

Influence of Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya

Benjamin K Ndambuki¹ Dr. Gideon M Kasivu (Ed.D)^{2*} Dr Rose Mwanza (PhD)

1.PhD Candidate: School of Education: South Eastern Kenya University

2.School of Education, South Eastern Kenya University

3.School of Education, South Eastern Kenya University, Kenya

Abstract

KCSE Performance in Public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya has consistently declined between 2014 and 2018. Although no empirical studies have explained the cause of the decline, Principals' instructional supervision practices may have contributed to the trend necessitating the need for an investigation. This study investigated Influence of Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to establish the influence of principals' instructional supervision practices on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The hypothesis for the study was that there is no statistically significant relationship between principals' instructional supervision practices and students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study employed mixed methods research design. The rationale for using the method is that it combines both qualitative and quantitative data within a single study hence complementing each other by integrating their strengths. The target population was all principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Makueni County. The study employed stratified sampling technique for schools, equal allocation sampling technique for both principals and teachers for quantitative phase while maximal variation sampling was used for qualitative phase. Means, percentage and frequencies were used to determine the distribution of variables under study among the respondents and represented in tables and figures. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between principals' instructional supervision practices and KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The results for quantitative phase indicated that the coefficient of correlation (r) for the objective was 0.6 at significance level of 0.04. Principals interviewed attested that they embraced instructional supervision practices. The study concluded that principals of public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya applied effective instructional supervision practices that positively influenced KCSE performance and that principals' instructional supervision practices influence students' KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The study recommends that principals be trained on specific instructional supervision strategies to enhance their effectiveness in instructional leadership.

Keywords: Supervision, Instructional supervision, principals' instructional supervision practices, Supervision practices

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1.1 Introduction

Many countries all over the world have committed huge budgetary allocations to the education sector. These countries have committed themselves to world education conventions such as Universal Primary Education (UPE), Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable development goals (SDGs) which are instruments that aim to improve quality of education globally. These global conventions have resulted to great challenges to many education systems in the world that call for effective and thorough instructional supervision (UNESCO, 2005). Sergiovanni and Starvatt (2002) posit that supervision is a cooperative venture where supervisors and teachers engage in dialogue for the purpose of improving instruction which logically should contribute to student improved learning outcomes. Glanz & Behar-Hornstain (2000) argue that for quality education to exist there must be adequate techniques of supervision since proper supervision of instruction facilitates the achievement of goals and objectives of education. Further, supervision based on collaboration, participative decision making and reflective practice is the hallmark of a viable school improvement program that is designed to promote teaching and learning.

Supervision in classroom teaching ensures that the right content is delivered to the learners and within the prescribed timelines. Further, supervision is believed to help teachers be aware of their teaching and the eventual consequences for their learner's improved outcomes. Supervision is believed to avail data which provides feedback on whether the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross (2004) the concept of supervision of instruction is an assessment of whether intended goals of learning are being achieved. According to Mutisya, Mulwa and Mwanja (2017) the school principal is the key to the adoption of educational reform.

Currently, teachers have embraced instructional supervision as a process through which they can improve

their professional work. In the view of Clark (2015), instructional supervision is the key responsibility of the principal and encompasses the actions the principal take to mentor and monitor subordinates such as teachers and provide supportive and conducive atmosphere for improvement on the instructional process. Clark's view is supported by assertion by Mulwa, Kimosop and Kasivu (2015) that principals provide instructional leadership and are the key decision makers in curriculum and instruction.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Instructional leadership is regarded as key contribution to enhancing quality education. The Government of Kenya allocates a high budgetary share of its natural annual budget to the education sector in an attempt to provide free and compulsory basic education as per the basic education Act 2013, (Republic of Kenya, 2013). However, even with these efforts by the Government of Kenya, KCSE performance has continued to decline nationally. In Makeni county, university entry grade of C+ has declined from 31.53% in 2015 to 11.38 % in 2018 recording 15.62 % margin drop .To mitigate the decline of students' performance the government of Kenya through Kenya education management institute (KEMI) started training heads of secondary school on strategic planning and curriculum supervision and awarded them diploma certificates. The Ministry of Education has deployed quality assurance and standards officers to carry out assessment activities in school, Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has come in with performance contractive (PC) for principals and teacher performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) for teacher to enhance supervision of curriculum. Despite all these efforts, KCSE performances has taken been consistently declining in public secondary schools in Makeni County, Kenya. There are insufficient empirical studies on influence principals' instructional supervision practices on KCSE performance. It is for this reason therefore that this study was done to investigate the role of the principals' instructional supervision practices and their influence on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makeni County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' instructional supervision practices on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makeni County, Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objective of the Study

To establish the influence of principals 'instructional supervision practices on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makeni County, Kenya

1.5 Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no statistically significant relationship between principals' instructional supervision practices and students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makeni County, Kenya.

