



Challenges Encountered by School Heads in Carrying out Instructional Supervisory Activities in Public Secondary Schools in Lindi Region-Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author SVC designed the study, literature searches, collected data from the field and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author JK assisted on data analysis of the study. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the challenges heads of schools encounter while carrying out their instructional supervisory activities in schools. The study conducted in Lindi region, Tanzania Mainland. The study used descriptive design in which qualitative and quantitative approaches were involved. The study sample comprised of teachers (N=114), heads of schools (N=57) from 57 randomly selected secondary schools. Data collected through questionnaires, focus group discussion and interview. Thematic used to analyse qualitative data, while IBM SPSS version 20 used as a statistical tool for analysing quantitative data. The study findings revealed several challenges encountered by heads of schools while carrying out their instructional supervisory activities in public secondary schools in Lindi region. Challenges identified by this study included; multiple responsibilities, lack of qualification, negative attitude of teachers toward supervision, inadequate training among heads of schools and large number of teachers as well as poor communication skills. Heads of schools have to be relieved with multiple responsibilities by school boards. The study recommends leadership training to heads of schools, establishment of

good communication system through which teachers will not consider supervision negatively. Moreover, provision of awareness seminars to teachers on the importance of supervision. As for further research, the study recommends the comparative study involving a number of heads of schools to determine the role of an individual head of school in effective supervision at school.

Keywords: Challenges; instructional supervisory activities; heads of schools; public secondary schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Instructional supervision enhances the quality assurance, which leads to quality planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating and evaluating by the school managers to achieve quality education [1]. Quality education is obtained if education managers use properly the resources such as finance, personnel, facilities and time to supervise their teachers. There is a relationship between success in quality education provision and effective supervision by relevant educational authority, in this case, heads of schools. For that matter, Musa [2] observes that the decline in education is associated with lack of proper supervision in schools that has a bearing on the education-related challenges that are making it difficult for countries to achieve their educational goals than ever before. Despite the implementation of free education policy, the education system is facing a number of challenges. One of these challenges is lack of close supervision, particularly in public schools [2]. For instance, Mgonja's study [3] found out that local government officials were not closely supervising and monitoring Regional and District Education Officers (DEOs), as a result the same did not keep close eyes towards heads of schools in their surrounding public secondary schools.

Lack of effective supervision in secondary schools, impacts negatively on education system as it lowers the quality of education [4]. Unless this is solved, the quality of education will not improve despite the current investments directed to that sector [4]. However, effective intervention requires a clear understanding of the challenges the heads of schools face in fulfilling their supervisory role; only then can one suggest the remedies if need be. Therefore, research problem that investigated was on determining the challenges encountered by heads of schools in carrying out their instructional supervisory activities in public secondary schools in Lindi region hence ensuring teachers effectiveness in performing their duties.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Studies

Instructional supervision is the service provided to help teachers in order to facilitate their own professional development for better attainment of school goals. According to scholars, there are several factors, which tend to militate against effective supervision of instruction in schools. Some of the identified challenges are:

2.1.1 Lack of adequate training and support

Supervisors need continuous and sufficient training to carry out their responsibility effectively. Kiamba, [5] shows that lack of training for supervisors, weak relationship between teachers and supervisors and lack of support for supervisors from higher offices affect the supervisory practice in a school. Kalule and Bouchamma [6] point out that, lack of continuous training system for supervisors to up-date their educational knowledge and skills tend to be obstacles for effective supervision. The same observation is also noted by scholars such as [7,8] and (Jones; 2008).

2.1.2 Teacher-Supervisory communication

Bernard and Goodyear [9] argue that lack of good supervisor-teacher communication causes a great challenge to effective instructional supervision. Scholars [10,7], and [11] indicate that lack of adequate communication between instructional supervisors and teachers contribute significantly to failure in instructional supervision.

2.1.3 Supervisor excessive workload

De Grauwe [12] found that limited time spent on supervision by supervisors is one of the key challenges because of multiple roles that the supervisors have to perform as one of their administrative tasks. In the same line of argument, Dali, et al. [10] observe that there are

a several roles a principal should execute in a school, some of which do not add value. To overcome this challenge, it was suggested that, some of these roles should be assigned to subordinates.

