

**ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN LUNGALUNGA SUB – COUNTY IN KWALE COUNTY, KENYA.**

**ABSTRACT**

Studies indicate, students' academic achievement is dependent on effective management strategies. As a result, the school principal has a vital position within the school to create a learning environment. Academic achievement at public secondary schools in Lungalunga has been unsatisfactory over the years, raising doubts about principal management strategies on students' academic achievements. This study therefore attempted to assess the influence of principals' management strategies on students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in Lungalunga sub – county in Kwale County, Kenya. The objective of the research was to assess principals' management strategies of instructional supervision on students' academic achievements. Management theory and theory of academic performance guided the research. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Data was gathered using questionnaires and interviews. The findings of the study revealed a critical concern regarding principal's supervision practices was realized with the biggest percentage of respondents expressing huge dissatisfaction. The study concluded that there was a pressing need for comprehensive reforms in instructional supervision to bridge the existing gaps and enhance students' academic achievements. By aligning management strategies with the study's objective, schools can create a conducive atmosphere where students thrive, educators excel, and stakeholders actively contribute to the educational journey, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education in the region.

**Key words** principal, management strategies, student, academic achievements

**1. Introduction**

Education remains both investment and instrument which can be customized to accelerate the country's economic, social, political, technical, science and cultural growth (Asikhia, 2010). Hence, secondary education is very important for national and individual growth. Principal remains to be a powerful educational manager in each school, and his/her management strategies are inextricably linked to students' academic achievements.

Globally, productive school principals have been found to build school environments and communities that help to empower both students and teachers to create effective learning environments that are more favorable for higher students' academic achievements. In addition, school principal is mandated by the general authorities in most school systems to strengthen learner knowledge and is kept responsible through making commitments in establishing common goals.

A responsive concern has been the worldwide academic output of national exams. This is because the nationalized analysis predicts the ability and the direction to be taken by the person. The basis of each nation's national examination is the national curriculum and set material. Poor

academic achievement among students is a common problem that affects parents, governments and stakeholders.

The World Bank (2008) argues that the retention and quality of education rest on mainly on how learning institutions are managed, above plenty accessible learning resources. Ability of learning institutions to improve outcomes remains subjective to value of management delivered through the principal. Concerned initiatives to strengthen school management is one of the utmost hopeful arenas of action to enhance the retention, excellence students' academic achievement of secondary education over Sub-Saharan Africa.

UNICEF (2000) in Latin America carried research involving 50,000 pupils in grades three and four, the study established that pupils whose schools were short of classroom materials and deficient library continued to display poor academic results and grade repetition compared to those whose schools were well furnished . Well run schools contribute to the standard of education and increase retention (Graig&duParisis, 1998).

In Sri Lanka school principals are increasingly held accountable for the quality of learning outcomes of schools, resource mobilization, and resource management, school quality monitoring and associated staff development programmes (Lekarage, 2010). In order to fulfill these responsibilities they work collaboratively and effectively with students, school management committees, teachers and school communities. The school principal is therefore expected to be a strong instructional leader, and team player.

Regionally, In Hamza, Lucky and Joarder (2014), postulates there is a substantial link regarding determining notes of learners, lesson observation, knowledge of teachers, attendance and examination administration procedures and attainment of learners in high schools in Ondo State in Nigeria. Hamza et al (2014) in the same zone recommends that there be a need for frequent supervision of teachers in order to have successful academic results, including class visitation and inspection.

According to Zame, Hope and Respress (2008) in their study about education reform in Ghana, they reveal that leadership is key and the head teacher has a vital role in an effective school and student achievement. They further suggest that attention be paid on the head teachers' leadership styles in the school.

Guinea and Indian observations indicated that teachers who are ill-trained in instructional methods and evaluation techniques are unable to gauge individual learning needs of the students and consequently could not produce the desired enhanced academic performance of the students (Carron & Chau, 2006).

According to research carried out in Botswana secondary schools on instructional supervision by Moswela (2010), the environment in which instructional supervision takes place in schools is rather hostile and intimidating to teachers to make any meaningful, impression on the improvement of teaching standards this positively impacts the students achievements

As stated by Kenya Education Commission report (1964); secondary education acts like foundation for tertiary education besides opening chances for employment. Education is comprehended as influential weapon that transpires economic, social and political advancement. Knowledge attained through education prepares learners with the right abilities, experience and understanding of the realm they are in.

