Assessing the Effectiveness of Techniques Applied by the Heads of Schools to Promote Teachers' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of techniques applied by the heads of schools to promote teachers' performance in public secondary schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. The study was guided by the qualitative research approach using a case study design. The sample of respondents was twenty-six (26), of whom there were 18 teachers, 6 heads of schools, 1 Municipal Secondary Education Officer and 1 School Quality Assurer Officer. Six (6) public secondary schools were involved in the study. Data were gathered through interviews, documentary reviews and observations. Qualitative data was categorized into themes and presented in form of narratives. The study findings indicate that most heads of schools do not make regular classroom visit to ensure teachers' content delivery, they do not provide teaching and learning resources and they are not keen to ensure teachers prepare professional documents. The study recommends the need for planning of supervision process, sensitization on the importance of appraisal as well as provision of teaching and learning resources as necessary.

Keywords: Heads of Schools, Supervisory Techniques, Teachers' Performance

1.0 Introduction

Education goals cannot be achieved without well-established effective school supervisory practices (URT, 2013). Today, the demand for effective school supervision activities is rapidly taking centre stage more than ever the world over (Okumbe, 1999). The effectiveness of school supervision is judged by the extent to which schools acquire the necessary instructional materials, teacher's effectiveness and efficient performances (Mosha, 2011).

According to Enyedy (2017), heads of schools must have skills and knowledge that enable them to supervise and influence the behaviour of the school in terms of how teachers teach, how much students learn and the overall school performances. Those results can be achieved only if the heads of schools provide feedback, encourage and motivate teachers to perform better, which are one of their administrative roles (Enyedy, 2017).

Teachers are expected to be provided with proper conditions for good teaching and learning. Heads of schools are endowed with a capacity to create such conditions. That is, a success of school has been attributed to those in the helm of proper school supervision activities. The heads of schools should give their institutions' images of their potentialities through drive, support and skills to mould the mission, vision and motto statements to an approximate reality. They have the responsibilities of removing administrative and supervisory constraints that may prevent teachers from maximizing their efforts in rendering services to students (Kimutai, 2012).

A study on the implementation of instructional supervision in secondary schools in Ethiopia found that classroom visits enable the heads of schools to interact with teachers, determine whether teachers are using sound instructions and provide feedback to help the teachers correct highlighted issues. A study by Asiyai (2009) in Nigeria showed that regular instructional supervision practices of the school heads through direct supervision of the teachers led to improvement in the teachers' lesson preparation, regular and punctual class attendance.

2.0 Literature Review
2.1 Techniques Employed by Heads of Schools in Carrying Out their General Supervisory Practices
Meador (2013) shows that a good school head is the one who always leads by example, positive, enthusiastic, has high energy, initiative, tolerant for ambiguity sense of humour, has analytical ability and uses common sense and has a hand in the day-to-day activities of the school and listens to what their subordinates are saying. An effective leader (e.g., head of school) is available to the teachers, staff members, parents, students, and community members. Good leaders stay calm in difficulties, think before they act and put the needs of the school before themselves (Meador 2013). Also, an effective leader steps-up to fill in gaps as needed, even if it is not part of their daily routine.

A study of Zepeda (2010) found that effective supervision of teachers as a developmental process is designed to support and enhance an individual's acquisition of the motivation, autonomy, self-awareness, and skills to effectively accomplish the teacher's job performance. Another study conducted by Alemayehu (2012) in Ethiopia found that supervisory practices have been carried out since 1941, though the service name shifted from "inspection" to "supervision". In order to effectively and efficiently achieve the intended objectives of educational supervision, two approaches to the organization of effective supervision were taken: out of school (external) supervision, and school-based (internal) supervision; the former is carried out by external supervisors at federal, regional and lower levels, whereas the latter is carried out by the school heads, departmental heads and senior teachers. However, in Addis Ababa, which is the capital city of Ethiopia, the study established that effective supervision somewhat brought improvement, and it helped to compete with other countries.

In Kenya, Kalai (2017) found that secondary school heads are tools to successful school management. Also, the study observed that the secondary school heads are appointed from serving teachers and most of them have no any substantial training in educational and supervisory management. Thus, the role of heads of schools is to stimulate, improve, organize, and make teachers self-directed and cooperative to ensure the feedback is geared towards changing errors in order to achieve teaching and learning goals.

Furthermore, the heads of schools convey information to teachers on all school activities through staff meetings, which intend to promote unity, to accommodate teachers' views and harmonize workers (Sekovic, 2020). In addition, the heads of schools are pillars and examples at schools. The vision, mission and motto of the schools carry a heavy message and picture of schools' objectives in summary.

Motivational techniques are very important for the performance of the teachers. The study of Ghafoor and Sajjad (2021) shows that the head teachers' good behaviour is a source of motivation and encouragement for teachers to perform well in classroom. Motivation also ensures completion of tasks. A study by Sekovic (2020) found that motivation impacts teachers' personality to complete assigned tasks. Furthermore, the results indicated two groups of teachers: one group being motivated by their head teachers to complete assigned task, while the other group was not motivated by their head teachers. As a result, teachers who were motivated by their head teachers got much higher marks compared to the ones who were not motivated by their head teachers.