2.1 Review of Related Literature

Education is basic human right and provides holistic development of all round person (Muema, Kasivu & Mwanza, 2019). In Kenyan education system, various legislations serve as guidelines for management and administration of educational institutions (Muindi, Mwanja & Metet, 2017) Education managers are called upon to provide leadership to enable learners attain this basic human right. One key responsibility of school principals is to provide instructional leadership in institutions of learning. Instructional supervision is the act of checking, watching and observing the activities of teachers in teaching and learning process. It is geared toward coaching and monitoring them as well as providing professional guidance, direction, leadership and assistance for professional development in order to improve the quality of instructional delivery (Clark 2015). Further, Clark 2015 explains supervision as a task of improving instruction through regular monitoring and in-service education of teachers. Sule ,Ameh and Egbai (2015) identified a number of principals' instructional supervision practices that include ; checking of teachers lesson notes ,schemes of work ,records of work ,students notes ,teachers' punctuality ,teachers class attendance ,lesson observant , moderation of examination papers and making schemes among letters.

Supervision of instructional is the use of varied professional mechanisms to enhance the teachers' instruction to students, promote leadership in education and bring desirable change (Glanz and Behar- Hovenstein 2000). Zepeda (2007) observes that through the one on one relationship between teachers and the supervisor, the teacher continuously acquire new skills that can be used to teach better. Further Zepeda (2007) notes that supervision provides an opportunity for decision –making for the needs of the teacher. Okumbe (2007) postulates that supervision “is the administrative oil that lubricates the management engine “.supervision is an ongoing activity and ensures that there's effective delivery of information in the teaching and learning process at school.

Okumbe (2007) in a study on supervision of schools in Kenya established that principals' major responsibilities as supervisors was by visiting and doing class observation and lesson observation where the principal meet and share with teachers on the issue affecting teaching and learning in the classroom .This was seen as an appraisal tool where the teacher reflects on highlighted issues by the supervisor .Yunita (2013) observes that

supervision of teachers is critical for it promotes efficiency; leads to timely and guided curriculum delivery; Nyanwamu (2010) and Kimeu (2010) believe that supervision set direction of the school and that the principal sets the pace, leads and monitors the teaching staff and the students to perform well in their examinations.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed mixed methods research design. Using this design, the study first conducted quantitative research by use of questionnaire to collect data, analyzed the results. During the qualitative phase interview schedule was used. The study targeted 392 public secondary schools in Makueni County with equal numbers of principals and 3364 teachers. Out of the total target population, 386 principals participated in quantitative phase while 6 participated in the qualitative phase. Sampling in quantitative phase was done first followed by qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, the study had 108 principals and 357 teachers. On the qualitative phase, the study had 6 respondents comprising of principals only. In the quantitative phase, the study employed stratified sampling method by stratifying the schools into four categories namely; National, Extra – county, County and Sub – county schools. The validity of the research instruments was determined by a pilot study of the survey instruments while the reliability of the instruments was done by test – retest method.

4.0 Research Findings and discussions

4.1 Principals’ Instructional supervision practices and KCSE performance

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of instructional supervision practices on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. Both the principals were asked to respond to structured questions that provided information that helped to determine the extent to which principal instructional supervision practices influence students’ performance of KCSE in Makueni County. Information provided on this objective were represented in table 1.2

Table 1.2 Teachers responses on principals’ Supervision Practices influencing KCSE performance.

N = 345 Teachers

N= 108 Principals

Response	Teachers								Principals							
	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%
Principal suggests new approaches and teaching methods after supervision	257	74.5	87	25.2	0	0	1	0.3	68	63.6	38	35.5	0	0	1	0.9
Principal conducts lesson observation on teachers from time to time	185	53.7	155	44.9	0	0	5	1.4	57	53.3	48	44.9	1	0.9	1	0.9
Principal ensure teachers prepare and use schemes of work	192	55.6	148	42.9	4	1.2			71	66.4	33	30.8	1	0.9	2	1
Principal gives constructive and useful feedback after the supervision	209	60.7	126	36.7	7	2.0	2	0.6	75	70.1	31	29	1	0.9	0	0

Table 1.2 represents findings given by both teachers and principals showing the extent to which principals instructional supervision practices influence KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County Kenya. It shows activities done by the school principal in supervision practices and the extent they agreed on its influence on students’ performance at KCSE examinations.

The information shown in Table 1.2 indicates that majority of both teachers and principals represented by 74.5% and 63.6 % strongly agreed that Principals suggests new approaches and teaching methods after supervision

while 35.5% of the principals and 25.5% of teachers agreed to the statement. A small proportion of the teachers (0.9%) and 0.3% of the principals negated the statement by strongly disagreeing while none of the respondent disagreed to the statement. The findings imply that principals guide teachers on methods of instruction that are appropriate for content delivery and which are good for fostering students' academic excellence.