According to Muya (2015), the education system of Kenya is biased towards assessment, since the academic achievement of any learning institution is determined by the worthiness of the results in national examinations. According to The Daily Nation as reported by Muya (2015), it was revealed that government academic evaluations have become a “do or die” issue in Kenya since we are living in an examination-based community. The learning institutions have been evaluated based on learners’ academic achievement in the national examinations. The differences in the management of the learning institutions and the managerial approaches of the school heads are some of the key factors which are responsible for this outcome. As a result, Principals as administrators cannot disconnect from the success of schools in the Kenya Secondary Education Certificate. The school principal is believed to ensure that learners become active members of society through better academic achievement (Heck, 2009).

Mutua (2011) did a study in Machakos County; he noted good number of teachers had benefited skillfully from instructional supervision of the Principal. Consequently, they testified that academic achievements of students in their subject had increased; their classroom teaching had enhanced besides feeling inspired.

Sobe (2013) examines the motivational practices of principals in Kuria West and their effect on teacher performance. The study identified motivational practices such as recognition of teachers’ efforts through material incentives, tours and oral praises. The study also identified motivational practices such as sharing of co-curricular activities and sharing of responsibilities like those of guidance and counselling.

In Mombasa County, Mwatsuma, Mulambe, Mrope, & Cherutich (2012) interrogate the role of leadership in primary schools performance. The study findings show that effectiveness of principals in monitoring the staff has a significant correlation with the mean score of the school. The fact that there is an improved school mean score demonstrates that in one way or another, student performance is influenced by monitoring practices of the principals. Staff monitoring entails, the attendance of classes by the teachers as well as their teaching methodologies.

As Lydiah and Nasongo (2009) observed, "academic achievement of students depends on effective management," the school principal therefore inhabits premeditated role in the school to create atmosphere which is favorable for learning process. Meanwhile learning dwells in school, therefore the quality of education is highly influenced by the management strategies used by the head of the school and inhabit a substantial part in shaping students’ academic achievements.

Many a times, when the KCSE results are released by the ministry of education, numerous news come out trying to applause principals that their schools did well and on the other hand trying to criticize those that performed below expectation posing question on the management strategies employed by the principals. In this regard, the study aims to look at the principals’ management strategies on students’ academic achievements in public secondary schools in Lungalunga sub – county in Kwale County, Kenya. According to the Lungalunga sub county education office (2020) report, the sub county has a total of 20 public secondary schools but a keen look at the results indicate that there has been a poor students KCSE performance. This study therefore aims at assessing out whether the principals’ management strategies influence students’ academic achievements in public secondary schools in Lungalunga sub – county in Kwale County, Kenya.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Government of Kenya has made incredible efforts to ensure universal children’s access to free secondary education in public secondary education. It has also ensured effective provision of

academic material and human resources (republic of Kenya, 2000). On the other hand, parents sacrifices resources so that children attend school, with expectation that the children gain competence in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.

Success in producing good results in national examinations is largely determined by the principal management strategies. The principal has the pivotal role of providing suitable management strategies for the school and its wider community. Review of research on the principal’s management strategies in school effectiveness concluded that “strong management strategies was among those factors within a school that make a difference in student academic success” (Poirier, 2009). The principal’s role is a complex one, which includes being accountable to the public, building community relations, motivation, instructional supervision, engaging stakeholders on the affairs of the school, dealing with crises and political issues, overseeing discipline, creating school culture among others. The principal’s unique role in the school is that they have an influence on student achievement (Poirier, 2009).

Marwinga (2010) however, asserts that most of the principals are not well prepared for their present jobs hence do not execute their tasks and roles as expected leading to poor students’ academic achievements.

Reports available from the office of the Kwale County Director of Education (2020) shows while some public secondary school in Kwale County students achieve satisfactory results, in Lungalunga Sub County many students performs below expectations. This can be attested by table 1 below;

**Table 1: Kwale county KCSE results analysis 2018 to 2020**

	Lungalunga sub county	Msambweni sub county	Matuga sub county	Kinango sub county
Year	Student K.C.S.E Mean score			
2018	2.7	3.0	5.1	4.4
2019	3.4	4.0	4.3	3.7
2020	3.6	3.3	4.8	4.3

**Source: Kwale county education office 2020**

The reasons for this poor performance cannot be easily discerned without focused investigation. Poor performance among secondary schools in Lungalunga Sub-county undermines students’ chances of joining institutions of higher learning and jeopardized opportunities for job placement and thus reduces the students’ active participation in national development.

