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# INFLUENCE OF STAFF ATTITUDE ON PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CHEPALUNGU SUB-COUNTY, BOMET COUNTY, KENYA

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## ABSTRACT

**Statement of the Problem:** Staff attitude is a key determinant of effective instructional supervision by principals in schools. However, in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, the situation is quite different, with ineffective instructional supervision being undertaken by principals.

**Purpose of the Study:** To assess the influence of staff attitude on principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, Bomet County, Kenya.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a mixed methodology, using both descriptive and phenomenological research designs. The target population was 735 respondents, comprising 76 principals and 659 teachers in public secondary schools. A sample of 258 respondents was obtained using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create six (6) strata based on the number of zones in Chepalungu Sub-county. For each zone, four (4) principals were selected using purposive sampling. However, from each zone, 39 teachers were selected using simple random sampling to avoid bias. This procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample size of 24 principals and 234 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers, whereas interviews were used to gather qualitative data from principals. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

**Findings:** The study found that many principals in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county rarely provide effective instructional leadership. Many principals rarely undertake teachers' classroom observation, rarely check whether teachers have professional documents such as schemes of work, lesson plans, and notes, rarely assess whether they participate in co-curricular activities, nor do they regularly monitor the disciplinary approaches they apply in their classes. This is due to negative staff attitude.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends that principals make teachers aware that the success of instructional supervision is meant to benefit them and improve their classroom pedagogy and not a punitive exercise. Principals should also believe in the efficacy of instructional supervision as a tool for improving teaching and learning processes.

**Keywords:** *Staff Attitude, Principals' Instructional, Supervision, Public Secondary Schools, Chepalungu Sub-County*

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## INTRODUCTION

Principals play an important role in the realization of education objectives and quality education in secondary schools. Goddard and Leask (2012) posit that, for quality education to be realized, the attitude of teachers and other staff cannot be overlooked, as it is the driving force and main source of organizational development and academic growth of students. In other words, the attitude of staff plays an important role in principals' instructional supervision in secondary schools and determines, to a great degree, the extent to which principals undertake their administrative duties. Smith (2011) opines that staff are human beings who have their values, personal needs, beliefs, and generalizations that they hold to be true. Therefore, if staff have negative attitudes towards supervision activities performed by school heads, then these attitudes will inhibit efforts by the heads to perform their duties aimed at improving students' performance, teacher productivity, and management efficiency.

These assertions lend credence to the findings of a study conducted in the United Kingdom in which Bishop (2012) revealed that attitudes may hinder or facilitate the willingness of the staff to accept change in supervision approaches adopted by school heads. This implies that, besides other staff dynamics, the nature of their attitude plays an important role in principals' instructional supervision practices. That is, staff with positive attitudes towards principals' instructional supervision processes cover their syllabus in time and work hard to ensure that their students register good grades in examinations. In a study carried out in Indonesia, Farrow (2012) found that among the factors that influence successful principals' instructional supervision in secondary schools is staff attitude and beliefs. In other words, if staff attitude is positive, then they can easily provide useful insights about approaches which can best enhance principals' instructional supervision activities.

Another study conducted in Vietnam by De Mesquita and Drake (2016) revealed that though barriers such as lack of hardware and software existed, staff positive attitude was an important determinant to effective instruction supervision by school heads witnessed through prompt syllabus coverage and enhanced students' achievement in examinations. These findings are indicative of the fact that the success of instructional supervision activities undertaken by

principals depends on the nature of their attitudes. In South Africa, Martin, Yin, and Mayall (2016) suggest that the successful application of instructional supervision strategies critically depends on the extent to which they are compatible with principals' beliefs about what is worthwhile in education. A study carried out in Lesotho by Rose (2017) revealed that staff attitude and belief system determine principals' ability to actualize the desired outcomes during the instructional supervision process. Rose (2017) found that principals effectively undertake instructional supervision activities in an environment where teachers believe in the role of supervision, feel motivated to be supervised, and exhibit a strong desire to learn new teaching approaches from the seniors such as the principals. These findings affirm the fact that the success of principals' instructional supervision relies heavily upon the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers. Thus, as a supervisor, it is necessary to have an understanding of the belief systems of teachers to successfully undertake supervision activities within a school since without the support of the teachers, these programs are destined to malfunction.

In Kenya, the scenario is the same and Gachiri (2014) opines that, for improved classroom instruction, and hence improved student learning and experiences, school heads need to first look at the thinking, beliefs, and practices in the field of supervision interact with teachers' instruction and the assumptions about students as learners. In Chepalungu Sub-county, many public secondary schools still witness cases of ineffective instructional supervision among principals. The Ministry of Education (2020), for example, indicates that in many public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, only 34.7% of the secondary school principals undertake classroom observation, 25.9% supervise preparation of professional documents by teachers, 21.7% can assess the extent to which teachers participate in co-curricular activities, whereas 48.3% monitor students' disciplinary approaches adopted by teachers. This is attributed to the attitude of staff.

