

Influence of Principals' Management Competencies on Supervision of Instruction in Public Secondary Schools in Homabay County, Kenya

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Abstract

Principals' supervision of instruction is vital as it ensures that all planned teaching and learning activities in a school are implemented and educational objectives achieved. Despite its importance, principals' supervision of instruction in Homabay County over the years has been below expectation as evidenced by poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Examinations (KCSE). This paper examines the influence of principals' management competencies on supervision of instruction in public secondary schools in Homabay County, Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. A sample of 6 Sub County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQASOs) and 204 Heads of Departments (HODs) selected using purposive, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques were involved in the study. Data was collected using the HODs questionnaire and SCQASOs interview guide. The two instruments were validated and piloted for reliability before they were used to collect data. The influence of principals' management competencies on supervision of instruction was determined using simple regression analysis. The results of the study revealed that the relationship between principals' management competencies and supervision of instruction was significant ($R = .429, p < .05$). The results also revealed that a significant proportion of variance in supervision of instruction was explained by principals management competencies ($\beta = .426, p < 0.05$). It is expected that the findings of this paper will provide school administrators and government education officers with an insight on the role of principals' management competencies in supervision of instruction. The results may also be used by principals to develop policies and practices that enhance quality of supervision of instruction in their respective schools.

Key words: *Competencies, Influence, Instruction, Management, Supervision*

1.0 Introduction

Management of secondary schools is becoming more complex because of the dynamic environment in which they operate (Bouchamma, Basque, Marcotte, 2014). Schools require competent leaders and managers if they are to provide quality education to learners. Principals as heads of these institutions are central to successful management of schools and realization of their objectives. The quality of education offered by schools depends on the nature of leadership provided by principal, his/her ability to control, direct and guide teachers and students (Kiptum, 2016). It also depends on the principal's ability to organize and supervise implementation of the approved school curriculum (Wango, 2009).

The term "supervision" literally means to "watch over" or "to oversee" (Amannuel, 2009). It is concerned with aspects of administration which are geared towards human resource with an aim of achieving organisational goals. Wanjohi (2005), conceptualized supervision as "overseeing" and "helping", where overseeing has a connotation of a task oriented that involves directing, controlling, coordinating and reporting. In educational cycles, it is more concerned with supervision of instruction. According to Ayeni (2012), instructional supervision is an internal mechanism adopted by principals

for school self-evaluation, geared towards helping teachers and students to improve on their teaching and learning activities for purposes of achieving educational objectives. The purpose of supervision of instruction is not to judge the competencies of teachers, nor is it to control them but rather to work cooperatively with them. Its main objective is to improve teachers' instructional practices, which may in turn improve student learning. It provides teachers with information about their teaching so as to develop instructional skills to improve performance

Supervision of instruction is one of the most important management activities in schools as it facilitates learning and supports teachers in bringing about effective teaching (Gregory, 2011)). In Kenya, supervision of teaching and learning was conducted by inspectors from the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2009). This mode of supervision was referred to as inspection, it has been phased out and the function left to the principals (Ministry of Education, 2011). Instructional supervision provides principals with the opportunity to make observations and evaluate shortcomings in the classroom. Data generated by these observations is used to determine whether a school and its educational offerings are effective or ineffective (Republic of Kenya, (2005) Sessional Paper No. 1). Macharia, Thunguri and Kiongo (2014) assert that instructional supervision ensures that goals of the school are well articulated; learning environment is safe; teachers' efforts are focused on teaching and improving their professional skills; and classroom teaching.

Studies have shown that supervision of instruction is affected by several factors. Sergiovani (2009) noted that possession of three basic skill domains; technical, human and conceptual is key to supervision of instruction. Wawira (2011) observed that principals' job and teaching experiences influence teachers' perception towards the principal's instructional supervision practices. Studies done in Kenya by Nyandiko (2008) and Kirui (2012) found that principals' experiences have a positive influence on implementation of curriculum change and instructional supervision practices. Attitudes (Mbithi, 2007), school size (Bays, 2010) and workload (Kamindo, 2008) are some of the determinants of instructional supervision. Studies have also shown that principals' management competencies contribute significantly towards their supervision of instruction (Makokha, 2015). Babayemi (2006) is of the view that a school principal must not only be trained in the act of administration but must be well-acquainted with the principles that guide and control administrative processes.

