THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

Influence of Frequency of Conducting Classroom Observation of Teachers of English on Their Teaching Effectiveness in English in Secondary Schools of Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Instructional supervision is key to effective teaching. Whereas emphasis has been put on external instructional supervision, less attention has been given to Internal Instructional Supervision (IIS), probably because its influence on teaching effectiveness is yet to be established. Kakamega County is the second largest County in terms of population yet achievement in English is low at a mean score of 5.03 in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (2007-2018) The County's Panel of Standards Assessment report of 2010 and 2011 pegged this to weak IIS structures. The purpose of this paper is to establish influence of frequency of conducting classroom observation of teachers of English on their teaching effectiveness. A conceptual framework constituting of frequency of classroom observation of teachers of English on IIS as the independent variables and teaching effectiveness as the dependent variable was used. The study used ex-post –facto, correlation and descriptive survey. Population was 13 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QUASO), 247 principals, 247 HODs and 494 teachers of English (TOEs). It sampled 13 QUASOs, 74 principals, 74 HODs and 215 teachers purposively. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis guide were used. To establish validity, the instruments were given to experts in language pedagogy. A pilot study was conducted using 10% of the population, hence, 24 principals, 24 HODs and 50 teachers were used to establish reliability. Quantitative data was analysed using frequencies, percentages and Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression. Qualitative data was transcribed, categorized and reported in themes relevant to the study. Findings revealed that teachers of English are rarely observed teaching in class. The study concludes that 6% of frequency of observing TOEs in class contributed to their teaching effectiveness and that this checking predicted teaching effectiveness. The study thus recommends that stakeholders of IIS should prioritize frequency of classroom observation of TOEs and observe these teachers at least once per term as stipulated by Teachers Service Commission (TSC)'s Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Tool TPAD in Kenya.

Keywords: Internal instructional supervision, influence, teaching effectiveness, frequency and classroom observation

1. Background to the Study

One of the challenges facing education systems in most countries world over is how to uphold quality of public education amidst the increasing national and fiscal constraints. In 2009, Polish's Ministry of Education (MoE) requested the World Bank's assistance in exploring ways to improve teaching quality and education outcomes through improved systems of supervision and support to schools (Nakpodia, 2006). According to international literature many teachersmany teachers especially student teachers, newly qualified and the under qualified teachers, may not have mastered sufficient skills for effective teaching. Hence, there is need for instructional supervision (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000) albeit at the school level.

Such supervision is referred to as internal instructional supervision. It should concern itself with the frequency of supervisors physically observing teachers teaching in class alongside checking of teachers' professional documents that are used during instruction. This should be with the intention to boost teaching effectiveness. Spending reasonable periods of time in a classroom observing a teacher will reveal areas of weakness and steady usage of instructional materials and develop good teaching skills. Orenaiya, Adenowo, Aroyeun and Odusonga (2014) recommend that there should be intense and constant monitoring of teachers. This is with regard to Peretomode (2012) proposition that by doing so supervisors will know what and how teachers teach. Assefa (2016) equally pointed out that ineffective supervision leads to poor performance. This was in the sense that regular classroom visitation enhances higher student achievement levels as it results to students getting high grades in examination while fewer instances of classroom observation of teachers leads to laxity of teachers hence poor performance. Chenge and Syomwene (2016) observe that it improves achievement of high aptitude learners, assists the teaching and learning of students with special needs and produces positive effects on attitude towards learning.

In Kenya, recent reports on monitoring of implementation of the revised curriculum have pointed out supervision as an issue of concern in the implementing of curriculum (Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), 2004, 2005

& 2006). Though this was established through perspective of primary schools, secondary education by extension is equally affected and there is need that research should focus on it. This is because (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2003) report on the Sector Review and Development pointed out the problem of quality of teaching and learning in various secondary schools. This was attributed to teacher inadequacy, ineffectiveness and motivation. The report then recommended that supervision of instruction should be used to offer instructional improvement within the education system.

At the core of supervision is the physical observation of teachers in class. As pertains the continuous observation and assessment of teachers in class, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC)'s Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Tool (TPAD, 2016) stipulates that performance appraisal is a continuous interactive process between appraisee and appraiser, in which they are required to plan for a termly lesson observation, p4.

