

Headteachers' Instructional Supervision and its Effect on Academic Performance in Public Primary Schools in Ol'lessos Division, Nandi County, Kenya.

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Abstract

The head teacher wears many hats being a manager, administrator, curriculum leader and instructional leader. However, it should be understood that the core business of a school is instruction thus head teachers' instructional supervision is crucial hence this sets the focus of the study. The purpose of this study was to establish head teachers' instructional supervision and its effect on academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). The study was based on a theory of leadership developed by House known as Path – Goal theory. Research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of head teachers and teachers of 30 Public Primary schools in Ol'lessos Division and the QASSO officers. To select the schools used in the study, stratified and proportionate sampling techniques were used. Using the techniques, 19 schools participated in the study. The teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique; hence a total of 74 teachers formed the sample, while the QASSO officer and head teachers were purposively selected. This study mainly used questionnaires, interview and document analysis to obtain data for analysis. Content and face validation of research instruments were ensured by the supervisors and lectures in the department of educational administration. The instruments were piloted through test -retest and reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's coefficient of Alpha, and a coefficient of 0.72 was obtained which was considered sufficient to render the instruments reliable. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was analyzed using frequencies and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between head teachers' instructional supervision and academic performance in schools. The study concluded that head teachers are reluctant in carrying out their instructional supervisory role. The findings of this study will be useful to head teachers, stakeholders and the ministry of education which has interest in performance of schools in national examination. This study recommends that head teachers should always undertake instructional supervision as they are internal quality assurance officers for improved performance in KCPE examinations.

Key terms: Instruction, Instructional supervision, Instructional Supervision, academic performance

1.0 Introduction

Education has an essential role to play in the development of any country, this was affirm during the world education forum held in Dakar on April 2000, where it was unanimously agreed that knowledge and innovation underpin economic growth, both of which are by product of education. Council of Africa Ministers of Education (2000), also reaffirm the role of education and the role of teachers as purveyors of knowledge and values and as community leaders, (UNESCO, 2005). In Kenya, the Government and its development partners have continued to provide investment both in monetary and in terms of material in an effort to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goal by 2015. This is yet to be realised in Kenya though measures has been done through Free Primary Education (FPE) initiative the quality has to be improved, (Economic Survey, 2009). Attainment of EFA goals requires an effective instructional leadership from those in the helmet of leadership. Its role in organization is to co-ordinate the work of non-management employees and to have direct responsibility for machinery and materials (Hannagan, 2008). This concurs with Bennett and Anderson, (2003) who said a leader is the person who gets things done by enlisting the efforts of others. The leader must have both social and psychological attributes in order to succeed on the job. An effective head teacher is not only able to make his subordinates want to do what they have to do but also recognizes that they must be motivated to ensure that goals and objectives of the institution, organization or systems are achieved (Okumbe, 1999)

Many scholars have found that the success of any school depends to a large extend on the quality of the head teachers' leadership behaviour. Mbiti (1974) noted that a head teacher gives the school an image of what can be; provide the drive, support and skills to make that image approximate reality. This was also affirm by Millette,

(1988) who noted that the quality of leadership makes the difference between the success and failure of a school. According to Sushila (2004) the head teacher as the leader in a school is the pivot around which many aspects of the school revolve, and the person in charge of every detail of the running of the school, be it academic or administrative. Research has consistently shown that head teachers play a pivotal role in school reforms, during the 1980s and 1990s research on effectiveness referred to as effective schools research, focused on head teachers and their role as boosters of effectiveness in schools. These studies consistently found that the head teacher is key to effective school. Research done by Zigarelli(1996)and Adams(1999) found that the unique position head teachers hold has put them in a powerful position so as to coordinate the entire schools operations and progress.

Research on effective schools also found out that most effective head teachers had a clear vision, aligned resources (material and human) and could engage other key players in achieving goals embedded in the vision. It is indeed clear that the head teacher undertake both instruction and administrative roles but it should be understood that the core business of a school is teaching and learning hence must be accorded relevant time. Fullan (2002) observed that, instructional leadership is required if a school has to be effective that is, achieve expected objectives. He further observed that most head teachers seldom practice instructional leadership because they are pre-occupied with their administrative role while instructional role is delegated to other non-managerial staff. Steyn (2007) confirms the importance of leadership by pointing out that effective management of people has been identified as key element of best practice at many leading educational organisations. Hannagan (2008) highlighted that a leader is expected to be skilled at both overseeing work done and doing it. Stronge (1988) calculates that 62.2% of the elementary principal's time is focused on school management issues whereas only 6.2% of their time is focused on programme issues. He adds that head teacher must change from being administrator to instructional leaders so as to achieve desired results. Berlin and Jensen (1998) concluded that if schools are to progress, 'the principal/ head teacher cannot allow daily duties to interfere with the leadership role in curriculum.'

