



**INFLUENCE OF STAFFING LEVELS
ON HEAD TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION
PRACTICES IN INTEGRATED ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN GARISSA AND NAIROBI COUNTIES, KENYA**

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Abstract:

The study investigates staffing levels and school location based on head teachers' instructional supervision practices in integrated Islamic primary schools in Kenya. The study was conducted in two counties in Kenya: Garissa and Nairobi. The study was guided by systems theory by Bertalanffy in Sergiovanni and Starrat (2004). The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population consisted of 86 head teachers and 602 teachers from where a sample of 234 was derived using Yamane's formula (2001) then stratified random sampling used to sample 42 head teachers and 104 teachers from Garissa and 44 head teachers and 130 teachers from Nairobi. Census was used to obtain all 86 head teachers since they were less than one hundred respondents. The study used questionnaires for teachers while questionnaires and interview guides for head teachers as instruments of data collection. The collected data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and t-test. Research findings pointed out that location of schools significantly influence ($p < 0.05$) on head teachers' instructional supervision in rural schools. The study recommends that there is a need for integrated Islamic primary schools' managers and stakeholders to employ enough and qualified teachers to help head teachers to improve instructional supervision and learning to match with the current trends.

Keywords: influence, staffing levels, school locations, instructional supervision

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1. Introduction

Human resource is the most important resource in a school organization. Teachers comprise the most imperative human resource in schools and learning institutions, Bore (2012). Teachers are considered the key for the success of learning and teaching process and one of the fundamentals in the school institutions. The Number of the teachers available in the school makes a difference to student achievement and head teacher's instructional supervision. Having sufficient teachers, the head teacher is enabled to carry out their duties effectively since they have time to study and evaluate the technique that work best for their school. The head teacher can however do this when his or her school is allocated with adequate number of teachers. Due to the number of the teachers, head teachers will be able to supervise and interact with teachers inside and outside the classrooms.

Distresses always occur when the inadequate staffing levels are provided, and a conducive learning environment is not created to effectively achieve the performance of the learning institutions. Adequate teaching staff and creating a conducive learning environment facilitate and enhance effective supervision practices by the school administrators and head teachers (Peretomode, 2014). According to Nyandiko (2014) head teachers are experiencing staff shortages due to unbalanced distribution of teachers. Most teachers prefer working in urban, semi-urban and high potential areas. Ministry of Education, Kenya (2014) research identified understaffing and inadequate follow up of inspectional visits as some of the challenges that are related to supervision of instructions in schools. This, therefore, reduces head teacher efficiency since playing both roles automatically means he or she has so much on his plate. The study establishes the concept of staffing levels and school location in integrated Islamic primary schools in Garissa and Nairobi Counties.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Staffing levels and head teachers' instructional supervision

Teachers are the most important resource that contributes to the success of their schools. The number of staff needed to deliver services to the clients is important and when number of teachers is below the required, head teacher is forced to play the role of a teacher as well as his or her role which reduces head teachers' efficiency. An inadequate number of teachers lead to heavy workload of head teachers which will influence his or her instructional supervision practice and goes beyond what one single individual can possibly achieve successfully. In most cases when the head teacher is faced with too much responsibility, instructional supervision is most likely the task the education leader foregoes (Bore, 2012; OECD, 2011; Opudo, 2012).

Head teachers are experiencing staff shortages which hinder realization of curriculum demands, low level of staffing compelled head teachers to take more lessons in expense of carrying out effective instructional supervision practices for instance,

classroom visitation among others (Nyandiko, 2014). He further indicated that in Kenya, there exists an unbalanced distribution of teachers with most teachers preferring working in urban, semi-urban and high potential areas. A study conducted by Buregeya (2011) noted that there is an ongoing decline on supervision of schools throughout the globe due to staffing levels. The availability of teaching staff reduces great challenges and tensions of head teacher workload and improves instructional supervision as well as institutional steadiness. The staffing levels in schools affect instruction supervision either directly or indirectly.

