

# Teachers' Perception Towards Supervisory Practices In Integrated Primary Schools, Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

**Doris Kathambi Njeru (M.ed)**

Special Needs Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

**Dr. Chomba M. Wa Munyi (Ph.D)**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Special Needs Education,  
Kenyatta University, Kenya

*Abstract: In this article, the authors present a summary of findings of a study conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's thesis in special needs education. The study sought to assess the teachers' perception towards headteacher's instructional supervisory practices in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Specifically, the study sought to find out teachers perception regarding policy supporting supervision of instruction, establish the aspects of instructional supervision teachers want practiced by headteachers, determine the systemic challenges likely to affect supervision of instruction, and to examine SNE teachers' perception on supervision of instruction by headteachers. This study was based on role theory. The research design for the study was descriptive research survey and target population was 50 integrated public primary schools in Tharaka South sub-County. A sample of 30% of the target population was selected. This translated to 15 schools, 15 headteachers and 67 teachers. All the 10 quality assurance officers (QUASOs) were also selected as respondents through census sampling. Questionnaires were used to gather the required information. The questionnaires were piloted on a sample of teachers in a school in the same sub county which did not participate in the final study. The Cronbach Alpha was used to test internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate the descriptive statistics that were used to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data was reported thematically in line with the objectives of the study. The study established that some of the headteachers and teachers were not conversant with the 2008 TSC policy on identification, selection, appointment, development and training of headteachers. There exists a variance in the way respective headteachers approach the teaching policy in their respective schools. Systemic challenges also exist in the integrated public primary schools in the sub-county and affect supervision of instruction. While supervision of instruction was an effective tool for headteachers, its approach inhibited teachers' performance.*

**Keywords:** Teachers' Perceptions, Instructional Supervisory Practices, Integrated Public Schools

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reports and papers generated from the Ministry of Education have continued to identify inadequate supervision of instruction as a key factor impacting negatively on the quality of education in Kenya. As a matter of fact, the first pre-independence education commission in Kenya identified lack of instructional supervision as a major cause of low standards of education (Republic of Kenya, 1964). Recent reports on the monitoring of implementation of the revised curriculum have pointed out supervision as an issue of concern

in the implementation of the curriculum (Kenya Institute of Education, 2004, 2005, and 2006).

Research demonstrates that the biggest factor in student improvement is the classroom teacher and quality pedagogy (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005). This means catering for all students through differentiation of the curriculum.

Differentiation can be applied to outcomes with particular students being expected to draw different learning from the same activity. Principals, as leaders of the school, are accountable for student performance and achieving the school's improvement goals and performance targets through

effective, quality education services. In aligning the Students with Disabilities Policy implementation with the Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework (APIF), principals can: build the capacity of the school, be accountable for the learning outcomes and wellbeing of students, ensure that all school staff meet expected standards of service provision, ensure the school complies with relevant legislation, regulations and organizational standards including the management of finances, assets and other resources (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005). Unfortunately, there is a handful of literature vis-à-vis research study on either correlation between policy on supervision of instruction and teachers' performance or students' performance. Most researchers and scholars focus mainly on what the policy on supervision tells teachers to do in the classroom. However, adherence to strict time table and school regulations as determinants of effective supervision should not be compromised. Bureaucratic procedures in supervision may be characteristic of some African and other developing countries. The definition presented by IIEP/UNESCO (2007) testifies to this belief.

One issue that has been controversial in most schools for many years is the issue of instructional supervision in integrated education. Through Instructional supervision in these schools, supervisors, school heads cannot know if they are being effective for their team of teachers unless they know what they are doing. There are four parts of self that one should know as a supervisor. The Public (Open) self is where both the supervisor and the supervisee are aware of the behaviours. The Blind self occurs where the supervisees are aware of what behaviours take place, but the supervisor is unaware of these behaviours. The Private (hidden) self is the knowledge that the supervisor has about him or herself but the supervisees do not. Finally, the Unknown Self is the behaviours that both the supervisor and the supervisee are not aware of (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005).

