

The relationship between head teachers' classroom observation and academic Performance of primary schools in Mwingi central Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the relationship between head teachers' supervision practices and academic performance in public primary schools of Mwingi Central Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya. Statement of the problem, poor academic performance in Public primary schools in Mwingi central Sub County where schools were registering low academic performance compared to other Sub counties. The specific objectives that guided the study was, to assess the influence of head teachers' classroom observation on academic performance in public primary schools in Mwingi Central Sub-County. Literature was obtained from various books, study journals, articles and reports from both electronic and print media. The study applied the concurrent triangulation research design .The target population was 1368 ,From the three zones simple random sampling were applied in selecting 6 head teachers and 61 teachers. The study utilized questionnaires as data gathering tools where test -retest technique was used to test reliability of the research instruments and the Pearson product movement correlation Findings were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The findings revealed that classroom observation practices by the head teachers were not taken seriously. From the study findings the study suggests the following; the ministry of education (MOE) and the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) to employ strategies that are aimed at balancing the head teachers' core functions to ensure that they have sufficient time for conducting instructional supervision practices. Also head teachers needs to play a mix between hands-on and delegated approaches of carrying out classroom supervision practices. CQASO should implement mechanisms to ensure that there is effective coordination in ensuring that classroom observations is done frequently to help in bridging the gaps that occur as a result of head teachers' laxity.

Keywords: Academic performance, classroom observation, supervision practices, head teacher's roles

Introduction

Academic performance is a product of several factors with head teachers' supervisory practices playing the key role. In education context, supervision regards administration geared towards stimulation of the teachers in order to enhance increased pedagogic efficiency and productivity. Effective and efficient supervisory practices at all levels are the key to success of well-planned education programme. In absence of this, planning process in education can be highly handicapped (Halliday, 2005). Supervision practices are aimed at enhancing and improving the school teaching-learning processes. Head teachers have to ensure that they supervise teachers through ensuring easy lesson planning, lessons structuring with interesting begging, adequate revision of the available materials and enhancing warm teachers-students relationship and ensuring sufficient follow-ups (Too, 2012)

Academically Supervision extends to evaluation of goals of the education program among other administration goals of supervision it also aims at managing school resources and facilities in place properly as well as other systems in the institution (Thakral, 2015). In the modern context of supervision in education, it involves multi-dimension tasks of education administration concerned with enhancing and improvement of effectiveness of performance. Supervision is service given to teachers as while as the learners at once as a group and it is involving specialized help in the learning process (Tshabalala, 2013). Currently, the main objective of supervision is to offer the best teaching practice in learning and teaching processes to improve and control the teaching-learning process, improving the quality of learning process learners performance academically for the learners in place. Classroom observation is deemed as a communication tool where head teachers share various issues affecting teaching and learning in a particular classroom. Teacher supervision also acts as appraisal tool where teachers reflect on highlighted issues. In primary schools in Yemen, learners scoring mean grades of 75 percent and above are considered to have excelled in academic performance (UNESCO, 2013). The same metric has been used in measurement of academic attainment and performance in schools in many developed countries like United Kingdom, German, and Netherlands etc.

In context of Africa, a conference in Addis Ababa in 2008 on achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) in their member countries, the main issues were ensuring of quality and relevant education in Africa where performance in terms of the students' outcome of the examinations was majorly defining the quality of education. The conference stated that unless education quality is improved in Africa, the effort towards MDG purpose will not be met (Woldefesae, 2008). In Nigeria, the study conducted by Oghuvbu (2011), established that the key role of supervisors as effective schools inspectors of instruction should have regular workshops to enable them discharge their instruction supervision duties. School inspection has been cited for its inability to help teachers in improving classroom performance.

