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# INFLUENCE OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' SUPERVISION ON PREPARATION OF TEACHING INSTRUMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher supervision was a central pillar in successful preschool curriculum implementation. In Kenya, teachers including those specializing in preschool teaching, are expected to prepare teaching instruments such as schemes of work, lesson plans, instrument of work done, pupils progress, timetable among other relevant instruments. The ECDE policy framework and preschool handbook have outlined schemes of work, lesson plan, record of work, IEP and progress record as the major teaching instruments. Teaching instruments are an essential component of teacher preparedness, lesson development, curriculum implementation and evaluation of instructional outcomes. The purpose of the study was to explore the influence supervision has on preparation of teaching instruments on preschool teachers. Descriptive survey research design was used to conduct the study. Multi stage sampling technique was used to sample 17 (25%) public pre-schools/head teachers out of 68 of them and 34 (25%) out of 136 preschool teachers. Data collection involved use of questionnaires for pre-school teachers and oral interviews for head teachers. Piloting was done in four pre-schools using four head teachers and eight teachers. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using tables and percentages. The study established that, although most of the head teachers (58.8%) visited the preschool section on a weekly basis, they assessed preschool teachers teaching instruments once in a term. The study concluded that, despite high frequency of head teachers' supervision of preschool sections they did not supervise preparation of teaching instruments. The head teachers and Curriculum Support Officers should collaboratively work with teachers to ensure that they prepare all instruments required to ensure improved instruction outcomes and curriculum implementation.

**Key Words:** Teaching Instruments; Supervision; Preschool Teacher; Head teachers.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers' preparation of teaching instruments appeared to be a challenge as contained in a report by Koskei (2013) concerning Kesses Sub-County Kenya, which showed that teachers had a problem with planning for lessons. A study on teacher effectiveness in Makadara by Egunza (2014) stated that teaching instruments are a reliable testimony showing what a teacher has been doing and the achievements made. Due to the important role played by teaching instruments in curriculum implementation, it was necessary to explore the influence of teacher supervision on the preparation of teaching instruments. Teberg (1999) reported that teacher supervision was a central pillar in successful preschool curriculum implementation in American schools. He emphasized on the need for collaborative efforts among teachers, assistance from the administration and supportive evaluation by school inspectors. Similarly, Matete (2009) revealed that teacher supervision carried out by school inspectors in Tanzanians schools improved teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and preparation of teaching experiences. Oluwafemi, Nma, Osita, and Olugbenga (2004) in their study also revealed that teacher supervision influenced teachers instructional practices and children's learning outcomes in Nigeria. However, these regional studies did not establish whether teacher supervision influenced the preparation of teaching instruments. A study conducted in Nairobi and Machakos Counties by Wawire (2006), reported that preschool teacher' supervision and overall inspection were rarely done. The study concluded that this trend impacted negatively on teachers' efficacy. The current study, therefore, needed to interrogate and find out whether or not teacher supervision influenced the preparation of instruments for teaching by preschool teachers in Kesses Sub-County.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper was to establish the influence of teachers' supervision on their preparation of teaching instruments and the role played by Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and head teachers.

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Supervision is a continuous process of monitoring teaching/ learning activities to ensure the sharing of experiences and information, improving the quality of curriculum implementation including instrument preparation, encouraging/ motivating, enriching and promoting personal as well as professional growth for all teachers and the entire school fraternity (KIE, 1995). According to Mureithi (2015), in a school, the principal or the head teacher is the chief supervisor. He/ she oversees all the activities with regard to the teaching/ learning procedures in order to enhance curriculum implementation process.

In the United States (Brays, 2001) asserted that apart from principals being overall supervisors, older or more experienced teachers also provide supervision to new teacher recruits and serve as mentors. This was echoed by The Professional Educator (2011) which reported that it is mandatory for newly recruited and inexperienced preschool teachers in Ireland to be supervised by pedagogical leaders (experienced teachers). The leader works with the classroom teacher in planning lessons and organizing practical activities. The pedagogical leaders are specially trained in supervision as well as teacher professional development and assessment strategies. Similar views were also shared by Teberg (1999) who pointed out that supervision was a central pillar of preschool curriculum implementation in American schools. The above studies, however, were not in our local or regional context. Furthermore, they were conducted in a first world country that boasts of availability of greater opportunities in terms of resources to enable older and more experienced teachers to mentor the inexperienced ones joining the teaching workforce.

In a related study in Nigeria, Nakpodia (2011) who focused on principals' supervisory aptitude of teachers' work performance, revealed that instrument keeping was part and parcel of instructional supervision that shows how well the teachers and students performed in the school. He, however, revealed that secondary school teachers' instrument preparation practices were not related to the principal's supervisory roles unlike in Kenya where the principal is the chief supervisor of the entire curriculum development and implementation process in school apart from County and Sub-County Quality Assurance Officers who oversee the entire supervisory process in their area. Similarly, Matete (2009) in a study in Tanzania had also revealed that school inspectors, who were equivalent to Quality Assurance Officers in Kenya, evaluate teachers' schemes of work, lesson plans, record of work done and registers. These studies explored the types of teaching instruments inspected by QASOs, the current study focused on the influence of supervision by QASOs on the preparation of preschool teaching instruments.

A similar trend was put forth by Wairimu (2011) in a study in Kenya on teachers' perceptions of head teachers' supervisory practices on performance of their duty in public primary schools in Nakuru North District. The study showed that most head teachers endorsed professional documents regularly but did not offer concrete support towards the preparation of the document. Rutumoi and Too (2012) also found that majority of primary school head teachers in Baringo County concerned themselves with an appraisal of preschool schemes of work, lesson plans and record of work done. These studies were on the types of teaching instruments appraised by head teachers during supervision. However, they did not point out the influence of supervisory activities of head teachers on the preparation of these teaching instruments.