In an integrated educational setting, this remains true for both principals and for teachers. They must first know themselves, before they can be effective supervisors and effective educators for students. Supervision is based on the premise of communication and improving methods of communication through asking questions, or telling information (Armstrong, 2006). This exposure allows school head to understand where the teachers come from, what background experiences they have to shape their position, and what beliefs, values, and ideas they hold (Armstrong, 2006). This information cannot necessarily be shared without effective communication and provides great opportunities for understanding between a supervisor and a supervisee. Supervision promotes teachers' professional growth, development as well as benefits them with technical skills. Otherwise if not supervised, the teachers in integrated schools will stagnate in a mechanical way of teaching with no positive change. Gerumi's (2002) study findings also indicate statistically that there was a very low correlation between instructional supervision and teacher performance in integrated schools.

The main purpose of supervision is to work collaboratively with teachers, and provide them with the necessary assistance, guidance, and support to improve

instruction. Some support systems in education delivery in integrated schools as well as supervisor characteristics and practices, and the context within which SNE teachers work pose challenges to the smooth performance to their duties. If integrated education is to become a reality there is need for teacher education in every school as well as those training as teachers (UNESCO 2007).

Another challenge to supervision is a situation where headteachers, by virtue of their position, are faced with inadequate teaching and learning materials in their schools. There is need for adequate teaching and learning materials to make integrated programmes a success. The government resources are inadequate to meet the basic needs in education (UNESCO, 2007). There are no special facilities for children with various disabilities like hearing aids, Braille materials, spectacles and while canes. There is also insufficient assessment equipment, learning and teaching aids and specialized materials for special needs education (ROK, 2008). Such heads have relatively a hard time supervising instruction.

Arguably, the success of supervision of instruction in integrated education relies heavily upon the attitudes and beliefs of the teachers (Edmunds & Edmunds, 2008, p. 24). As a supervisor, it is necessary to have an understanding of the supervisee's belief systems in order to successfully implement integrated education programs within a school because without the support of the teachers, these programs are destined to malfunction. In order to improve and advance instruction, and hence improve student learning and experiences, school heads need to first look at how their "present thinking, beliefs, and practices in the field of supervision interact with instruction and the assumptions about students as learners" (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005, p. 78).

According to teachers, the integrated school head ought to be proactive, to the needs of all children and teachers, rather than reactive as an integrated education has been. Proponents of supervision of instruction in integrated schools maintain that it aims at improving teacher development training and takes the view that teaching is a form of human behaviour that has structure and can be both influenced and controlled. The need to examine teacher attitudes in integrated education can be linked directly to classroom cohesion and socio-emotional climate within classrooms (Subban and Sharma 2005).

## II. PURPOSE

The study sought to assess the teachers' perception towards headteacher's instructional supervisory practices in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. Specifically, four objectives were formulated for the study as stated below:-

- ✓ To investigate out teachers perception regarding policy supporting supervision of instruction in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County;
- ✓ To establish the aspects of instructional supervision teachers want practiced by headteachers in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County;

- ✓ To examine SNE teacher's perception on supervision of instruction by headteachers in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County;
- ✓ To determine the systemic challenges likely to affect supervision of instruction in the integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County.

The study was intended to contribute to practical managerial knowledge of the duties and responsibilities associated with supervision of instruction and at the same time help in identifying future training and skills needed for school-based supervisors in integrated public primary schools.

### III. PROCEDURE AND METHOD

The research design for this study was descriptive research survey. This design was adopted for the study because it enabled the researcher to comprehensively record, describe and analyse instructional supervisory practices and challenges. Since the study involved human subjects and the information needed cannot be manipulated, the researcher collected information on the state of affairs in the schools, without manipulating variables thus, making the design appropriate for the study.

The study was conducted in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This county is situated in Mount Kenya region, bordering Meru, Embu and Kitui Counties. The target population for this study was all the 50 integrated public primary schools in Tharaka South sub-county. There were 200 regular and special teachers, 50 headteachers and 10 quality assurance officers in the sub county.