Supervision of instruction is one of the several techniques employed in achieving educational objectives (Bendikson, Robinson & Hattie, 2012) Supervision of instruction is important because it is a means of advising and stimulating interest in teachers, pupils, help to improve teaching and learning situations in educational institutions (Oyewole & Alonge, 2013). Despite its importance supervision of instruction is not effective in most schools (Kieleko, 2015). This study sought to establish the influence of principals' management competencies on supervision of instruction in public secondary schools in Homabay County, Kenya. It tested one null hypothesis at an alpha level of significance of 0.05 which states:

HO: Principals' management competencies do not significantly influence supervision of instruction.

2.0 Methodology

This study was conducted among public secondary schools in Homabay County between February and March 2016. It adopted the descriptive survey research design. The design was selected because it is ideal for examining the nature of prevailing conditions and practices as they existed without manipulation of variables (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005).

This study was conducted among public secondary schools in Homabay County. The county has a total of 298 secondary schools (County Director of Education [CDE], 2015). The schools are categorised as, National (2), Extra County (11), County (43) and Sub County (242).

The target population of the study was 4,795 public secondary school teachers in the county and the 6 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASO). The accessible population was 803 Head of Department (HODs) and the 6 SCQASOs. The HODs were selected because they coordinate department activities and assist the principals and their deputies to manage schools (Wango, 2009). The SCQASOs were chosen because it is their mandate to ensure that quality education is provided to students in their respective sub-counties.

Purposive sampling was used to select the 6 SCQASOs who took part in the study while the sample size of the HODs was determined using Slovin's formula (Dionco-Adetayo, 2011)

$$n = \frac{N}{1+NE^2}$$

Where: n = sample size

N = population size

E = margin of error or error tolerance (5%)

1 = is a constant value

The sample size of HODs was 267 given that their accessible population was 803. The number of HODs drawn from the various school categories was determined using purposive, stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select all the 104 HODs from national and extra-county schools to ensure these school categories were included in the study. Stratified and proportionate sampling procedures were then used to determine the number of HODs drawn from the county and sub-county schools.

The study used the Head of Departments' (HODs) questionnaire and SCQASOs interview schedule to collect data. A questionnaire was chosen because it is efficient, practical, allow use of a large sample and administration and scoring is straight forward (Borg & Gall, 2003). It is especially useful in surveying people who are dispersed over a wide geographical area and the travelling demands on an interviewer would be excessive (Salkind, 2009). The interview was chosen because respondents can seek clarification whenever need arises and interviewers can explain questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The HODs questionnaire and SCQASOs interview schedule were validated by 5 experts in the Faculty of Education and Human Resource, Kisii University before they were used in the field to collect data. Thereafter, the questionnaire was piloted and its reliability coefficient estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability coefficient of the HODs questionnaire was 0.81. The instrument was deemed reliable given that its coefficient was above the recommended 0.7 threshold (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

The principals' management competency was measured using data generated by the HODs questionnaire. The variable was measured with respect to its five dimensions namely: planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and controlling. A set of 22 close ended items constructed using a 5 points (1: Very Poor to 5:Very Good) scale was used to measure the variable. The responses to the items were averaged and transformed into indices of the five management competencies dimensions. The overall index was derived from the indices of the five dimensions of management competencies and used as the measure of principals' management competencies.

The principals' supervision of instruction was also measured using data gathered using the HODs questionnaire. The construct was measured with respect to three aspects of instruction supervision, namely;

planning, delivery and evaluation. 17 close ended items based on the frequency (1 Not at All to 4: Very Often) of supervision of instruction activities were used to measure the variable. The HODs responses to the items were averaged and transformed into the supervision of instruction index.