In Uganda, according to the Ugandan universal primary education and the Ugandan universal secondary education programmes, there has been raising rate of failure of those programs to attain their objectives. The education development studies conducted at Makerere University reported that the main challenge facing those programs is lack of close supervision practices in schools (Esudu, 2010). The failure in

supervision practices starts from the top downwards in essence that the MoE has failed to closely supervise and monitor closely the functioning of District Education Officers who in turn have failed to keep close checking and monitoring of the schools heads and education inspectors who in same line are not supervising the teachers leading to the teachers laxity in classroom management practices thus contributing to non-attainment of UPE objectives due to low academic performance (Esudu, 2010). In Kenya, pupils academic attainment in examinations both internally and externally (in KCPE) have trended downwards. Head teachers supervision practices in their schools are taken and seen as managerial strategy that has been designed to achieve efficiency in teaching which is geared towards attainment of academic performance (Ministry of Education, 2018). According to MoE (2018), the outcomes of applying this supervision principle has assisted in enhancing head teachers through imposing various functional rights for transforming them from dictatorial to democratic trend of managing their respective schools. In Mwingi central Sub county, Public primary schools are not exception with many pupils registering low academic grades in KCPE (MoEST,2018) who noted that ,in Mwingi Central, the public primary schools registered mean Score of 31.6% which was lower than the national Mean Score.

According to Ministry of Education (2018), The structure gets primary attention on a day to day basis because in reality, not much of supervision may be going on. Few empirical case studies have been conducted in line to the relationship between the head teachers supervision practices academic performance in primary schools in Mwingi central Sub county; therefore posing the significance of conducting this study.

Statement of the problem

Academic performance is a key concern for all educational stakeholders because poor pupil's performance in the national examinations spells doom for pupils whose life becomes uncertain and full of despair. A problem that the researcher sought to investigate is that public primary schools in Mwingi central sub county continue to register poor performance compared to other sub counties .In the event of poor academic performance, parents and guardians often transfer children to the private schools in the hope of better performance. The study have been reporting lower academic mean grades where many pupils have displayed lower grades which have continued to diminish with great extend witnessed in the last few years in their KCPE examinations (MoEST, 2018) who noted that, in Mwingi Central, the public primary schools registered mean score of 31.6%, which was lower than the national mean score. With the current state in place, adverse effects in the education sector are likely to intensify with schools dropouts, unrests and overall curtailing of the educational dreams of the children. Few and insufficient investigations on subject of study especially in Mwingi Central has been conducted. Therefore, this has provoked this present study which sought to investigate the relationship between the head teachers supervision practices and academic performance of primary schools in Mwingi central sub-county in Kitui County.

Theoretical framework

The study was guided by Management practice theory which was proposed by Kuo (2009).The theory addresses how Managers and Supervisors relate to their organizations in the knowledge of better

performance In the effort of effective means to get the goals accomplished and how to motivate employees to perform to the highest standard, the Main interest in this study was that, although school head teachers in different parts of the world might have succeeded in managerial duties without the ideas of management theory .Managers Who have used management strategies while performing their day to day duties with or without theoretical management knowledge had better chances of efficient and effective management . Therefore, the Rationale for using this theory in this study is to enhance efficient and effective supervision in public primary schools. Head teachers ought to realize the important role they play as school Managers in their institutions and adopt the practice in order to increase their school academic performance

Study Delimitations

This study was limited to the public primary schools only on subject matter of the relationship between head teachers supervision practices and academic performance because it was deemed that academic performance of any institution squarely depends on the nature of management.

The geographical area limitation was confined to Mwingi Central Sub-County since recently the area has raised alarming concern on KCPE performance.

Methodology and Research design

The study applied the descriptive design. The research design involved single study comprising of both qualitative and quantitative data collections carried out at the same time to validate the research findings generated by each method (Creswell & Clark, 2011) This study targeted 1364 respondents consisting of 114 school heads and 1250 teachers in public primary schools in Mwingi central sub county .From the three Zones, purposive sampling method was used to select Six head teachers and Random sampling was used to select Sixty one teachers from each Zone. Questionnaires were used as instruments of collecting primary data. The collected information was then analyzed in descriptive design and the Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine reliability

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Summary of the findings

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents research findings arising from the results obtained from questionnaires issued and filled by the respondents which were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The study aimed at assessing the relationship between head teachers observation practices and academic performance of primary schools in Mwingi Central Sub county, Kitui county Kenya.