In this study, the researcher clustered the integrated public primary schools into sub-groups according to the divisions. Each cluster formed a stratum from which a proportionate sample of schools was obtained randomly. A sample of 30% was purposively selected as representation of the target population as summarised in Table 3.1.

Category	Population	Sample
Schools	50	15
Headteachers	50	15
Teachers	200	67
Quality assurance officers	10	10
Totals	310	107

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

The sample selection translates to 15 schools, 15 headteachers and 67 teachers. The teachers were proportionally selected to get 5 teachers per school. All the 10 quality assurance officers were also selected as respondents through census sampling.

The study utilized questionnaires for regular teachers, special needs education teachers, and headteachers and quality assurance officers. The questionnaire contained open and closed questions organised in five sections. The first section gathered respondents' bio data.

Second section collected information on the requirement of instructional supervisory policy, while the third section was on the aspects of instructional supervision. The fourth part prompted respondents to give challenges of instructional

supervision while the last section asked for perception of SNE teachers in integrated setting on supervision of instructions by headteachers in integrated public primary schools in Tharaka South sub-county.

The reliability of the data was arrived at by using the test retest technique which involves the following procedures.

- ✓ Selecting an appropriate group of subjects.
- ✓ Administering the questionnaire to the subjects.
- ✓ Correlating the scores from the filled in questionnaires.

The Cronbach Alpha was used to test internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire. The results were as shown in table 3.2

Objective no.	Cronbach's Alpha		No. of Items
	Interview guide for headteachers and QASOs	Questionnaire for regular and special needs teachers	
Objective 1	.713	.782	7
Objective 2	.726	.787	7
Objective 3	.751	.714	10
Objective 4	.725	.723	8

Table 3.2: Reliability analysis

For purposes of data collection, an introduction letter was obtained from the department of education Kenyatta University, after which a research permit was sort from National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation headquarters, Nairobi. The researcher then consulted with education office, Tharaka South Sub-county on modalities to interact with headteachers and teachers in the sampled schools. Once permission was granted, the researcher proceeded to create rapport with headteachers in schools and subsequently book appointments to collect the data. Data was collected by the researcher over a period of three weeks. The interviews for the headteachers and quality assurance officers were conducted in their offices while questionnaires for the teachers adopted the drop and pick later method where the researcher distributed the tools and picked them the following day.

This study mainly employed descriptive statistics to analyse the data obtained. Questionnaires were checked to remove those with incomplete items and multiple entries. The data collected was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for windows. As Martin and Acuna (2002) observe, SPSS is able to handle large amount of data, and given its wide spectrum of statistical procedures purposefully designed for social sciences, it is also quite efficient. This research yielded data that required both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To achieve the purpose of the study which mainly investigated teachers' perception towards supervisory practices in integrated primary schools in Tharaka Nithi County, two questionnaire sets were used to collect the required information. The return rate was 100 percent for

headteachers 98% for teachers and 100% QASOs. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to process the reliability coefficients, frequencies, percentages and descriptive statistics which were used to discuss the findings. The following were the findings of the study.

Regarding the first objective which sought to establish the teachers' perceptions concerning policy supporting supervision of instruction in integrated public primary schools in the sub-county, it was established that the majority of the headteachers, QASOs and teachers were aware of the existence of the TSC policy on identification, selection, appointment, development and training of headteachers, and that the Policy allows headteachers to control instructional practices. However, some of the Headteacher and teachers were not conversant on the 2008 TSC policy on identification, selection, appointment, development and training of headteachers. Most of them were not conversant with the sections on inspection of instructional practices. Whereas the majority of the teachers, headteachers and QASOs were aware of the policy's provisions on seeking solutions to problems encountered in instructional practices, half of the headteachers and teachers in the sub county were not conversant with the policy's sections on inspection of instructional classroom roles. The majority of the headteachers and teachers in the sub county correctly perceived that the Policy allows headteachers to reward for good instructional practice.

