

# Assessing Instructional Supervision as a Tactic for Improving Girls' Academic Performance in Kenya

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**Abstract-** Secondary school heads are assumed to play an important role in influencing student performance within their academic institutions. In Kenya, the school principal is considered to be in charge of guiding both teachers and students toward a common goal. In most cases, principals devise a variety of strategies to assist them in leading their institutions to success, one of which is instructional supervision. However, it has not been determined whether or not instructional supervision influences the performance of girls in Bungoma County secondary schools, which serves as the foundation of this research. The study concentrated on girls-only secondary schools and targeted school principals and Heads of Departments, with a structured questionnaire serving as the primary data collection tool. The findings show that principals' instructional supervision leadership strategy had a positive impact on the girls' academic achievement. The academic achievement of girls in Bungoma County was influenced by performance management practices for curriculum implementation, determinants of effective instructional supervision, and reasons for instructional supervision. Effective policy recommendations should be in place to ensure that there is a well-structured instructional supervision guideline in place to accommodate for frequent practice. Furthermore, more time should be allocated to instructional supervision in order to reap the benefits, which means that school principals should be relieved of some administrative duties and paper work.

**Index Terms-** Academic Performance, Instructional Supervision, Principal Leadership Strategy, Secondary Schools

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education has been a critical component of the global development agenda, critical for any country's economic, political, and social development. According to Offorma (2009), no nation can afford to gamble with its citizens' education because education is the foundation of all aspects of development. According to DFID (2005), education has a significant impact on girls' and women's ability to claim other rights and achieve status in society, such as economic independence and political representation. Academic achievement, which has been a priority in the twenty-first century, has been heavily reliant on principals'

leadership strategies. In Kenya academic achievement in secondary schools is measured by one's performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Over the years the girls' academic achievement has continued to be at low level as compared to the boys' achievement. The worst hit year was in 2009 when no single girl appeared among the top 10 students nationwide terming 2009 as "a year of boys". This low achievement of girls as compared to boys has in the recent led to the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services (KUCCPS) being forced to lower the entry point of girls with a point or two less than their counterparts into various universities for the purpose of adopting an affirmative action policy (Daily Nation, 2020).

Since independence, the government has invested heavily in the education sector, necessitating accountability from educational institutions and their teaching staff. In today's accountability era, there are changing expectations for principals to guide their staff in raising the quality of academic achievement to higher standards. School principals have devised a variety of strategies to raise academic standards. The problems with girls' academic achievement have been exacerbated by poor time management, unclear goals, and uncoordinated instructional supervision, which has exposed girls to various dangers such as girl-boy relationships and early pregnancies, which have a negative impact on their study habits. Engaging in principal leadership strategies, such as instructional supervision, is one of the many ways to improve higher academic achievement in secondary schools. Instructional supervision is a formative, supportive, and developmental process that aims to improve the procedure of guiding, encouraging, directing, and motivating teachers in order to improve their output (Agila, 2015). Also, supervision is an administrative activity that encourages teachers to improve their pedagogical effectiveness and productivity. From the perspective of the subordinates, the supervisor is critical to the organization because it is through him that instructions are given and information, guidance, and advice is sought or channeled.

Unsupervised instruction may act as a deterrent to higher academic achievement, whereas instructional supervision aims to leverage the point for instructional improvement, teacher

competence, and educational system efficiency. As a result, principals must serve as catalysts, facilitating the implementation of various sets of instructional activities aimed at creating an effective, viable, vibrant, and qualitative educational system that will improve the teaching-learning situation. The Teachers Service Commission- Kenya (TSC) defines a principal as an instructional leader whose responsibilities include establishing clear goals, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources, and regularly evaluating teachers in order to promote learners' learning and growth (TSC-Kenya, 2019). This is carried out through an improvised performance management system, which is a systematic process that involves teachers as individuals and as members of staff in improving institutional effectiveness in meeting set goals. This is done through the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Tool (TPAD) which allows an individual teacher to appraise himself/herself according to the school's set standards through the provision of evidence prior to being appraised by the institutional appraiser. Self-evaluation is essential in meeting set goals because it allows the principal to identify performance gaps / shortfalls in the teacher's ability to effectively deliver and master subject content.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Farah (2013), a perfect leader does not impose hard orders on their employees, but rather monitors and advises them, and their employees are always delightful. Effective principals give instructions and directions to students and invite them to participate in educational activities. Commuting, training and coaching, carrying out induction and orientation, preparing action plan, ensuring work flow planning and control, conducting performance appraisal, making decision, managing time, meeting performance standards, custody of staff rules, holding meetings/briefing, and motivating are some of the roles of a supervisor highlighted by Sagimo (2011).

