

HEAD TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND PUPILS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Primary school education is crucial for economic development in Kenya. The government, through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), has implemented training programmes to enhance school leadership, aiming to improve pupils' academic achievement. Despite this effort, public primary schools in Kakamega County have continued to register low pupils' academic achievement. The study examined head teachers' Instructional Supervision beliefs on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Based on Bandura's (2001) self-efficacy theory, the research employed a descriptive survey design with a stratified random sample of 329 participants, including head teachers, deputy head teachers, and Sub-County Directors of Education, drawn from a population of 916 public primary schools. Data collection involved closed-ended questionnaires and structured interviews, with analysis conducted using SPSS Version 25. Validity was evaluated through a comprehensive review process where the questionnaire was submitted to academic supervisors and research specialists for their expert assessment. Pearson's Product Moment correlation to assess the instruments' reliability coefficient was used where coefficients exceeding 0.7 suggested that the research instruments were determined to possess sufficient reliability and were deemed appropriate for the study. The findings revealed significant moderate correlation between pupils' academic achievement and head teachers' beliefs on: instructional supervision practices ($r = .572, p < .01$). These findings indicate that head teachers' self-efficacy significantly correlates with pupils' academic achievement in Kakamega County's public primary schools. The study recommends strengthening Teachers Service Commission (TSC) leadership training programmes for head teachers, with particular focus on head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs. Additionally, schools should develop policies to enhance parental involvement in pupils' education. Future research should explore other aspects of teacher self-efficacy and investigate potential mediating and moderating factors in this relationship between head teachers' self-efficacy and academic achievement.

Keywords: academic achievement, instructional supervision, self-efficacy

Introduction

The global push for educational excellence has transformed schooling into a highly competitive endeavour, with unprecedented scrutiny on educational outcomes and the effectiveness of school leadership. This heightened focus on educational quality is reflected in Kenya's substantial investment of 544 billion shillings allocated to the Ministry of Education in the 2022/2023 financial year (Republic of Kenya, 2022). Such significant financial commitments mirror global trends, as seen in the United States where increased educational expenditure aimed to enhance school productivity and economic growth (Cardenas & Cerado, 2016). The underlying premise was that a nation's educational success hinges critically on the effectiveness of its primary education system in preparing competitive individuals for secondary education and future career advancement (Glanz, 2018).

The relationship between education and socioeconomic development is well-established. The World Bank (2008) identified education as a primary driver of societal socio-economic

improvement, while Ndlovu (2020) emphasized that educational investment yields higher individual earnings compared to other economic sectors. However, this potential remains unrealized without adequate resource allocation and effective school leadership, particularly at the primary school level where the foundation for higher education is laid (Murithi, 2015).

The concept of self-efficacy, first introduced by Albert Bandura in 1977, refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments. In the educational context, head teachers' self-efficacy encompasses their beliefs and confidence in their ability to lead effectively, manage resources, influence teaching and learning processes, and ultimately improve on pupils' academic outcomes (Mutinda, 2023). The relationship between leadership self-efficacy and organizational outcomes has gained increasing attention in educational research, particularly in developing countries like Kenya.

It is worth noting that the Kenyan education system has undergone significant transformations since independence, with various reforms aimed at improving access, quality, and relevance of education. The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003 marked a milestone in Kenya's educational history, leading to increased enrollment rates and presenting new challenges for school leadership (Oduor et al., 2023). Currently, the introduction of the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) being implemented in public schools demands head teachers with high self-efficacy so as to facilitate the realization of the intended educational goals under the new curriculum. Head teachers, as the primary administrators of public primary schools, have found themselves managing larger pupil populations, diverse stakeholder expectations, and limited resources while being accountable for pupils' academic achievement.