The second objective sought to establish the aspects of instructional supervision teachers wanted practiced by headteachers in integrated public primary schools in the sub-county. The study established that there exists a variance in the way respective headteachers approach the teaching policy in their respective schools. The majority of the headteachers, QASOs and teachers who wanted the teachers' performance tracked because they believed that a teacher's effort would be commensurately rewarded as a result. However, half of the teachers were averse to inspection and correction because they viewed inspection as an opportunity for victimisation and reprimand. The study also established that the teachers in the sub county were willing to support the existing reporting structures especially as it incorporated complaints handling mechanism and systemic challenges that headteachers faced when exercising instructional classroom roles.

The third objective sought to determine the systemic challenges likely to affect supervision of instruction in the integrated public primary schools in the sub-county. Some schools experienced bureaucratic delays that affected supervision of instruction. Poor team work was not a likely challenge in supervision of instruction in the integrated public primary schools in the sub-county. This was because work groups are a very important job factor contributing to teacher's job satisfaction. A majority of the headteachers had learnt and practised delegation of duties and responsibilities to other stakeholders within the schools. As such, ineffective coordination and "One man show syndrome" were unlikely to affect supervision of instruction in the integrated primary schools within the sub county. Whereas incompetence was not a systemic challenge likely to affect supervision of instruction, a few of the headteachers (8%), QASOs (10%) and teachers (9%) indicated that corruption existed in schools, a systemic

challenge that affected supervision of instruction in the integrated primary schools within the sub county. A few of the headteachers and teachers had conflict of interests in procurement of learning and teaching resources.

The fourth objective of the study sought to assess the SNE teacher's perception on supervision of instruction by headteachers in the integrated public primary schools in the sub-county. The study established that 92% of headteachers, 100% QASOs and 55% teachers revealed that supervision of instruction was an effective tool to be used by headteachers. However, a majority of respondents felt that supervision of instruction inhibits teachers' performance. Due to the manner in which the headteachers approach the whole concept of supervision, particularly in cases where the approach is positive and with clearly defined deliverables, teachers tend to perform better than when expectations are vague.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the authors have made the following recommendations:

- ✓ That the TSC circulates enough copies of the TSC (2008) Policy on identification, selection, appointment, development and training of headteachers to all schools in the sub county.
- ✓ That the TSC organises Workshops for QASOs headteachers and teachers on the provision of the TSC (2008) Policy on identification, selection, appointment, development and training of headteachers in the sub county
- ✓ That the TSC and the Ministry of education provide in service courses on administration of schools to teachers upon their promotion to headship positions
- ✓ That the TSC and the Ministry of education provide in service courses for existing headteachers on objective approaches and strategies to supervision of instruction
- ✓ That the Ministry of education addresses the inefficiencies in the reporting structures for instructional supervision
- ✓ That the Ministry of education provides guidelines for QASOs, teachers and Headteachers likely to engage in activities that could conflict with the discharge of their mandates.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Armstrong, T.R. (2006). Revisiting the Johari's window: Improving communications through self- disclosure and feedback. *Human Development*, 27(2), 10-14.
- [2] Edmunds, A. L., & Edmunds, G. A. (2008). *Special Education in Canada*. McGraw-Hill Ryerson: Toronto, ON.
- [3] Glickman, C.C., Gordon. S.P., & Ross-Gordon, J.M. (2005). *The basic guide to supervision and instructional leadership*. Pearson Education.
- [4] IIEP/UNESCO (2007). *Reforming School Supervision for Quality Improvement: Roles and Functions of Supervisors. (Module 2)*. Paris: UNESCO.

- [5] Martin and Acuna, C., (2002). *SPSS for Institutional Researchers*, Buckhell Lewisburg, Pennsylvania: University press
- [6] Subban, P. & Sharma, U. (2005). Understanding Educator Attitudes toward the Implementation Of Integrated Education, *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 25(2). Retrieved, October 14, 2007, from Ebscohost Research Database.

IJIRAS