Instructional supervision is required to ensure that each individual teacher within the school system is performing duties for which he/she is scheduled, as well as to improve teachers' effectiveness so that they can contribute meaningfully to the system's goal (Agila, 2015). To carry out instructional supervision of teachers, the principal employs a performance management system, which is a systematic process that involves teachers as individuals and as members of staff in improving institutional effectiveness in meeting set goals. TSC-Kenya (2019) defines performance management as an ongoing process of communication between a supervisor and an employee that takes place throughout the year in support of the organization's strategic objectives. KEMI (2014) provides a list of tools to assist teachers in curriculum implementation. The syllabus, schemes of work, lesson plan, work records, and timetable are examples of these.

Because newly hired teachers have no prior teaching experience, they require an induction program. A number of teachers leave the profession during their first years of teaching, necessitating the need to re-employ them. TSC has taken great care to ensure that newly hired teachers are equipped with the necessary skills at the start of their careers to help them meet the standards of measurement required in their profession. Previous research (Fekadu, 2019; Hou *et al.*, 2019; Mbezi, 2016; Muasa *et*

*al.*, 2021; Oguta *et al.*, 2019) has shown that instructional leadership has a positive impact on students' academic achievement in high schools. According to Hou *et al.* (2019), instructional leadership had a moderate influence on students' academic achievement. Usman (2018) discovered that in secondary schools, regular instructional supervision using robust supervision strategies such as classroom visitation/inspection by school administrators; continuous checking of students' notebooks, teachers' lesson plans, and inspection of teachers' record keeping had a significant positive relationship with teachers' performance and students' academic achievement.

Public relations, managing instruction, promoting teacher development, and defining/setting school goals and mission are some of the instructional leadership strategies used by principals (Hou *et al.*, 2019) Noted also is checking teachers' notes, classroom visits, checking on teachers' lesson punctuality and attendance, moderation of examinations and marking schemes (Atanda and Jaiyeoba). However, according to Kamotho (2019), most principals do not make regular classroom visits to ensure teacher content delivery, do not provide teaching and learning resources, and are not interested in ensuring that teachers prepare professional documents. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that they follow up with their teachers to ensure that their students have a positive learning environment. Majority of the studies reviewed indicated that principals effectively use instructional supervision tactics by orienting new teaching staff, supervising curriculum covered by teachers, timetabling, checking teachers' work plans and notes (Hou *et al.*, 2019, Samoei, 2015), and monitoring their students' academic progress (Atanda & Jaiyeoba, 2011; Usman, 2018). Principals have faced challenges in their efforts to improve performance, including inadequate funds, a high teacher turnover rate, insufficient staffing, and interrelationships between students and teachers.

## III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study targeted girls' secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study's primary respondents were school principals and Heads of Departments (HODs) The study sought to ascertain teachers' perceptions of their principals' directive leadership practices in terms of instructional supervision. Data on various aspects, themes, and indicators was gathered through questionnaires distributed to principals and HODs. Specific statements were used, and respondents were asked to rate them on a 5-point Likert scale. The mean and standard deviation from descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Demographic characteristics of respondents

According to the findings in Table 1, all of the principals interviewed were female. This is because the study was conducted in public secondary schools for girls only. Girls' only public schools are typically led by female principals who are thought to be well-versed in issues concerning girls and thus in a position to handle them in the best way possible. It is also possible for them

to freely mingle with girls, discover their talents in various areas, and nurture them to achieve their full potential. In the study, 36 (47.4%) of the HODs were male, while 40 (52.6%) were female. As a result, there were slightly more female HODs in the sampled schools than male colleagues. In the study, the percentage difference between HODs by gender was minimal. Section 55 (3) begins in PART V of the CORT, on Recruitment, Appointment, Assignment, Deployment, and Other Conditions for Teachers: A teacher recruited by the commission may be deployed to serve in any part of the country based on the teaching service requirement (TSC-Kenya, 2015). The minor difference reflects the TSC mandate of deploying teachers to any institution without regard for gender. This slight gender difference in HODs provides a good sense of touch for both the presents of a father figure and a mother figure, which is quite motivating for the students.