In Kenya, education system is examination oriented and the quality of education is seen in terms of the number of pupils passing national examinations (Eshiwani, 1993). It is evident that head teachers' instructional role and leadership greatly influences academic outcomes. Alimi and Akinfolarin (2012) affirm that one major cause of poor performance can be ineffective instructional supervision. This study revealed that quality performance is only realized with effective instructional supervision in place and has to be done in a mutual way, Pearson (2009) reiterated that when supervising in the educational realms, supervisors should seek to help those being supervised realise their potentialities and usefulness. Sharma, Yusoff, Kannan & Baba, (2011) carried out a study in India, Malaysia and Thailand, the study found out that teachers did not see supervision positively but saw it as paper completion and punitive process and non-beneficial to teachers. This finding was in agreement with that of Mupoperi, (2007) a study carried out in Zimbabwe which revealed that teachers were unwilling to accept criticism.

According to Glanz, College, Shulman & Sullivan(2007) who carried out a study in America on the impact of instructional supervision on students achievement: Can we make the connection? This study indicated that in many instances head teachers given administrative issues did not have time to undertake continuous and meaningful supervision. This findings were in agreement with those of Fuller (2007), Tyagi (2011) and Alimi(2012) who also found out in their various studies in different parts of the world, that head teachers engaged themselves more with other duties in the school than instructional supervision.

Wekesa (1993) noted that to improve student's performance in academics, head teachers are required first to improve the management of the schools. This therefore signifies that head teachers leadership and supervision has to go hand in hand. Of paramount importance, therefore is the proper head teacher's instructional role as its absence will invariably lead to low productivity as measured by student's achievement in national examination. Other related to instructional supervision have been conducted elsewhere such as those of Mtune (2005), in Nakuru county, Anyango (2005), in Migori county and Mumo (2015) in Machakos. Some of them used different methodologies and their findings concentrated on attitude towards instructional supervision and skills but not the relationship between instructional supervision of head teacher and academic performance. The study therefore focused on the head teachers' instructional supervision and its effect on academic performance in Nandi County.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Performance in national examinations in primary school in Nandi East sub-county is average. However, performance in national examinations between the years 2011-2013 reveals that Ol'lessos division had

persistently posted relatively low marks in KCPE yet schools have fairly equal resources. This differential in performance has puzzled the stake holders as they question the disparity in performance in primary schools in the sub-county. This scenario cannot be discern without focused investigation since the schools in the division are assumed to be well staffed, have adequate learning materials, trained and qualified head teachers. The head teachers are the leaders in primary schools and in charge of daunting tasks and roles of which might affect the performance of a school. Many studies have been carried out regarding pupil's academic performance, for instance, Ngala (1997) carried out a study on management of teachers and its effect on pupil's academic performance. The study revealed that management practices of teachers by the head teachers influenced performance positively. Several other studies (Odubaker, 2007, Mpierwe, 2007) reveal that the head teacher's leadership style plays a significant role in academic performance. This also concurs with other researchers focuses on leadership values (Hargreaves, 2004; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2005) and more recently there has been in the influence of head teachers on academic achievements. Head teacher is therefore, the pivot around which all activities rotate and it is in this light that this study sought to establish the head teachers' instructional supervision and its effect on academic performance in Ol'lessos Division in Nandi county.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of head teachers' instructional supervision on academic performance in public primary school in Ol'lessos division in Nandi County.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were:

- i. To establish head teachers' instructional supervisory practices in primary schools in Ol'lessos Division.
- ii. To determine the relationship between head teachers instructional supervisory practices and performance of the schools in KCPE.

1.4 Justification of the Study

Parents and stakeholders in education have always questioned the cause of varied academic achievements in national examination in public primary schools, despite the provision of funds by the government to procure instructional materials. From the available data, private primary schools have been performing better than public schools in the same district. Perhaps the varied attainment of marks in K.C.P.E Examination is attributed to the head teachers' instructional leadership. From the researches done it is evident that head teachers play a pivotal role in enhancing quality teaching and learning, hence the need to establish the effect of head teachers instructional leadership on academic performance in public primary schools in Ol'lessos Division in Nandi County.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study bridges the gap in the area of head teacher's role as an instructional leader and academic performance in schools. The findings of the study will be useful to the education administrators in identifying effects on instructional supervision of head teachers. It will be used by training institutions and the education policy planners in initiating training programmes that will promote effective educational leadership skills. It would also aid school administrators, policy makers and head teachers to improve performance of primary schools in National Examination.

