

Original Research Article

## The Perceptions of Primary School Teachers on the Effectiveness of Supervision in Their Professional Development

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**Abstract:** Supervision of education in Kenya has adopted the inspection model which is traced back to the colonial era. The objective of the study was to investigate perceptions of primary school teachers on the effectiveness of supervision in their professional development. The needs assessment theory was adopted for this study. This study was conducted in Teso North district. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. A total of 180 respondents participated. Thirty (30) head teachers from the selected schools were selected, while the 150 teachers were selected by simple random sampling. Data were collected by use of a self-administered questionnaire for teachers and a structured interview schedule for head teachers. Data were analyzed and presented by use of frequency tables and t-test statistics. It was established that teachers generally agree that supervision enhances their professional development. It is envisaged that this study will be useful in improving both instructional and supervisory practices as teachers will get to be more aware of what is expected of them of the supervisory practices. The study recommends that the government needs to recruit and deploy more QASOs at Zonal levels in each district to increase the frequency of supervision.

**Keywords:** Perception, Supervision, Effectiveness, Professional Development.

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## INTRODUCTION

For a long time, supervision of education in Kenya has adopted the inspection model. The Kenyan school inspection model has its historical roots in the colonial era.

Before independence in 1963, there were three separate inspectorate units that conducted inspection on a racial basis. These were the whites', Asians' and Africans' inspectorate wing all under the imperial Her Majesty Inspectorate (HMI) department of education. There was minimum mutual communication and co-ordination between the three units. However, the white's inspectorate wing played a supreme role because it enjoyed an imperial right and privilege of inspecting the other two units as well as their teachers and curriculum (Maranga, 1977). Whenever a white school inspector paid a visit to a school mostly managed by African teachers, he would wear police colors such that his presence would be loathed and resented by indigenous teachers (Sifuna, 1974).

With independence, a different socialization process was needed to change the racial and ethnic

prejudices that had been inherited from Her Majesty's Inspectorate. The first step was the amalgamation of the three racial inspectorate units into one comprehensive unit. (Sifuna, 1974).

Inspection of schools as a function is entrusted to the Ministry of Education in accordance with the provision of the education Act, Chapter 211, section 18 of laws Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 1980) which empowers the minister of education to promote the education of the people of Kenya. The Legal framework that acted as a landmark in educational policy in Kenya was the 1968 Education Act. It placed the responsibility for ensuring quality of education in the hands of the inspectorate (Eshiwani, 1993). Since there were no structural changes on inspectoral functions, the post-independence inspectorate wing continued employing and exercising imperial policies. Such policies viewed African teachers as servants and white school inspectors as masters thereby initiating the proverbial master-servant relationship between the two professionals (Kiarie, 2002). This implied that even the native inspectors who took over acted more like masters than supervisors.

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The Ministry of Education and other scholars have carried out various studies which indicated a number of problems with the recent practice of inspection (Okumbe, 1987; Muchanje, 2004; Rugut, 2003; MOEST, 2004).

Over the years, the behavior of Kenya school inspectors, especially towards teachers has been criticized by many. The major concerns were associated with unprofessional conduct of school inspectors which, as Wanga (1988) cited in Wanzare (2002) noted, had serious implications for teaching and learning leading to a cold war relationship between teachers and inspectors. In this sense, the inspectors' sole mission was seen to be proving the incompetence of a teacher or catching the teacher doing wrong. The term "inspector" portrayed the officer as a person who comes from above to see that policies developed at the central education office are being implemented in schools.

Because inspectors tended to evaluate teachers on their own perceptions of teacher performance, teacher involvement on matters regarding school inspection was very minimal. Teachers tended to shy away from interacting freely with the "inspector" for fear of fault finding and victimization (Wanzare, 2002). Opportunities for meaningful dialogue between teachers and inspectors especially after inspection were highly limited. This could also have been attributed to the fact that inspection visits have been marked by poor planning and lack of clear objectives (Republic of Kenya, 1999).

The improvement of the teaching learning process to a large extent depends on teacher's perception and attitudes towards supervision. If teachers perceive supervision as a process of promoting professional growth and student learning then the whole process and activity of supervision may yield the desired outcome.