According to the academic qualifications of the respondents, 10 (11%) had a diploma level of education, 46 (49%) had a bachelor's degree level of education, 33 (36%) had a postgraduate diploma level of education, and 4 (4%) had a master's degree level of education. According to the findings, all of the principals and HODS who took part in this study are qualified to

teach in public secondary schools. Furthermore, the results show that a significant number of teachers have advanced their level of education by completing postgraduate degree programs and master's degrees. As a result, these teachers have acquired the skills and professional knowledge required to fully comprehend leadership strategies. This enabled them to effectively discharge teaching responsibilities and supervise curriculum implementation, resulting in reliable responses. In terms of years of teaching experience, 7 (7%) respondents had taught for 0 to 5 years, 45 (48%) had taught for 6 to 10 years, 13 (14%) had taught for 11 to 15 years, and 29(31%) had taught for more than 15 years. The majority of HODs and principals had more than 6 years of teaching experience. This implies that they had risen through the ranks to the level of administrators and were therefore familiar with principals' leadership strategies. In terms of teaching subjects, 38(41%) teachers were drawn from the Humanities department, 30(32%) teachers from the Language department, 14(15%) teachers from the Sciences department, and 11(12%) teachers from the Business and technical department. These findings suggest that all departments were represented, implying that the academic department was fully considered.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents**

Respondents	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Principals HODs	Female	17	100
	Male	36	47.4
Academic qualification	Female	40	52.6
	Diploma	10	11
	Bachelor's degree	46	49
	Postgraduate diploma	33	36
Years of experience in teaching	Master's degree	4	4
	0-5 years	7	7
	6-10 years	13	14
	11-15 years	45	48
Teaching subjects	Over 15 years	29	31
	Humanities	38	41
	Language	30	32
	Sciences	14	15
	Business and technical	11	12

Source: Field Data 2022

**Performance Management Practices for implementation of Curriculum.**

On a 5-point scale, principals and HODs were asked to rate their level of agreement with performance management practices for curriculum implementation supervised in school. In this study, a 1 meant strongly disagree, a 2 meant disagree, a 3 meant not sure, a 4 meant agree, and a 5 meant strongly agree. The study's

average mean was 2.5, derived from the minimum mean of 1.00 and the maximum mean of 5.00, respectively. Based on this finding, it was discovered that a majority of performance management practices were observed during instructional supervision in schools, with a mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 0.38. The research findings are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Performance Management Practices**

Performance Management practices supervised in schools Enhancing Academic Achievement	N	mean	Standard deviation	Rank
Staff appraisal/ Filling of TPAD	93	4.56	0.253	AGRE DISAD
Drawing up of lesson observation schedules/ Observing of lessons	93	3.65	0.324	
Drawing of schemes of work for the year	93	3.56	0.365	

Checking of students notes	93	3.54	0.158
Updating of records of work per department	93	3.52	0.452
Maintenance of class attendance register	93	3.25	0.529
Maintenance of students discipline records	93	3.25	0.329
Maintenance of departmental & personal mark books	93	3.21	0.321
Syllabus coverage and punctuality	93	3.12	0.231
Adherence to master timetable & personal class timetable	93	3.01	0.652
New staff orientation	93	2.04	0.541

**Key: 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree**

According to table 2, HODs and principals strongly agreed that staff appraisal/TPAD filling was the most commonly used and effective performance management practice during instructional supervision in schools (mean= 4.56 SD= 0.253). The head of institutions together with the senior management team are directed to develop a calendar of activities for the term to be shared with the teachers in the first staff meeting before the beginning of a term (TSC-Kenya 2019). This indicates the magnitude that is paid to teachers' appraisal by TSC as the main tool for assessment of teachers nationally. The HODs and principals agreed that creating lesson observation schedules/observing lessons was an effective performance management practice in schools (mean= 3.65 SD= 0.324). This contradicts with Samoei (2015), who discovered that principals were not visiting classrooms for lesson coverage observations while attempting to investigate the influence of principals' instructional supervisory roles on students' academic achievement. Findings also indicated that both principals and HODs were in agreement that teachers should prepare lesson plans for the year. (Mean: 3.56, standard deviation: 0.365) This current finding is consistent with Herbert (2017), who discovered that one of the most commonly used modes of supervision for teachers was the checking of work schemes.

Another key agreement on instructional supervision was that during instructional supervision in schools, students' notes were checked (mean= 3.54 SD= 0.158). The current study findings agree with Usman (2018), who discovered that regular instructional supervision using robust supervision strategies such as continuous checking of students' notebooks by school administrators had a significant positive relationship with teachers' performance and students' academic achievement in secondary schools. Updating work records per department was checked as a

practice of improving academic performance during instructional supervision in schools (mean= 3.52 SD= 0.452), which both respondents agreed on. Muasa *et al.* (2021) discovered that professional records had some influence on students' academic performance in KCSE in public secondary schools, which is consistent with the researcher's findings. Ndinza (2015), also found that checking professional documents was necessary to improve student academic achievement. Makuto (2014) disagreed with the researcher's finding that principals in the selected secondary schools checked work records on a regular basis. He noted that this contributed to poor performance (16.7%).