2. Teaching Effectiveness of TOE

The focus on the classroom teacher is moving away from the highly qualified to the highly effective teacher. Orenaiya *et al.*, (2014) propounds that the most significant criteria or factor directly influencing the quality of education a child receives is the quality of his teacher. There are many criteria that can be used to gauge the most effective teacher. These include deep understanding of subject matter, learning theory and student differences, planning classroom instructional strategies, knowing individual students and assessment of students' understanding and proficiency with learning, a teacher's ability to reflect, collaborate with colleagues and continue ongoing professional development. Researchers agree that teaching effectiveness mainly involves student learning which can be measured in terms of student scores and grades. In view of this, Barry (2010) observes that studies and models for teaching effectiveness have subtle differences but all of them agree that the gauge for teaching effectiveness is student learning. Yet again, there are numerous indicators of student learning that may be used to evaluate a teacher's effectiveness. However, the most predominant is students' performance as evident through results of standardized tests.

Teaching effectiveness in this study refers to individual teachers of English 2013 KCSE examination mean scores. Any mean score below 4.99 implied low teaching effectiveness, those between 5.00- 6.99 was fair teaching effectiveness, those between 7.00- 8.99 implied good teaching effectiveness while all those above 9.00 reflected excellent teaching effectiveness. This is presented in Table 1.

Mean Score	<i>f</i>	Percentage
2.5-4.99	89	39.72
5.00-5.99	45	21.02
6.00- 6.99	29	13.55
7.00- 7.99	20	9.35
8.00-8.99	24	11.22
9.00- 9.99	11	5.14
10.00- 10.99	-	-
11.00-12.00	-	-
Total	214	100

Table 1: Teaching Effectiveness

Results of Table 1 show that 60.74 % of teachers of English have fair and low teaching effectiveness, only 20.57% of them had good teaching effectiveness and only 5.14% of them had excellent teaching effectiveness. This implies that there is therefore something amiss in the performance of this subject. This could be as a result of different factors. This paper fronts the possibility of weak internal instructional supervision with regard to frequency of observing teachers of English teaching in the classroom as one of the causes of this ineffectiveness.

3. Influence of Frequency of Classroom Observation of Teachers of English on Teaching Effectiveness

Frequency of conducting Internal Instructional Supervision (IIS) is paramount in matters of instructional supervision. In order for IIS to achieve its goals the number of times it is conducted should be put into perspective. The more frequent a practice is done the better its outcome. A theory propounded by Marzona, Waters and McNulty (2003) and improved on by Reeves (2007) focused on instructional leaders, instruction and students in order to improve teaching and learning processes. It outlines certain indices that are fundamental to a fuller understanding of instructional supervision by supervisors. At the core of this is frequency of supervision. There must be a leadership supervision when principals, HODs and English subject heads visit classrooms regularly through observation, evaluation and recognition of best practices. Numerous studies including Jeptanus (2014), Tede and Roelande (2014) and Usman (2015) have observed that frequent classroom observation has a measurable impact on students' academic performance.

Chenge and Syomwene (2016) found that in several of the most effective schools, regular IIS was a critical component in the school principal's strategy to create and sustain academic focus. Such schools were characterized by an 'ethos of improvement' that encouraged teachers to come to school on time; to provide academic instruction in the afternoon as well as the morning; to use test results to evaluate instruction; and to discuss teaching and learning during lunch break in some schools.

Peretomode (2001) findings also established that effectiveness in classroom instruction through high level of frequency and duration of supervision leads to building up of the expected values. This will involve checking teachers'

notes, with schemes of work to determine the extent of relatedness and completeness of tasks and content of instruction or otherwise.

According to Kimeu (2010) the head teacher should visit the classroom frequently to encourage teachers and as Glickman (2010) looks at it, it is one way to help teachers improve their instructions and as such, it should ideally be implemented at least twice a year. Physical observation of lesson presentation is the only way a principal can gain insight into quality of teaching and learning in the school whether or not they themselves teach English. Kariuki (2013) propounds that instructional supervisors can only be able to access the potential for excellence through watching the teacher present a lesson which he or she has prepared. In addition, Gachoya (2008) confirms that through these visits the supervisor can have insight into quality benchmarks and performance. All these foregoing have an implication that frequent classroom observation strengthens the teacher's pedagogical skills.

