

Geography Subject Head Supervisory Roles In Teaching And Learning Process in Matungu, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated on the effectiveness of subject heads supervisory roles in the teaching and learning of geography in Matungu, Kakamega County, Kenya. The study was grounded by the Total Quality Management theory of Deming, Juran and Feigenbaum (1961). A convergent parallel design was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher targeted teachers, subject heads of geography and principals of secondary schools. Data was collected through questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide. Quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, qualitative data were summarized in themes and presented in narrative form as well as direct quotes from participants. Findings revealed that the supervisory roles of subject heads were conducting regular meetings with subject teachers, signing of professional records and ensuring that there were well-set assessment and examination policies within the department. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education should be able to allocate adequate funds towards teachers' in-service programmes and the principals to provide constant and adequate information to the subject heads on supervision activities as well as professional development among others.

Keywords: subject heads, supervision, examination, schools

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I. BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

The main objective of effective school-based supervision was to enable the individual teacher to become an implementer of effective teaching. Supervisors were part of the technical level in schools, as they were concerned with teaching and learning. Their area of expertise was curriculum and instruction while their job was to help their colleagues in improving the teaching and learning process. Their need was an organizational structure that allowed them to do this in a non-threatening environment unfettered by bureaucratic requirements for control (Tasema, 2014). Geography heads of subject occupy a crucial position, as "linking pins between the subject department and the school administration". Bringing the management of the subject closer to its members by the appointment of heads of subjects; is a clear indication of the need to improve the quality of schools, learning, and the achievement of students (De Grauwe, 2001). This has enhanced the effectiveness of teaching and learning outcomes that depends largely on the quality of education being offered (Barro, 2006).

Delano and Shah (2007) observe that supervision is a professional relationship that provides support and improves the practice of both teachers and supervisors. Thus, it is a vehicle that facilitates growth, maintenance of professional standards and quality services. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2004) posit that effective supervision requires well-trained personnel with knowledge, interpersonal skills, and technical skills that are prepared to provide the necessary and appropriate guidance and support to the teaching staff. According to them, these personal attributes are essential for the subject heads' supervisory role to ensure effective supervision of teaching and learning process.

The major parameter used to measure educational output is performance in examinations. There is a public cry towards poor performance and low enrolment in geography country wide despite the subject having the same support and administrative structure like other subjects. For instance, Migori district KCSE results (2010-2015) showed that the maximum grade for geography in KCSE is A, which translates to 12 points, yet most schools in Migori district were only able to score a mean between 4.7 and 5.2 that translated to C- while other humanities scored above 6.5, which translated to C+. In Matungu Sub County, there is also a public concern over the poor performance and low enrolment in the geography subject. For the last five years, the

subject had a mean score of less than 5.4 (mean grade of C-) out of the possible 12 (mean grade A) while History had a mean score above 7.5 (grade B-) and CRE a mean score above 8.5 (grade B) (KNEC, 2011-2015). Maoga (2007) noted a decline in geography enrolment as compared to other humanities; where he saw it as an indicator of underlying factors, which needed to be identified. Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) report 6 (2009) on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) showed that there was a tremendous decline in students enrolment in Geography; a fact that the Ministry of Education (MOE) (2010) concurred with. It is pertinent to note that the supervision of teachers is necessary to guarantee and instill professional standard in teaching profession. As such, subject heads should assist teachers through supervision to diagnose and remedy challenges that hinder teachers' growth, subject failures, and low enrolments and provide effective guidance in promoting teachers' professional abilities that meets the challenge of changing education system.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher explored literature on the supervisory role of the subject heads in enhancing effective teaching and learning of geography in secondary schools. Kitavi (2005) noted that in education, the term supervision is used to describe those activities which are primarily directed towards improvement of conditions surrounding the growth of both pupils and teachers; therefore, the role of the supervisor is to improve, stimulate, coordinate and make teachers self-directed and cooperative toward personal and institutional goal achievement. Improving supervision of instruction in schools is of great concern to educational Authorities worldwide. Adu, Akinloye and Olaoye (2014) argued that effective school supervision provides relevant and continuous support and encouragement in order to improve teachers' instructional practices. According to them supervision should be seen as a continuous effort directed towards ways of improving the outcome of each school or educational institution.

The appointment of subject heads by principals in schools seems to have been aimed at achieving these objectives. Atebe (2009) noted that, the policy of decentralization of education services, vested HODs with additional administrative and financial responsibilities whereas subject instructional leadership to heads of subjects who have become the link between the Head teacher and the teachers in instructional management. Studies conducted by Sailesh, Marohaini and Sathiamoorthy (2011) on the Instructional supervision in Saudi Arabia, India and Pakistan did not address supervisory skills needed by the subject heads for effective teachers' supervision. In addition, the study did not look at the role of the principals and subject heads in relation to teachers' professional development. Kerei (2010) carried out a study on the survey of factors affecting staff development in public secondary schools in Kajiado Central District. Kerei's study was relevant to the present study because the study focused on factors affecting staff development in public secondary schools. The present study sought not only to look at challenges facing teachers' professional development but also considered the role of the subject heads in enhancing effective teaching and learning process.

