

# HEAD TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate head teachers instructional leadership practices employed on improving academic performance of students in Morogoro Municipality. The study used mixed research approach. The sample size of this study was 115 respondents that include 105 ordinary teachers, 7 head of schools, 1 DEO and 2 WEO. Simple random sampling techniques and purposive random sampling techniques were used in selection of ordinary teachers and head of schools, DEO, WEO respectively. Data were collected by questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary reviews methods. Quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analysed through content analysis. The study found that head teacher's instructional supervision activities that head-teachers did perform in the schools were budget resource allocations, observing classroom teaching and assessment procedures, ensuring teachers attending classes and developing and communicating schools goals. The study recommends that, head teachers need to be encouraged by their supervisors to allocate more time for head teachers instructional supervision practices, head teachers need to organize in-service training or staff development programs that will help teachers to develop and acquire skills necessary to improve their teaching and learning, and different committees should be organized as to solve various challenges that schools face.

**Keywords:** *Instructional leadership practices and Academic Performance*

## **1. Introduction**

The significance of education today is greater than ever before in the development of any nation. It is a fact that no society can develop without quality education. The entry point to a developed society is education; hence education is a precious tool for our development. It is at school where the students acquire knowledge and skills to lead a full, meaningful and productive future (Ayeni, 2012)

School administrations have a big role to play in supervision and provision of the desired leadership for achievement of quality education. This implies that quality education cannot be achieved without the input of the schools administration; the debate about the instructional leadership practices on improving academic performance of students' domain for some time now (Oandah, 2008).

Fayol (1949) argues that school administration functions are to organize, plan, command, coordinate and control. The head teacher therefore wants things to be right. In this scope therefore, planning is the responsibility of school administration and it involves forecasting and preparing to meet the future. Commanding is the directing and structuring of subordinates' tasks based on authority and the level of the manager in the organization's hierarchy. Like command, coordination is an essential aspect of the control process and is closely related to the formulating authority structure of the organization.

Viewed as the most important function of all coordination, according to Fayol (1949), is the means through which an organization and its managers achieve goals. Also coordination gives the hierarchical form to organizations like schools. Through control, head teachers can check the actual performance of subordinates against organization rules, regulations and standards. Knowledge about the presence of these managerial functions created a motive for the researcher to conduct deeper exploration in the schools that have been earmarked in this study. In the light of this perspective, a school is always a reflection of what the head teacher or school manager perform, the personal and organizational effectiveness is proportionate to the strength of leadership in any given organization (Burns, 1978).

The academic performance of many educational institutions is influenced by the capacity of the administration and management team in the workplace. According to Ayeni (2010) the study in Nigeria, Baldoni (2003) and Sushila (2004) in Nairobi low expectations for student achievement permeate educational systems, rather than setting high standards and believing students can meet them, teachers and administrators in many developing countries expect up to half the students will drop or fail. Schools committed to student learning communicate expectations clearly, give frequent and challenging assignments, monitor performance regularly, and give students the chance to participate in and take responsibility for diverse school activities.

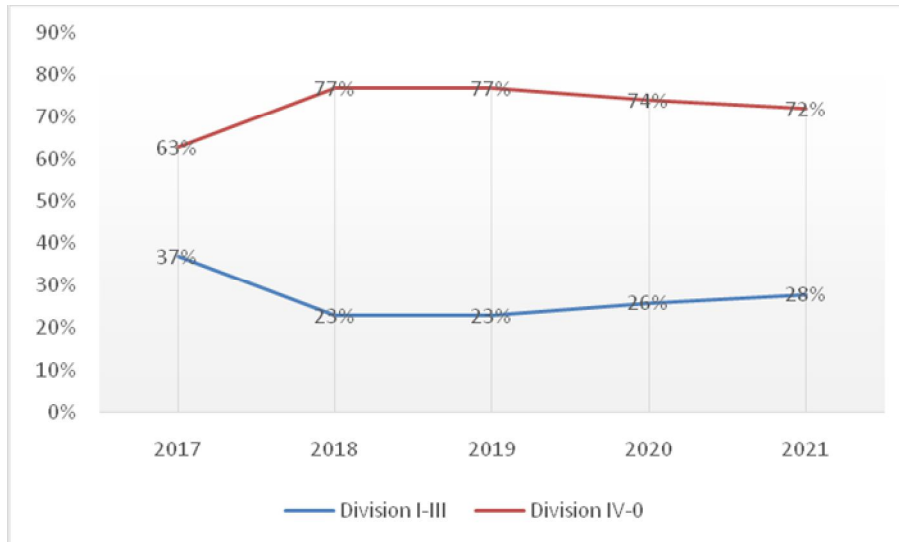
Mobegi, Ondigi and Oburu (2010) in Kenya, shows that, head teachers should take up their roles as quality assurance officers in their schools and ensure that there is adequate departmental supervision. They should introduce staff appraisal through locally designed