The underlying assumption here is that this observation is a powerful tool which gives participants opportunity to gather data and gain insights into the classroom (Hofer, 2016). Studies have indicated that there are concerns with frequency of conducting classroom observations. For instance, a survey research conducted by Alemayehu (2008) in 10 Addis Ababa Secondary schools with a sample of 332 teachers, showed that the subject - area instructional supervision practiced in these schools has multiple problems, one of which was infrequent use of classroom visits. This is in congruent with the findings of Tede and Roelande (2014).

In Kenya, the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) has rolled out a tool that designates the number of times classroom observation should be conducted. The Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Tool (TPAD) outlines that heads of institutions should plan for a continuous observation and assessment of teachers' lessons on a termly basis. This implies that classroom observation of teachers should be carried out at least once per term.

Indeed, the language teacher has to be proficient in all competence specification if he is to be useful to the students. This is because the teacher will invariably teach those specifications at various times during the language course. Ng'ong'ah (2002) looks at the effect of ineffectiveness in which he observed that graduate teachers perform poorly in record keeping probably because they are not keenly supervised. It is thus possible that internal instructional supervisors have not fully paid attention to this construct of frequency probably because they are ignorant of the extent to which it influences teaching effectiveness.

The integrated nature of English subject also calls for close and frequent IIS. This integration poses a great challenge to the teacher particularly during pre- service or to the newly posted teacher. This is because the idea of integrating English and literature, different methodology as well as bringing alive contemporary issues into the classroom appear abstract to such teachers. In such a case, frequent observation is a means available to the supervisor to guide and direct the teacher until such a point when this entire web of integration is solidly engrafted in these teachers teaching.

4. Methodology

4.1. Design

The study used *ex- post- facto*, correlation and descriptive survey.

4.2. Population

Population was 13 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QUASO), 247 principals, 247 HODs and 494 teachers.

4.3. Sample and Sampling

It sampled 13 QUASOs, 74 principals, 74 HODs and 215 teachers purposively.

4.4. Data Collection

Data for this study was collected by use of questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis

5. Results

Frequency of conducting IIS was measured using a 5-point *Likert* scale of weekly, monthly, termly, annually and never. Any mean score that fell between 0-2.49 implied a rare check, 2.5- 3.49 mean scores implied the variable had a fair check, that between 3.5-4.49 indicated there was frequent check while any mean score that fell between 4.5- 5.00 indicated that area of IIS was checked always. This result is presented in Table 2 below.

Area of Check	R	N	Weekly f%	Monthly f%	Termly f%	Annually f%	Never f%	Mean f%
Classroom observation	T	215	-	-	23 10.7	76 35.5	116 53.8	1.57

Table 2: Report of Respondents on Frequency of Conducting Internal Instructional Supervision
Key: T=Teachers

Table 2 shows the results of the report of TOEs, principals and HODs on how frequently they are physically observed teaching in class. Results revealed that none of the teachers was observed weekly nor monthly. Only, 23 (10.7%) of them had been observed termly, 76(35.5%) of them had been observed annually while the majority of them 116

(53.8%) had never been observed in class while teaching. This gave rise to a very low mean score of 1.57. This implies that teachers of English are rarely observed in class while teaching.

The principals and HODs confirm this since 38(51.3%) and 41(56.4%) of them respectively reported that teachers were never observed while teaching. This result is similar to the study by Thembinkosi (2013) and Chenge and Syomwene (2016) in which teachers confirmed that classroom observation of teachers was not frequent and yet the teachers in the study by Thembinkosi (2013) preferred having supervision of instruction at least once or twice per term.

Furthermore, interview schedules with principals revealed that they had varied views concerning their frequency of observing TOEs teaching in class. Their responses ranged from daily, weekly, fortnightly, mid and end of term, once per term, twice per term, often and in other cases they reported that they did not observe teachers teaching in class. They added that this checking was in many cases impromptu, through spot or random check or one to one discussion with TOE. In cases where other persons apart from the principal observed teachers in class, a report would be prepared and it would be handed over to the principal for perusal. The interview guide with the QUASOs confirmed that classroom observations should be conducted term wise.