A study carried out in Chepalungu Sub-county by Kipkemo (2017) found that the beliefs, perceptions, interests, and desires which teachers hold about instructional leadership offered by principals have affected the extent to which principals undertake their supervision activities. Kipkemo (2017) further found that staff support instructional supervision processes which are consistent with their own attitudes, beliefs, and practice. However, much still needs to be done since Kipkemo (2017) as well as other reviewed empirical studies have not interrogated how different components of staff attitude influence the extent to which principals undertake instructional supervision in secondary schools.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Staff attitude plays an important role in shaping how principals undertake instructional supervision in schools. However, in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, there are many instances of ineffective instructional supervision being undertaken by principals. As indicated earlier, a report by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2020) shows that, in many public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, only 34.7% of secondary school principals undertake classroom observation, only 25.9% supervise the preparation of professional documents by teachers, 21.7% can assess the extent to which teachers participate in co-curricular activities, and 48.3% monitor students' disciplinary approaches adopted by teachers. Despite these findings, few empirical studies have exhaustively interrogated the extent to which staff attitude influences principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools, hence the need for the study.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- i. To assess the status of principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county.
- ii. To determine the influence of staff attitude on principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was guided by the Dynamic Theory of Factors, which was proposed by Kyriakides (2009). This theory is based on the assumption that factors at the school management level are expected to have not only direct effects on teacher productivity and students' achievement, but also indirect effects. School factors such as staff attitude and dispositions are expected to influence classroom-level factors, especially teaching practice. This assumption is based on the fact that effectiveness studies show that the classroom level is more significant than the school and the system level, and that defining factors at the classroom level is seen as a prerequisite for defining the school and the system level. In the context of this study, determinants such as staff attitude play a key role in principals' instructional supervision activities.

The study was also guided by the theory of supervisory practice, which was postulated by Sergiovanni (1982). This theory states that a supervision system that is based on theoretical foundations and conforms to the guidelines for developing a theory of practice contributes to the implementation of curriculum objectives by the standards for quality instruction, and

specific teaching behaviors that correspond to the theoretical dimensions are identified to ensure that the results of the art instruction are well within the control of classroom teachers and are consistent with the theory of learning. The principals' role, as the supervisors, in initiating, implementing, and maintaining academic programs in schools is significant. In many learning institutions, supervision for the purpose of improving or managing accountable instruction is the responsibility of principals and classroom teachers.

In the context of this study, this is relevant in that it provides the three aspects of instructional supervision for the principals, namely directional, collegial, and non-directional approaches. This theory is applicable because the principal is the chief supervisor in schools and has the responsibility to oversee all the educational processes for the purpose of achieving the academic goals of the schools. This theory places the principal as the person who teaches truths about the absolute standards and provides direct control to teachers. In other words, supervision is developmental by nature, hence principals encourage and involve teachers to plan for instructional supervision in the schools.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used a mixed methodology, combining descriptive and phenomenological research designs. The target population was 735 respondents, consisting of 76 principals and 659 teachers in public secondary schools. A sample of 258 respondents was obtained using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was applied to create six strata based on the number of zones in Chepalungu Sub-county. For each zone, four principals were selected using purposive sampling. From each zone, 39 teachers were selected using simple random sampling to avoid bias. This procedure resulted in a sample size of 24 principals and 234 teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from teachers, while interviews were used to gather qualitative data from principals. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23), and presented using tables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

### Response Rates

In this study, 234 questionnaires were administered to teachers out of which 126 questionnaires were filled and returned. At the same time, nine (9) principals were interviewed. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1;

**Table 1: Response Rates**

Respondents	Sampled Respondents	Those Who Participated	Achieved Return Rate (%)
Principals	24	19	79.2
Teachers	234	231	98.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>96.9</b>

Table 1 shows that principals registered a response rate of 79.2% whereas teachers registered 98.7% as the response rate. On average, this yielded a response rate of 96.9%, which affirmed the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for the generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

### Status of Principals’ Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of principals’ instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county. Descriptive data were collected from teachers and results are shown in Table 2;

**Table 2: Status of Principals’ Instructional Supervision**

Instructional Supervision Activities	Very Often f(%)	Rarely f(%)	Never f(%)
Classroom observation	85(36.8%)	128(55.4%)	18(7.8%)
Supervision of teachers’ preparation of professional documents	92(39.8%)	118(51.1%)	21(9.1%)
Teachers’ participation in co-curricular activities	76(32.9%)	138(59.7%)	17(7.4%)
Monitoring of disciplinary approaches adopted by teachers	99(42.9%)	111(48.1%)	21(9.1%)