forms to enhance standards and engage in evaluative class observation to ensure that a variety of teaching methods apart from class discussion is utilized. Head teachers should devise school income generating activities to alleviate current financial problems that result in student absenteeism, transfers, indiscipline and inadequate facilities. They should frequently invite quality assurance officers to advice on school affairs and community relations.

The quest for improved academic performance of students necessitated the ability of schools administration to demonstrate or use certain instructional leadership practices to ensure a complete well-round education and production of quality students from the secondary school system. The government, parents, and other stake holders in education expect school heads to work effectively for the enhancement of students' academic performance (Lydia & Nasongo, 2009). Although school heads have been providing leadership in the school system to some extent, but some instructional leadership practices that could lead to the achievement of school objectives perhaps have not been provided by many school heads (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). There is a growing concern of the society about the realization of secondary education objectives perhaps due to the observation that some schools heads could not have been using some instructional leadership practices that could facilitate better performance of students in public examinations. Findings from literatures such as Ayeni (2010); Baldoni (2003); Sushila (2004); Lydia & Nasongo (2009); Ayeni and Akinfolarin (2014) revealed that students' academic performance is being affected by many problems.

By implication, there is a greater challenge to head teachers because of existing gaps and inadequacies in their leadership and supervisory duties (Lydia & Nasongo, 2009). From the researchers' point of view, school administrations should demonstrate certain strategies to move the schools forward because of the numerous problems the schools are now facing which are too complex and too big for a school heads to cope with. Baldoni (2003) noted that we live in a rapidly changing world in which the pace of change is likely to increase. What we teach, what we learn and how we deliver and manage the process cannot be immune from change.

From the growing body of literatures from researchers and educationalists which have made an attempt to examine the relationship between education instructional leadership practices and students' academic performance like the works mentioned above (Orodho, 2014; UNESCO, 1999; United Nations, 2013; Waweru & Orodho, 2014). The results reveal rather spurious relationship (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). The poor performance of students in examination could be largely attributed to poor instructional leadership practices by school administrations. The National Examination Result of Morogoro municipality for the year 2017 to 2018 showed that the performance of students for Division I-III in final examination has declined consecutively from 37% to 23% while from 2019, 2020 and 2021 has been in increasing trend from 23%, 26% and 28% respectively as indicated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1 Morogoro Municipality National Performance Trend (2017 to 2021)**  
**Source: Morogoro Municipal Council (2022)**

Despite of the fact that the Government provide fee free education with required needs for schools since 2016, the form four secondary school national examination results especially in Morogoro municipality are not convincing. This creates the need to conduct more studies at low levels as public secondary schools seem to lack proper strategies on accomplishing their targets for improving academic performance. Therefore because little is known, this study aim to fill this knowledge gap by assessing to what extent do planed instructional leadership practices formulated and used by heads of schools in Morogoro municipality are helpfully on improving students’ academic performance.

### 1.1 Theoretical Literature Reviews

A theory is a set of statements or principles devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, especially one that has been repeatedly tested and can be used to make predictions (Kambuga & Iramba, 2011). This study was guided by Theory X and Theory Y of motivation and Management. These theories were created by Douglas McGregor while he was working at the MIT Sloan School of Management in the 1950s, and developed further in the 1960s.

According to Theory X, supervisors will treat their employees depending on what they think motivates them to work (McGregor, 1960). The Theory X supervisor, for example, assumes that his employee dislike work, lack motivation and responsibility, and will always try to avoid it. As a result, workers need to be closely supervised if they are to effectively perform the desired roles. Theory X therefore demands that Head teachers supervise instruction, lack of which leads to inefficiency in the performance of teaching roles.

Theory Y supervisors, according to McGregor assume that employee naturally like to work without being forced to do so. They are self-motivated and are willing to take responsibility of what they are doing and therefore, there is no need to closely supervise

employees. Theory Y encourages Head teachers to use an inclusive style of management where every teacher is involved in decision making to motivate them. The study therefore assumed that Head teachers of secondary schools supervise instruction depending on what they think about their teachers. For example, in schools where Head teachers feel their teachers are unmotivated, lazy and do not like to work, close supervision and monitoring of teaching takes place. If Head teachers think their teachers love to work and find pride in taking responsibility in what they are doing, limited supervision takes place. Realizing effective teaching in schools would therefore depend on the level of supervision that takes place as determined by the character of teachers one is dealing with.