The Ministry of Education of Education has consistently emphasized the importance of school leadership in driving educational outcomes. Recent statistics indicate that approximately 23,000 public primary schools serve over 8 million pupils across Kenya, highlighting the massive scope of primary education and the critical role of head teachers in shaping the educational landscape (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2024). The quality of leadership in these schools varies significantly, influenced by factors such as professional preparation, experience, support systems, and individual self-efficacy levels. Head teachers' self-efficacy may be considered as a key driver in informing school leadership's performance as pertains school administrative roles.

Research has shown that head teachers' self-efficacy manifests in various dimensions of school leadership. These include instructional leadership, administrative management, community engagement, and professional development of teaching staff. For this study head teachers' self-efficacy and head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs were used interchangeably. Studies conducted in different parts of Kenya have revealed a significant positive correlation between head teachers' self-beliefs in these areas and pupils' academic achievement indicators (Kimani & Mwangi, 2023). Head teachers with higher self-efficacy tend to set more challenging goals, persist in the face of obstacles, and create more supportive

learning environments. Such head teachers have a likelihood of influencing pupils' academic achievement.

In Kenya, where primary education is viewed as fundamental to achieving Vision 2030's scientific and technological advancement goals, the role of school leadership has come under increasing scrutiny. Head teachers' self-efficacy - their confidence, beliefs and capability in achieving success in assigned tasks - has emerged as a critical factor in school effectiveness and pupils' academic achievement (Mudassir & Norsuhaily, 2015). This leadership characteristic encompasses the overall management of curriculum delivery in the school and specifically head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs of which may directly influence educational outcomes. Being cognizant with the immense role of the primary school education, the government has continuously trained school leaders with an aim of improving pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools nationwide.

Despite substantial efforts in training school administrators in Kenya, including initiatives by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) through the Teacher Performance Appraisal Development (TPAD) programmes (TSC, 2016), public primary schools in Kakamega County continue to face significant challenges as far as pupils' academic achievement is concerned as shown in table 1

Table 1: KCPE Results (2018-2022)

Sub-county/Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Likuyani	236.69	240.17	244.11	248.43	250.13
Lugari	227.18	247.36	243.53	248.11	259.45
Matete	218.52	229.73	239.63	241.52	248.08
Navakholo	231.08	241.12	249.44	245.61	251.86
Kakamega Central	233.83	240.35	244.75	249.04	258.59
Butere	237.87	243.51	247.94	251.16	259.74
Khwisero	235.48	246.62	256.53	253.76	258.72
Kakamega South	229.57	236.07	241.03	246..55	249.68
Mumias	236.26	242.71	248.24	250.04	249.61
Kakamega East	239.94	247.49	251.32	257.47	256.68
Matungu	241.58	248.30	244.59	250.34	257.11
Kakamega North	212.79	231.69	238.84	244.53	245.91
Total	2780.79	2895.12	2949.95	2986.56	3045.91
Average	231.73	241.26	245.83	248.88	253.82

Source: KNEC Reports (2018, -2022).

Table 1 showed KCPE results for 2018-2022 in public primary schools in the county. It was observed that pupils' academic achievement as evident from the table was dropping. The table revealed that pupils' academic achievement as per the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) results was on the downward trend in the five years thus from an average mark of 253.82 in KCPE 2018 to 231.73 in 2022 which was a negative deviation of 22.09. These below-average KCPE scores, well below the 350-mark admission threshold for highly competitive secondary schools, have drawn the attention of educational stakeholders and prompted the need for this study as most of the candidates in the county may not compete with their county parts from other counties for form one placement.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between head teachers' self-efficacy, specifically the head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. Examining this critical link could provide insights to guide interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes, thereby realizing the full potential of Kenya's substantial investments in primary school education.

Hypothesis

HO₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs and pupils' academic achievement.

