

Relationship between Teacher Classroom Observation and Student Academic Performance in KCSE in Public Secondary Schools in Rongo Sub- County, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of external instructional supervision on students' academic performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, Kenya. Specifically, the study aimed at achieving one objective viz: Determine the influence teacher classroom observation on students' academic performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The target population comprised of 309 teachers from 16 public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. The sample size therefore consisted of 16 principals, 96 teachers and 2 quality assurance and standards officers hence constituting a total of 114 respondents that were used in the study. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The validity of the instruments was done using a pilot study. The reliability of the instruments was computed using a formula by Mugenda & Mugenda (2006) that recorded a correlation coefficient of 0.789; thus, the instruments were reliable. Data analysis was run using percentages and frequency counts. The findings indicated that teacher classroom observation influenced students' academic performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. The results further revealed a positive correlation between comments given to teachers by the supervisors and students' academic performance in KCSE examinations and finally, that the selection and use of teaching and learning resources improved teacher delivery of content, which eventually translates into student academic performance at KCSE examinations. The study recommends that there should be enough provision of facilities to enhance the process of classroom observation by external supervisors.

Key Words: Teacher Classroom Observation, Students' Academic Performance

Introduction

Supervision is an aspect of administration that deals with monitoring of the teaching and learning process through the offering of the right advice by the educational experts in an educational system. Supervision is mainly carried out by the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) who visit schools to check and monitor all the activities pertaining teaching and learning process going on in the school system. (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995).

Supervision, teaching and learning are major components of the educational system without which, the educational system may not be effective. Each individual student who applies knowledge that is constructive, cumulative, and self-organized, goal-oriented, situated individually achieves effective learning. Effective learning therefore should be the teacher's primary focus in education (Montgomery, 1999)

Instructional supervision may be defined as the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance (Cogan, 1972). Acheson and Goull (1980) also define instructional supervision (clinical supervision) as an alternative model of supervision that is interactive rather than directive, democratic rather than supervisor centered. Supervision had undergone series of changes culminating in the establishment of organized schools when the need for specialized school supervisors materialized, when parents and tutors instructed youngsters in the homes, these people acted as teachers and supervisors.

In America, they have no instructional inspectors, the department of education duty is to check on teachers and schools. For instance, some states do provide a limited type of inspection of teachers prior to full certification in a subject or grade level, but this is not particularly common even today, however, some individuals behave like inspectors, although their job specifications do not call for such behavior. As the population grew and schools

increased in number, the superintendents could no longer supervise individual schools closely. In the late 19th century, principals and central office supervisors shared a major part of the burden of everyday supervision in secondary schools. With the advent of the industrial revolution and the influence of people like Fredrick W. Taylor and Marx Weber in the late 19th and 20th centuries, scientific and bureaucratic approaches to supervision replaced inspection. Scientific management and efficiency were buzz words of the new approach (Burnham, 1976).

In the early 19th Century, Lucio, and McNeil (1962.) pointed out that teachers were regarded as instruments that should be closely supervised to ensure that they mechanically carried out the methods of procedure determined by administrative and special supervisors. In the mid-Twentieth Century, supervision turned out to be collaboration and partnership between supervisors and teachers became important. They became more aware that they must respond to the needs as determined by the people they serve as teachers as opposed to satisfying their own needs based on their supposedly superior judgment (Lucio and Neil, 1962)

In modern times, principals, HODs and perhaps teachers have all become instructional supervisors during the teaching and learning process because, at the end of it all, they are supposed to assess or evaluate the success of an instructional programme. Many countries throughout the world have developed some means of monitoring the quality and standards of their education systems. In most cases, the monitoring process involves supervision by inspection of educational institutions such as schools, colleges and other aspects of the education systems. The critical role of supervision as one of the dominant strategies for monitoring and improving the performance of the education system in schools cannot be overemphasized.

Supervision is concerned with the improvement of standards and quality of education and should be an integral part of a school improvement program. In many countries where the inspectoral system of supervision of schools is conducted, the responsibility for inspection lies with the Inspectorates. School inspection practices, especially in Third World countries, such as Kenya, are associated with numerous problems, which, as a result, forced attempts to improve education quality into the background (Burnham, 1976).