Kiilu (2011) conducted a study on the principals' supervisory role in enhancing teachers' job performance in Catholic sponsored schools in Machakos Diocese, Kenya. The study looked at principals' role in enhancing teachers job performance but the present study sought to address on the subject heads supervisory roles in effective teaching and learning process. This gap prompted the current study. Muita (2012) carried out a study on implementation of geography curriculum in public secondary schools in Gatundu south district in Kiambu County, Kenya. The previous study failed to get the insights of qualitative data that could have been relevant to explain teacher effectiveness in teaching. Therefore, there exists a gap that the current study sought to address. However, there are limited empirical evidences to ascertain whether secondary school subject heads of geography effectively supervise the teaching and learning process in Matungu district.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Matungu Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya. The study used a convergent parallel design, in which both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately, and then merged (Creswell, 2014). Survey design was used to collect quantitative data while qualitative method employed was phenomenology design. The study targeted all principals, subject heads of geography and geography teachers of 30 public secondary schools in Matungu Sub County. The schools were placed into sub groups for instance, boys boarding, girls boarding, day/boarding mixed schools and day mixed schools using stratified random sampling technique. Teachers who participated in the study were selected using simple random sampling. HOSs and Principals were selected purposively because each school that participated in the study had only one principal or HOSs. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide were used as instruments for data collection. The data collected was cross-examined to ascertain its' accuracy, completeness and uniformity. The SPSS was used to handle large amount of data. The data analysis was done through descriptive statistics. Open-ended questions and interview schedules that elicited qualitative data were analyzed according to themes based on the research questions and thereafter, inferences and

conclusions drawn.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Section shows results and discussions on the supervisory roles subject heads of geography play in promoting the teaching and learning of geography as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Subject heads of Geography supervisory roles in the teaching and learning

Statement	SD	D	NS	A	SA
HOS conducts regular meetings with teachers of the subject to evaluate their activities	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	45 (75.0%)	15 (25.0%)
HOS signs professional documents and corrects members where necessary	14 (23.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0(0.0%)	23 (38.3%)	23 (38.3%)
HOS organizes internal inspection regularly and discusses findings with members	0 (0.0%)	8 (13.3%)	0 (0.0%)	29 (48.3%)	23 (38.3%)
HOS ensures that there are well set assessment and examination policies within the department	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.8%)	35 (58.3%)	23 (38.3%)
HOS arranges on- the- job orientation program to newly assigned teachers in subject	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (31.7%)	22 (36.7%)	19 (31.7%)
HOS encourages teachers to use appropriate teaching materials and new dynamics in teaching	0 (0.0%)	4 (6.7%)	0	41 (68.3%)	15 (25.0%)
Principal encourages teachers to acquire ICT skills	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (10.0%)	38 (63.3%)	16 (26.7%)

As shown in Table 4.2, teachers were asked in the questionnaire to indicate their views on whether HOSs conducted regular meetings with them to evaluate subject activities. Most of the teachers 100.0% were in agreement to the statement that HOSs conducted regular meetings with them to evaluate subject activities. Therefore most, HOS conducted regular meetings with teachers of geography to evaluate their activities. For HOS, 7 (70.0%) agreed while 3 (30.0%)strongly agreed; hence HOSs were 100% in agreement that they conducted meetings regularly. This finding concurs with White and Rosen field (1999) who viewed subject departments as potentially highly influential sites for direction and commitment to learning of students.

The findings on signing of professional documents show that, 23 (38.3%) of teachers agreed and 23 (38.3%) strongly agreed while 4 (23.3%) of respondents strongly disagreed that HOSs signed professional documents and corrected members where necessary. This showed that some HOSs never signed professional documents or never corrected members in terms of professional documents. Among the HOSs, 5 (50.0%) strongly agreed and 3 (30.0%) agreed while 1 (10.0%) strongly disagreed and 1 (10.0%) disagreed. The results showed that majority of HOSs 80% performed their duties effectively although a few remained non-committal to work.

From the results, 48.3% of teachers agreed and 37.9% strongly agreed while 13.3% disagreed that HOSs organized internal inspection in schools. This shows that internal inspection is carried out in most schools, but there was no internal inspection in some of the schools. From the data collected from HOSs, 70.0% agreed and 10.0% strongly agreed while 10.0% strongly disagreed and 10.0% disagreed. The findings show that most of the HOSs organized and did internal inspection. Most of the principals interviewed indicated that they were striving to have improved internal quality and standards inspections in their schools. This finding concurs with Ndebele (2013), that supervision should aim to help improve teaching and learning process in the classroom; be a process of counselling, sharing, and supporting teachers to improve their performance and enhancing teachers professional development and growth by providing them with feedback regarding effective classroom practice. That good supervision programme demands supervisors who are continuously striving to improve by growing with their teachers.