### **Research Objective**

To investigate perceptions of primary school teachers on the effectiveness of supervision in their professional development

### **Research Question**

What are the primary school teachers' perceptions towards supervision process by QASOs' in enhancing their professional development?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted needs assessment theory. Needs assessment concerns determining what needs to be done in practice. To be able to do this, a need should be seen as performance gap which separates what people know, do or feel, from what they should know, do or feel to be competent. When teachers are more aware of the supervisory roles of QASOs' and what is

expected of them, they are likely to be more effective in instructional practice.

The theoretical underpinning of the study is that a needs assessment needs to be done to assess how well the new policies have been implemented and have been realized. The effective role of quality assurance and standards officers' to a large extent depends on how teachers' perceive their functioning. The teachers get to interact with the new policies screening them to understand and accommodate them. If filtered positively, then they are bound to accomplish their intended purpose. A needs assessment is necessary to gain understanding of how well the current processes meet the teachers' needs in trying to enhance improved and effective teaching practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Study Area**

The study was conducted in primary schools in Teso North district, Western province, Kenya. The district borders Mt. Elgon district in the North, Teso South District in the South, Bungoma district in the West and The Republic of Uganda in the East. According to 1999 census the two divisions had total population of 103,036. It is mainly an agricultural district with 65 per cent of the population involved in agricultural activities. The food crops grown include maize, beans, millet while the cash crops grown are tobacco, cotton and Pepper.

This area was selected for study because

1. It has been experiencing poor academic performance over the past few years and there has been no similar research in the area.
2. The available resources in terms of time, finance and human resources were inadequate for a wider geographical coverage and could only facilitate research in the district

### **Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This research design was preferred as it seeks to obtain information that describes a phenomenon that is in existence through asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behavior or values (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It also enables data collection for purposes of describing a large population hence cutting down on costs by use of representative sample.

### **Study Population**

For this research, the population consisted of all primary schools teachers in primary schools in Teso North District. This has 3 educational zones Angurai, Kolanya and Amagoro. Angurai zone has 29 public primary schools, Kolanya zone 28 public primary schools and Amagoro zone 30 public primary schools. In total there are 640 primary school teachers' in the district.

### Sampling Design and Sample Size

The researcher used zones to classify schools using stratified sampling technique to ensure that teachers from schools in different zones are represented in the sample. Schools were stratified according to the educational zones. Simple random sampling was then used to select 10 schools from each zone. Five teachers from the respective schools were then selected by simple random sampling so as to have a sample size of 150 respondents. Thirty head teachers were sampled for the study.

### Research Instruments

Data was collected through administration of questionnaires to teachers and interview schedules for the head-teachers.

### Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

#### Validity

Validity of a research instrument is defined as the extent to which the instrument measures what it purports to measure. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study.

The researcher established the validity of the research instruments through discussion of the items with supervisors, colleagues and other lecturers in the department.

A pilot study was also conducted in some schools before administering the tools. During this time, items that were found to be ambiguous and not clearly framed were revised accordingly.

#### Reliability

Reliability of a research instrument refers to the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation or any measurement procedure produces the same results on repeated trials. In short, it is the stability or consistency of scores over time or across raters.

This was established through the test-retest technique. The researcher carried out a pilot study in neighboring Teso South District in which the respondents experience relatively same conditions. The research instruments were administered twice within an interval of two weeks. From the responses obtained, the SPSS computer package was utilized in which a Pearson Product Moment formula was applied to calculate the co-efficient of the correlation at  $\pm 0.5$  level of significance. A correlation coefficient of 0.67 as yielded which was considered high enough to judge the instrument reliable.

### Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Descriptive methods were employed and the data was presented in form of frequency tables that will facilitate description and explanation of the findings.

### Ethical Considerations

The research proposal was approved by the department of Curriculum Instruction and Educational Media, Moi University. The study was conducted with approval of the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology, the District Education Officer Teso North and the teachers participating in the study.