2.2 School location and head teachers' instructional supervision

Study has identified several factors that are influencing head teachers' instructional supervision. These include workload, overcrowded classes and school location. Location refers to rural or urban area in this study whereas instructional supervision was measured by; checking schemes of work, visiting classes during lessons, checking students' attendance, checking lessons plans, and providing adequate teaching resources. Learning can occur anywhere, and belief is often that if a school is built, students will attend. Most institutions consider the placement of schools as an important factor. School location often tries to pinpoint a standard of the school and it is considered as the primary reason that influences head teachers' instructional supervision. School location can affect students' learning outcomes either positively or negatively. However, location can be in terms of whether a school is located in the less developed areas or in the developed areas (Osokoya & Akuche, 2012).

Depending on the school location head teachers face different sets of challenges such as walking distance or travelling long distances as well as availability of resources such as water, infrastructure, electricity and number of teachers and their level of expertise in the education sector. Social context may constrain the work of instructional supervision. For instance, school located in areas where people do not believe in the education of the girl child, the head teacher has a hard time convincing society to give equal attention to students of both genders. Schools under these scenarios widely influence head teachers' instructional supervision practices (Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves, Halász, & Pont, 2014). They need to increase their instructional supervision that can contribute to improved learning by shaping the conditions and location in which teaching, and learning occur.

Most schools in rural lack qualified teachers since qualified teachers prefer to stay in urban schools. This is likely affecting rural schools negatively (Osokoya & Akuche, 2012). As a result, rural schools mostly, learning are unfriendly with unqualified teachers therefore, instructional supervision becomes a difficult task and hence there is a need for the head teachers to strengthen their instructional supervision and learning environments. They are in charge of leading schools to respond to challenges of location.

3. Research Methodology

The research employed descriptive survey design. The design allows researchers to obtain information from selected target group that provided reasons for ineffective instructional supervision. The target population consisted of 86 head teachers and 602 teachers from where a sample of 234 was derived using Yamane's formula (2001), then after that stratified random sampling used to sample 42 head teachers and 104 teachers from Garissa and 44 head teachers and 130 teachers from Nairobi. A census was used to obtain all 86 head teachers since they were less than one hundred respondents. The final sample consisted of 85 head teachers 231 teachers. 42 head teachers and 104 from Garissa County while 43 head teachers and 127 from Nairobi County, giving a total of 316 sample size.

The research tools adopted were questionnaires and interview guide. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers while questionnaires and interview guide for the head teachers. To test if the research tool measures what it alleged to be measuring, reliability of the study was established by piloting in 4integrated Islamic primary schools which were not participated in the study. The reliability gave coefficient of 0.7, while validity was confirmed with the help of supervisors. The research data was collected through distribution of the questionnaires personally to the respondents. The collected data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages and *t*-test using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

4. Results and Discussion

H₀₁: To determine the extent to which staffing levels influence head teachers' instructional supervision practices.

Staffing levels on head teachers' instructional supervision practices was investigated. Options were given from which the respondents were required to pick one depending on their agreement. The results presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Adequacy of teachers in schools

		Instructional Supervision			Total
		Never	Once a term	Twice a term	
Adequacy of teachers in your school	Inadequate	25 61.0%	14 34.1%	2 4.9%	41 100.0%
	Adequate	8 18.2%	17 38.6%	19 43.2%	44 100.0%
Total		33 38.8%	31 36.5%	21 24.7%	85 100.0%

The findings in Table 4.1 show that 61.0 percent of the head teachers with inadequate teaching staff have never conducted instructional supervision, 34.1percent carried out instructional supervision once a term while 4.9 percent of the head teachers conducted

instructional supervision twice a term. On the other hand, 43.2 percent of head teachers with adequate teaching staff were conducting instructional supervision twice a term and 38.6 percent with adequate teaching staff carried out once a term instructional supervision. It was only 18.2 percent of head teachers with adequate teaching staff never conducted instructional supervision. This explains school with adequate number of teaching staff head teachers delivering great services to its clients like students and parents. The findings of this study concur with the findings of Opudo (2012) confirmed that adequate teaching staff gives room to head teachers to do effective instructional supervision other than insufficient number of teachers in the school.