The influence of principals' management competencies on supervision of instruction was determined using simple regression. The procedure was selected because it is ideal for establishing causal relationship between variables and explaining the power of the independent variable in accounting for variations in the outcome (Field, 2010). The association between the two constructs was established by regressing the principals' management competencies index against that of supervision of instruction.

3.0 Results and Discussions

The principals' management competencies were measured with respect to planning, organizing, coordinating, supervising and controlling. The indices of the 5 aspects of management and the variable index are given in Table 1

Table 1: Planning, Organizing, Coordinating, Supervising, Controlling and principals Management Competencies Indices

Management Dimension	n	Mean	SD
Planning	197	3.84	0.54
Organising	195	3.87	0.48
Coordinating	196	3.74	0.38
Supervising	193	3.92	0.48
Controlling	194	4.09	0.13
Management competency index	199	3.90	0.40

The results in Table 1 reveal that the means of the 5 dimensions of management ranged from 3.74 (SD = 0.38) to 4.09 (SD = 0.13) while the principals management competencies index was 3.90 (SD = 0.40). The means of the 5 aspects of management and principals management competencies indices were high given that they were out of a maximum of 4. This is an indication that principals are competent managers

Data generated by the QASOs interview schedule indicated that the principals' management competencies levels were high. Two of the QASOs noted that principals have good working relations in their schools while three reported that principals involve stakeholders in management of the schools. Two of the SQASOs reported that most of the schools were well organized as they have well laid structures with clear lines of responsibilities. One QASO observed that most principals in old schools had well-kept records. The observations of the QASOs is an indication that principals practice aspects of management aspects of management organizing, delegation and team work.

3.1 Principals' supervision of instruction

Principals' supervision of instruction was measured with respect to three aspects of instruction supervision, namely; planning, delivery and evaluation. The supervision of instruction index was M = 3.17 (SD = 0.60) out of a maximum of 4 and was rated good.

Data generated by the QASOs interview guide revealed the principal's management competencies were good. The QASOs pointed out some of the weak areas that commonly featured during their inspection. They pointed out, some of the issues they come across during inspection were; schemes of work which were not up to date; records of curriculum delivery not endorsed; and monitoring systems not in place.

3.2 Testing the hypothesis

Simple regression was used to test the study hypothesis which stated that principals' management competencies do not influence supervision of instruction (Table 2)

Table 2: Regression Model showing Association between Principals' Management Competencies and Supervision of Instruction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.870	.201		9.302	.000
Principals' management competencies	.352	.053	.429	6.629	.000

R= .429, R² = .184, Adjusted R² = .180, F(1, 195) = 43.947, p < 0.05

The results in Table 2 reveal that the relationship between principals' management competencies and supervision of instruction was positive and significant ($R = .429, p < 0.05$). The results further reveal that principals management competencies explained a significant variation in supervision of instruction, $R^2 = .184, F, (195) = 43.947, p < 0.05$. These results imply that principals' management competencies influence supervision of instruction. On the basis of these results the study hypothesis which states that principals' management competencies do not influence supervision of instruction was rejected.

This paper examined the influence of principals' management competencies on supervision of instruction. The results indicated that the relationship between principals' management competencies and supervision of instruction was positive and statistically significant. The results support those of Olaleye (2013) who observed that the success of schools systems depend on principals abilities to plan, organize, direct and coordinate, staff and evaluate. Accomplishment of school objectives depend solely upon the principal's administrative and management skills. The results are in harmony with those of a study conducted by Adegbeville (2011) in Nigeria. The study demonstrated that the principals require planning, organizing, communication, personnel and leadership skills to supervision to effectively supervise operations in school.

4.0 Conclusions

The results of the first hypothesis test revealed that the relationship between principals' management competencies and supervision of instruction was positive and statistically significant. It also revealed that principals' management competencies explained a significant variation in supervision of instruction. On the basis of these observations, it was concluded that principals' management competencies positively influence supervision of instruction.