Table 2 shows that 85(36.8%) of the teachers stated that principals often undertake classroom observation, majority, 128(55.2%), indicated that they rarely do whereas a paltry 18(7.8%) stated that they never observe activities undertaken by teachers in classroom. From Table 2, slightly more than a third, 92(39.8%), of the teachers stated that principals often supervise their preparation of professional documents, slightly more than half, 118(51.1%), noted that they rarely do while 21(9.1%) stated that they never supervise. The study found that 76(32.9%) of

the teachers stated that principals often supervise teachers' participation in co-curricular activities, majority, 138(59.7%), indicated that principals rarely do whereas 17(7.4%) stated that they never do. On discipline, Table 2 shows that 99(42.9%) of the teachers indicated that principals often monitor disciplinary approaches which teachers adopt, 111(48.1%) stated that they rarely monitor while 21(9.1%) noted that principals never do.

During the interviews, the principals, however, responded on the contrary. They stated that they always provided instructional leadership in their respective schools. When probed further, principal, P1, noted;

*In my secondary school, despite my busy schedule, I always ensure that I undertake teachers' classroom observation activities, assess whether teachers have professional documents such as schemes of work lesson plans and notes, their participation in co-curricular activities and monitor the disciplinary approaches they apply in their classes.*

Despite these contradictions, these findings underscore the vitality of instructional supervision practices adopted by school principals as key to the academic success of the schools. These findings corroborate the findings of a report by the Ministry of Education (2020) which indicated that, in many public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county, only 34.7% of the secondary school principals undertake classroom observation, 25.9% supervise preparation of professional documents by teachers, 21.7% can assess the extent to which teachers participate in co-curricular activities whereas 48.3% monitor students' disciplinary approaches adopted by teachers. These findings affirm the fact that instructional supervision in many public secondary schools. In other words, many principals are unable to undertake classroom observation activities, check whether teachers prepare professional documents or not, whether they participate in co-curricular activities or not and the kinds of discipline management approaches teachers adopt in their classes. This calls into question the effectiveness of administrative dynamics on principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools.

### **Staff Attitude and Principals' Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools**

The study sought to assess how staff attitude influences principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers and results are shown in Table 3;



**Table 3: Teachers' Views**

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %
Teachers' beliefs in the role of supervision have enabled the principals to undertake their duties with ease	50.8	3.9	4.8	26.2	14.3
Teachers' interest in supervision has enabled principals to undertake instructional supervision activities to improve teaching	53.2	8.7	4.0	21.4	12.7
Teachers are usually motivated when their teaching activities are supervised to improve classroom instruction	57.1	7.9	4.1	19.8	11.1
Teachers rarely feel that instructional supervision undertaken by the principals plays a key role in improving their teaching	63.5	5.6	4.7	16.7	9.5
Despite teachers' negative attitude towards principal's supervision, classroom instruction has not improved in public secondary schools	57.9	4.9	5.4	21.4	10.4

Table 3 shows that 50.8% of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that teachers' beliefs in the role of supervision have enabled the principals to undertake their duties with ease with 3.9% agreeing, 4.8% undecided, 26.2% disagreeing and 14.3% strongly disagreeing. Slightly more than half, 53.2%, of the teachers were in strong agreement that teachers' interest in supervision has enabled principals to undertake instructional supervision activities to improve teaching while 8.7% agreed., 21.4% disagreed with 12.7% strongly disagreeing. Slightly more than half, 57.1%, of the teachers strongly indicated that teachers are usually motivated when their teaching activities are supervised to improve classroom instruction whereas 7.9% agreed, 19.8% disagreed whereas 11.1% strongly disagreed.

Most of the teachers (63.5%) strongly agreed with the view that teachers rarely feel that instructional supervision undertaken by the principals plays a key role in improving their teaching while 5.6% agreed, 16.7% disagreed whereas 9.5% strongly disagreed. Slightly more than half (57.9%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, despite teachers' negative attitude towards principal's supervision, classroom instruction has not improved in public secondary schools while 4.9% agreed, 21.4% disagreed whereas 10.4% strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted in United Kingdom in which Bishop (2012) revealed that attitudes may hinder or facilitate the willingness of the staff to accept change in supervision approaches adopted by school heads. These findings further support the findings of a study carried out in Indonesia by Farrow (2012) which found that among the factors that influence successful principals' instructional supervision in secondary



schools is staff attitude and beliefs. Another study conducted in Vietnam by De Mesquita and Drake (2016) revealed that staff positive attitude is an important determinant to effective instruction supervision by school heads witnessed through prompt syllabus coverage and enhanced students' achievement in examinations. Martin et al (2016) also conducted a study in South Africa which revealed that successful application of instructional supervision strategies critically depends on the extent to which they are compatible with principals' belief about what is worthwhile in education. This is also consistent with the findings of an investigation undertaken in Lesotho in which Rose (2017) also revealed that staff attitude and belief system determine principals' ability to actualize the desired outcomes during instructional supervision process. Rose (2017) found that principals effectively undertake instructional supervision activities in an environment where teachers believe in the role of supervision, feel motivated to be supervised and exhibit a strong desire to learn new teaching approaches from the seniors such as the principals.