4.1 Response Rate

The response rate implied the proportion of the research instruments that were returned by respondents fully filled. The researcher targeted 201 respondents consisting of 18 head teachers and 183 teachers. The

response rate originating from the instruments distributed and returned by the respondents was represented in the table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Category	No. Of instruments issued	No. of instruments returned	Response rate
Head teachers	18	18	100%
Teachers	183	141	77%

Out of 18 research instruments issues to the head teachers, all the 18 instruments were returned duly filled representing a response rate of 100% while out of the 183 instruments issued to the teachers, 141 instruments were returned dully completed representing a response rate of 77%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2011), the response rate above 60% is good for analysis and hence the response rate for this study was deemed adequate for purpose of analysis. The rest of respondents 23% who did not return their instruments cited reasons among them being out of the time and forgetfulness among others

4.2 Background Information of Respondents

The researcher sought to find the background information of the key respondents mainly their age, level of education, years of experience in the current position and years of service in the current school. This information was deemed relevant in provision of deeper understanding of the research problem. These were analyzed, presented and discussed as follows

4.2.1 Range of Age of Respondents

The study surveyed age of respondents and their range of ages were represented in the

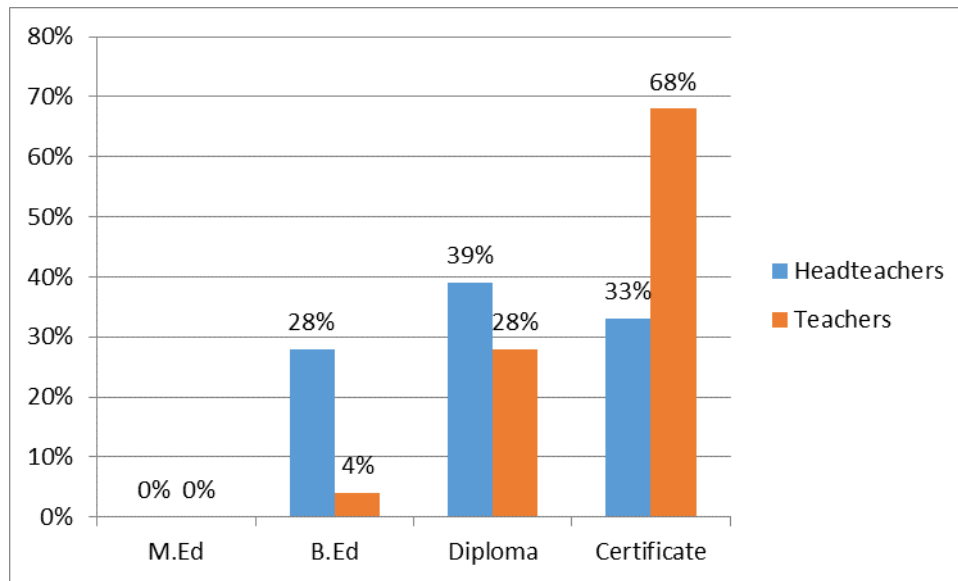
Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Head teachers		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 – 30	0	0	12	9
31 – 40	1	6	40	28
41 – 50	2	11	64	45
51 and above	15	83	25	18
Total	18	100	141	100

Table 4.2 indicates the distribution of head teachers by age where majority of 83% were within the age brackets of 51 and above years. This held the implication that they were very mature and very experienced in the field of teaching and in leadership positions thus they could provide deeper insight and analytical opinion of the current study, while 63% teachers were of the age bracket of above 41 years of age which is a clear indication that they were mature enough with adequate information and knowledge regarding the subject matter under study.

4.2 Highest Level of Education

The researcher sought to establish the highest academic qualification of the respondents. Figure 1 Distribution of Respondents Based on their Highest Level of Education



The findings in the figure 1 on the highest level of education of respondents indicated that vast majority of head teachers above 67% of the head teachers had education qualifications of diploma level and above which was clear indicator that they had necessary qualification for implementation of their supervisory role as mandated by the ministry of education in their work stations. On the side of teachers, they all had tertiary qualification of certificate level and above meaning that they had essential knowledge skills and abilities to discharge their responsibilities as stipulated by ministry. Generally, the level of education of the respondents meant that they had necessary level of understanding of the supervision practices and processes and how they enhance academic performance in their schools thus capable of providing dependable information on the subject under study.

