

# Influence of Supervision of Curriculum Implementation by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Public Schools in Meru County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of head teachers' supervision of curriculum implementation on pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary School in public primary schools in Meru County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and a sample of 65 head teachers, 389 teachers and 778 pupils was drawn from 65 public primary schools in Meru County. The instruments used were the questionnaires for head teachers and teachers while focus group discussion was applied to collect data from the pupils. The data was presented in frequencies, mean and percentages. The study found out that most of the head teachers were too busy with administrative duties and this made them fail to supervise teachers as they carried out their duties and this significantly influenced pupils' performance in KCPE. This study recommends that the Directorate of Quality Assurance organize more capacity building for head teachers on management to equip them with managerial skills necessary to schools for academic excellence.

**Key word:** curriculum, implementation, influence, public primary schools. pupils' performance, supervision

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Head teachers are seen as the driving forces behind any school and it is argued that they are significant to the academic growth of pupils (Williams, 2010). However, the overall responsibility for schools' effectiveness in primary schools' education is associated with the commitment and efficiency of the head teachers. A school manager needs to be a good human resource manager who motivates the teachers in order to maximize their performance so as to obtain maximum output starting from the day they are recruited (Oduma, 2012). This can be done by setting a clear vision for the schools and communicate this vision to the pupils, teachers and support its achievement by giving instructional leadership.

In Kenya, schools are also evaluated using students' achievement data (Heck, 2009). Both the government and the parents expect the pupils in any primary school to perform better in KCPE regardless of the prevailing circumstances. However, inadequate teachers' recognition and absence of incentives to teachers by the head

teachers lead to low productivity and poor academic performance of pupils (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Hence the head teachers cannot be dissociated from the schools they manage and the academic results of their schools. The head teachers need to apply management strategies such as supervision of curriculum implementation for pupils' academic excellence. Okumbe (2008) noted that to improve students' performance, head teachers are required to be effective personnel managers. Hence good performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination is vital for admission into competitive County and national schools.

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Influence of Supervision of Curriculum Implementation by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE**

Supervision involves a lot of activities conducted by head teachers in schools. Kimeu (2010) found that overall high performance would be realized in schools if head teachers carry out their instructional supervision roles. Among these roles include checking of learners' notebooks to ascertain that lesson notes are taken. They also need to ensure that assignments are given, marked and corrected. It is the responsibility of heads of institutions to ensure that teachers attend classes to conduct their instructional duties as a professional requirement. Moraa (2010) found that head teachers need to be objective on lesson observation by giving immediate and fair feedback to the teachers after assessment, to enable them improve on their delivery methods.

Head teachers need to conduct classroom visits on regular basis in order to assess teachers as they teach. School managers need to involve live observation of teachers and analyze their class practices, their pedagogical skills, their personality and student-teacher interaction as lessons progress (Panigrahi, 2012). Head teachers need to visit classrooms and check whether teachers apply and follow schemes of work. According to the Republic of Kenya (2012), a scheme of work is an action plan made by teachers as part of preparation to teach. It is a breakdown of the topics in the syllabus divided into teachable units. It shows what is to be taught at any particular time and the relevant teaching and learning activities for a particular lesson. Hence there is need for the heads of institutions to regularly check whether teachers adhere to the syllabus in terms of scope, depth appropriateness of teaching and learning resource and learners' intellectual level. According to Fischer (2011), supervision of teachers through classroom visits include: walk through, informal class observation and formal class observation. Walk-through refers to an observation interlude lasting for a minute or two which provides a quick look at the teachers' performance and environmental factors in the classroom. Informal visit is unannounced visit lasting for more than ten minutes. During such visits, the teachers' practices are observed and documented. While a formal visit is an announced visit lasting within an agreed upon amount of time.

Effective supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers influences pupils' academic performance. A study done in Ghana by Okeyerefo, Fiareh and Amptey (2011) found that academic performance is better in private schools due to effective supervision of curriculum implementation by head of institutions. The study showed that some teachers in public schools left classrooms at will without attending to their duties because there was insufficient supervision by school supervisors. This relaxed method of supervision gave the teachers ample room to do as they pleased (Okeyerefo et al., 2011).