The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards in Kenya is the arm of the Ministry of Education charged with the responsibility of assuring quality in Kenya's education system at all levels except University. The country had 1686 QASOs by July 2009. In Rongo Sub-County, general performance in schools has been affected by a shortage of education officers (QASOs) to supervise and inspect schools. Therefore it is forcing the DEOs office to even invite QASOs from outside the Sub-County to assist in performing supervision (Kimaiya, 2010)

According to the handbook for inspection of Educational Institutions, some of the QASOs functions are; Inspecting all Educational Institutions regularly and compiling appropriate reports, advising the government on the type and quality of education being offered in the country, advising the government on trends in obtaining equity, access, equality, gender, enrolment, wastage [drop out], repetition rates, retention, curriculum delivery, learning and teaching materials, leadership, staffing, governance, healthcare, career guidance, discipline, curriculum evaluation, pre-service and pre-service of teachers, costs, institution development plans (Ndiso, 2013).

Statement of the problem

In Kenya, supervision generally has to do with the monitoring of the teaching learning process and offering the right advice by educational experts (Okumbe, 1998). Lack of sufficient time for adequate and meaningful supervision of schools and consequently, school inspectors and supervisors do not seem to obtain a true picture of the state of schools and to reflect on the outcomes of inspections. Nakitare (1980) reiterated that the time spent by inspectors or supervisors to offer professional support to teachers in schools was usually negligible and ranged between two minutes to five minutes, that supervisors spent most of their time solving administrative problems with headteachers and that teachers were never helped so as to improve classroom performance.

The quality of education, as measured by students 'achievement in national examinations, is considered below

average standards (Ongiri and Abdi, 2004). The government of Kenya also noted in its master plan on education and training (1997-2010) that the majority of schools fall short of providing for the learning needs (resources) hence leading to poor academic performance (the Republic of Kenya, 1998) out of the 16 secondary schools that sat for the KCSE 2010, only 6 schools managed to get a total mean grade of C plain and above (KCSE 2010 Analysis). The implication is that the rest of the secondary schools recorded mass failure in KCSE examinations of 2009.

Supervisory work faces a lot of challenges in Rongo Sub-County because of the shortage of supervisors as they are very few to serve all the secondary schools as required. The DEOs office is, therefore, delegated the principals with responsibility so as to help them in the improvement of their performance. It is hence against this background that a need for this research arose to help determine the relationship between teacher classroom observation and students' academic performance in KCSE in public secondary in Rongo Sub-County, Kenya.

Classroom Observation and Students Academic Performance

Forms of classroom observation

The two types of classroom observation that a supervisor can make use of include: Formal and Informal observations. Regardless of the type, the supervisor who wants to gain entrée into the classroom needs to realize that the world of teaching is not the same for the supervisor sitting in the back of the room as it is for the teacher standing in front of the classroom. Although informal observations forgo the pre-observation conferences, formal classroom observations, if they are to be meaningful, must include these processes.

Informal classroom observations

Informal observation is one way in which the supervisor gets to know their teachers' 'instructional' (Zepeda, 2003). By making the time to observe the work teachers do on a daily basis in their classroom. Supervisors can exert informed effort and energy to assist teachers beyond formally scheduled observations.

Dubbed 'Walk-through "and pop-ins" informal observations can provide powerful learning opportunities for teachers. Skretta and Fisher (2002) observed that informal classroom observations are opportunities that translate to student academic achievement. Skretta and Fisher further reiterates that the mere presence of an administrator is not enough to guarantee substantive instructional change. However, when the administrators equip themselves with the walk-through instrument and give teachers specifically, detailed instructional feedback based on a 3-10 minute informal snapshot of a lesson, the effect can be tremendous.

Formal classroom observation

In a formal observation, the supervisor typically spends an extended amount of time in the classroom. Common sense indicates that extended classroom observations are needed for an observer to do more than get a snapshot of the classroom environment. Regardless of the length, a formal classroom observation should include pre-observation and a post-observation conference (McGreat, 1983). The more teachers talk about teaching, the better they get at it. It is during the pre and post observation conferences that teachers and supervisors have the opportunity to have focused discussions about practices. Second, supervisors need to gain entry into the world of the teacher's classroom environment (McGreat, 1983).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey. The descriptive survey, according to Frankel and Wallen (1993), is a method that involves asking a large group of people questions about a particular issue. The information is obtained from a sample rather than the entire population at one point in time, which may range from one day to a few weeks. A target

population according to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (1997) is a full set of cases from which a sample is taken. Cooper and Schindler (2006) call it a population of interest from which the individual participant or object from which the measurement is taken. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) defined the target population as a complete set of cases or objects with the same common observable characteristics from which the sample for the study is drawn.