These findings support the outcomes of a study carried out in Chepalungu Sub-county by Kipkemo (2017) which established that beliefs, perceptions, interests and desires which teachers hold about instructional leadership offered by principals have affected the extent to which principals undertake their supervision activities. In summary, these findings attest to the fact that the nature of teachers' attitude plays an important role in principals' instructional supervision practices. That is, staff with positive attitude towards principals' instructional supervision process cover their syllabus in time and work hard to ensure that their students register good grades in examinations. This implies that teachers are human beings who have their values, personal needs, beliefs and generalizations that they hold to be true and therefore, if they have negative attitudes towards supervision activities by school heads, then these attitudes will inhibit efforts by principals to undertake instructional supervision activities.

### **Inferential Analysis**

To verify the possibility of the influence of staff attitude on principals' instructional supervision, data were collected on teachers' interest (Interested = 3, Not Interested = 2 and Not Sure = 1) in instructional supervision and how often (Often = 3, Rarely = 2 and Never = 1) principals undertake staff supervision activities in the 19 sampled public secondary schools. Results are shown in Table 4:

**Table 4: Teachers’ Levels of Interest in Instructional Supervision and How Often Principals Undertake Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools**

Teachers’ Levels of Interest in Instructional Supervision	How Often Principals Undertake Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools
2	1
1	1
3	3
2	2
1	3
2	3
2	2
3	3
2	3
1	1
2	2
2	3
2	2
2	2
1	1
3	2
2	1
3	3
2	2

Table 4 shows that, in public secondary schools where teachers develop interest in instructional supervision, principals frequently undertake the activities to ensure improved classroom pedagogy. The data in Table 4 were subjected to Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Test Analysis and results are shown in Table 5:

**Table 5: Relationship between Teachers’ Levels of Interest in Instructional Supervision and Principals’ Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools**

		Teachers’ Levels of Interest in Instructional Supervision	Principals’ Instructional Supervision
Teachers’ Levels of Interest in Instructional Supervision	Pearson Correlation	1	.515*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.024
	N	19	19
Principals’ Instructional Supervision	Pearson Correlation	.515*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	
	N	19	19

Table 5 shows a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test Analysis which generated a correlation coefficient,  $r = 0.515$ , with corresponding significant level (p-value) of 0.024 which was less than the predetermined level of significance, 0.05, that is,  $p\text{-value} = 0.024 < 0.05$ . Thus,

the data shows there is significant influence of staff attitude on principals' instructional supervision in public secondary schools.

In other words, in schools where teachers believe in the efficacy of instructional supervision as a tool for improving classroom pedagogy, principals frequently undertake the activities.

### **Thematic Analysis**

During the interviews, the principals, also noted that teachers' attitude plays a key role in the success of instructional supervision activities. Principal, P3, noted;

*In my secondary school, I have been able to undertake instructional supervision activities owing to the cooperation I receive from teachers. In my school, teachers believe, have shown interest, though not all, and always feel motivated to be supervised while performing their duties.*

These views further underscore the significance of attitude which teachers have as crucial in the success of principals' instructional supervision. Just like quantitative findings, these views further lend credence to the views expressed by Bishop (2012) revealed that attitudes may hinder or facilitate the willingness of the staff to accept change in supervision approaches adopted by school heads. These views also support the viewpoints held by Kipkemo (2017) which established that beliefs, perceptions, interests and desires which teachers hold about instructional leadership offered by principals have affected the extent to which principals undertake their supervision activities. This indicates that successful instructional supervision critically depends on the extent to which they are compatible with principals' belief about what is worthwhile in education.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

From the study findings, many principals in public secondary schools in Chepalungu Sub-county rarely provide effective instructional leadership. The study also found that quite a number of teachers do not believe in the efficacy of principals' instructional supervision as a tool for improving classroom pedagogy. They have little interest in instructional supervision activities. In other words, the inability of principals to provide effective instructional supervision is attributed to teachers' attitudes.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study recommends that principals make teachers aware that the success of instructional supervision is meant to benefit them and improve their classroom pedagogy, and that it is not a punitive exercise. Principals should thus believe in its efficacy as a tool for improving

teaching and learning processes. The Ministry of Education should formulate a policy that requires all school heads to undertake programs on how to offer effective instructional leadership in public secondary schools.

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