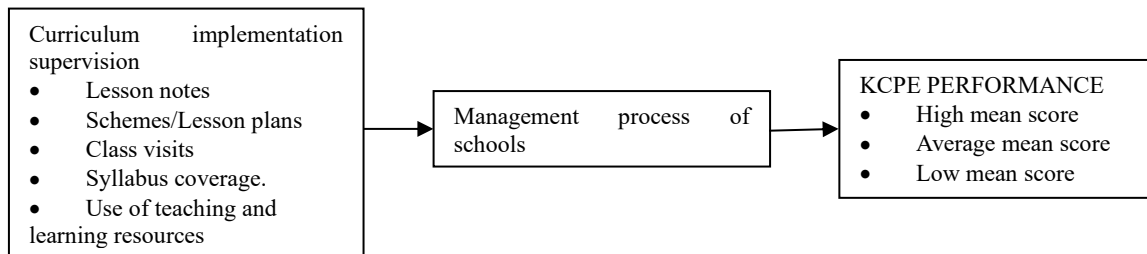
In Kenya, Muriithi (2014) found that internal instructional supervision helps teachers to improve in assessment and evaluation in curriculum implementation which improves pupils' academic performance. According to Ngunjiri (2012) head teachers should be held accountable for teachers who do not apply professional documents appropriately. These are the documents which are used by the teachers in the preparation, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning processes. They include schemes of work, lesson plans, records of work and progress records which ought to be updated and checked regularly. Hence these reviewed studies are closely related to the current study.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted path goal theory. The theory was developed by Evan Martin in 1970 and modified by House Robert in 1971. According to this theory, leaders are effective because of their impact on subordinates. The theory is concerned with how the leader influences the subordinates' perceptions of their work goals, personal goals and directs paths to goal attainment. The theory suggests that a leader's behavior is motivating or satisfying to the degree that the behavior increases subordinates' goal attainment and clarifies the paths to these goals. In this theory, it is assumed that a leader complements his employees and compensates for their shortcomings. In relation to the current study, head teachers to be effective supervisors of curriculum implementation in their respective schools and guide teachers on how to carry out their instructional duties to improve pupils' academic performance. The path goal theory provides guidelines for head teachers to encourage and support teachers in achieving the goals set for schools.

## **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation which shows the relationship of variables diagrammatically (Orodho, 2014). Figure 1 shows the relationship between supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers and pupils' performance in KCPE.



**Figure 1 Relationship Between Supervision of Curriculum Implementation and Pupils' Performance in KCPE**

Figure 1 shows how inputs such as supervision of use of lesson notes, schemes of work, lesson plans, syllabus coverage and use of teaching and learning resources lead to KCPE performance which can be high, average or low mean score. Head teachers need to be available in schools and be experienced in management skills for effective supervision. The independent variable is supervision of curriculum implementation while dependent variable is KCPE performance.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

Baskarada (2014) defines target population as all the members of a real set of people, events or objects to

which a researcher wishes to generate the results of the research. While Mugenda and Mugenda (2015) define target population as the entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic. The target population for current study was 4,008 teachers in public primary schools in Meru County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2015), a sample as a sub-group carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with relevant characteristics. The researcher used a sample size of 15% which was validated by Mugenda and Mugenda (2015) who asserted that a sample size of 15% and above of the target population is large enough and allows for reliable data analysis and testing and this is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Sample Size**

Sub-County	Target Population	15% Sample Size
Imenti South	666	100
Meru Central	570	85
Imenti North	492	74
Igembe North	516	77
Igembe South	432	65
Tigania East	498	75
Tigania West	510	76
Buuri	324	49
Total	4008	601

*Source:* Meru County Director of Education (2018).

Table 1 shows a sample size of 15% for each sub-County in public primary schools in Meru County. The study used purposive sampling technique in determining the sample size for each Sub-County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2014), purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the study objectives. The researcher used a total sample size of 601 teachers out of 4008 target population in public primary schools in Meru County. This was obtained by calculating a sample size of 15% of the target population per sub- County and this percentage was large enough to allow for reliable data analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2015).