The study focused on the 16 public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County with a population of 7,464 Students and 309 teachers. The secondary schools that met the conditions of the study were those that had presented candidates for the Kenya "National Examinations Council (KNEC) between 2008- 2010. The study also included two QASOs in the Sub –County Education Office in Rongo. The secondary schools were stratified into high performing with a mean score of 6.00 and above in KCSE examinations, average-performing with a mean score of 5.00 to 5.9 in KCSE examinations and low performing schools with a mean score of 4.9 and below in KCSE examinations (2008 to 2010). The identification of schools was based on the mean examination scores posted in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations for the three years of study.

A stratified sampling method was used to select the high, average performing schools and poor-performing schools. There were 6 high performing schools, 3 average performing schools and 7 poor-performing schools. A third of the poor performing schools were randomly sampled. A sample of 16 schools was selected based on the above stratification. Six teachers from each school were sampled to participate and 2 QASOs from the DEO's office .In total 114 respondents were selected for the study.

Two instruments were used to collect data. For example, a questionnaire for teachers and principals and interview schedule for Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs). Questionnaires contained open and close ended questions. The questionnaires were divided into three sections for teachers and principals. Section A contained demographic information of the respondents while section 'B' had questions related to instructional performance. The interview guide was used on education officers (QASOs) to corroborate responses received from questionnaires.

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure. A pilot test was used to test the validity of the instruments in the schools that were not in the main study in order to discover weaknesses, inadequacies and ambiguities associated with data allocation. A pilot study is a small scale replica and rehearsal of the main study (Sarantaka, 1996) interview schedule was tested on six secondary teachers, sixteen principals and two QASOs during pilot testing. The findings from the pilot study helped to improve the final instruments and to eradicate any form of ambiguity.

Reliability refers to the level of internal consistency or stability of measuring instruments. It also refers to the extent to which the test scores are free from measurements errors. Reliability has two main forms: related measurements and internal consistency (Mujis, 2004) reported measurements deal with the ability to measure the same thing at different times. The same instruments should bring about the same results when used with the same respondents. In order to ascertain the reliability of research instruments, the researcher had to test or use them on the same respondent and see if the answers obtained have not changed much. This approach is termed as a test-retest method. The time frame has to be appropriate in applying this procedure. Mostly a period of one to two weeks could be enough for carrying out that test-retest approach to achieve the researcher uses coefficient, which should be the highest possible. The formula for determining r is given below:

Where X is the score on test 1 while y is the score on test 2. According to Mugenda (1999), a correlation coefficient r of 0.7 is considered appropriate. The study had a correlation recorded coefficient of 0.789 thus, the instruments were reliable. Authority was sought from the National Council for Science and Technology and thereafter, permission was obtained from the Sub County Education Officer (SEO) Rongo and then the principals of the respective schools were contacted accordingly. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in their respective schools and then collected immediately. The quantitative data were then be coded in the computer to help classify the responses to the questions into measuring full categories so as to bring out their essential pattern. The researcher used the statistical package for

social science (SPSS) version 20.0 to run data analysis using descriptive statistics such as means, median and percentages.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Influence of teacher classroom observation on students' academic performance.

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of teacher classroom observation on student's academic performance. The study hence sought to find out how often QASOs visited schools in Rongo Sub-County. The results are displayed in Table 4.1

Table 4.1

Principal's response on quality Assurance officers' visits

RESPONSEF	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very often	3	19
Regularly	4	25
Often	9	56
Total	16	100

The findings in Table 4.1 shows that 3(19%) of the respondents indicated that quality assurance and standards officers visited the schools very often, 4(25%) regularly said while a majority 9 (56%) indicated often. The implication of these findings is that quality assurance and standards officers rarely visited schools hence causing an impediment to effective classroom observation of teachers.

