

IMPACT OF SUPERVISION ON THE QUALITY OF LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IMENTI CENTRAL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Supervision of teaching and learning plays a critical role in determining the quality of learning and consequently the performance of learners. In Imenti Central District, public primary schools have been performing poorly over the last six years in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations. This raises questions on the quality of learning in these primary schools. It is therefore important to determine the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in public primary schools in Imenti Central District. The study employed the descriptive survey research design with a target population of 20,766 subjects in 56 public primary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 10 schools from where 350 class seven pupils, 10 head teachers and 20 teachers were sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select 2 QASO officers giving a sample size of 382 participants. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used as tools for data collection. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, means and percentages. The results of data analysis were presented using frequency distribution tables and bar graphs. The study established that supervision of the learning process was poor. This was mainly affected by lack of commitment among teachers, lack of adequate time by head teachers and weak prefect bodies. The researcher recommends that head teachers should strengthen supervision to enhance the quality of learning in schools.

Key words – Impact, Supervision and Quality of learning

Introduction

Formal schooling is one of the several important contributors to the skills and development of an individual and to human capital. The distribution of personal incomes in the society is strongly related to the amount of education people have had (UNESCO, 2004). Education instills in the young crucial humanitarian values such as equity, tolerance and peace; promotes sustainable development, environmental protection, improvement in maternal and child health and participation in democratic, social and political processes; and directly contributes to national economic growth

(Serbessa, 2005). Access to good-quality schooling is thus of central importance to national development.

Edmonds (1981), Kirk and Jones (2004), Daggett (2005), and Lezotte (2010) in studies conducted in developed countries, have established that the quality of learning is found in what they refer to as 'effective schools', which are characterized by: strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of learner progress, positive home-school relations and opportunity to learn/time on task. Lezotte (2010) argued that these seven Correlates of Effective Schools are powerful indicators of successful places where all children learn, regardless of socio-economic status or ethnicity. This study sought to establish how staffing, resources, environment, enrollment and supervision will affect the quality of learning in public schools in Imenti Central District.

Verspoor (2008) conducted a study to determine the conditions and factors of effective schools in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Verspoor's (2008) findings indicated that schools associated with quality teaching and learning are characterized by emphasis on classroom factors such as time, grouping procedures and instructional strategies; emphasis on school factors such as leadership, academic achievement and staff development; focus on system factors like vision, standards, resources, relevant curriculum and incentives to provide direction as well as community factors such as home environment; and emphasis on community support for education to ensure local relevance and ownership.

In Kenya, concerns have been raised about the quality of learning in public primary schools especially since the commencement of (Free Primary Education) FPE in 2003 (UNESCO, 2005; Sifuna, 1990). After the introduction of FPE, head teachers in many schools found themselves with more children to enrol than their capacity could hold (Ng'ethe, 2004). While there is a consensus that FPE is an appropriate policy addressing the problem of declining primary school enrolment in Kenya, a serious concern has been raised on the effects the programme has on quality of education (Swamura & Sifuna, 2008; Chuck, 2009; Oketch & Somerset, 2010; Shimada, 2010). Of major concern to this study are the factors that may impede the quality of learning in the schools.

The quality of learning in Imenti Central is of specific concern to stakeholders. According to KCPE results in the province for the last six years, the performance has remained dismal. Table 1 shows the mean score and rank of the district in the province.

Table 1

KCPE Mean Scores for Imenti Central District

Year	Entry	Mean score	Rank	Index
2006	4425	227.41	50/52	-0.49
2007	4434	229.62	48/52	+2.19
2008	4445	225.6	50/52	-4.02
2009	4827	223.1	49/52	-2.50
2010	2611	222.75	51/52	-12.65
2011	2647	234.6	50/52	+3.84

Source: Imenti Central Education Office (2012)

Information on Table 1 shows that schools in Imenti Central District have been performing poorly in KCPE examinations. Concerns have been raised on the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in the district which is a contention that the current study sought to address.

Statement of the Problem

Supervision of teaching and learning is critical in ensuring quality education. Despite the governments' investment in primary education, performance has been poor in Imenti Central District which has been blamed on supervision of teaching and learning by stakeholders. The current study sought to investigate the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in Imenti Central District, Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to establish the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in primary schools in Imenti Central District.

Methodology

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The location of the study was Imenti Central District. The target population for the study was 20,776 subjects made up of 580 teachers and 20,186 pupils in 56 public primary schools in Imenti Central District and the Quality Assurance

and Standards Officers (QASOs) in the district. The researcher sampled 382 subjects made up of 350 pupils, 10 head teachers, 20 teachers and 2 QASOs to participate in the study. From each of the 10 schools, the head teachers were purposively selected, giving 10 head teachers for the study. Simple random sampling was used to select 2 teachers from each of the 10 schools, giving a total of 20 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select two QASO officers in charge of Abothuguchi East and Abothuguchi West divisions. Therefore, the total sample size comprised of 10 head teachers, 20 teachers, 350 pupils and 2 QASOs, totaling to 382 respondents. Table 2 provides a summary of the sample matrix.