Generally, this result on frequency of observation of TOE in class is in tandem with those in a study conducted by Thobega (2008) in which only a fifth of the teachers of Agriculture confirmed being observed in class teaching. This result also tallies with those in a study that appeared in the Swedish Journal of Scientific Research (2014) in which all sets of respondents in two different categories of schools reported that it was rare for head teachers to observe them in class. Equally, the study by Usman (2015) established that schools in Nasarama state were not regularly supervised. It is also a sorry state that some TOE are rarely observed in class in while others go through teaching without being physically observed by their internal instructional supervisors. It is thus right to say that in Kakamega County teaching of English is not closely monitored since there is rare check of teachers in the classroom.

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>			<i>Change Statistics</i>
			<i>R Square</i>	<i>f Change</i>	<i>df1 df2</i>	<i>Sig. F Change</i>
.300 ^a	.090	.058	1.094	.090	2.654	7 207 .007

Table 3: Linear Regression of Frequency of Conducting IIS as A Predictor of Teaching Effectiveness

The results generated from the data show:

- Predictors (constant), aspects of IIS
- Dependent variable: Teachers' means scores in 2013 KCSE

Results of table 3 indicate that the frequency of checking the aspects of IIS is a significant predictor ($R^2=0.300$, $F(7, 202)=2.657$, $p=0.007 < 0.05$) of teaching effectiveness in English. Similar to One Way Analysis of Variance results, linear regression ($p=0.007$) is lower than the acceptable confidence level of 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between the frequency of checking of aspects of checking aspects of IIS and the teaching effectiveness in English and .058 that is 6% teaching effectiveness can be predicted from frequency of checking aspects of IIS. This is in tandem with Odo and Udu (2016) that IIS has influence on development of teaching effectiveness. This has an implication that its supervisors should step up its frequency.

The regression model was as in Table 4

<i>Aspect of IIS</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>p Value</i>
Model intercept	2.400	.427	-	.000
Personal visitations to classes	.144	.044	.281	.001
Schemes	-.187	.069	-.195	.068
Lesson plan	.037	.044	.070	.395
Records of work	-.020	.071	-.020	.776
TOE attendance to lessons	-.030	.071	-.032	.672
Students notes	-.065	.053	-.100	.222
Perusal of academic reports	.001	.078	.001	.994

Table 4: The Regression Model of Predicting Teaching Effectiveness in English by Using Frequency of IIS

The results shown in Table 4 reveal that lesson plan, personal visitations to classes and perusal of academic results reports have a weak positive relation with teaching effectiveness, thus are statistically significant with teaching effectiveness in English. This has an implication that these three variables influence teaching effectiveness. Further, of the three aspects only personal visitations to classes show a significant positive relationship with teaching effectiveness ($\beta=.281$, $p=0.001$). This is in line with in Assefa (2016) which established that frequent classroom observation of teachers leads to students getting high grades in exam. Thus, personal visitations by supervisors to classes is the main predictor of teaching effectiveness and as such IIS stake holders need to invest more into it. However, in this County respondents' results revealed that professional documents are checked more frequently than classroom observation is conducted and

yet the later has a positive significance to TE unlike the former. This is the reason why performance of English is barely at average and below average.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that many teachers had not been observed teaching in class and few TOE were observed according to the schedule which is once per term and therefore there is rare observation of TOE in class teaching. With such low frequency not much can be achieved in terms of teaching effectiveness.

7. Recommendations

- Internal instructional supervisors should be sensitized on influence of frequency of conducting classroom observation of teachers of English on teaching effectiveness, especially the principals who have other duties that eat into their time.
- These again, should conduct regular classroom observation of teachers at a frequency of once per term as they are expected to do.
- Classroom observation of teachers should not be solely the responsibility of principals, their deputies and HODs, but rather peer teachers should be brought on board as these are readily available and can thus lead to increase in frequency of these observations.

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