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¹Agnes Jerono, ²Alice Limo

¹Masters Student University of Eldoret, ²Lecturer University of Eldoret

P. O. Box 1125-30100 Eldoret, Kenya

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Quality Assurance and Standards Officers Communication Strategies and Effective Secondary Schools Teacher Supervision in Nandi East Sub -County, Kenya

¹Agnes Jerono, ²Alice Limo

¹Masters Student University of Eldoret, ²Lecturer University of Eldoret

P. O. Box 1125-30100 Eldoret, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers' (QASO) communication strategies and effective Secondary Schools Teacher supervision in Nandi- East Sub County, Kenya. The study adopted a survey research design for its ability to emphasize an understanding of QASO communication strategies and also its ability to extend experience. Target population comprised of 5 QASO representatives, 20 head teachers, 20 deputy head teachers, 100 H.O.D'S and 565 teachers of secondary schools to make a total target population of 710 respondents. The

sample size of the study was calculated using the formula recommended by Nassiuma 2000. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 249 respondents. Questionnaire and interview schedule was used as data collection instruments. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques where frequencies and percentages were used. Data was presented using frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. The study established that there was a communication breakdown between QASOs and teachers on date of supervision in advance. However, QASOs have satisfactory abilities to communicate clearly and objectively during pre-observational and plenary conference. QASOs are conscious of the language they use and always encourage dialogue in the instructional supervision process. The study recommends that there should be effective communication between teachers and QASO. It is hoped that the findings of the study will be significant in providing empirical evaluation of QASO communication strategies of enhancing supervision of teachers in schools.

Introduction

Supervision is a multifaceted process that focuses on instruction to provide teachers with information to improve their teaching performance (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000). Supervision of instruction or teachers' supervision takes place in a building, in a classroom, mainly through observation and evaluation of the teaching process (Glanz, 2012) and is described as direct assistance as it enables supervisor share his/her suggestions with the concerned teacher for future improvement. Supervision involves guiding, communication, refreshing, encouraging, improving infrastructure and overseeing certain given group with the aim of gaining their co-operation and eliciting

effectiveness. Since the ultimate goal of any evaluation is to continue successful programs or improve less successful ones, communication in the forms of public disclosure and evaluator-evaluated communication is essential (Udeozor, 2004).

Globally, the establishment and implementation of supervision strategies has had a better hand in the general teachers' supervision and has contributed towards efficiency in the Education sector on a global scale and studies have been conducted to determine the various established and implemented supervision strategies and the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing teachers' supervision process. According to Dinko (2011), proper balance in the establishment and

implementation of the supervision strategies is a more appropriate way of enhancing the supervision process because it will offer its benefits to all the concerned groups, that is; the students, teachers and supervisors as well as improve the perception of these groups towards the supervision process. Many of the studies seem to suggest that teachers' supervision has benefited the students only to a small percentage and the supervision strategies available have done little in enhancing the supervision process while others have suggested that these supervision strategies have enhanced the process of supervision as well as benefited the students, teachers and supervisors (Geshon, 2013).

In Kenya, for effective supervisory leadership, Okumbe (2007) explains that, the supervisor must acquire basic skills of supervision which may include; conceptual skills which entails the ability to acquire, analyze and interpret information in a logical manner. Another skill is human relation, which refers to the ability of the head teacher to understand and to interact effectively with others. He continues to say that teachers should be able to act professionally and humanely and at the very least possess some technical skills to enable him /her to perform effectively some of the specific processes, practices and techniques required of specific jobs within the school organization. Shahida (2008) points out that head teachers are instructional leaders in school who should be at the forefront in supervising, instructing and providing academic leadership in the institution. She observes that poor supervision of teaching especially syllabus coverage is the cause of difference in academic achievements among learners. The focal point between Shahida's observations and the current study is in the variable of supervisory technique and the role it plays in enhancing academic performance. It is against this background information that this study sought to determine the QASOs communication strategies for enhancing teachers' supervision in schools.

In most developing countries, QASOs are likely to be contributing in any way to quality Education. The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards in the Ministry of Education is charged with the responsibility of quality assurance and quality development of education. Concerns have been raised by education stakeholders as to whether the QASOs are effective in enhancing quality education in public

secondary schools in Nandi East Sub-County. Major trends observed in some schools in the sub-county regarding deficiencies and weaknesses of secondary school teachers in performing their official duties remain a clog in the wheel of development and achievement of educational objectives. Similarly, some school supervisors haphazardly discharge their functions especially when there is ineffective supervision and quality control. Inherently, the need for adequate supervision and quality control of secondary education must be addressed if quality and desirable objectives of the educational sector would be realized. This consequently has necessitated the undertaking of this research with an aim of identifying whether teachers in the sub-county are properly supervised. The present study sought to establish the QASO communication strategies that enhance teacher's supervision in secondary schools in Nandi East Sub- County.