The findings in Table 4.2 show that, 35 (58.3%) of teachers agreed, 23 (38.3%) strongly agreed while 2 (3.3%)of teachers were not sure of whether HOSs ensured that there were well set assessment and examination policies. This showed that majority of teachers agreed that HOSs ensured well-set assessment and examination policies were done in the department. ForHOS, 7 (70.0%) strongly agreed and 3 (30.0%) also in agreement. The results show that all HOSs ensure that both assessment and examination are well set and adhered to in secondary schools. All Principals interviewed indicated that their schools had testing policies that were being adhered to, enhancing quality implementation of the curriculum.

The findings on –the-job orientation show that, 22 (36.7%) of teachers agreed, 19 (31.7%) strongly agreed while 19 (31.7%) of teachers not being sure whether HOSs arranges on- the- job orientation program to newly assigned teachers in the subject. The result indicates that most HOSs organized on-the-job orientation programs. For HOSs, 4 (40.0%) agreed, 4 (40.0%) strongly agreed while 1 (10.0%) strongly disagreed with 1 (10.0%) who again disagreed. 80% HOSs agreed to have done the on-the-job orientation implying that most of the HOSs do orientation to newly posted teachers. Majority of the principals interviewed agreed that there was an organized programme for orientation of newly assigned teachers in their schools.

According to the results in Table 4.2, a majority 41 (68.3%) of teachers agreed and 15 (25.0%) strongly agreed while a few teachers, 4 (6.7%) disagreed, that the HOSs encouraged teachers to use appropriate teaching materials and new dynamics in teaching. Over 83% teachers, response showed that HOSs encouraged their teachers to use appropriate teaching materials and the new teaching dynamics to foster content delivery. For HOSs, 5 (50.0%) agreed while 5 (50.0%) strongly agreed. 100% HOSs were in agreement that they encourage their colleagues to use the new dynamics to enhance the teaching process. This finding concurs with Muita's (2012) recommendations that, schools be well equipped with teaching and learning resources and teachers' to adopt to more effective methods of teaching to ensure proper curriculum implementation in schools.

The finding on use of ICT in teaching shows that, 38 (63.3%) of teachers agreed and 16 (26.7%) strongly agreed while 6 (10.0%) of teachers were not sure that principal encouraged teachers to acquire ICT skills and use them for teaching. For HOS, 5 (50.0%) agreed, 3 (30.0%) strongly agreed while 2 (20.0%) were not sure if principals encouraged teachers to use ICT in teaching. It was noted clearly that both teachers and HOSs were positive towards the support given by principals on the use of ICT in teaching. Most Principals interviewed indicated that, they encouraged teachers to use ICT as it made learning more enjoyable and boosted understanding. Regarding the need for further training, one of the HOS in open-ended questionnaire expressed thus:

I would like to undergo training to be equipped with ICT skill since such skill will help me to be an effective administrator in responding to evolving technological evolution in education; and also would like to be trained in the assessment of professional records of teachers since it will help me delegate few responsibilities to other teachers.

This finding concurs with Tesema (2014) that direct teachers assistance occurs when a supervisor effectively provides feedback for individual teachers and continuously focuses on improvement of classroom instruction.

On document analysis guide, it was found that teachers, updated and followed, prepared Schemes of work; records of workbooks were available, filled and tallied mostly with the lessons taught. However, some lesson plans, lesson notes and student notes were not signed by teachers for use, which implied that either the subject heads involved failed in their supervisory role to carry out this noble assignment.

V. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Findings showed that all 100% teachers agreed that the supervisory roles of HOSs were to conduct regular meetings with teachers of the subject to evaluate their activities. Another 76.6% of teachers agreed that HOSs role was to sign professional documents and to correct members with professional misconduct. However, the results showed that some of the HOSs never signed professional documents or never corrected members in terms of professional documents but most of the respondents indicated that they were striving to have internal inspections in their schools. It was also revealed that, most teachers 96.6% agreed that subject heads ensured that there were well-set assessment and examination policies and they arranged on- the- job orientation programs for newly assigned teachers. In addition, subject heads encouraged teachers to use appropriate teaching materials and new dynamics in teaching. Above all the principals encouraged teachers to acquire ICT skills and use them for teaching and learning process.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated on the effectiveness of subject heads supervisory roles in the teaching and learning of geography in Matungu sub county, Kenya and concluded that supervisory roles of the subject heads can only be ensured through continuous in-service training to update subject heads' supervisory skills. Acquisition of effective supervisory skills such as communication skills, mentoring and coaching skills, monitoring and evaluation skills and human-relation skills will help foster effective supervision of teachers. Adequate provision of supervisory activities and professional development programme such as induction, checking of teachers' professional records, enhancing teamwork and organizing departmental meetings will help HOSs and teachers develop the competence needed in teaching profession.

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