1.0 Recommendations

This paper has shown that principals' management competencies positively influence supervision of instruction. On the basis of the results, it is recommended that principals' management competencies be enhanced through workshops and seminars, post graduate training in school management and skill upgrading short courses. It is also recommended that supervision of instruction in schools be strengthened through planning, organising and motivation of educators and parents by principals.

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Appendices

Principals' management competencies index

Statement	N	Mean	SD
<i>Planning</i>			
Shaping school mission and vision	162	3.04	1.45
Sharing the schools core values with all the stakeholders	197	4.14	0.98
Preparing plans for school curricula and co-curriculum activities	197	4.01	1.09
Drawing the school's annual budget	192	4.17	1.01
Planning index	197	3.84	0.54
<i>Organizing</i>			
Designing a framework for implementation plans for achieving school objectives	190	4.06	1.08
Has put in place effective communication channels in the school	167	3.16	1.47
Makes adjustments in the school's academic programmes whenever need arises	190	4.23	0.96
Organizing repairs and maintenance of school's physical facilities	195	4.03	1.07
Organizing index	195	3.87	0.48
<i>Coordinating</i>			
Selecting and recruiting qualified of competent staff	163	3.23	1.59
Deploying staff for effective execution of school programmes	189	4.01	1.06
Consulting subordinates before making decisions	192	3.54	1.24
Coordinating repairs and maintenance of school's equipment plant	196	4.19	0.92
Coordinating index	196	3.74	0.38
<i>Supervision</i>			
Overseeing the preparation of procurement plan for purchase of goods and services for the school	160	3.11	1.49
Continuously monitors and evaluates all school's teaching-learning activities	195	4.10	1.13
Oversees the collection of all school revenue	194	4.10	1.03
Supervises utilization of school finances	192	4.36	0.90
Overseeing school's participation in co-curricular activities	189	3.93	1.15
Supervision index	193	3.92	0.48
<i>Controlling</i>			
Directing implementation of curriculum	192	4.30	0.92
Promptly deals with problems	194	4.04	1.04
Motivates student and staff	194	3.97	1.17
Ensures there is a favourable climate for change in the school	194	4.03	1.40
Is a team player	196	4.09	1.11
Controlling Index	194	4.09	0.13

Principals Supervision of Instruction Index

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Monitoring curriculum delivery by attending class during lessons	194	2.87	1.19
Rating preparation of work/lesson plans by the end of the term	193	3.76	0.49
Monitoring purchase and delivery of instruction materials	197	3.72	0.49
Examining quality of teaching-learning materials	192	3.80	0.61
Visiting classroom to ensure teaching and learning takes place in a conducive environment	192	3.18	0.93
Checking whether teachers mark and prepare students progress report promptly	189	3.57	0.77
Examining teachers records of works to ensure they filled and checked by HODs	191	2.80	0.65
Checking whether teachers are present in class and teaching during lesson	191	3.40	0.91
Going through students work books as a way of ensuring assignments are given and marked by teachers	196	2.74	0.93
Make visits as way of ensuring science teachers prepare laboratories and run practical lessons with students	182	3.19	1.01
Overseeing provision of remedial teaching by ensuring time is allocated and teachers assigned those responsibilities	193	3.40	0.90
Monitoring syllabus coverage by inspecting teachers record of work	184	3.68	0.68
Ensuring teachers cover the syllabus at the end of the 4 year cycle	193	3.34	0.66
Monitoring class attendance by examining registers	184	2.88	0.86
Involving parents in supervision of learning	189	2.97	0.85
Conducting regular inspection to ensure teaching and learning equipment are in good working condition	188	3.19	0.90
Attending class during lessons and holding staff meeting to as a way of monitoring syllabus coverage	187	3.65	0.73
Principals' supervision of instruction index	190	3.17	0.60