Despite decades of public secondary school effort to improve students’ academic achievements in Lungalunga sub county, it is unclear what influence the principal’s management strategies has on improving students’ academic achievements.

As earlier noted principal play a significant role in determining students’ academic performance in a school due to their varied management strategies such as instructional supervision. It is significant establish the link between the principals’ management strategies and the students’ academic achievements in KCSE in Lungalunga Sub County and propose potential interventions. Therefore this research aimed at assessment of the influence of principal’s management strategies on students’ academic achievements in public secondary schools in Lungalunga sub – county, Kwale County, Kenya.

### 3. Objective of the Study

i. To establish the influence of principal's instructional supervision strategies on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Lungalunga sub-county, Kwale County, Kenya.

#### **4. Research Question**

i. How does principal's instructional supervision strategies influence students' academic achievements?

#### **5. Theoretical Literature Review**

Henry Fayol's management theory guided on this research. Fayol believed in five management principles: plan, organize, command, coordinate, and control. In this study, the primary management job as a planner is to shape the rapport, focus by creating goals, anticipate the academic accomplishment of the school, and then act accordingly. The principal should assist students and teachers in achieving their goals by inspiring them, incorporating them in making decisions in all school programs of their concern, encouraging teachers to prepare professional documents through instructional supervision, and engaging stakeholders in all matters concerning the school's operation. As an organizer, the principal identifies positions and divisions of duties based on specialty. Teachers should be chosen to oversee classrooms based on their particular subject performance rather than by consensus or consultation. Effectively and efficiently coordinate the institution's resources (human, material, and financial) in enhancing students' academic progress. As a commander, the principal should keep the institution's policies and procedures moving through identifying management structure.

The theory was pertinent to this study since it conceptualizes the need for principals to employ various management techniques in order to improve the academic achievements of students. They should offer a supportive environment for learners' academics, social, and emotional development.

#### **6. Research methodology**

Mixed method was used in this study, that is, quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. 20 school deputy principals, 20 BOM chairpersons, 20 parent association chairpersons and 546 secondary school teachers will be study's target population. The researcher sampled 182 respondents using simple random technique, that is, 6 school deputy principals, 6 BOM chairpersons, 6 parent association chairpersons and 164 secondary school teachers'. Data was gathered using questionnaires and interviews. Validity of the instrument was established through piloting of the instruments in Lungalunga sub-county in two secondary schools which were part of the general population although not considered in the sample. Cronbach's Alpha Co-efficient was used to compute reliability of the data. In this study, the credibility of data was determined by analyst triangulation through various specialists. To establish data dependability the researcher conducted external audit. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22) software.

#### **7. Result And Discussions**

Instructional supervision is a critical component of effective school management, aiming to enhance teaching practices and student learning outcomes (Brandon, Hollweck, Donlevy, & Whalen, 2018). According to Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2014), lesson observation allows for a detailed analysis of teaching methods, student participation, and overall instructional

strategies. Additionally, supervisors can identify strengths and areas for development, guiding targeted professional development efforts.

Supervisors play a crucial role in ensuring the quality and appropriateness of teaching and learning materials. By vetting textbooks, workbooks, and digital resources, they can guarantee that teachers have access to relevant and effective materials aligned with the curriculum (Adakai, 2018). Supervisors can also identify supplementary materials that enhance the learning experience for students. TPAD is a comprehensive system that evaluates teachers' performance, focusing on various aspects such as lesson planning, instructional delivery, and student assessment. Supervisors monitor TPAD implementation to assess teachers' adherence to standards and guidelines (Jonyo, 2017). According to DiPaola & Wagner (2018), regular classroom visits by the supervisor, provide an opportunity to directly observe teaching methods, student engagement, and classroom atmosphere. By being physically present in classrooms, supervisors can offer immediate feedback and support to teachers, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

The study's objective was purposed to examine the influence of principal's instructional supervision strategies on students academic achievement. The respondents were provided with two questions, one from which there were optional answers to tick the most common instructional supervision strategy used by their respective principal. The other question was inform on likert scale, as presented below.