2.1.4 Lack of instructional resources

Most programs of instruction and student service require some physical facilities including school buildings and grounds, equipment needed in and essential to instruction (Darling-Hammond, 2010). According to scholars, these materials are undoubtedly helpful to the instructional supervisors themselves and to the teachers, and ultimately schools themselves. Dawo [13] asserts that, instructional supervision can never be effective without adequate instructional materials. Fisher [14] denotes that, educational resources including supervision guides and manuals have their own direct impact on supervision work and if not looked at keenly, can cause challenge to instructional supervision. Thus, lack of these resources negatively impact on the heads of schools efficiency in supervision.

2.2 Empirical Studies

Wanzare’s [15] study on the influence of instructional supervisory role of principals on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kenya found out that principals rarely visited classrooms for lesson observation and rarely provided in-service training for their teachers as they lacked finances, had inadequate staff; they experienced high turnover of teachers and had poor inter-

relationship. Akiri [16] shows that the factors that determine the principals’ effective strategies to promote academic performance are effective communication, team working, recognizing teachers’ efforts, advising, counselling and encouraging. [8] and (Mohammed; 2014) identified inadequacy of trained personnel, constrain to education supervision. Adewale, et al. [17] revealed transportation problems as one of the hindrances to inspection frequencies to rural located schools in Nigeria. Aldaihani [18] noted that unsuitable supervisory practices, loss of connection between the teacher and the supervisor, teacher resistance to support, and lack of meaningful feedback were the challenges that limited effective implementation of supervision in high schools in Kuwait.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study sought to determine the challenges heads of schools encounter in carrying out their instructional supervisory responsibilities in Lindi region. The study was descriptive in nature with the application of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Creswell (2014) elaborates that, mixed methods research involves the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data, integrating the two forms of data using a distinct design with philosophical assumptions as well as the theoretical framework. To realize the set objective, the study used 171 participants; teachers (114) and heads of schools (57). Participants’ characteristics was categorized based on their sex, educational qualifications and their age as presented in (Table 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

Variables	Descriptor	N	Percent
Sex	Male	120	70.1
	Female	51	29.9
Professional qualification	Diploma	35	20.5
	Degree	96	56
	Masters	40	23.3
Age group	Less than 30	35	20.6
	30-35	109	63.7
	36-41	22	12.9
	42-47	4	2.1
	More than 47	1	0.3
Working experience	1-5	54	31.6
	6-10	91	53.2
	11+	26	15.3

As indicated in (Table 1) 70.1%, male teachers and 32.2% female teachers participated in this study. Teachers who were involved in this study varied as per educational qualifications. Out of 171 teachers, 56% had a degree whereas 23.3% had master's degree. Only 20.5% had diploma. This means that many teachers were degree holders. In terms of age, 63.7% participants were of 30-35 years of age. Others, 12.9% were aged between 36-41 years while 20.6% were aged less than 30 years. In the age category of 42-47, there were 2.1% participants while the age category of above 47 years, had one participant. This implies that most of the participants age wise, ranged between 30 and 35 years. With regards to working experience, out of 171 participants, 53.2% participants had working experience of between 6-10 years, followed by 31.6% participants with working experience of between 1-5 years while 15.3% participants had working experience of 11+.

As per level of education and the working experience of heads of schools and teachers show, that they were capable of supervising teaching and learning process or teach secondary schools in Tanzania. According to HakiElimu [19], the more the teacher is experienced the more better the performance in teaching and learning process. Bernard and Goodyear (1998) supports that a supervisor will not be able to carry out instructional evaluation effectively if he/she is not well qualified and trained in techniques of evaluation. Instructional leadership skills are the traits possessed by effective educational leaders to inspire action and optimism. These leaders normally set an example for others by treating them fairly and making an impression with their honesty and integrity [20].