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for data collection. Before the actual data was collected, the researcher conducted a piloting study in four schools in Buuri district in Eastern Province. The research instruments were administered twice with a break of two weeks. The correlation coefficient from the two sets of data collected was computed using the Spearman Brown prophecy formula. The correlation coefficient for questionnaire for the teachers was 0.938, head teachers 0.845 and that for pupils' questionnaires was 0.94. Since the coefficients obtained were greater than 0.7, the instruments were considered to be reliable enough to collect the expected data to address the formulated research questions. Quantitative and qualitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentages. The results of data analysis were presented using frequency distribution tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Table 3 shows a summary of methods of the data analysis.

Results and Discussions

Researchers obtained demographic information from the subjects to understand sample characteristics. The study sought to establish how the sample population was distributed by gender and the data presented on Table 2 reveals the findings.

Table 2

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Category of respondent	Male		Female		Total Percentage
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
Head teachers	6	60.0	4	40.0	100
Teachers	10	50.0	10	50.0	100
Pupils	168	48.0	182	52.0	100
DQASO	2	100.0	0	0	100
Total	187		195		

According to the findings in Table 2, majority (60.0%) of the head teacher respondents were males and 40.0% were females. Of the teachers, 50.0% were males while 50.0% were females. The information shown in Table 3 further shows that majority of the pupil respondents (52.0%) were girls while 48.0% were boys. This implies that there was heterogeneity in terms of gender among the respondents that took part in this study

The study sought to establish the academic qualification of the Head teachers and Teacher respondents and this information is presented on Figure 1.

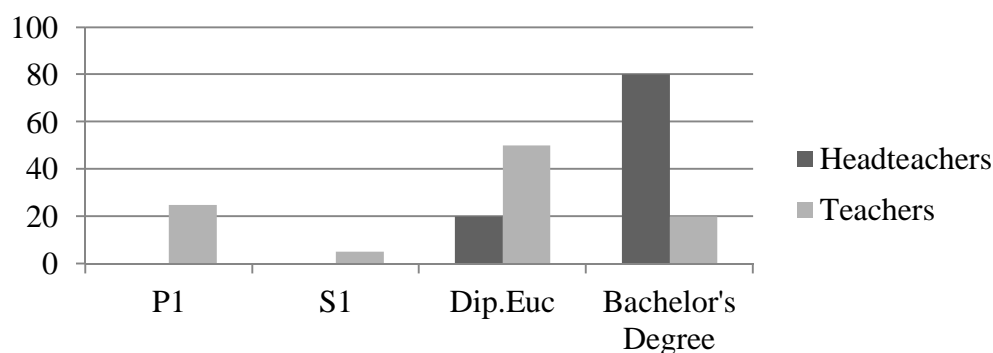


Figure 1. Head teachers' and Teachers' Academic Qualification

Figure 1 shows that majority (80.0%) of the head teachers had bachelor's degree qualifications while 20.0% of the head teachers had diploma in education qualification. None of the head teachers had a S1, P2, P1 or master's degree qualifications. The requisite qualification to be appointed as a head teacher in primary schools is a minimum of P1 with at least five years' teaching experience according to the ministry of education. This implies that head teachers who participated in the study were qualified for that responsibility and were expected to carry out their mandate effectively.

Further, the findings reveal that majority (50.0%) of the teachers had diploma in education qualification whereas 25.0% had P1, 20.0% had bachelor's degree and 5.0% had S1 qualifications. This further implies that most teachers had the recommended qualifications and training to teach in primary schools in Kenya.

The length of time spent in an organization leads to the development of shared understandings and experiences (Smoley, 1999). Increased tenure in an organization is positively related to effectiveness and performance (Mahoney, 1988). The study sought to establish the number of years head teachers and teachers had in service and the results are shown on Figure 2.