### **3.2 Data Collection Instruments**

Research instruments are techniques used by a researcher to gather information pertaining to the study aimed at establishing or refuting some hypothesis (Hakim, 2015). The researcher used the questionnaire to collect data from teachers. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2010), the questionnaire is referred because the responses are gathered in a standardized way and they are more objective than interviews. Questionnaire is also relatively quick to use especially when information is collected from a large portion of a group. Questionnaire allowed uniformity in the way questions were asked thus ensuring greater comparability in the process (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). This instrument saved time since the targeted respondents were literate and therefore easier for them to respond to questions. The study used both open and closed-ended questions where the later were more to limit the respondents' answers on specific subject matter for easier data analysis.

### **3.3 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation**

Data analysis refers to examine what has been collected in a study and making deductions and inferences: It includes scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). After collecting the questionnaire from the respondents, they were checked to ascertain whether they were complete and accurate.

The data was then entered into the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 which processed accurate frequencies, percentages and mean which were used to discuss the findings. From the analysis, the findings were presented in the subsequent chapters where discussions, conclusion and recommendations were drawn. The multiple linear regression model was used to measure the relationship between independent variable, that is, supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers and dependent variable, that is, pupils' performance in KCPE. The regression model helped to explain the magnitude and direction of relationship between variables of the study through the use of correlation-coefficient of determination and determination and the level of significant.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Distribution of Teachers by the Years of Teaching Experience

The researcher sought to find out the years of teaching experience of teachers who formed the sample size. The findings are shown in Table 2

**Table 2 Distribution of Teachers by the Years of Teaching Experience**

Years of experience	Teachers	f %
Above 25 years	196	50.4
15–24 years	137	35.3
Below 14 years	56	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>100</b>

Data on Table 2 shows that majority, 50.4% of teachers who participated in this research had taught for over 25 years, while 35.3% had teaching experience of between 15 and 24 years and at least, 14.3% had taught for less than 14 years. This indicates that most of the teachers in public primary schools in Meru County had adequate knowledge as professionals necessary to implement the recommended curriculum to enable pupils perform well in their national examinations (Williamson, 2014).

### 4.2 Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Supervision of Curriculum Implementation by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE

The researcher sought to find out from the teachers the influence of supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers on pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County. The questionnaire given to the respondents was based on a 5 Likert scale from strongly disagree rated at 5 in a descending order to strongly agree that was rated at 1. The key is as follows: 5=Strongly disagree (SD), 4=Agree (A), 3= Un decided (U), 2= Disagree (D), 1=Strongly agree (SA). A number of items were included in the questionnaire for teachers and the findings are presented in Tables 3.

**Table 3 Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Supervision of Curriculum Implementation by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE**

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.The h/t monitors teachers in classes.	156	40.1	96	24.6	17	4.4	66	17.1	54	13.9
2.The h/t monitors content coverage by teachers.	48	12.0	68	17.5	19	4.8	97	2.5	157	40.5
3.The h/t checks pupils' note books.	70	17.9	112	28.8	33	8.5	102	26.2	72	18.5

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4.The h/t monitors assignments issued.	164	42.1	114	29.3	8	2.0	65	16.7	38	9.9
5.The h/t checks teachers' professional documents.	172	44.1	127	32.5	23	6.0	35	9.1	32	8.3
6.The h/t monitors lessons' attendance.	173	44.4	123	31.7	20	5.2	36	9.2	37	9.5

**n=389**

Data on Table 3 shows majority, 40.1% of the teachers strongly disagreed that the head teachers physically checked the presence of the teachers in class while only 13.9% strongly agreed to that statement. Only 4.4% were undecided on whether the head teachers physically checked on lessons' attendance. This implies that the head teachers knew what was expected of them yet they did not do so and according to the TSC Handbook (2015) performance contract was a TSC management tool for measuring performance against set performance targets yet it is a freely negotiated agreement between the TSC, acting as the manager of the teaching force in public schools and the head teachers in primary schools or principals in post primary institutions acting as the supervisors of teachers.