**Table 2: Common Instructional Supervision Strategies**

**Common Instructional Supervision Strategies by Principals**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
<b>Regular classroom visits</b>	33	20.1	20.1	20.1
<b>Lesson observation</b>	47	28.7	28.7	48.8
<b>Vetting teaching and learning materials</b>	46	28.0	28.0	76.8
<b>Monitors TPAD</b>	38	23.2	23.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	164	100.0	100.0	

*Source: Primary Data 2023*

Table 2 above reveals that regular classroom visit is the least common among the options provided, with 20.1%. Regular classroom visits are essential for direct teacher observation, but the relatively low percentage suggests that a significant portion of principals might not be engaging in this strategy frequently. There is potential for improvement in ensuring consistent and ongoing classroom interactions to support teachers and enhance teaching practices. Lesson observation is a more frequently utilized strategy, with 28.7% of principals employing it. This method involves systematic evaluation of specific lessons and offers valuable insights into

instructional techniques. Its higher frequency indicates a recognition of the importance of direct lesson evaluation in improving teaching quality and student learning outcomes. The findings indicate that a 28% of the principals engage in vetting teaching and learning materials. This strategy involves ensuring the quality and relevance of educational resources. Given its prevalence, it highlights the emphasis on providing teachers with appropriate materials that align with the curriculum, potentially enhancing instructional effectiveness. Monitoring Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) is employed by 23.2% of principals.

The data suggests a varied adoption of instructional supervision strategies among principals. While lesson observation and vetting teaching materials are relatively more prevalent, regular classroom visits and TPAD monitoring are less commonly utilized. To enhance instructional supervision comprehensively, there is a need for more consistent classroom interactions, emphasizing the importance of direct teacher observation. Additionally, training and resources can be provided to principals to facilitate the implementation of these strategies effectively. A well-rounded approach, encompassing all these strategies, can significantly contribute to improved teaching practices and, consequently, enhanced student learning outcomes in schools. The response provided through the likert scale is as presented below;

**Table 3: Principal’s Instructional Supervision on Students’ Academic Achievement**

**Principal’s Instructional Supervision**

	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Total	Mean					
<b>Principal checks the class time-tables</b>	32	19.5%	37	22.6%	8	4.9%	67	40.9%	20	12.2%	164	2.96
<b>Principal checks the class time-tables</b>	21	12.8%	51	31.1%	11	6.7%	58	35.4%	23	14.0%	164	3.08
<b>The principal checks the professional documents during classroom visitation</b>	16	9.8%	30	18.3%	17	10.4%	77	50%	24	14.6%	164	2.93
<b>Principal observes how the teacher teaches, manages and control the students in the classroom</b>	21	12.8%	28	17.1%	15	9.1%	80	48.7%	20	12.2%	164	2.96
<b>Principal provides and vets suitable teaching and learning materials which are used in teaching</b>	23	14.0%	51	31.1%	10	6.1%	54	32.9%	26	15.9%	164	3.05

<b>The principal monitors TPAD tool to improve teacher performance competencies</b>	23	14.0%	45	27.4%	11	6.7%	62	37.8%	23	14.0%	164	2.90
<b>The principal supervise students when they are doing private studies</b>	17	10.4%	55	33.5%	14	8.5%	56	34.1%	22	13.4%	164	3.07
<b>Principal organizes meetings with teachers after lesson observation</b>	30	18.3%	46	28.0%	8	4.9%	60	36.6%	20	12.2%	164	3.04

Source: Primary Data 2023

The data illustrates that teachers perceive their principal's commitment to checking class timetables quite critically. A substantial 53.1% (D+SD) of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that the majority finds the principal lacking in this aspect. Only 42.1% (A+SA) of teachers reported a positive commitment from the principal in checking class schedules. This clear dissatisfaction suggests a significant gap in the principal's attention to this crucial organizational detail, possibly leading to disruptions in the school day and teacher planning. Principals should address this concern promptly, as maintaining an accurate and reliable class timetable is fundamental to the smooth functioning of the school, ensuring efficient use of instructional time, and supporting effective teaching practices. The feedback provided by teachers regarding their principal's commitment to checking class timetables reveals a mixed response. While 43.9% of respondents (31.1% Agreed, 12.8% Strongly agreed) acknowledge the principal's efforts, a significant portion, 49.8% (35.4% Disagreed, 14% Strongly disagreed), expresses dissatisfaction, indicating that there are concerns and inconsistencies in this area. The mean score of 3.08 suggests a moderate level of dissatisfaction. This data highlights a need for the principal to address the concerns raised by nearly half of the respondents. It is crucial for the principal to enhance their commitment to checking class timetables, ensuring accuracy and consistency, which are fundamental for the smooth functioning of the school. Addressing these concerns can improve overall organizational efficiency and foster a positive school environment, where teachers and students can rely on the consistency of their schedules.