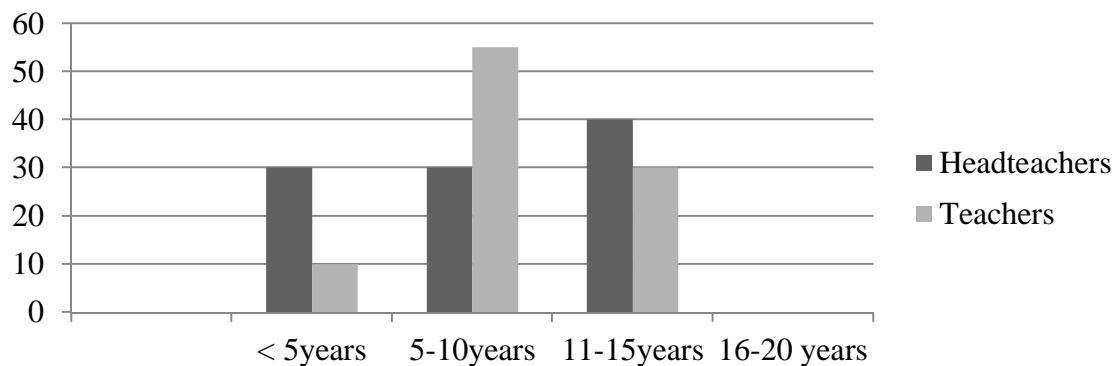


Figure 2. Work Experience as Head teacher or Teacher

Figure 2 shows that majority (40.0%) of the head teachers who participated in this study had a working experience of between 11-15 years, 30.0% had an experience of 5-10 years while 20.0% had worked in headship for less than 5 years. 55.0% of teachers had an experience of 5-10 years whereas 30.0% had taught for 11-15 years. This implies that majority of the respondents had taught for a long time and hence they could give school related factors which influence quality of learning in school. Borman (1993) and Schmidt (1986) states that work experience improves performance but only indirectly via relevant knowledge and skills because prior work experience provides the opportunity for individuals to acquire relevant knowledge and skills that could in turn enhance performance in the job.

Supervision

The objective of the study was to establish the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in primary schools in Imenti Central District. Respondents were provided with a number of statements relating to the impact of head teachers' supervision in classrooms. They were to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. Presented in Table 3 are results obtained from the pupils' responses.

Table 3

Pupils' Responses on Supervision

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Supervising time management	20	67.0	30	9.0	0	0	250	71.0	50	14.0
Lesson attendance are monitored	14	47.0	94	27.0	27	8.0	240	69.0	2	1.0
Constant inspection of school facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	305	87.0	45	13.0
Ensuring syllabuses are adequately covered	43	12.0	167	48.0	90	26.0	50	14.0	0	0
Regular evaluation of the learning process	0	0	38	11.0	63	18.0	249	71.0	0	0
Checking how teaching was being done	0	0	0	0	0	0	71	20.0	279	80.0
Never concerned with what goes on in the classrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	216	62.0	134	38.0

According to the findings, pupils disagreed with the following statements: that head teachers were effectively supervising time management (85.0%), inspected school facilities regularly (100.0%), regularly evaluated the learning process (89.0%), checked on how teaching was being done (100.0%) and were never concerned with what goes on in the classrooms (100.0%). This implies that supervision of teachers and pupils' utilization of time was not effectively being done and that head teachers were not checking on how the teaching was being carried out. Pupils were found to be in agreement with the following statements: head teachers monitored lesson attendance by teachers (74.0%) and ensured that the syllabuses were adequately covered (60.0%). Mbugua (1987) observed that school head teachers should regularly supervise and monitor the learning process to enhance quality of learning.

The study sought to determine the head teachers and teachers' responses regarding the impact of supervision on the quality of learning. The information that was captured is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Head teachers and Teachers Responses on Supervision

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Supervising time management	28	93.0	2	7.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lesson attendance are monitored	26	87.0	4	13.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Constant inspection of school facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	77.0	7	23.0
Ensuring syllabuses are adequately covered	27	90.0	3	10.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regular evaluation of the learning process	10	33	20	77.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Checking how teaching was being done	0	0	0	0	0	0	25	83.0	5	17.0
Never concerned with what goes on in the classrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	100.0

n=30

The findings in Table 4 reveal that majority (100.0%) head teachers and teachers were in agreement with the following statements: head teachers were supervising time management, monitored lesson attendance by teachers, ensured syllabuses were adequately covered and conducted regular evaluation of the learning process. On the other hand, head teachers and teachers disagreed with the sentiments that head teachers were conducting constant inspection of school facilities and checked how teaching was being done in the classrooms.

The study sought to determine pupils' responses on the extent to which supervision impacted on the quality of learning in primary schools. Majority (71.0%) of the pupils who participated in this study indicated that supervision had an impact on the quality of learning to a very great extent while 29.0% felt that the extent to which supervision had an impact to quality of learning was to a great extent. The study further sought pupils' free responses on the challenges facing the supervision of

the teaching and learning. The pupils' responses show that the challenges that the head teachers were facing in the supervision of teaching and learning were: inability to delegate duties (50.3%) and having too much administrative duties that leave them with little time or no time at all to supervise the teaching and learning process (49.7%). This implies that in most schools head teachers were not engaged in classroom supervision especially inspection of pupils' exercise books. Consequently, this could contribute to lack of commitment among teachers which would eventually affect pupils' academic performance.