Research Methodology

The study was guided by supervision theory by Robinson (1968). According to him, supervision of professionals in education is necessary to fulfill a number of functions, among them making the job of teaching easier. Others are, ensuring that there are adequate number of teachers, good orientation programs and provision of adequate supplies and equipment. The theory states that the results of teaching are highly intangible and teachers have a better way of assessing their quality of work or effects of their work. These teachers may invite education officers to supervise them not because they need help but because they want a reassurance that they work well. The study adopted a survey research design. The survey research design was selected for its ability to collect varied responses from the respondents with an aim of properly understanding the issues under study. The study targeted 20 secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. The target population consisted of 5 QASO representatives, 20 head teachers, 20 deputy head teachers, 100 H.O.Ds and 565 teachers of secondary schools. The study was done in all the 20 secondary schools in Nandi East Sub-county. All the 20 principals and deputy principals were purposively selected to participate in this study. The five QASO supervisors were also included in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select one HOD from the selected schools. This implied that 20 HODs were selected in this study. The teachers' sample size was

obtained using coefficient of variation. The study used a coefficient of variation of 30% and a standard error of 2%. Using this formula a sample of 161 teachers was selected proportionately from each of the schools selected for this study.

The data collection instruments that were used to collect data from the selected respondents were questionnaires and interview schedules. Selection of these tools was guided by the nature of data to be collected, time available and objectives of the study. The structured questionnaires were used to collect data on the strategies of enhancing teachers' supervision in

schools. The questionnaires were administered to the head of departments and teachers of secondary schools in Nandi East Sub County. Interview schedules were administered to the QASO representatives and the secondary school head teachers of Nandi East Sub County. The study used frequency distributions, pie charts and percentages in analyzing the data.

Findings of the Study

Background Information of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender of teachers and HoDs who participated in this study. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

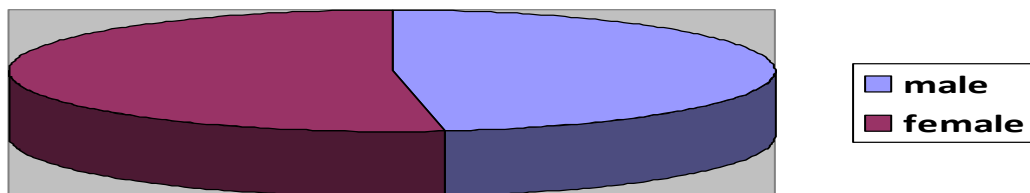


Figure 1 Gender of the Respondents

As shown in Figure 1, 52.3 % (90) of the respondents were female whereas 47.7% (82) were male. This shows that there were more female respondents than male. There still exists gender disparity in staffing of secondary schools in Nandi East sub-county.

Age of Respondents

It was also necessary to identify the age of the teachers and HoDs who participated in this study. To obtain this information, the respondents were asked to state their age bracket. The responses are shown in Figure 2.

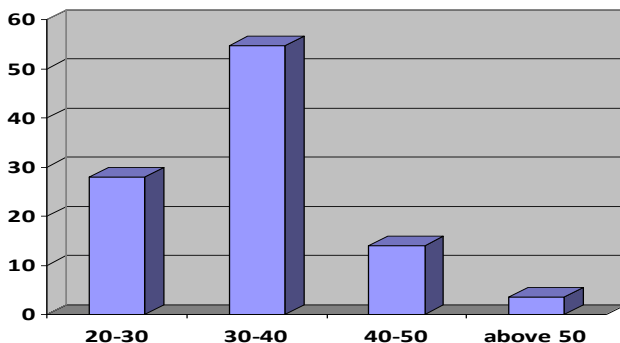


Figure 2 Age of the respondents

It should be noted in Figure 2, that over half (54.7%) of the respondents were aged between 30-40 years

while 27.9% (48) were below 20-30 years. Another 14% (24) were aged 40-50 years and only 3.5% (6) were more than 58 years old. This is an indication that

majority of the teachers were between 20-40 years. This is the age in life when individuals are most active and therefore able to carry out their activities as required. This group of respondents is expected to carry out their duties effectively if the QASOs employ appropriate supervision strategies.

