrs  6–10 yrs  11–15 yrs  Above 15 yrs
6. Circuit: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SISOs' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

<b>Please indicate the extent to which you agree and disagree with each of the statements by ticking 5 = Strongly Disagree, 4= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree.</b>						
<b>Code</b>	<b>TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SISOs' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TP1</b>	SISOs play a key role in monitoring and supervising teaching and learning activities.					
<b>TP2</b>	SISOs ensure adherence to professional standards among teachers.					
<b>TP3</b>	SISOs' roles contribute to maintaining discipline and professionalism in schools.					
<b>TP4</b>	SISOs guide teachers in preparing lesson notes and instructional materials.					
<b>TP5</b>	SISOs' visits motivate teachers to improve instructional performance.					
<b>TP6</b>	SISOs serve as mentors and advisors to teachers on professional matters.					
<b>TP7</b>	SISOs play a role in identifying teacher training needs within the circuit.					
<b>TP8</b>	SISOs help ensure that school improvement plans are implemented effectively.					

**SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY SISOs**

<b>Code</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY SISOs</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PS1</b>	SISOs organise in-service training to update teachers' professional skills.					
<b>PS2</b>	SISOs promote knowledge-sharing among teachers during supervision.					
<b>PS3</b>	SISOs provide effective feedback after classroom observations.					
<b>PS4</b>	Teachers receive adequate mentoring from SISOs.					
<b>PS5</b>	SISOs assist teachers in identifying and solving classroom challenges.					
<b>PS6</b>	Professional support from SISOs enhances teaching effectiveness.					
<b>PS7</b>	SISOs' visits have improved my confidence in teaching.					
<b>PS8</b>	SISOs help teachers integrate new teaching methods and instructional resources.					

**SECTION D: IMPACT OF SISO ACTIVITIES ON COLLABORATION**

<b>Code</b>	<b>IMPACT OF SISO ACTIVITIES ON COLLABORATION</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>IS 1</b>	SISOs encourage teamwork among teachers within the school.					
<b>IS 2</b>	SISOs facilitate joint problem-solving sessions that enhance cooperation among teachers.					
<b>IS 3</b>	SISO-led workshops foster collaboration between teachers of different schools.					
<b>IS 4</b>	SISOs encourage teachers to observe one another's lessons and share ideas.					
<b>IS 5</b>	SISO activities have improved communication among teaching staff.					
<b>IS 6</b>	SISOs create opportunities for peer learning and mentorship.					
<b>IS 7</b>	Collaboration promoted by SISOs has led to improvement in teaching quality.					
<b>IS 8</b>	SISOs help establish and sustain professional learning communities (PLCs) among teachers.					



## B

### YAMANE'S FORMULA

Yamane's formula (1967), which provides a simplified method for calculating the required sample size based on the total population and a desired margin of error.

The formula is expressed as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

**n** represents the sample size,

**N** is the accessible population (890 basic school teachers), and

**e** is the margin of error (0.05 for a 95% confidence level).

$$n = \frac{890}{1 + 890(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 276$$