The data indicates a significant dissatisfaction among teachers (64.8%, including 50% strongly disagreeing) regarding their principal's commitment to checking professional documents during classroom visits. Only 28.1% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the principal's dedication in this area. This stark contrast underscores a substantial gap in the principal's supervision approach, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the monitoring process. Principals play a pivotal role in ensuring teachers' professional growth, and their involvement with professional documents is vital for targeted support and development. The overwhelmingly negative feedback emphasizes the urgent need for principals to actively engage with teachers' documentation, fostering a more supportive and accountable supervisory environment that prioritizes teacher development and, ultimately, elevates the overall quality of education in the school.

In terms of observing teachers in action, a significant portion (61.4%, combining 48.7% Disagreed and 12.1% Strongly disagreed) expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that principals might not be actively engaging in classroom observations. This lack of direct involvement raises concerns about the efficacy of this supervisory method in ensuring teaching quality and student management. On the provision and vetting of teaching materials, while 45.0% (A+SA) expressed satisfaction, a notable 48.8% (D+SD) expressed dissatisfaction. This discrepancy suggests a need for improvement in ensuring the suitability and quality of instructional materials, as perceived by the teachers. When it comes to monitoring the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, 62.2% (D+SD) expressed dissatisfaction. This finding highlights a significant gap in the use of this structured approach for teacher performance improvement, indicating a need for better implementation or communication regarding TPAD. Supervising students during private studies received mixed responses, with 43.9% (A+SA) indicating satisfaction. However, 47.5% (D+SD) expressed dissatisfaction, indicating room for improvement in student supervision strategies outside regular classes.

The data on teachers' feedback regarding their principal's commitment to organizing meetings after lesson observation reveals a varied response. A notable portion of teachers, 49.2% (D+SD), expressed dissatisfaction, indicating that these post-observation meetings are not meeting their expectations or are not happening as frequently as desired. Furthermore, 46.3% (A+SA) of teachers acknowledged the effort, suggesting that a significant group appreciates these meetings. This data underscores a need for principals to enhance their communication and feedback mechanisms, ensuring that post-observation meetings are structured, supportive, and responsive to teachers' needs.

## **8. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

The data from Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the various instructional supervision strategies employed by principals in the surveyed schools. Notably, regular classroom visits are the least common strategy, utilized by only 20.1% of principals. In contrast, lesson observation is more frequently employed, with 28.7% of principals utilizing this method. The relatively higher frequency suggests a recognition of its importance in evaluating specific lessons and enhancing teaching quality. Vetting teaching and learning materials is a prevalent strategy, embraced by 28% of principals, highlighting a focus on providing relevant instructional resources to teachers. However, monitoring Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) is employed by only 23.2% of principals, indicating a gap in structured approaches for teacher performance improvement.

The feedback from teachers reveals critical concerns regarding their principal's supervision practices. A substantial portion of teachers expressed dissatisfaction with various aspects. The dissatisfaction regarding checking class timetables (53.1%) and observing teachers in action (61.4%) raises concerns about the consistency and effectiveness of these supervision methods. Additionally, the dissatisfaction regarding the principal's engagement with professional documents (64.8%) and monitoring TPAD (62.2%) emphasizes the need for active involvement in teachers' professional growth. Dissatisfaction with post-observation meetings (49.2%) highlights the necessity for more structured and supportive feedback mechanisms.

The study concluded with highlighting the pressing need for comprehensive reforms in instructional supervision strategies to bridge the existing gaps and enhance students' academic achievements. Immediate interventions are crucial to foster a positive and effective learning

environment in the surveyed schools. Implementing consistent and supportive instructional supervision is paramount. Addressing these challenges will not only bridge the gap between expectations and reality but also pave the way for improved academic achievements. By aligning management strategies with the study's objective, schools can create a conducive atmosphere where students thrive, educators excel, and stakeholders actively contribute to the educational journey, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education in the region.

In light of the findings, the study recommends that the principals should conduct consistent and meaningful classroom observations. Following each observation, structured feedback sessions should be held with teachers. Regular, constructive feedback provides teachers with actionable insights to enhance their teaching methods, leading to improved student learning outcomes.

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