The HODs and principals agreed that the class attendance register was checked during instructional supervision (mean= 3.25 SD= 0.529). The researcher's finding is consistent with Mwangi (2014), who discovered that 58% of principals checked teachers' attendance to their lessons, which improved performance. Herbert (2017) concurs with this research outcome that classroom visits by principals and the keeping of attendance registers for both students and teachers as elements of instructional supervision practices have an impact on students' academic performance. The HODs and principals, on the other hand, disagreed that new staff orientation was practiced during instructional supervision in schools (mean= 2.04SD= 0.541) centrally to Samoei (2015)'s finding that principals typically do new staff orientation.

**Determinants of Effective Instructional Supervision**

On a 5-point scale, principals and HODs were asked to rate the determinants of effective instructional supervision that enhance academic achievement. The findings are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Common determinants of effective instructional supervision**

Common determinants of effective instructional supervision	N	mean	Standard deviation	Rank
<b>Enhanced Academic Achievement</b>				
Achievement of set targets nearly at all levels	93	4.65	0.13	DISAGREE AGREE
Proper students management /disciplined students	93	4.58	0.45	
Attendance to all lessons by students and teachers	93	4.56	0.63	
Free communication between school head and teachers and among teachers	93	3.68	0.23	
Positive student-teacher relationships that promotes peace in school	93	3.26	0.12	
Smooth running of the school routine	93	2.01	0.32	
Controlled movement of students within the school compound	93	1.23	0.63	
Maintenance of school properties	93	1.02	0.52	

**Key: 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree**

The average mean score More than three-quarters of the principals and teachers who were respondents strongly agreed that achievement of set targets nearly at all levels was the best determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 4.65 SD= 0.13). Achievement of targets is quite a relieve to a working team and is an indication that work programmed is well coordinated and supervised. Proper student management / disciplined students was strongly agreed upon as a determinant of effective instructional supervision (mean= 4.58 SD= 0.45). In his research on determinants of instructional supervision, Oghuvbu (2005) found out that proper students' management / disciplined student is a determinant of effective instructional supervision at 83% (3.32) response. Through instructional supervision, all unwanted indiscipline issues are rooted out for the purpose of a peaceful learning environment. Attendance to all lessons by students and teachers was also strongly agreed upon as a determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 4.56 SD= 0.63). It is a requirement in teachers' appraisal program that all lessons should be attended to and any lesson missed should be recovered to enhance coverage of the syllabus at the programmed time. The majority of respondents agreed that free communication between the principal and teachers, as well as among teachers, was a factor in instructional supervision (mean= 3.68 SD= 0.23). The communication indicates a good working relationship within an institution and an indication of team spirit which can contribute to academic achievement. Positive student-teacher relationships that

promote peace in school was also was also rated as a determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 3.26 SD= 0.12). A peaceful atmosphere in most cases may provide a positive working a atmosphere for achievement of set goals.

However, the respondents disagreed that smooth operation of the school routine was a determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 2.01 SD= 0.32). The respondents strongly disagreed that controlled movement of students within the school compound was a determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 1.23 SD= 0.63). The respondents may have felt this is more of early determinants of time management than instructional supervision. Respondents on also strongly disagreed that school property maintenance was a determinant of instructional supervision (mean= 1.02 SD= 0.52). The respondents may have overlooked this indicator and not really connected it a determinant of instruction supervision wile in the real sense where school properties are well maintained it means their usage is supervised.

**Reasons for instruction supervision in schools**

On a 5-point scale, principals and HODs were asked to rate their level of agreement on Reasons for instruction supervision in schools that they felt would enhance academic performance. In this study, 1 meant strongly disagree, a 2 meant disagree, a 3 meant not sure, a 4 meant agree, and a 5 meant strongly agree. The mean score is 2.5 on average. Table 4 summarizes the findings.

**Table 4: Reasons for instruction supervision in schools**

<b>Reasons for instruction supervision in schools</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev</b>
To improve on the effectiveness of the teacher for attainment of set goals	181	4.62	.21
To evaluate / assess educational outcome	181	4.55	.75
Control and coordinate formal and non-formal activities	181	3.56	.54
Assist developing and achieving school goals	181	3.02	.56
To motivate teachers and non- teaching staff	181	2.03	.63

**Key: 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree**

The respondents, principals and HODs, strongly agreed that improving teacher effectiveness for achieving set goals is a reason for instruction supervision in schools (mean= 4.62 SD= 0.21). Teachers' effectiveness both in terms of subject content delivery and classroom control is relevant in academic achievement. The respondents also strongly agreed that evaluating / assessing educational outcomes is a reason for school-based instruction supervision (mean= 4.55 SD= 0.75). The outcome of any program put in place should be positive and that is why much resources are channeled to instructional supervision otherwise it would all be a waste of time.