It would also be helpful to head teachers in formulation and planning for effective instructional leadership programs that could boost teachers' motivation and effectiveness at work. The head teachers will also use the findings as an assessment tool to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency in instructional leadership skill and technique. Finally the findings of the study may be used by the head teacher to change their leadership and administrative skills particularly in the context of instructional issues.

2.0 Research Methods

The research design is the overall plan and procedure for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2006). The study employed descriptive survey design. The design generally entails describing the state of affairs as it exists. It involves the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of conditions as they exist (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The design involves seeking opinions and feelings of respondents on the influence of selected instructional supervisory practices on performance and the leadership style adopted by the head teachers.

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) asserted that descriptive survey are intended to answer questions concerning the current status of subjects in the study thereby determining and reporting the way things are. The procedure involved a systematic collection of data from the study population by use of questionnaires and interviews. Therefore, descriptive research design was found appropriate to the current study and also minimizes bias and maximizes on reliability of evidence collected (Kothari, 2003). The target population of the study comprised of all 30 public primary school head teachers, teachers, and Education Officers in the Division. A sample of 19 schools was obtained. From the sampled schools a total of 74 teachers, 19 head teachers and QASSO officer constituted the sample size for the study.

2.1 Research Instruments

2.1.1 Questionnaire

It was used as a tool for collecting data. Kombo and Tromp (2006) noted that this kind of research instrument gathers data over a large sample. A questionnaire that has both structured and unstructured questions were prepared and administered to the respondents (head teachers and teachers). Questionnaire was preferred because it could be used to gather large amount of data from many subjects very inexpensively. According to Kothari, (2008), questionnaires are free from interviewer's bias as the answers are in the respondents own words. Respondents also have adequate time to give well thought out answers. The questionnaires were prepared and given to both head teachers the teachers who provided information on the effect of head teachers' instructional leadership on academic performance. The questionnaires had transmittal letters informing the respondents the purpose for which the information they provide would be used as well as instructions on how to respond to each question. It comprised of two main sections. The first section contained structured questions seeking background information like gender, age, qualification and teaching experience. The second section contained Likert type questions which will seek their views as regards instructional leadership practices of the head teacher.

2.1.2 Interview Schedule

It is an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview schedule which is face to face encounter (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). An in-depth structured interview was conducted to gather insights of all respondents responsible for running of public primary schools in Ol'lessos Division. Interviews were chosen because they provided an in depth data which is not possible to get using a questionnaire. In addition, interviews were more flexible and the interviewer could adapt to the situation and get as much information as possible (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003). Interview schedule was administered to the QASSO officer in Ol'lessos Division.

2.1.3 Document Analysis

Documents are important source of data in many areas of investigation. Documents from the DEO's office were utilized to establish K.C.P.E results analysis to compare results of schools and zonal mean scores in the last three years.

3.0 Reliability and Validity of Research Instruments

3.1 Validity

Kothari (2008) describe validity as correctness, soundness of result and conclusions reached in a study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) validity has in recent years been defined as the appropriateness, rightfulness and usefulness of the specific inferences researchers make based on the data they collect. So it is the inferences about the specific uses of an instrument that are validated not the instrument in itself. Validity is the degree to which result obtain from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study. To ensure instruments were valid for collecting data, lectures and colleagues in the department of Educational Management and Policy Studies, Moi University and other educational research experts were sought to establish whether questionnaires and interview schedule were suitable and appropriate in collecting data.

3.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to consistency or stability in measurement (Christensen, 1988). An instrument is considered reliable if it produces the same or similar result each time it is administered to the same respondents. Kerlinger (1983) define the term as the consistency that an instrument demonstrate when applied repeatedly under similar conditions. To ensure reliability of questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted in the neighbouring District (sub-county) of Wareng in Uasin-Gishu County having same characteristics but did not participate in the actual study. In this study the test re-test technique was used, the developed instruments were administered to 10 teachers and 2 head teachers. The responses from these respondents were scored manually. The same questionnaires and

interview schedule were administered again to the same respondents after an interval of two weeks. The responses were scored manually and a comparison was made on the two scores. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient of 0.72 was obtained indicating that the research instrument was reliable as it indicated a value close to positive 1, an indication of high degree of correlation between the scores. It was therefore adopted for data collection (Kothari, 2008).