This theory therefore suggests that for workers to perform their responsibilities, punishments, force, or threatening conditions must be used. Theory Y on the other hand believes that people are naturally not resistant or passive to the goals of the organization; rather they have the ability for assuming responsibilities, and exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives of the organization (Robbins, 2005). Thus, the attitude of any school manager on how he or she views people under them have an impact on how those workers perform their responsibilities for achievement of their organizational goals.

## 2. Research Methodology

This section presents the methodology that guided the study. This study was carried out in Morogoro Municipality. The study employed descriptive survey research design and a mixed research approach. The sample size of this study was 115 respondents that include 105 ordinary teachers, 7 head of schools, 1 DEO and 2 WEO. Simple random sampling techniques and purposive random sampling techniques were used in selection of ordinary teachers and head of schools, DEO, WEO respectively. Data were collected by questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary reviews methods. Quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive statistics while qualitative data were analysed through content analysis.

## 3. Findings and Discussions

This section focuses on presenting results on head teachers' instructional leadership practices that enhance students' academic performance in urban secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Table 1 presents the study results.

**Table 1 Head Teachers' Instructional Leadership Practices that enhance students' academic performance**

Variable(s)	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Disagree Agree	
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Availability and Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Resources	11	10.5	17	16.2	50	47.6	27	25.7
Develop and Communicate School Goals	22	21	38	36.2	27	27.1	18	17.1

Teachers' Attendance in Classes	23	21.9	40	38.1	23	21.9	19	18.1
Budgeted Resource Allocations	31	29.5	48	45.7	11	10.5	15	14.3
Inspection of Classroom Teaching and Assessment Procedures	31	29.5	46	43.8	17	16.2	11	10.5

**Source: Field Study, 2022**

### ***3.1 Availability and Adequacy of Teaching and Learning Resources***

The study findings from Table 1 revealed that, 11(10.5%) respondents strongly agreed that in ensuring availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources is one of the head teachers instructional supervision practices by head of schools, 17(16.2%) respondents agreed, 50(47.6%) respondents disagreed and the remaining 27(25.7%) respondents disagreed. These results show that majority of respondents (62.3%) disagreed that head of schools ensure there is availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources.

These results imply that, teaching and learning resources were in adequately supplied in secondary schools as a result the number of users of teaching and learning resources is larger than the available teaching and learning resources in schools. These results indicate that head of schools in secondary schools suffered greatly in searching for important information in the teaching and learning process. Despite of head of schools having responsibility of supervising the provision of teaching and learning resources, it was a challenging matter for them to supervise the provision of adequate books.

These findings are in line with a study by NGO Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) as cited by Mlewa (2013) that capitation grant governance is undermined by erratic disbursement a practice that makes schools face acute shortages of basic supplies, including stationeries. This forces teachers to borrow for textbooks, chalks and there educational materials the best way they can simply get along. Furthermore, Hakielimu (2012) observed that textbooks and other teaching materials are scarce and secondary schools face significant deficiencies in science laboratories and materials, leaving science subjects to be taught theoretically rather than with a practical, hands-on lab component.

### ***3.2 Develop and Communicate School Goals***

Table 1 above reveals that, about 22(21%) respondents strongly agreed that, developing and communicating school goals is one of the head teachers instructional supervision practices by head of schools, 38(36.2%) respondents agreed, 27(27.1%) respondents disagreed and the remaining 18(17.3%) respondents disagreed. These results show that about (57.2%) agreed that head of schools develop and communicate schools goals. The results imply that, heads of schools develop and communicate a school goal which promotes high standards and high expectation for all students. Examples of such school goals include increasing academic achievements, to construct libraries and laboratories and increase number of classes. School goals are developed by School Management Team

which includes head of school, vice head of school, academic teacher, and discipline teacher in collaboration with School Board. These practices are mostly practised by heads of schools since such practices are among of management roles. This plays important roles in enabling teachers, parents and students to have direction on what is supposed to be achieved. These findings were supported by head of school in an interview who revealed that:-

*.... I usually sit with my School Management Team members in collaboration with School Board and plan what we need to achieve. Then we communicate what we plan to teachers through staff meetings, also we display or in the notes board for student to read although we communicate to them even during school “baraza”....*

### **3.3 Teachers’ Attendance in Classes**

Table 1 above shows that, about 23(21.9%) respondents ensuring teachers’ attendance in classes is one of the head teachers instructional supervision practices by head of schools; 38(36.2%) respondents agreed, 27(27.1%) respondents disagreed and the remaining 18(17.3%) respondents disagreed. These results meant that heads of schools ensure that teachers attend classes effectively with efficiency.