4.2.2 Years of Experience in TSC

The study also sought to determine the respondents’ years of experience in TSC. The findings on these were summarized in table 2 as follows

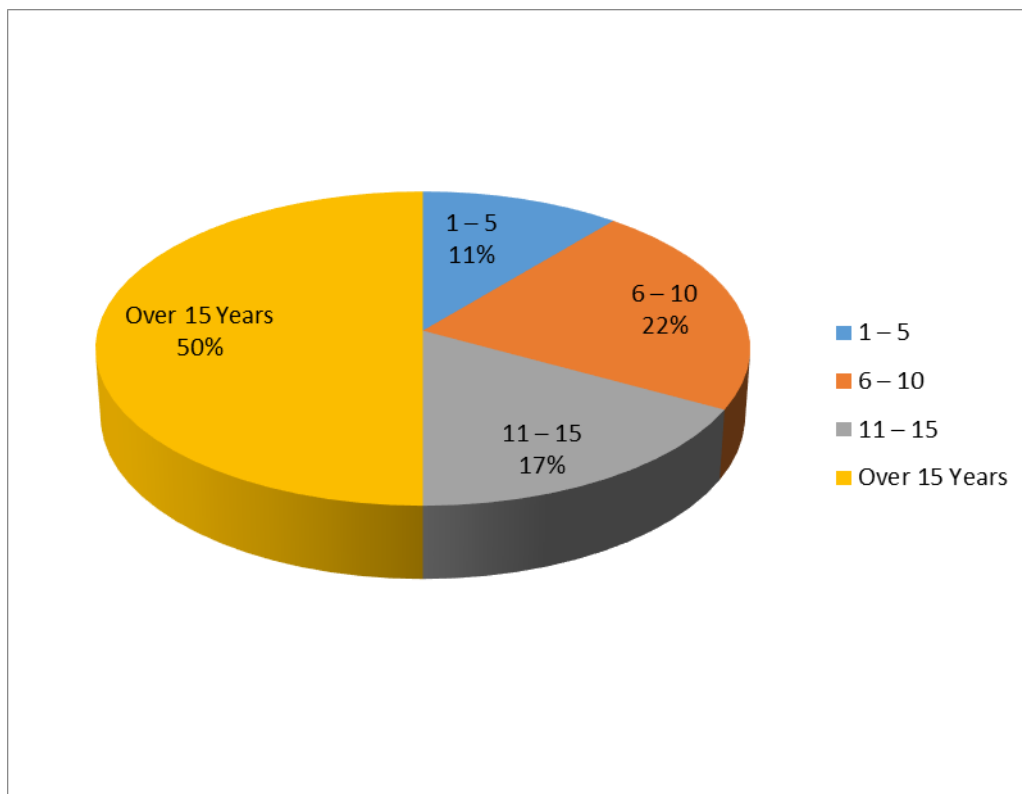
Table 2 Years of Experience in TSC

Years of Service in TSC	Head teachers		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 – 5 Years	0	0	5	3%
6 – 10 Years	0	0	15	11%
11 – 15 Years	3	17%	46	33%
Over 15 Years	15	83%	75	53%
Total	18	100%	141	100%

Based on the findings tabulated in table 2 vast majority (83%) of the head teachers had over 15 years of experience in TSC. On the side of teachers, majority of 86% had over 10 years of experience in TSC thus conversant with subject matter under study. This implies that both categories of respondents had sufficient exposure in terms of TSC guidelines and policies that were essential to enhance performance in their workstations.

On the years of service as the head teacher, the researcher sought to determine their administrative and leadership exposure which is essential for the performance of supervision practices. The findings were illustrated in the figure 4.2