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Teacher's Views on Head teachers' Instructional Supervision

From the study the teachers identified various instructional supervisory practices the head teachers perform in order to ensure that the performance in KCPE was achieved as summarized in Table 6.1

From the study it was notable majority 40(54.0%) teachers identified that their head teachers sometimes inspect schemes of work, with 26(35.1%) always and 8(10.8%) indicated rarely. Majority of teachers 38(51.4%) identified that their head teachers sometimes stress on maximum teacher-pupil contact time, with 16(21.6%) always, 9(12.2%) rarely and 11(14.9%) never. The findings also revealed that 31(41.9%) of the teachers identified that head teachers rarely inspect lesson notes and plans, with 25(33.8%) sometimes, 10(13.5%) always and 8(10.8%). Majority of the teachers 34(45.9%) viewed their head teachers sometimes check syllabus coverage periodically, with 18(24.3%) always, 12(16.2%) rarely and 10(13.5%) never check syllabus coverage periodically owing to the daunting tasks that they are to perform.

Most of the teacher 22(29.7%) identified that head teachers rarely require them to make up for missed classes, with 20(27%) sometimes, 14(18.9%) always and 18(24.3%) never. It was also noted that 23(31.1%) of the teachers identified that head teachers never inspects pupil's class work and individual studies, with 21(28.4%) sometimes, 14(18.9%) rarely and 16(21.6%) always. As to whether heads supervise them while teaching, the table revealed that 17(23.0%) indicated always with 18(24.3%) sometimes while 15(20.3%) rarely and majority of the teachers 24(32.4%) indicated never. It revealed that head teacher do not visit classrooms yet are mandated to do so. Rossy (2007) recommended that the head of school should visit classroom more often and take note of what kind of teaching goes on in the classroom.

Majority of the teachers admitted that their head teachers never supervise them while teaching and also never inspect pupils' class work and supervises individual studies. It was also evident that majority of head teachers sometimes check syllabus coverage periodically, Inspecting schemes of work and stresses on maximum teacher-pupil contact time. It was notable from the study that head teachers rarely inspect lesson notes and ensuring teachers make up for missed lessons. Teklemarriam, (2009) affirms that instructional supervision is a function that the school head must always carry out. This implies that the head teachers ought to perform their supervisory role at all times.

4.2 Head teachers' Instructional Supervision

From the study the head teachers identified various instructional supervisory activities they perform in order to ensure that the performance in KCPE was achieved as summarized in Table 6.2

The table above shows that 9 (47.4%) of the head teachers pointed out that they always and sometimes inspect scheme of work and only 1(5.3%) admitted that they rarely do so. It was also indicated that 9(47.4%) of the head teachers sometimes inspect lesson notes and plans, 8(42.1%) rarely and 2(10.5%) always. This revealed that head teachers understand their role in inspecting professional documents. Eshiwani (1993) held that in particular the head must check the teaching standards by reference to schemes of work, lesson notes, record of work done and pupils' exercise books.

Head teachers were asked to respond as to whether they supervise teachers while teaching and the findings revealed that majority 8(42.1%) of head teachers indicated never, 6(31.6%) sometimes, while 3(15.8%) always whereas only 2(10.5 %) rarely do so. The findings further revealed that some heads visit teachers while others never implying that it is not a common practice. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Ogunu (2005) that secondary school principals are so weighed down by routine administrative burden that they hardly find time to visit the classrooms and observe how the teachers are teaching. As to whether they inspects pupil's class work and individual studies, majority of head teachers 7(36.8%) indicated that they rarely and 3(15.8%) indicated always while 4(21.1%) and 5(26.3%) indicated sometimes and never respectively. This revealed that head teachers have not taken it a routine to monitor pupils in their studies. This finding concurs with Fullan that, most head teachers seldom practice instructional supervision because they are pre occupied with their managerial and administrative roles while the instructional role is

delegated to other junior members of staff.

As to whether they check teachers work and completion of syllabus, their response were as follows; 7(36.8%) of them indicated they sometimes check and 6(31.6%) always check while 4(21.1%) and 2(10.5%) never. This finding content with that of Okumbe (2001) who recommended that heads should closely monitor and understand how teachers work in the classroom on a regular basis. In addition, Majority of the head teachers 8(42.1%) indicated they sometimes stress on maximum teacher-pupil contact time, with 7(36.8%) always, 3(15.8%) rarely and 1(5.3%) never. This implies that head teachers do not take it seriously hence missed the key role of monitoring and controlling standards. The study also revealed that majority of the head teachers 8(42.1%) rarely and 5(26.3%) sometimes encourage teachers to make up for missed classes, with 3(15.8%) always and never.