Principals' internal supervision

The study sought to find out whether the principals carried out internal supervision to their teachers in schools. In order to accomplish this task, respondents were asked to indicate whether they conducted internal classroom observations in their schools. Table 4.2 contains the results.

Table 4.2

Principal's responses on internal supervision

RESPONSEF	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
No	4	25
Yes	12	75
Total	16	100

From table 4.2, it is evident to conclude that 4 (25%) of the respondents denied the claim that they carried out internal supervision to their teachers in their schools. A majority of 12 (75%) of the principals were in agreement that they

carried out internal classroom observation in their schools. The implication of this result is that the majority of the secondary school principals relied on internal supervision to evaluate their teachers.

Principals’ frequency of conducting internal supervision

It was important in the study to establish the magnitude of internal classroom observation. In order to realize this objective, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they carried out internal classroom observation in their schools. The results are displayed in Table 4.3

Table 4.3

Principal’s response on how often they conduct supervision

RESPONSE	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very often	2	12.5
Regularly	4	25
Often	10	52.5
Total	16	100

The results from Table 4.3 indicate that 2 (12.5%) of the respondents said they carried out classroom observation quite often, 4 (25%) regularly indicated while a majority of 10 (62.5%) testified often. The implication of these findings is that principals rarely carried out internal supervision hence interfering with effective classroom observation.

External supervisors’ frequency of visit to schools

The study sought to investigate the extent to which external supervisors carried out classroom observation in Public Secondary Schools in Rongo Sub-County. In carrying out this investigation, teacher –respondents were asked to indicate how frequent external classroom observation was done in their schools. The data generated is presented in Table 4.4

Table 4.4

Teacher’s responses on how often the external supervisors visit the school.

ITEM	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Daily	8	8.1
Weekly	14	14.3
Monthly	22	22.4
Termly	48	49.1
Yearly	6	6.1
Total	98	100

The findings from Table 4.4 reveals that 8(8.1%) of the respondents were of the opinion that external supervision was done daily, 14 (14.1) confirmed weekly, 22 (22. 4) said monthly, 48 (49.1%) indicated termly while only 6 (6.1) confirmed yearly. The implication of this findings is that a majority of the respondents were in agreement that external supervision was done termly hence giving room for principals to conduct internal supervision of the teaching learning process.

Teachers' attitude on external supervision

It was important from the study to investigate the attitude of teachers towards external supervision in their schools. This was necessary because attitude plays a significant role in the performance of learners. Respondents were, therefore, asked to indicate their attitude on external supervision. Table 4.5 contains the results.

Table 4.5

Teacher's response on their attitudes

RESPONSE	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Neutral	5	5
Negative	20	20
Positive	73	75
Total	98	100

The results from Table 4.5 shows that 73(75 %) of the respondents had a positive attitude against external supervision, 20 (20%) had a negative attitude while 5 (5%) remained non-committal. The implication of these results is that the majority of teachers supported external supervision. This was a good gesture as it could lead to improved performance at KCSE examinations.

Relationship between classroom observation and students' performance at KCSE

The study sought to investigate the relationship between classroom observation and students' academic performance at KCSE in Rongo Sub- County. In order to accomplish this task, respondents were asked to give theirs regarding the extent to which external classroom observation improved performance. The results are contained in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Teacher's response to the relationship between classroom observation and Performance.

RESPONSE	REQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very good	18	18.4
Good	10	10.2
Average	70	71.4
Total	98	100

The results from Table 4.6 shows that 18 (18.4%) of the respondents indicated that external supervision was very good, 10 (10.2%) said well, while 70 (71.4%) said average. The impression one would get from the results, however, points to the fact that all the respondents were in agreement that external observation was necessary and it eventually enhanced improved performance in KCSE examinations. Thus the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between external classroom observation and students' academic performance at KCSE examinations in Rongo Sub-County.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that there is a significant relationship between classroom observation and students' academic performance in Rongo Sub-County. Both internal and external classroom observations were, therefore, instrumental in improving learner performance at KCSE.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that there should be proper follow-up activities for both external and internal observations so as to improve effective curriculum delivery. There should be enough provision of facilities to enhance the process of external supervision in schools.

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