3.0 Materials and Methods

This study was guided by constructivism paradigm, because teachers who were selected in the study provided their lived experiences and valuable insights of their performance in public secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative approach and a case study design, of which the heads of schools were the main unit of analysis and the researcher selected six schools which were named: school A, school B, school C, school D, school E, and school F.

The target population for this study involved four categories of respondents, namely: the heads of secondary schools, teachers, School Quality Assurer (SQA) and Municipal Secondary Education Officer (MSEO). Specifically, the study used a total of 26 respondents from a population of public secondary schools, which involved six (6) public secondary schools with 18 teachers, six (6) heads of schools, 1 MSEO and 1 SQA.

In this study, the researcher employed multiple data collection methods to collect the relevant data to answer research questions. The use of multiple sources and methods facilitated the validation of the data. In this study, interviews, observation, and documentary review were used.

4.0 Results
4.1.Promotion of Teachers' Professional Development
According to the participants' viewpoints, professional development was viewed as one of the strategies used by most of the school heads in carrying out their general and instructional supervisory duties. Brooker and Jeniffer (2015) view professional development as the effort and strategies by the government or non-governmental organizations to improve the skills, abilities and knowledge among teaching workforce. It is from this opinion, a head of school A argued that:

> *It is important to update the knowledge and skills for both heads of schools and teaching staff because it would equip both of them with the ability to promote quality teaching and learning in schools* (Interview with Head of School A: 14/05/2023).

In line with that finding, Okumbe (2007) contented that the role of the heads of schools is to draw up a training programme roster and indicate the number of teachers that could participate in each programme when it is organized. Moreover, the heads of schools should assist teachers through supervision to diagnose remote challenges that hinder teachers' growth and provide effective guidance in promoting teachers' professional abilities, which meet the challenges of the changing education system.

During the interview with the heads of schools, it was also revealed that most of the heads of schools allow their teachers to attend different professional development seminars and workshop as proved by one of the heads of schools, who said:

> *I allow them to participate in various in-service seminars and on-job trainings. I also give them various instructions during tea meeting at school; this makes teachers improve their teaching and learning skills and finally leads to better academic performance* (Interview with Head of School B: 14/05/2023).

Thus, the application of professional development as strategy for teacher's professional improvements is perceived to be practical by teachers and the heads of schools. Also, the heads of schools reported on the organizing and conducting of seminars and other kinds of professional development training for the purpose of ensuring that their teachers are updated. This was said by one school head as follows:

> *Normally, there are internal seminars called in-service training whereby professionals from different units are invited to come and discuss professional issues to train my teachers in the areas of teaching and learning, and sometime the government gives chances under my supervision to select who has to go for such professional development course* (Interview with Head of School D: 17/05/2023).

The information from the interview indicates that, some heads of schools do conduct internal professional development programmes in the form of seminars whereby they invite experts from different organizations to equip teachers with the necessary skills needed in the teaching profession. Most of the professional development training conducted within the school environment has positive impacts on teachers' competences because majority of them reflect the needs of teachers. By conducting internal training to teachers, teachers get updated on teaching methods, assessment techniques, classrooms management and shaping students' behaviour. These findings concur with those of Saidin (2021) who observed that effective professional development practice enhanced the competence of teachers. These findings also imply that professional development gives teachers skills and knowledge, which is necessary for them to have as professional teachers in the school.

It was also revealed that the heads of schools provide professional development to all teachers without bias, and this can reinforce teachers to perform their duties effectively in schools. One of the school heads commented that:

> *All teachers are given equal opportunities to attend professional development programmes. However, we consider specifications. You may find that specifications do differ where some of teachers are teaching Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry. So, it may happen that there is a seminar for Mathematics teachers and thus only teachers who teach such subject will have to attend and those who teach other subjects will not attend* (Interview with Head of School E: 17/05/2023).

This comment supports the view by most heads of schools that they do provide an equal chance to their teachers to attend professional development seminars and workshops. Based on the Contingency Theory, it seems that the heads of schools consider the characteristics of teachers as well as their needs when selecting teachers to attend professional development training. Considering the needs of teachers is a good thing as long as teachers do not have similar needs.

The findings are in agreement with what was observed by Ajan (2021) who revealed that professional development programmes are made available to all school teachers. By offering equal opportunities to all teachers to attend such seminars and trainings, the heads of schools understand the importance of using professional development strategy to manage their teachers.

4.2. Maintaining Teamwork

Maintaining teamwork is another strategy through which the heads of schools demonstrate good supervisory skills. According to Ngassa (2016), team work is a state of working together for the purpose of accomplishing the goals of the organization. Participants from the interview session revealed that the heads of schools engaged heads of departments to assist in management activities like discipline issues and in planning education matters to improve school academic performance. One teacher had this to say:

> *Formation of different departments in schools helps the teachers to work as a team. This helps the heads of schools to reduce the workload; hence, they can concentrate on other administrative activities. Teamwork makes school activities easy, simple and effective. It also diminishes misunderstanding amongst staff. It further propels cooperation and good relationship among staff. This improves effectiveness in school management* (Interview with Teacher$_1$, School F: 17/05/2023).