Research Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design, which allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a deep understanding of the research problem. The target population consisted of 916 public primary schools in Kakamega County, including 916 head teachers, 916 deputy head teachers, and 12 Sub-County Directors of Education. A stratified sampling approach was used, with schools divided into 12 strata representing each sub-county. Schools were then selected proportionately from each stratum using simple random sampling. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's formula, resulting in 329 respondents - 317 head teachers and deputy head teachers, as well as 12 sub-county education officers. Data was collected through questionnaires and interview schedules. Validity was evaluated through a thorough review process where the questionnaire was submitted to academic supervisors and research specialists for their expert assessment. Pearson's Product Moment correlation to assess the instruments' reliability coefficient was used where coefficients exceeding 0.7 suggested that the research instruments were determined to possess sufficient reliability and were deemed appropriate for the study. Strict ethical considerations were followed, with consent obtained from all participants prior to data collection. The collected data was examined for completeness and consistency, with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations used for analysis. Data from interview schedules was transcribed, grouped into themes, and presented through narrations and quotations.

Results and Discussion

Gender of the respondents

The researcher collected data on the gender of the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender of the respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent
Male	193	68.4
Female	89	31.6
Total	282	100.0

Source (Researcher, 2023)

As shown in Table 2, majority 193(68.4%) of the respondents were male while minority 89(31.6%) were female. This implies that the positions are adhering to the principle of gender equality and thus the decisions made are bound to be gender sensitive. This is supported by Schwab, (2017) that male possesses certain characteristics such as happily taking risk, stillness in a crisis, and the ability to work under pressure.

Respondents' age

The researcher collected data on the age of the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their age. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents age

Category	Frequency	Percent
20-30 years	12	4.3
31-40 years	88	31.2
41-50 years	128	45.4
Above 50 years	54	19.1
Total	282	100.0

Source (Researcher, 2023)

As shown in Table 3 the majority 128(45.4%) of the respondents were 41-50 years, 88(31.2%) 31-40 years, 54(19.1%) above 50 years and 12(4.3%) 20-30 years. This reveals that most of the respondents are under 50 years which is an age full of energy to ensure pupils academic achievement.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for instructional supervision practices

Statement		SD	D	N	A	SA	M	SD
Head teacher makes frequent class visits for improved teaching.	F	14	26	93	106	43	3.49	1.020
	%	5.0	9.2	33.0	37.6	15.2		
Our head teacher does not check pupils' written work.	F	4	42	138	73	25	3.26	.869
	%	1.4	14.9	48.9	25.9	8.9		
Head teacher ensures teachers make professional records on time.	F	6	41	87	112	36	3.46	.962
	%	2.1	14.5	30.9	39.7	12.8		
Our head teacher promptly organizes meetings to discuss class assessment reports.	F	16	39	99	98	30	3.31	1.023
	%	5.7	13.8	35.1	34.8	10.6		
The head teacher facilitates teachers in undertaking capacity building programmes.	F	3	35	108	104	32	3.45	.888
	%	1.1	12.4	38.3	36.9	11.3		
Head has a clearly stated daily work plan.	F	8	48	78	114	34	3.42	.999
	%	2.8	17.0	27.7	40.4	12.1		
Ensures adequate teaching/learning resources are provided.	F	2	28	122	108	22	3.43	.802
	%	0.7	9.9	43.3	38.3	7.8		
The head teacher does not keep staff attendance register	F	6	30	98	115	33	3.49	.910
	%	2.1	10.6	34.8	40.8	11.7		
Head teacher ensures timely completion of the syllabus.	F	10	32	120	100	20	3.31	.894
	%	3.5	11.3	42.6	35.5	7.1		
Plans for face-to-face feedback sessions.	F	6	28	88	124	36	3.55	.912
	%	2.1	9.9	31.2	44.0	12.8		

Key: SD= strongly disagree; D= disagree; N= neutral; A= agree; SA= strongly agree

M=Mean SD= Standard deviation

Source (Researcher, 2023)