3.1 Sample and Sampling Procedures

Stratified proportionate simple random sampling technique used to select the sample for this

study. In this study to obtain the sample size, Lindi regional education office was consulted to avail the whole list of all 124 public secondary schools in the region. The average of forty six point three percent (46.3%) of the schools from each (of 6) district formed the study sample. All school names in each district written on pieces of paper and mixed up in a container. Then, the researcher randomly selected the school sample of 57 public secondary schools, to form the total school sample size. These sampling procedures were in line with [21] also [22]. All participants in selected sec school formed a total sample of 171 (Teachers 114 and heads 57) as indicated in Table 2.

3.2 Methods of Data Collection

Data collected through interview and questionnaire. Interview conducted to 57 heads of schools in visited secondary schools. The information explored from the interview guide helped to determine the core instruction supervisory activities of heads of schools. In particular, the deliberation of interview aimed to explore various techniques used by heads of schools in supervising teachers work while questionnaire used to gather information from 114 teachers.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to discover challenges heads of schools encounter while carrying out their instructional supervisory activities. To obtain relevant information interview was used to solicit information from heads of schools while for quantitative data, questionnaire was used to collect teachers' opinions regarding challenges heads of schools face in executing their instructional supervisory activities in their respective schools.

Table 2. Sampled schools and teachers by district council

S/N	District	School sample size	Teachers and Heads of School sample size
1	Lindi rural	8/16(50%)	24
2	Kilwa	13/26(50)	39
3	Liwale	8/17(47.1%)	24
4	Nachingwea	11/27(40.7%)	33
5	Ruangwa	9/21(42.9%)	27
6	Lindi urban	8/17((47.1%)	24
	Total	57	171

Table 3. Teachers views on challenges faced by heads of schools in executing instructional supervisory activities (n=114)

S/N	Challenges	F	%
1	Inadequate training among heads of schools	81	78.6
2	Poor communication skills	79	76.7
3	Negative attitude of teachers toward supervision	95	92.2
4	Multiple responsibilities	102	99
5	Large number of teachers	81	78.6
6	Limited budget in carrying out teacher’s professional development	74	71.8
7	Low motivation among teachers	36	35
8	Lack of incentives	43	41.7
9	Inappropriate advice offered by Supervisor	86	83.5
10	Inadequate time spent on supervision	74	72

Data in (Table 3) above shows that secondary school teachers in visited schools identified major challenges faced by heads of schools in carrying out their instructional supervisory activities. As multiple responsibilities 99%, lack of qualification 83.5%, negative attitude of teachers toward supervision 92.2%, inadequate training among heads of schools and large number of teachers 78.2% as well as poor communication skills 76.7%. This implies that heads of schools faced various challenges in carrying out their instructional supervisory activities.

Multiple Responses:

Quantitative findings from questionnaire were also supported by interview findings from heads of schools. During interview, it was found that heads of schools concurred with their teachers. For example, one head of school from one of the schools during interview outlined several challenges he faced in the course of carrying out instructional supervision activities as he said:

Honestly, I encounter various challenges in performing my instructional supervisory roles, for example not all teachers want to be supervised by head of school...visiting teacher in classroom and observe him/her while teaching is not welcomed by many teachers...also I have many teachers in this school...it is difficult for me to have time to see each of them or visit their classroom...as well teachers perceive supervision negatively...they think is an evaluation hence they dislike it.

In the same way, during interview with head of school from one of the studied schools said “some teachers showed their resistance against the supervisory activities. They missed their regular teaching classes during classroom

observation. Because; they suspect supervisors as they find out poor performance of teachers”.

Thus, from the above analysis, it was concluded that negative perception of teachers towards heads of schools classroom visit adversely affects the practice of supervision in secondary schools in Lindi region.

Speaking on the same issues another head of school from one of the studied schools when asked about challenges she faced in carrying out her instructional supervisory activities she sincerely responded by saying that:

It is very difficult job especially for me because I do not have sufficient training on how to do it. I need training to do it effectively...another challenges is multiple responsibilities madam...I am not only here to supervise teachers, I also have to attend meeting, help parents and other people....look at people outside my office who want to see me....it is real challenge.