This implies that building the base of agreement in a team is important for effective school management since it influences cooperation and discourages misunderstanding and conflict in schools. Teamwork also helps to make acute and proper decision in different managerial issues such as problem solving, resolving discipline cases and enhance good relationship among teachers. Moreover, teamwork helps to accomplish tasks on time as well as reducing workload to the heads of schools. The study finding concurs with the study of Bite (2012), who observed that teamwork helps to manage challenging issue in schools, which resulted to increase the time taken on academic work, hence, improving effective school academic performance.

4.3. Creating Effective Communication

Effective communication is essential for executing administrative plans as well as for handling day-to-day accomplishments of tasks through people. The results from the interview revealed that the heads of schools provided information needed to accomplish task by using the leadership hierarchy and staff meetings. Furthermore, the heads of schools provided information directly and indirectly through leadership hierarchy whereby immediate subordinates were fully engaged in administering specific school activities. During the interview with teachers, one of them said:

> *Provision of information to subordinates made teachers aware of what should be done, how it should be done, when should it be done and who should supervise. Also, effective communication is a means of minimizing internal conflict in the schools* (Interview with Teacher$_4$, School A: 17/05/2023).

This suggests that provision of appropriate information maintained effective communication since workers become aware of the school procedures, which helped them to accomplish various tasks, hence, maintaining organization goals. The finding concurs with Slater (2020) who asserts that an effective communication is about conveying one's message to other people clearly and unambiguously; therefore, the heads of schools need to exercise communication skills in an open way to deliver information and at the same time receive information from subordinates.

4.4. Provision of Interpersonal Relations and Motivation to Teachers

Through interview, it was revealed that the heads of schools motivated teachers as a way of arousing their commitment to work. The heads of schools motivate teachers who performed well in academic matters and in different school activities. As a result, such performers were given letters of

appreciation. Also, the heads of schools provided certificates of appreciation, financial allowances and opportunities for engaging in activities such as marking external examination. One of the interviewed teachers had this to say:

> *The head of the school motivates teachers who perform well in academic matters and effective supervision of different school activities through writing a letter for congratulations, providing certificates of appreciations, giving some amount of money and granting different opportunities like attending the playful seminars, through get together and granting tea and lunch; this consequently encourages more commitment to the teachers* (Interview with Teacher$_{10}$, School B: 17/05/2023).

Furthermore, the results from the interview made with heads of schools revealed that some school heads motivated teachers through preparing ceremonies soon after opening the school as a way of welcoming them for duties and arousing morale to work. One school opined that:

> *Normally, I'm preparing ceremonies soon after the commencement of the new term as a way of welcoming them for school activities. I use this system in order to motivate teachers work in optimal performance* (Interview with Head of School C: 17/05/2023).

This implies that motivating staff members creates patriotism at the workplace and this arouses teacher's spirit and commitment to work more effectively. Similarly, Kamete (2014) agrees that motivation develops teachers to work in optimal performance that contributes to effective performance in school's activities. Thus, the study findings imply that building the base of agreement in a team is important for school management, because it influences cooperation and discourages misunderstanding and conflicts in schools. This concurs with the study of Ngasa's (2016) findings which indicated that teamwork is a state of working together for the purpose of accomplishing a set of goals in an organization.

4.0 Discussion

The heads of schools should identify teachers requiring professional development such as induction, pre-service courses, on and off-job training, incentives and other trainings for improving teachers' abilities. Thereby, equipping them with skills and knowledge that they can share with other teachers to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in job performance as evidenced by Ndunguru (2015) who contended that on-job training is a key factor to good performance, career path and job security.

The study findings indicate that the heads of schools should build the base of agreement as a team and creating effective communication for effective school management, since it influences cooperation and discourages misunderstanding and conflict in schools. Teamwork also helps to make acute and proper decision in different managerial issues such as problem-solving, resolving discipline cases and enhancing good relationship among teachers. Moreover, teamwork helps to accomplish tasks on time as well as reducing workload to the heads of schools. This was also observed by Bite

(2012), who insisted that teamwork helps to manage challenging issue in schools and as a result, increase the time taken on academic work, hence, improving effective school academic performance.

Generally, motivation is very crucial tool in a working place to increase production, motivate staff members, creates patriotism at workplace and arouses teacher's spirit and commitment to work more effectively. Similarly, Kamete (2014) agrees that motivation develops teachers to work in optimal performance that contributes to effective performance in school activities.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study concludes that the heads of schools have some supervisory skills to enhance teachers' performance but more professional skills development programmes should be frequently provided to them so that they become more skilled and conversant in ensuring effective supervision of teachers' performance. The study also concludes that ineffective supervisory of the heads of schools on teachers' performance causes poor results of an expected goal, catalyze conflicts among school workers due to communication breakdown, lack of awareness among education stakeholders, and thus disturb the whole learning and teaching process in secondary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the heads of schools should be frequently trained on various education issues including instructions' supervision so as to enrich them with appropriate knowledge, skills and attitude. As a result, it leads to increase the number of competent teachers, and make school infrastructure improved.

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