The Second statement sought from the principals and teachers whether principal conducts lesson observation on teachers from time to time. The study findings indicated that none of the teachers disagreed, 1.4% strongly disagreed, 44.0% agreed while 53.60% of the teachers strongly agreed that principal conducts lesson observation on teachers from time to time with the aim to improve student KCSE performance. Similarly majority of the principals forming 53.3% and 44.9% strongly agreed and also agreed respectively that principal's conducts lesson observation on teachers from time to time with the aim to improve student KCSE performance while only 0.9% of the principals disagreed. None of the principals strongly disagreed that principal's conducts lesson observation on teachers from time to time. The statement that principals ensure that teachers prepare and use schemes of work was confirmed by 66.6% of principals and 55.6% of teachers who strongly agreed to the statement. Similarly 30.8% of principals and 42.9% of the teachers attested by agreeing that principals ensure that teachers prepare and use schemes of work. A negligible number of both teachers and principals strongly disagreed and disagreed to the statement. When asked whether Principals give constructive and useful feedback after the supervision 70.1% and 29.9% of the principals strongly agreed and agreed respectively that Principals give constructive and useful feedback after the supervision, while 60.7% and 36.7% of teachers affirmed by strongly agreeing and also agreeing respectively that Principals give constructive and useful feedback after the supervision. A small number of the respondents negated the statement

These findings imply that principals of public secondary schools in Makueni County were applying effective supervision practices measures in order to improve students' KCSE performance. The findings of this study concur with the findings of a study carried out by Egwu (2015) in Ebonyi State secondary schools in Nigeria on principals' performance in supervision of classroom instruction. The results indicated that adequate supervision and application of effective pedagogical practices led to improved academic performance of students.

To test the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between principals' instructional supervision practices and students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya a simple regression test was carried out between the responses on principals' and teachers' responses on principals curriculum supervision practices and KCSE performance. This output was correlated with the mean scores of KCSE performance for the period under study. A coefficient of correlation (r) and alpha levels of significance were determined which established the strength and the significance of the correlation. The results were presented in Table 1.3

Table 1.3 Regression coefficient model summary of the influence of the principals' instructional supervision on KCSE performance

Independent variable(Constant predictor	Dependent variable	(r)	Sig. (b)
Principals' instructional supervision practice	KCSE performance	0.6	
		Pearson Chi Test	0.049

Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) df= 1

(a) Constant predictor: Principals' instructional supervision practice

(b) Dependent Variable: KCSE performance

Table 1.3 Shows that the coefficient of correlation (r) for Principals' instructional supervision practice was 0.6 implying a strong positive relationship between Principals' instructional supervision practice and students KCSE performance. The output also revealed that the significant level of Principals' instructional supervision practice and students' KCSE performance was highly significant at *alpha* level 0.049 a value lower than alpha 0.05 showing a high significant influence of Principals' instructional supervision practice and students KCSE performance. The relationship implied that Principals' instructional supervision practice resulted to high level of students KCSE performance in Makueni County.

In the qualitative phase, principals were asked questions related to their supervision practices. They attested that supervision led to timely syllabus coverage, guided teaching and monitoring evaluation of the teaching learning process.

One principal said;

"I always ensure that teachers prepare and use lesson plans and scheme of work.I also ensure that all teachers attend their lessons and lesson attendance register marked".

Further asked how influential principals' instructional supervision was in promoting students' academic performance another principal said;

"Instructional supervision leads to early syllabus coverage, guided teaching and monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning process all which contribute to students' academic performance".

The study established that there was a strong positive relationship between principals' instructional supervision practices and KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The

findings concur with findings by Clark (2015), Sule, Ameh and Egbai (2015) and Okumbe (2007) who observed that class observation, regular monitoring of teachers, giving construction feedback as well as frequent lesson observation positively influenced learners' performance. The study also has revealed that instructional supervision by the principal improves instructional time, efficiency and timely syllabus coverage by teachers. These findings are supported by study findings by Yunita (2015) who established that instructional supervision by the principals led to timely and guided curriculum delivery.

In Kenya, Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has of late supported the idea of supervision tools referred to as Performance Contracting (PC) for principals and Teaching Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) for all teachers.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study findings established a very strong link between principals' instructional supervision practices and students' performance in KCSE. The study conclusion is that majority of principals in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya applied effective instructional supervision practices that influence students' KCSE performance. The study also concludes that principals' instructional supervision practices influence students' KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County.

The study recommends that the government of Kenya through the ministry of education and teachers service Commission to prioritize training of principals to equip them with knowledge and skills required in curriculum delivery in schools instructional leaders such as Deputy principals, senior teachers and head of department in supervision practices need to be explored.

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