Table 4 shows that 149(52.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers made frequent class visits for improved teaching, 93(33.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 40(14.2%) disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents agreed (Mean=3.49, SD=1.020) that head teacher made frequent class visits for improved teaching. This was supported by a female Sub-County Director of Education indicating that, “head teachers frequently visited classrooms to oversee teaching for improved academic achievement”. This implies that sometimes, head teachers make frequent class visits to oversee teaching, consequently, pupils’ academic achievement is enhanced. This is

in line with Anike and Mery Pool (2013) that there are various practices through which the head teacher can use for effective instructional supervision in a school and among them, the head teacher physically visiting the classroom during live teaching. It therefore means that physical appearance of the head teacher has a significant role in both enhancing instructional delivery as well as acting as a motivation to both the teacher and the learners. This may eventually result in the overall improvement in pupils' academic achievement in school.

Similarly, 98(34.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers did not check pupils' written work, 138(48.9%) neither agreed nor disagreed while 42(26.3%) disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.26, SD=.869) that head teacher did not check pupils' written work. This implies that sometimes, the head teacher checks pupils' written work for improved pupils' academic achievement.

On whether head teachers ensured that teachers made professional records on time, 146(52.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 87(30.9%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 47(16.6 %) disagreed with the statement that head teachers did not ensure that teachers make professional records on time. The study findings suggested that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.46, SD=.962) that head teachers ensured that teachers made professional records on time. This was supported by a male Sub-County Director of Education who stated that, "head teachers through their consistent supervision make teachers prepare professional records on time for improved academic achievement".

This implies that sometimes, head teachers ensure that teachers make professional records on time for enhanced pupils' academic achievement. This concurs with Fischer (2011) who asserted that it was likely most school administrators may not be effectively supervising instructional delivery by use of walkthroughs, both informal and formal class visits, checking of pupils' written work as well as checking teachers' professional records as is evident from the declining of pupils' academic achievement.

Additionally, 128(55.4%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers promptly organized meetings to discuss class assessment reports, 99 (35.1%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while 38(13.5%) disagreed. It emerged from the study that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.31, SD=1.023) that head teachers promptly organized meetings to discuss class assessment reports. This implies that sometimes, the head teacher promptly organizes meetings to discuss class assessment reports for improved pupils' academic achievement. This supports Ogonsaju (2012) that regular checking of pupils' work by the head teacher makes both the teacher and the learner more alert and focused as a result teaching and learning is meaningful and purposeful hence improved academic achievement on the side of learners.

On whether the head teachers facilitated teachers in undertaking capacity building programmes, 136 (48.2%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers facilitated teachers in undertaking capacity building programmes. 108(38.3%) of the

respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while 38(13.5%) disagreed. The study findings suggested that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.45, SD=.888) that head teachers facilitated teachers in undertaking capacity building programmes. This was supported by a female Sub-County Director of Education who observed that, “through capacity building programmes teachers are motivated and their attitude towards teaching is positively changed for improved pupils’ academic achievement”.

This implies that sometimes, head teachers facilitate teachers in undertaking capacity building programmes for enhanced pupils’ academic achievement. This is in line with Lesono (2013) that school-based teacher professional development programmes improve teachers’ morale, skills, and knowledge as regards duty performance. It also agrees with Spilt, Koomen and Jak (2012) the head teachers have a major role in guiding the teachers to undertake capacity development programmes which can only be achieved if he/she has undergone through programmes meant for staff development and growth.

Similarly, 148(52.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head had a clearly stated daily work plan, 78(27.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 56(19.8%) disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.31, SD=.999) that head teachers had a clearly stated daily work plan. This implies that sometimes, head teachers have a clearly stated daily work plan for improved pupils’ academic achievement. This supports Manaseh (2016) that classroom walkthroughs provide a brief over-view of the teaching process as regards lesson preparedness, delivery, and evaluation. It is also supported by Afolabi and Loto (2018) that head teachers need to supervise lesson planning to ensure that they cater for the given curriculum content, and they are appropriate to the class.