Adding on how lack of teaching resources and limited budget have affected him in performing his instructional supervisory duties another head of school had this to share with the researcher during interview:

How can I make teachers perform their duties properly if there no sufficient teaching and learning materials? In this school we have acute shortage of teaching and learning facilities....as you know we are only depending on capitation grant from central government and we don't have any other source of fund.... also when you are talking about teachers professional development you are talking about money....we don't have such money...

Likewise, another head of school from school, during interview gave his views saying that;

It is very hard to visit classroom of the teacher who has more qualification than you do. for example, I have diploma in education, but most of my teachers are degree holders and master's degree....this makes difficult for me to check their works or even visit them in the classroom while there are teaching....they think they know more than me...even my advice they will not take.....

Similarly, during interview session, all 57 school heads revealed that there was no supervision manual in their school, which could be used as a guideline for school-based supervisors. One of the school heads said that:

In addition to the absence of in-service training programs for school heads and their subordinates, lack of supervision manuals adversely affects supervision in our school. Consequently, the school head and our subordinates are inefficient on how to assist other teachers in a proper way; we lack how to prepare appropriate criteria to help teachers and how to gather necessary information when conducting supervisory activities.

From the results finding, it is possible to say that resources such as lack of supervision manuals and lack of adequate allocated budget adversely influence the proper implementation of instructional supervision in public secondary schools in the study area.

The findings from questionnaire and focus group discussion that in the course of executing their instructional supervisory duties, heads of schools encountered several challenges including multiple responsibilities, lack of qualification, negative attitude of teachers toward supervision, inadequate training among heads of schools and large number of teachers as well as poor communication skills. These findings are in line with previous studies (Kramer, et al., 2005; Kiamba [5], Knight [23]; Kaule & Bouchamma, 2014; Jumapili, 2015).

For example, Dali et al. [10] found that the attitude of teachers towards instructional supervisors most likely depends on the type of instructional supervision offered at a given stage. Specifically, concerning head of school working load, a study by Adewale [17] revealed that head

teachers are affected by workload in performing their instructional supervision duties. Most of the head teachers are affected with workload in performing their roles although their performance are judged depending on how well they are able to control and coordinate the school's academic performance. Exemplifying it more, Mofareh [24] argued that head teachers implement their work into two aspects, namely instructional and administration roles. The implementation of these two tasks brings confusion in performing these tasks. It gives confusion to the head teachers who are less knowledgeable to lead the primary schools.

Further, Ogunu (2005) argues that lack of time seems to be a challenge in supervising instruction in primary schools. The researcher claimed that, heads of schools are so engaged in the administrative roles that they missed time to visit the classrooms and observe how teachers were teaching. Wanzare [15] noted that, teaching load of the head teachers in most cases influence the effectiveness of the head teachers' instructional supervision. Usman [25] observes that teaching load considerably influence supervision especially on the head teachers' ability to observe teachers in class and give feedback after classroom observation. Apart from head teachers having many activities to perform, they are responsible in preparing their duties and ensuring that teachers provide a well-structured lesson to fulfil the instructional deliverance (Zepeda, 2003).

Wairimu [26] shows that in community schools, head teachers work under high pressures due to many reasons, including tight management structures, financial constraints and shortage of teaching and learning materials, which often lead to poor instructional supervision in schools. Head teachers performing multiple duties in their schools do not have a room to implement the instructional supervision roles properly, in this regards head teacher might therefore provide poor pupils' academic performance in their schools.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, it was noted that most challenges, which heads of schools face in discharging their instructional activities are contextual rather than individuals' attributes of the heads of schools. One would wish to know how the state of the affair would be if different

personalities, in terms of gender, age, education, experience and the time spent in a given school by the head of school, would be in a more or less administrative environment. To appreciate the role these variables may bring to head of school supervisory experience, a comparative study would be required involving heads of schools with differences in the mentioned aspects. Based on the findings recommendation is that, creating awareness to teachers on the importance of head of school supervision through seminars in order to do away with negative attitude they may have. On this, heads of schools should adopt positive kind of communication, which will enable teachers to take supervision positively rather than authoritative sort of supervision that tend to create a gap between heads of schools and teachers.

CONSENT

The researcher obtained the consent from each of the study participants.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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