The majority of respondents (mean= 3.56 SD= 0.54) agreed that controlling and coordinating formal and non-formal activities is a reason for instruction supervision in schools. Given the number of activities that take place in institutions, it follows that supervision of these varied activities has to take place so that some of the activities are not downplayed. The respondents also agreed that one reason for instruction supervision in schools is to assist in the development and achievement of school goals (mean= 3.02

SD= 0.56). Respondents however disagreed that motivating teachers and non-teaching staff is a reason for school instruction supervision (mean= 2.03 SD= 0.63). The respondents may have all the above indicators contribute to teacher motivation hence the low score.

**Spearman Correlation of Instructional Supervision and Girls' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools.**

Spearman correlation analysis was used to determine if there was a relationship between instructional supervision and the academic achievement of girls in secondary schools. A correlation is a number between -1 and +1 that indicates how closely two variables are related. Correlation coefficient values (r) ranging from 0.10 to 0.29 are considered weak, 0.30 to 0.49 are considered medium, and 0.50 to 1.0 are considered strong. As a result, a positive correlation value implies a positive relationship, whereas a negative correlation value implies an inverse or negative association. Table 5 summarizes the study's findings.

**Table 5: Spearman Correlation of Instructional Supervision and the Girls’ Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools**

	1	2	3	4
1. Girls’ academic achievement in Spearman Correlation secondary schools.	1	.659**	.545**	.758**
		Sig.	.042	.008
2. Performance management practices Spearman Correlation during instructional supervision in schools	.659**	1	.652*	.752**
		Sig.	.042	.000
3. Determinants of effective instructional Spearman Correlation supervision	.545**	.652*	1	.459**
		Sig.	.008	.000
4. Reasons for instruction supervision in Spearman Correlation schools	.758**	.752**	.459**	1
		Sig.	.000	.000

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**\***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Based on this correlation matrix in Table 4, there exists a correlation between the instructional supervision and the girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools. The correlations were between 0.545 to 0.758 and p-value<0.001. Therefore, instructional supervision would likely enhance the girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools.

The Spearman correlation index obtained on the relationship of performance management practices during instructional supervision and girls’ academic achievement in secondary schools is  $r=0.659$ , which was found to be positive with  $p\text{-value} = 0.042$  which is less than  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The second variable determinants of effective instructional supervision also correlated with girls’ academic achievement ( $r=0.545, =0.008$ ) at  $\alpha= 0.05$ ). This research finding agree with Mbezi (2016) whose finding revealed that effective instructional supervision indeed enhances both teaching and learning which significantly enables students to perform well in their examinations. The third variable ‘Reasons for instruction supervision in schools’ correlated with girls’ academic achievement ( $r=0.758, p<0.0001$ ) at  $\alpha= 0.05$ ).

#### V. CONCLUSION

The goal of this study was to look into instructional supervision as a strategy for improving girls’ academic performance in Kenya. Instructional supervision is one of the various leadership strategies devised by secondary school principals in Kenya with the goal of improving performance. Among the tactics used is timely programming of the teachers’ appraisal calendar, checking of teachers’ and students’ notes, following up on lesson plans, orienting new teaching staff, and setting class and school goals to guide the school to success. Thus, instructional supervision is crucial not only for ensuring excellent academic achievement, but also for ensuring that the school principal manages the school with a clear strategy. Instructional supervision leadership strategy of the principals had a positive impact on the academic achievements of the girls. The academic achievement of girls in Bungoma County was influenced by curriculum implementation performance management practices,

determinants of effective instructional supervision, and reasons for instructional supervision. Effective principals’ instructional leadership strategies could therefore help girls perform better in the KCSE.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve girls’ academic performance through the integration of instructional supervision by school principals/heads, the government must devote more time to instructional supervision through the TSC. Because the strategy necessitates a significant amount of time to reap its benefits, school principals’ class and some of the administrative responsibilities can be reduced to allow them to focus solely on instruction supervision as a strategy of improving academic performance. Additionally, since it is critical that school principals undertake instructional supervision in their academic institutions, education stakeholders must develop an effective and well-structured instructional supervision guideline that school heads across the country will use in their supervisory role. This will ensure a good competitive and benchmarking environment for schools, allowing them to learn what makes other schools perform better.

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#### Declaration of interest statement

The authors declare no competing interest.

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