On whether the head teachers ensured that adequate teaching/learning resources were provided, 130 (46.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers ensured that adequate teaching/learning resources were provided, 122(43.3%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 30(10.6%) disagreed. The study findings suggested that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.43, SD=.802) that head teachers ensured that adequate teaching/learning resources were provided. This was supported by a male Sub-County Director of Education who said that, “head teachers have a role to select and provide instructional materials that aid the teacher to perform their teaching duties better and improve instruction through effective instructional leadership for improved pupils’ academic achievement”.

This implies that sometimes, head teachers ensure that adequate teaching/learning resources are provided for enhanced pupils’ academic achievement. This concurs with Kemunto (2015) that head teachers have a duty to facilitate teaching by providing the necessary instructional materials and resources promptly for effective teaching.

Additionally, 145(52.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the head teacher did not keep staff attendance register, 98(34.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed while

36(12.7%) disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.49, SD=.910) that the head teacher did not keep staff attendance register. This implies that sometimes, head teachers keep staff attendance register for improved pupils' academic achievement.

On whether the head teacher ensured timely completion of the syllabus 120 (42.6%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that head teachers ensured timely completion of the syllabus, 120(42.6%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, while 42(14.3%) disagreed. The study findings suggested that the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean=3.31, SD=.894) that head teacher ensured timely completion of the syllabus.

This implies that sometimes, the head teachers ensure timely completion of the syllabus for enhanced pupils' academic achievement. This supports the Republic of Kenya (2004) report that efficacious head teachers do manage prompt syllabus coverage, record of work covered and provide appropriate and adequate instructional materials for use at different class levels.

Lastly, 160(56.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the head teachers planned for face-to-face feedback sessions, 88(31.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while 34(12.8%) disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.55, SD=.912) that head teacher planned for face-to-face feedback sessions. This implies that head teachers plan for face-to-face feedback sessions for improved pupils' academic achievement. This agrees with Akinfolarin (2017) that instructional supervision as a way of monitoring teachers as they carry out their teaching functions to identify any gap or shortcomings and therefore plan for a face-to-face session of giving feedback and mitigating identified gaps or shortcomings.

The researcher, however, also sought to test whether there was an association between the instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County in the first null hypothesis "Ho₁: There is no statistically significant effect between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County."

To achieve this, the researcher calculated Spearman's rank correlation test to determine the relationship between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County. The findings are as shown in table 5.

Table 5: Correlation between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement

Scale		Pupils' academic achievement
Instructional supervision practices	Pearson Correlation	.572**
	p-value	.000
	N	282

Source (Researcher, 2023)

Table 5 shows a moderate positive linear relationship ($r = .572$) between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County. In addition, the relationship was significant ($p = .000$; $\alpha = .01$). Therefore, the first null hypothesis "H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County" was rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis H_{a1}: There is significant relationship between instructional supervision practices and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kakamega County was upheld. From the findings, it is evident that when the head teachers' self-efficacy on instructional supervision practices increases, so would the pupils' academic achievement. This implies that for the pupils' academic achievement to improve, the head teachers' self-efficacy on instructional supervision practices should also be improved. The same sentiments are expressed by Onyango (2012) that supervision of classroom instruction through classroom visitations enhances teacher accountability and may determine pupils' academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study concluded that there is a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between head teachers' instructional supervision beliefs and pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools. Henceforward, when head teachers make frequent class visits for improved teaching, promptly organize meetings to discuss class assessment reports, facilitate teachers in undertake capacity building programmes, ensure that adequate teaching/learning resources are provided, keep staff attendance register, and plan for face-to-face feedback sessions, pupils' academic achievement advances.

Recommendations

The study recommends that policy makers should include strict measures on the consideration of self-efficacy in instructional supervision practices, classroom management practices, leadership skills and involvement of parents. It also recommends that parents and community members be actively involved in pupils academic planning and management.

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