The study sought to establish the extent to which head teachers and teachers rated the impact of supervision on the quality of learning in primary schools. The findings indicated that 50% felt that supervision to a very great extent impacted on the quality of learning while a similar percentage of respondents felt that supervision influenced quality of learning to a great extent.

The study further sought Head teachers and teachers' free responses on the challenges facing the supervision of the teaching and learning. The responses were categorized and coded to facilitate analysis. The common challenges that emerged from the head teachers and teachers' responses are captured in Figure 3.

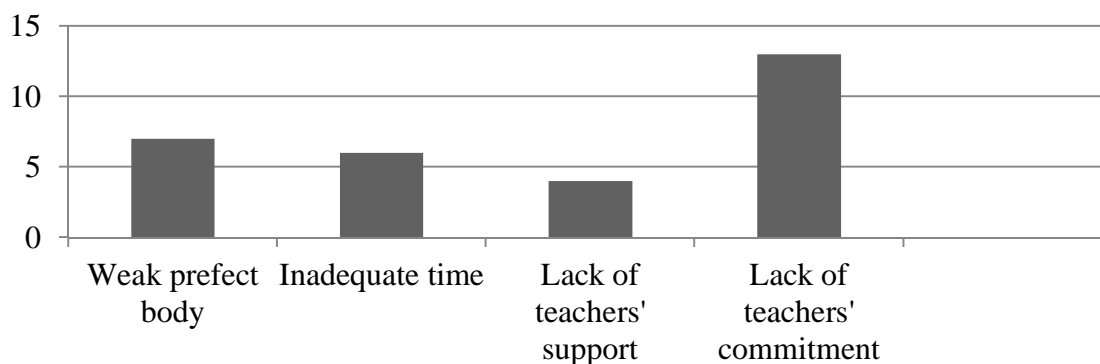


Figure 3. Head teachers and Teachers Responses on Challenges Facing the Supervision of the Teaching and Learning

From the findings shown in Figure 3, it is clear from the teachers and head teachers' responses that the challenges facing the supervision of the teaching and learning in public primary schools in Imenti Central included lack of commitment and support by some teachers, lack of adequate time by the head teachers and weak prefect body.

The strategies to enhance supervision of teaching and learning suggested by teachers and head teachers are captured in Table 5.

Table 5

Strategies to Enhance Supervision of Teaching and Learning Suggested by Teachers

Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Division of supervisory roles	6	20
Strengthening the prefects body	8	27
Participatory approach to supervision	9	30
Less workload for head teachers	4	13
Setting of work targets	3	10
Total	30	100

The strategies to enhance supervision of teaching and learning suggested by teachers and head teachers included employing a participatory approach to supervision, strengthening the prefects' body, sharing supervisory roles among teachers, having less workload for head teachers to enable them have adequate time to supervise the teaching and learning and setting work targets.

During interview, the researcher noted that according to QASOs, the major challenges experienced when engaging in supervisory management in schools were: lack of enough classes to accommodate all pupils, lack of enough teachers, parents not providing basic learning materials, negative attitude towards education by some parents and pupils, drop out cases and enrolment of over-age pupils. To solve the above stated challenges, QASOs proposed that the government through the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) should train head teachers to enable them become effective institutional managers; all the stakeholders should co-operate in provision of teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, uniform, teaching resources and facilities; school infrastructure should be improved, especially classrooms, desks and teaching/learning material; there is need for fair distribution and utilization of available resources so that all schools in need are adequately catered for; that professionalism be maintained at all levels of education management; strengthening curriculum development; the Government to provide enough funds so that schools can meet other challenges; and employing more qualified teaching personnel in order to deal with the problem of high pupil-teacher ratio.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study the researcher made the following conclusions:

- i. The pupil respondents felt that head teachers were in effective in supervising school activities while the teacher respondents indicated that head teachers were effective to a great extent in supervising teaching and learning activities.
- ii. Lack of commitment among teachers in their roles, lack of adequate time by head teachers and weak prefect bodies were identified as the major challenges to effective supervision of teaching and learning activities in schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations have been made:

- i. Head teachers should strengthen supervision of learning process to enhance the quality of learning. The work load for head teachers should be reduced to allow more time for supervision responsibilities.
- ii. School should adopt a participatory approach in supervising teaching and learning. The role of supervision should be shared offices in the school.
- iii. The students' prefect bodies should be strengthened through nomination of responsible student leaders and training to enhance their role in supervision of teaching and learning.

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