On monitoring of content coverage, Table 3 shows that majority, 40.5% of the teachers strongly agreed that the head teachers checked the content coverage by the teachers while 12.3% strongly disagreed to that fact and only 4.8% were undecided on this fact. This finding corresponds with Kosgei (2010) who found that when head teachers effectively supervise teachers' instructional activities, the quality of professional instruction is improved, the syllabus is covered within specified time and this improves students' academic performance.

On checking of pupils' notebooks, Table 3 shows that majority, 28.8% of the teachers disagreed that the head teachers checked pupils' note books while only 17.9% strongly disagreed to this statement and 8.5% were undecided on the same statement. However, these findings correspond with the view by Firestone and Rien (2008) who found that checking of students' note books does not produce a direct effect on students' performance. But this finding contradicts Kimeu (2010) who found that over law high performance would be realized in schools where head teachers carry out their instructional supervision like checking of learners' notebooks to ascertain lesson notes were taken.

On monitoring of how assignments were issued, Table 3 shows that majority, 42.1% strongly disagreed that the head teachers monitored on whether assignments were given out and marked by teachers while 9.9% strongly agreed to this statement. This finding contradicts Elliot and Cresswel (2010) who found that head teachers' commitment in monitoring teachers as they identify weak students and give them assignments and mark them leads to improved students' academic performance.

On checking of teachers' professional documents, Table 3 shows that majority, 44.1% strongly disagreed that head teachers checked teachers' professional documents while only 8.3% strongly agreed that professional documents were checked by head teachers. But only 6.0% were undecided on this statement. Finding from this study corresponds with Ngunjiri (2012) who found that teachers are required to make and maintain professional documents such as schemes of work, progressive record of work, lesson plans and class attendance registers. Okoth (2018) concurs that the principals who checked professional records were rated high by teachers and that it

could lead to improvement of students' academic performance.

On monitoring of lessons' attendance by teachers, Table 3 shows that majority, 44.4% of the teachers strongly disagreed that head teachers monitored teachers on lessons' attendance while only 9.5% strongly agreed to this statement and 5.2% were undecided on this statement. This implies that head teachers were busy with administrative responsibility and neglected this core role that could have improved pupils' academic performance. Ngunjiri (2012) concurs that successful school heads of institutions need to engage in a number of supervisory activities which include classroom visits and checking of teachers' professional records.

### **4.3 Discussion of Results**

The study findings indicate that effective supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers has significant influence on pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County. The study found that for pupils to improve in their academic performance, head teachers need to regularly visit classes and assess teachers as they carry out their instructional duties. Moraa (2010) concur that head teachers need to be objective on lesson observation by giving immediate and fair feedback to the teachers after assessment to enable them improve on their delivery methods. The findings are also in line with Panigrahi (2012) who found that school managers need to involve live observation of teachers and analyze their class practices, their pedagogical skills, their personalities and student-teacher interaction skill as lessons progress.

The study further found that head teachers need to regularly check teachers and ensure that they make and maintain updated professional records such as schemes of work, lesson plans, progressive records of work and attendance registers. Ngunjiri (2012) concurs that it is the responsibility of head teachers to ensure that teachers make and maintain professional records such as schemes of work, lesson plans, records of work and attendance registers among others. The findings in Figure1 indicates that supervision of curriculum implementation by head teachers can affect pupils' performance in KCPE which can be high, average or low mean score depending on the effectiveness of the head teacher. This corresponds with Okeyerefo et al. (2011) that academic performance was better in Ghana in private schools than in public schools because effective supervision of curriculum implementation was done by heads of institutions. Muriithi (2014) also concurs that internal supervision by head teachers helps teachers to improve in assessment and evaluation of pupils.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

It was found that supervision of lessons attendance was not properly conducted in the schools involved. The study thus concludes that the head teachers were overwhelmed by administrative duties in their respective schools such that they did not take the supervision of curriculum implementation as their first priorities hence this led to poor performance in KCPE in public schools in Meru County.

### **5.2 Recommendation**

Head teachers need to be conducting regular instructional supervision by visiting classes regularly to supervise curriculum implementation by teachers which may improve pupils' academic performance.

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