### Data Presentation, Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

#### Perception of Teachers towards the Supervision Process by Qasos' In Enhancing Their Professional Development

The researcher aimed at establishing how teachers perceive the supervision process by QASOs' in enhancing their professional development. The responses to selected items on teachers' perception towards the supervision process by QASOs' in enhancing their professional development were tabulated in table 1:

**Table 1: Perception of the teachers on the effectiveness of supervision in the teachers' professional development**

Responses											
Perception of effectiveness of supervision	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Officers reports useful in teachers' Instructional improvement	19	12.7	15	10.0	18	12.0	58	38.7	40	26.7	2.4
QASOs help in the diagnosis of learning problems	19	12.7	29	19.3	24	16.0	56	37.3	22	14.7	2.9
Teachers seek clarification from inspection team and colleagues	10	6.7	23	15.3	23	15.3	60	40.0	34	22.7	2.4
Effective teaching requires joint effort of QASO and teachers	15	10.0	14	9.3	19	12.7	49	32.7	53	35.3	2.3
Teachers asked to give professional advice on curriculum implementation	39	26.0	27	18.0	25	16.7	44	29.3	15	10.0	3.4
Teachers willing to use resources and suggestions by QASOs'	14	9.3	15	10.0	18	12.0	56	37.3	47	31.3	2.3
N=150 Overall mean = 2.6											

From the descriptive statistics, 68.0% of teachers agree with the statements that effective teaching requires joint effort of QASOs' and teachers; 68.6% of teachers felt that they (teachers) are willing to use resources and suggestions given by QASOs' and the fact that officers reports are useful in the teachers' instructional improvement (64.4%); the willingness of teachers to seek clarification from supervision team and colleagues (62.7%). Teachers also agree that QASOs' help teachers' towards diagnosis of learning problems (52.0%). However, most teachers do not agree that they (teachers) are asked to give professional advice on curriculum implementation (39.3%).

From the interview schedules, majority of the head teachers (70%) were of the opinion that teachers often seek new ways and directions of working from the QASO reports after QASO visits. They (65%) also concurred that after QASO visits and reports there is usually a change in teacher performance.

The results of descriptive statistics indicate that most teachers agree that supervision helps in their professional development. Teachers play a crucial role in ascertaining that the desired educational results are achieved. However they expect to be provided with proper conditions for good teaching and learning (Mbiti, 1974).

According to Ajuoga, Indoshi & Agak, (2010).the supervision approach adopted by QASOs is crucial in establishing rapport with teachers and is also effective in the improvement of instruction. The change in teacher practices is expected to result in the improved student learning outcomes. The influence of professional development on students is accomplished principally through its direct effect on teacher knowledge and practices (Guskey, 2000)

Improving teaching is a complex process in which many elements should interact. Teachers are in the center of this improvement process. Their acceptance of and interaction with the supervisory practice, provide the catalyst for any supervisory success. The way teachers view and think about the supervision process is important in the outcomes of the supervision process. Supervision is an interactive process that depends on the source of supervision, the supervisor, and the teacher. Therefore, knowing their opinions and expectations about the supervisory practices is important in implementing successful supervision (Firth, 1997).

Supervision improves teaching and learning through a deliberate emphasis on ways and means of instilling excellence in the quality of instruction. Through supervision teachers are guided and influenced towards achieving the desired goal of education. Supervision gives specialized help in improving instruction.

Teachers as a first component of educational reform efforts must share a vision of the school improvement plan. This does not mean that the teachers should necessarily initiate, plan, and implement the whole reforms change, but that any effort must consider the teachers role as essential. To effectively promote educational change, Fullan (2001), emphasizes "collegial" self-evaluation, critical thinking e.t.c. However, failure to involve the teachers in the suggesting how well the curriculum can be implemented suggests that the teachers are merely reduced to recipients of supervision of instruction.

Therefore the perceptions of the effectiveness of supervision by teachers suggest that effective supervision by QASOs plays an essential role in deciding the nature and conduct of the curriculum. If teachers are involved they get a better understanding of the curriculum requirements thus able to plan and become more effective in instruction.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

Most teachers agree that supervision helps in their professional development. Teaching standards must identify the central tasks of teaching, and adapt to changing public expectations of schools. Standards also need to identify the unique features of what teachers know and do.

Supervisors should encourage teachers to participate in planning and implementing supervisory activities. This participation would enable teachers and supervisors to come closer to the other's viewpoint. More importantly, it will enable the supervisors to understand the teachers' needs and expectations, which will make them more able to meet these needs and expectations.

Professional development should be seen as a process by which teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Supervisors are also expected to effectively communicate with teachers in a way that maximizes the good outcomes of the educational tasks.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The government needs to recruit and deploy more QASOs at Zonal levels in each district to increase the frequency of supervision. This will make the supervision process a continuous process where teachers interact with supervisors more frequently.

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