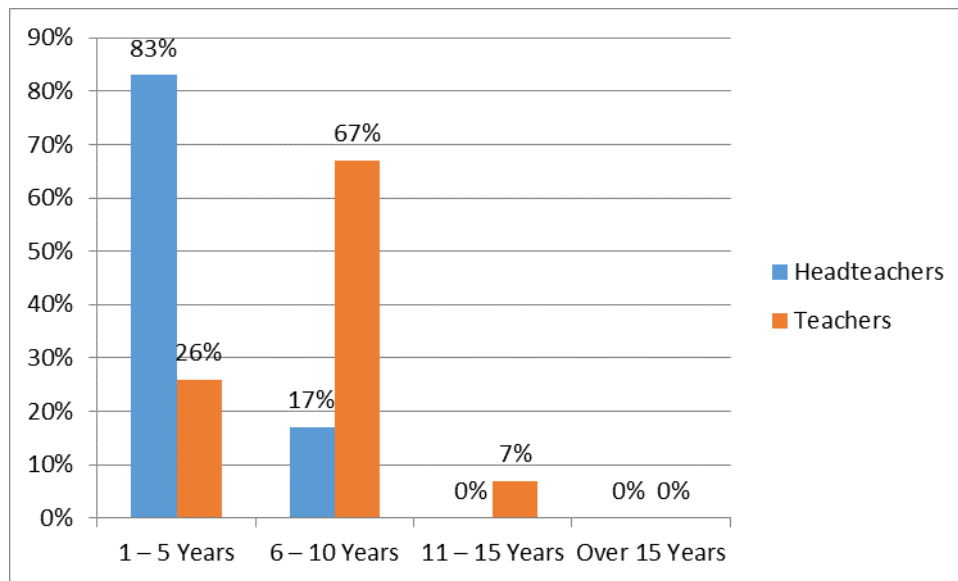
Figure 2: Years of Service as Headteach



The findings in the figure .2 show that majority of 89% of the head teachers had over 5 years of service as head teachers and only 11% had service time of below 5 years. This therefore implies that they had vast experience in the supervision practices as well as adequate knowledge of the academic performance metrics as well as the required exposure in the leadership therefore implying that they have sufficient understanding of supervision practices and the inherent enhancement of academic performance due to several years of administrative and leadership exposure.

Years of Service in the Current School

Figure 3 Distribution of Respondents Based on Years of Service in Current School



From figure .3 above, majority of head teachers 83% have less than 5 years of service in the current school and only 17% have more than 5 years but less than 10 years of service in the current school. This implies that majority of head teachers do not own academic performances which was attained in more than 5 years ago as they have been posted recently into these schools. On the side of teachers, majority of 72% have service length of more than 5 years in their current schools and therefore they can be linked to the academic performance attained in their schools for a period over previous five years. Thus they have reliable information regarding the supervision practices undertaken in their schools and the inherent academic performance in their schools.

Table 4.2, head teachers' classroom visitation

Frequency Percentage (%) tabulated in the table below

Frequency of classroom visitation	Frequency	Percentage
Daily		
Fortnightly	11	8%
Monthly	16	11%
Termly	17	12%
Never	97	69%
Total	141	100%

The table above shows the findings of Head teachers' classroom visitation where 69% of the respondents indicated that the head teachers never made class visits whereas only 8% indicated that they made visits fortnightly. While 12% of the respondents made classroom visitation on termly basis and 11% monthly. The low frequency of classroom observation could adversely affect the academic performance of the pupils in public primary schools in the study area because without frequent visitations,

understanding of the current problems faced by the learners and teachers becomes a challenge. These problems could thereof affect academic performance of the learners. This observation concurs with the findings by Mwashindo (2013) and Kariuki (2013) where both agreed that frequent classroom observation influences positively on KCPE performance. The findings showed that 69% never, 12% termly, 11% monthly and 8% fortnightly this was a clear indication that the number of days head teacher's made visits was less per year compared to the number of days the head teachers never made classroom observation meaning in most cases they were not aware of what was going on in the classrooms setting, the challenges teacher's and learners were facing and even the preparations teacher's were making to handle the learners and syllabus coverage. Therefore the findings above shows less numbers of days the head teachers' made classroom observation and yet the learners were witnessing low academic performance as a clear indication that there is a relationship between head teachers' classroom observation and academic performance of learners in public primary schools

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings were that there were unreliable classroom observation by the head teachers and the performance for the last five years were poor therefore, to improve on the observation, The head teachers should involve their deputies in classroom observation by delegating some supervision roles to their deputies to ensure that the supervision activities goes on consistently and persistently, The head teachers to revise the frequency of classroom visitations and supervision to be done regularly in public primary schools, Head teachers should enhance frequent undertaking of pre and post observation conferences to allow teachers to prepare and get feedback immediately, further study should be done on the role of deputy Head teachers' on classroom supervision and academic performance in public primary schools.

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