QASO Communication Strategies and Its Effect on Teacher Supervision

The purpose of this study was to determine the QASO communication strategies which enhance teachers' supervision in schools in Nandi East Sub-County. To achieve this objective, there were ten items measuring QASO communication strategies that the teachers and HODs were to respond to. The responses are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1 QASO Communication Strategies

Statement	SA		A		U		D		SD		TOTAL	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
QASOs inform teachers of the date of supervision in advance.	18	10.5	12	7.0	0	0.0	102	59.3	40	23.3	172	100
QASOs use letters to communicate to teachers details of the supervision process.	6	3.5	32	18.6	2	1.5	90	52.3	42	24.4	172	100
QASOs communicate to teachers through phone calls about supervision to prepare them in advance.	8	4.7	12	7.0	10	5.8	98	57.0	44	25.6	172	100
QASOs communicate to teachers through text messages about supervision to prepare them in advance.	8	4.7	16	9.3	6	3.5	102	59.3	40	23.3	172	100
There is a systematic communication between QASOs and teachers in relation to supervision.	14	8.1	76	44.2	6	3.5	48	27.9	28	16.3	172	100
QASOs compliment teachers during the supervision.	10	5.8	128	74.4	6	3.5	18	10.5	10	5.8	172	100
QASOs have satisfactory abilities to communicate clearly and objectively during pre-observational, post-observational and plenary conferences.	28	16.3	124	72.1	8	4.7	10	5.8	2	1.2	172	100
Good communication skills for QASOs facilitate smooth interactions between teachers and QASOs.	16	9.3	132	76.7	16	9.3	4	2.3	4	2.3	172	100
QASOs communicate their finding in objective and clear way.	22	12.8	134	77.9	4	2.3	10	5.8	2	1.2	172	100
QASOs are conscious of the language they use and always encourage dialogue in the instructional supervision process.	22	12.8	122	70.9	6	3.5	14	8.1	8	4.7	172	100

The findings shown in Table 1 reveals that only 17.4% (30) of the respondents stated that QASOs inform teachers of the date of supervision in advance whereas

majority (82.6%) disagreed. Another, 22.1% (38) of the respondents agreed that QASOs use letters to communicate to teachers details of the supervision

process. However, 76.7% (132) disagreed. Further, 11.6% (20) of the respondents stated that QASOs communicate to teachers through phone call about supervision to prepare them in advance whereas 82.6(142) disagreed. It is also shown that only 14% (24) of the respondents agreed that QASOs communicate to teachers through text messages about supervision to prepare them in advance while 82.6% (142) disagreed. One aspect of an emphasis on systematic communication in evaluation is that of public disclosure of those elements about which teachers, administrators and the general public have the right to be informed (Glanz, 2000). Vital elements for public disclosure in teacher evaluation include, among others: establishing institutional goals; determining evaluation purposes in relation to those goals; developing teacher job descriptions and roles and responsibilities; identifying acceptable standards of performance; delineating procedural guidelines and safeguards embedded in the evaluation system; and describing the evaluation timeline.

The study also indicated that slightly above half (52.3%) of the respondents agreed that there is a systematic communication between QASOs and teachers in relation to supervision while 44.2% (78) disagreed. Another, 80.2% (138) of the respondents stated that QASOs compliment teachers during the supervision while 16.3% (28) disagreed. Majority (88.4%) of the respondents asserted that QASOs have satisfactory abilities to communicate clearly and objectively during pre-observational and plenary conference while 7% (12) disagreed. As stated by Seyfarth (2002), communication on supervision guidelines should specify that teachers should be informed about and understand the means by which they will be evaluated and that the evaluation should take into account any factors that affect evaluation results. This is why communication should be done clearly and objectively as established in this study.

The findings also shows that 86% (148) of the respondents stated that good communication skills for QASOs facilitate smooth interaction between teachers and QASOs whereas 4.6% (8) disagreed. Majority (90.7%) of the respondents agreed that QASOs communicate their findings in objective and clear way while 7% (12) disagreed. Another, 83.7% (144) of the respondents stated that QASOs are conscious of the language they use and always encourage dialogue in the instructional supervision process whereas 12.8%

(22) disagreed. The other communication strategies mentioned by the respondents are communicating through TSC website, through principal and through directors' office. According to Clayton (2006) good communication between the evaluator and the evaluate, allows for the cooperative development of an evaluation plan; provides a systematic opportunity for individual skill enhancement and improved performance; provides the teacher with enhanced self-expectations; increases the likelihood of changes in performance; identifies ways to reach higher standards and correct significant discrepancies; and establishes a check and balance system for the evaluation process.

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there is a communication breakdown between QASOs and teachers on date of supervision in advance nor do they communicate to teachers through phone calls about supervision to prepare them in advance. Further, it was established that QASOs do not communicate to teachers through text messages about supervision to prepare them in advance nor do they use letters to communicate to teachers' details of the supervision process. There is a systematic communication between QASOs and teachers in relation to supervision and QASOs compliment teachers during the supervision. QASOs have satisfactory abilities to communicate clearly and objectively during pre-observational and plenary conference. The findings also shows that good communication skills for QASOs facilitate smooth interaction between teachers and QASOs. QASOs communicate their findings in objective and clear way. QASOs are conscious of the language they use and always encourage dialogue in the instructional supervision process.

Recommendation of the study

Based on the findings of the study, it can be recommended that there should be effective communication between teachers and QASO since this facilitates smooth interaction.

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