In this section, mean difference between head teachers from Garissa and Nairobi on the staffing levels were explained. The results are displayed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Garissa and Nairobi head teachers rating mean on staffing levels

	Garissa			Nairobi		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
How do you rate the adequacy of teachers in your school?	42	1.55	.504	43	1.49	.506
Does your school have Adequate teaching staff	42	1.95	.936	43	2.19	.958
Adequate teaching staff give enough time for head teachers to supervise	42	1.62	.764	43	2.00	1.254
Due to inadequate teaching staff head teachers are overloaded	42	2.40	.857	43	2.12	1.159
Overstaffing makes instructional supervision easier	42	2.33	1.119	43	2.14	1.125
Adequate teachers make head teachers to delegate duties	42	3.50	.741	43	2.07	1.298
Understaffing leaves head teacher little time for supervision	42	2.45	.942	43	1.58	.731
Understaffing makes completing the syllabus difficult	42	3.26	1.308	43	2.37	1.113

Table 4.2 shows that there was a significant mean difference between the head teachers on the perceptions of the adequate teachers makes head teachers to delegate duties. Garissa head teachers showed higher mean scores ($M = 3.50$, $SD=.741$) than did Nairobi head teachers ($M = 2.07$, $SD= 1.298$). Likewise, there was a significant mean difference between the head teachers on the perceptions of overstaffing makes instructional supervision easier. Garissa head teachers scored higher ($M = 2.33$, $SD= 1.119$) than did Nairobi head teachers ($M=2.14$, $SD=1.125$). According to staffing levels head teachers rating mean majority of Garissa head teachers were scored high while Nairobi head teachers scored consistently lower mean. This indicates understaffing levels affects the effectiveness of instructional supervision. The finding of the study concurs with the study by World Bank (2013) which affirmed that the availability of adequate teaching staff and

learning environment at the learning institutions makes it easier for head teachers to improve instructional supervision. Inadequate staffing levels in the learning institutions make head teachers to undertake classroom lessons to fill the gap. The findings of this study mirror the findings of Nyandiko (2014) who in his study confirmed that head teachers are experiencing staff shortages. This, according to the study has a negative impact on the head teachers' instructional supervision practices.

In this regard, *t* test was conducted. The respondents on strongly agree and agree were interpreted as adequacy while strongly disagree, disagree and neutral were interpreted as inadequacy. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: *t*-test of staffing levels and head teachers' instructional supervision

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Adequacy of teachers in your school	Equal variances assumed	14.309	.002	2.491	216	.013
	Equal variances not assumed			2.465	192.181	.015

Table 4.3 illustrates the results that the *p*-value of equality of variance is 0.002 which is less than 0.05 and this means that the variances are not assumed to be equal. The *t*-value for this study is 2.491 and the *p*-value for this *t*-value is 0.013. Because the *p*-value of 0.013 is less than the standard *p*-value of 0.05 ($0.013 < 0.05$), the null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference on adequacy of teaching staff in schools and instructional supervision is rejected. The study concludes that there is a significant evidence to prove that there is statistical difference in carrying out instructional supervision based on adequacy of teaching staff. The findings of the study agree with the findings of Opudo (2012) who revealed that both competence and the number of staff needed to deliver services to the clients, which are students and parents are significant to achieving effecting instructional supervision.