Majority of heads of schools heads ensures instruction time is not interrupted by teachers attending classes. This is done through walking around classes during teaching and learning time to ensure teachers attend their periods according to the time table. This plays important role in controlling teachers’ routine and acute maximization of the output (student academic performance). These findings were supported by head of school in an interview who revealed that:-

*I supervise teaching and learning process by walking around the school to see if teachers attend their periods. I usually make sure school time table is respected and full field.*

These findings concur with study by Theory X of McGregor (1960) which proposes that, a typical worker has little ambition, avoids responsibility, and is individual goal oriented. In such situation, managers are likely to use rewards or punishment as motivation.

### **3.4 Budgeted Resource Allocations**

It was found that 31(29.5%) respondents strongly agreed that budgeted resource allocations is one of the head teachers instructional supervision practices by head of schools, 48(45.7%) respondents agreed, 11(10.5%) respondents disagreed and the remaining 15(14.3%) respondents disagreed. These results show that majority of respondents (75.2%) agreed that head of schools conduct budgeted resource allocations. These results imply that, it is the duty of the head teachers to do budgeting so that they are able to implement strategic choices. Evaluate the success of the strategic process as an input for future when decision making. Heads of schools must evaluate all the strategic processes that they put in place. By keeping proper records and write reports concerning all the activities in schools as a proper way of evaluating success as well as help in future decision making.

These findings concur with a study by Brent and Hall (2017) who investigated charter school strategies for teacher management and resources acquisition in Colombia. One of strategies used to acquire additional resources beyond the government provision is budget prioritization to acquire more staff and extra funds to facilitate extra-curricular activities for students such as school bands and dance clubs.

### ***3.5 Inspection of Classroom Teaching and Assessment Procedures***

Table 1 reveals that, about 31(29.5%) respondents strongly agreed that, inspection of classroom teaching and assessment procedures is one of the head teachers instructional supervision practices by head of schools, 48(45.7%) respondents agreed, 11(10.5%) respondents disagreed and the remaining 15(14.3%) respondents disagreed. These results show that majority of respondents (73.3%) agreed that head of schools do inspect of classroom teaching and assessment procedures. The study results imply, heads of schools inspect classroom teaching and assessment procedures that as to observe if teachers are teaching and the children are learning, which necessitates considerable time and effort that could easily conflict with teaching a classroom or a combined classroom of students. For example, the supervisory role requires witnessing the manner in which the teachers are delivering their lessons and the ways in which the children are responding to the lessons. This endeavour is coupled with an examination of the contents of the students' exercise books, with the intent of gleaning information that could be used to provide the teachers with specific information regarding the levels of success of the students with their lessons. This plays important roles maintaining a steady focus on students' learning, progress and welfare.

Furthermore, these activities are keys to ensuring teachers' personal and professional development, increasing their performance and improving the quality of education. These finding concur with Theory X of McGregor (1960) that relies on the authoritarian style of management, where the managers are required to give instruction and keep a close check on each employee. As it is assumed, the employees are not motivated, and they dislike working.

## **4. Conclusion**

Schools are under increased scrutiny to educate all students to high levels of achievement. Head teachers are under extreme pressure to raise student academic performance. Basing on study findings head teachers of selected public schools had succeeded in fostering academic press by practising head teachers instructional supervision practices like budgeted resource allocations, classroom teaching and assessment procedures, and ensuring teachers attending classes and developing and communicating schools goals. Therefore, adhering of head teachers instructional supervision practices has positive effect on public secondary school academic performance and as results the academic performance has been in increasing trend from 2018 to 2021 as indicated in appendix IV though at a small rate.

The study recommends that, head teachers need to be encouraged by their supervisors to allocate more time for head teachers instructional supervision practices, head teachers need

to be adequately motivated by the Government in the form of remuneration, rewards and other incentives to provide head teachers instructional supervision practices in the public secondary schools, Government should develop a policy that will require heads teachers to allocate adequate time for instructional leadership activities, and Government should set up a leadership institute that is responsible for training newly appointed head teachers on head teachers instructional supervision practices so as to enhance their awareness and competence to effectively carry out the supervisory exercise.

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