Most of the head teachers sometimes make sure teachers keep updated schemes of work, completion of the syllabus and stresses on maximum teacher-pupil contact time. It is also evident that majority of head teachers rarely inspect lesson notes and plans, inspect pupils class work and supervises their personal studies, and ensuring teachers make up for missed lessons. It was also noted that majority of head teachers said that they had never supervise teachers while teaching. These findings concur with Ngala (1997), findings which revealed that the head teacher ensures that teachers have their professional tools prepared as per the syllabus and that these tools are used well for instructional purposes. A well prepared and used scheme of work helps the school to have an organized system of content coverage for a period or course in a subject. Ojuma (2009) observed that, head teachers check records of work covered by the teacher per subject. It is therefore expected that head teachers should manage all other areas to suitably affect the teaching and learning and therefore improve performance.

From the study the interview with QASSO it was found out that the selected instructional supervisory practices of the head teachers ought to be undertaken always as they influence performance positively. The QASSO further revealed that few of the head teachers always supervise instruction and sometimes. This confirms positive academic performance in such schools. The QASSO revealed that head teachers rarely supervise teachers while teaching and visit classroom to check pupils' work and individual studies. They agreed that these should be done because supervision is a process of overseeing people at their places of work in order to ensure compliance with established plans and procedure (Saleemi and Bogonko, 1997).

4.3 Relationship Between the Selected Instructional Supervision of the head teacher and Performance of the Schools in KCPE.

The study was to establish the relationship between the selected instructional leadership activities of the head teacher and performance of the schools in KCPE. This was sought through determining the relationship between the head teachers' instructional supervision on performance of the schools in KCPE. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the head teacher instructional leadership and performance of the schools in KCPE. There was a positive relationship between the instructional supervision and performance ($r=.793$, $n=19$, $p<.05$), this indicated that an increase in head teachers instructional leadership activities the performance in KCPE also improved. Thus the more the head teachers enhance instructional supervision the performance of students in KCPE also improved.

The findings concurs with Maranya (2001) and Nyangeri (2005) pointed out that evaluation in a school set up is important because the school head need to know what has been achieved and to enhance the effectiveness of the individual teacher or student. Also, Teklemariam (2009) noted classroom activities head teachers oversee play a pivotal role in enhancing learner's performance. The head teacher must ensure that they work amicably with the teachers so as to realize desired results. Instructional supervision is seen to be concerned with teaching process and with headteacher acting as the teacher in terms of pedagogical and instruction rather than taking hands off and being concerned with administration (Hallinger, 1987). It is therefore evident from the findings that the head teachers' instructional role is significant in realizing academic performance.

5.0 Conclusion

In view of the findings, the study concluded that;

Effective instructional supervision by head teachers enhances teaching and learning which translates to improved academic performance in national examinations in public primary schools. The head teachers are tasked to carry

out supervisory activities to oversee what goes on in classrooms. However, as this study reveal supervision is seldom and sometimes undertaken yet this role is mandatory and ought to be undertaken always. Head teachers should always endeavour to see to it that they perform this obligation.

5.1 Recommendations

Based on the significance of the study findings the researcher recommends that; head teachers should strive always to supervise what goes on in the classrooms and must do it with passion and not fault-finding and always inspect professional documents of teachers as this present what is being done in school. The study further recommends that head teachers should always inspect learners mark books and check their academic progress.

6.0 Tables

Table 6.1 Teacher's views on the head teachers' instructional supervision

Statement	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Inspecting scheme of work	26	35.1	40	54.0	8	10.8		
Stresses on maximum contact time during instruction	16	21.6	38	51.4	9	12.2	11	14.9
Inspect lesson plans and lesson notes	10	13.5	25	33.8	31	41.9	8	10.8
Supervises teachers while teaching	17	23.0	18	24.3	15	20.3	24	32.4
Requires teachers to make up for missed classes	14	18.9	20	27.0	22	29.7	18	24.3
Check syllabus coverage periodically	18	24.3	34	45.9	12	16.2	10	13.5
Inspect pupils class work and supervise personal studies	16	21.6	21	28.4	14	18.9	23	31.1

Table 6.2 Head teachers' instructional supervision

Statement	Always		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Inspecting schemes of work	8	42.1	10	52.6	1	5.3		
Supervise teachers while teaching	3	15.8	6	31.6	2	10.5	8	42.1
Inspecting lesson plans and lesson notes	2	10.5	9	47.4	8	42.1		
Checking teachers work and completion of the syllabus	6	31.6	7	36.8	4	21.1	2	10.5
Stresses on maximum teacher-pupil contact time during instruction	7	36.8	8	42.1	3	15.8	1	5.3
Encourage teachers to make up for missed lessons	3	15.8	5	26.3	8	42.1	3	15.8
Inspect pupil's class work and individual studies.	3	15.8	4	21.1	7	36.8	5	26.3

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