H₀₂: To determine the extent to which school location influences head teachers' instructional supervision practices

To determine whether the school location influences on head teachers' instructional supervision practices mean difference between head teachers from Garissa and Nairobi on the school location were explained. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 illustrates the results of mean difference between the head teachers on the perceptions of urban teachers are more trained. Nairobi head teachers' scores higher ($M = 3.83, SD=.730$) than did Garissa head teachers ($M = 3.51, SD=.910$). Likewise, mean difference between the head teachers on the perceptions of urban areas have more streams of the classes, Nairobi scored higher ($M = 3.43, SD=1.364$) than did Garissa ($M = 2.95, SD=1.234$). However, there was a significant mean difference between the head teachers on the perceptions of qualified teachers look work in urban areas. Garissa head teachers scored higher ($M = 4.21, SD=.861$) than did Nairobi head teachers ($M = 3.86, SD=1.160$). This means that most respondents agreed that the location of a school matters

most as far as instructional supervision is concerned. The study for instance showed that most head teachers agreed that urban areas are more likely to have qualified and trained teachers. The findings of this study are mirrored in the findings of a study conducted by Osokoya and Akuche (2012) which revealed that schools in urban areas have more teachers because they believe that urban schools have sufficient learning materials like books, internet, electricity, infrastructure and more allowances. However, schools' managers and stakeholders in corporation with the head teachers can contribute to improved rural conditions by creating essential infrastructure and resources needed for great learning locations and conducive teaching environment. The results are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Nairobi and Garissa head teachers rating mean on school location

	Nairobi Head Teachers			Garissa Head Teachers		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
School in urban areas tend to have more streams than rural	42	3.43	1.364	43	2.95	1.234
Qualified teachers look to work urban areas	42	3.86	1.160	43	4.21	.861
Due to the rural areas head teachers are overloaded	42	2.48	.773	43	2.21	.466
Teachers in urban are more trained	42	3.83	.730	43	3.51	.910
Head teachers in rural areas manage to carry out all instructional supervision	42	3.24	1.376	43	3.00	1.047

In this section, *t*-test was conducted based on school location on head teachers' instructional supervision. Table 4.5 displays *t*-test. The *t*-test was used to compare the mean ratings of the head teachers' instructional supervision based on their location.

Table 4.5: *t*-test based on school location and head teachers' instructional supervision

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Location of your school	Equal variances Assumed	39.457	.000	4.578	216	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			4.671	212292	.000

The results of Table 4.5 show that, the *p*-value of equality of variance is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and this means that the variances are not assumed to be equal. The *t*-value for this study is 4.578 and the *p*-value for this *t*-value is 0.000. Because the *p*-value of 0.000 is less than the standard *p*-value of 0.05 (0.000<0.05), the null hypothesis that there is no significant mean difference on how head teachers from Garissa County carry out instructional supervision compared to those from Nairobi County is rejected. Hence the

study concludes that there is a significant evidence to prove that there is statistical difference in carrying out instructional supervision based on school location.

The findings of this study confirm the findings of Oskoya and Akuche (2012) that highly qualified teachers prefer teaching in urban schools than in rural schools and this is due to urban well-developed infrastructures and good life. On the other hand, the findings of the study contradicts the findings of Hargreaves, *et al.* (2014) who in their study found that school location should never be a challenge to effective instructional supervision practices as head teachers can work together with the school management and create such a conducive environment to favour teaching and learning process. This will make a difference in the instructional supervision and learning environment.

4. Recommendation

The Ministry of Education in conjunction with schools' managers and stakeholders need to strategize on how to attract and retain enough teaching staff for each and every school in both counties. To improve instructional supervision schools' managers and stakeholders together should train teachers and post to rural areas. This is to ensure that learning environment is created for rural schools similar to that in urban schools whereby it is easier for the head teachers to do effective instructional supervision.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that majority of integrated schools in both counties head teachers face heavy workload due to understaffing levels. The understaffing level affected the head teachers' instructional supervision. When the number of teaching staff is below expectation head teachers have to take the responsibility of teaching to fill up the gap. Having conducive learning environment encouraged high levels of instructional supervision. It was noted that schools in the urban areas are more advantaged than those in the rural areas in terms of resource such as water, infrastructure teaching materials, higher level of staffing, and more qualified teachers. The findings concluded that the school location significantly influenced on head teachers' instructional supervision.

Acknowledgments

The study in this manuscript was made by the help of several individuals. Many thanks to the respondents who have contributed to the study. I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors for their encouragement throughout the study. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their assistance and support. I hope the study will benefit the interested parties.

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