Further, in a study titled; instructional supervision in an era of change involving policy and practice in primary education in Kenya, Kamindo (2011) indicated that supervisors were aware that according to the policy they were expected to perform evaluative and supportive advisory functions. However, their actual practice was more evaluative than supportive in nature and does not advise teachers accordingly for example in the area of instrument preparation. A similar perspective was shared by Mudaki (2011) who revealed that supervision by Quality Assurance Officers and District Centres for Early Childhood Officers was generally poor in Nairobi as was also noted by Wawire (2006) who indicated that supervision of preschools in Nairobi as well as Machakos, was poorly done. Despite the revelation that supervision was poorly done, the majority of teachers agreed that it helped in improving their instructional and planning practices (Wairimu, 2011; Mudaki, 2011; Musee, 2011). These studies were centred on how supervision was conducted in primary schools and preschools during classroom instruction, this study focused on supervision of teaching instruments that preschool teachers prepared in Kesses Sub-County.

After hiring ECDE teachers in all public preschools in UasinGishu County, governor Mandago directed primary school head teachers to supervise them (Eldoretnewsline, 2016). This acknowledged the important supervisory role of head teachers in preschool. It is on the backdrop of resultant more relevant research driven literature that this study sought to establish the kind of supervision practices undertaken by head teachers and quality assurance officers in preschools, to unearth the extent to which the supervisory practices influence preschool teachers' preparation of teaching instruments and what corrective measures could be instituted to avert the negative trends reported.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was employed for the study and preferred due to its appropriateness in generating accurate and detailed information about teachers' attitude from a relatively large number of them using questionnaires and interviews as Orodho and Kombo (2002) reveal.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used to randomly select 25% (17) pre-schools out of 68 in Kesses Sub-county, purposive selection of head teachers from these schools as well as a random selection of 34 pre-school teachers (2 per school). Data collection was done using questionnaires for pre-school teachers and face to face interviews with the head teachers to confirm teachers' preparation of teaching instruments.

Analysis of qualitative data was done by transcribing it into written texts and comparing as well as categorizing the notes taken per distinct themes as per the study objectives while quantitative data was grouped according to the research questions and analyzed through tallies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and frequencies. Tables, pie charts, and bar graphs were used to present the findings.

## 5. FINDINGS

The objective of the study was to determine the influence of teacher supervision on the preparation of teaching instruments. Headteachers' competency in the supervision of preschool teachers encompasses a variety of attributes chief among them maturity in age, training, and experience. These elements equip them with the ability to supervise the teachers under them particularly in the area of preparation of teaching instruments. Findings on this task are presented in table 1 to table 5 and figure 1 & 2.

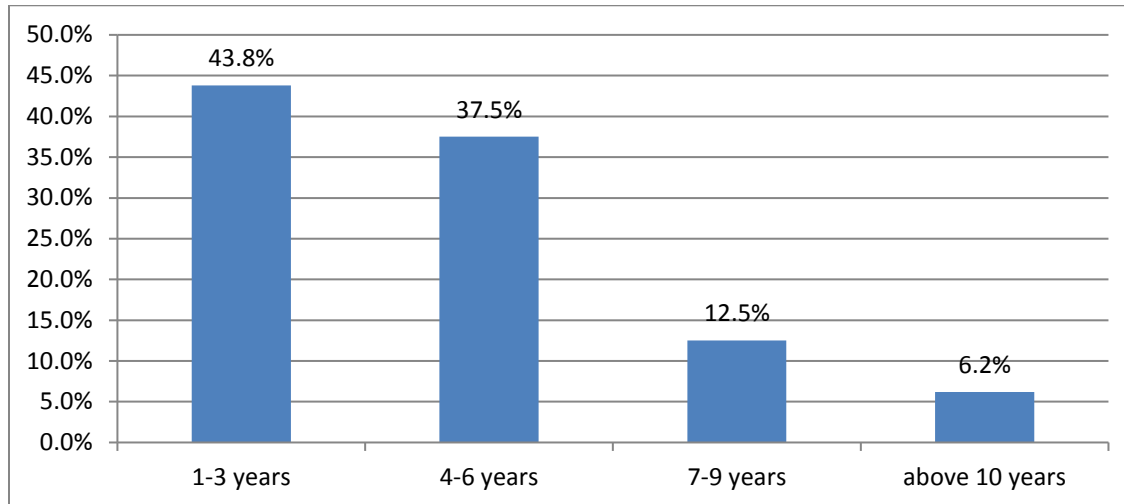
Headteachers level of training in ECDE was an important aspect that was considered in order to find out how competent they were to be able to know and understand which instruments are kept in preschool. Results of this aspect are presented in table 1.

**Table 1: Level of Head Teachers ECDE Training**

Level of ECDE training	Frequency	Percent
No ECD training	8	50.0
Certificate in ECDE	0	0.0
Diploma in ECDE	5	31.0
Degree in ECDE	3	18.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From table 1 it is clear that majority of primary school head teachers in Kesses Sub-County are not trained in ECDE programme despite it being a requirement for head teachers in Kenya to have at least a certificate in ECDE as stated in the ECDE policy framework (KIE, 2006). Another 31.2% (5) of head teachers have ECDE diploma training while the remaining 18.2% (3) had trained in degree in ECDE. The low level of head teachers training in ECDE may limit their awareness and supervision of instruments preparation. Whitebook (2003) revealed that teachers with the most advanced education were the most effective in the overall curriculum implementation process including preparation of teaching instruments and supervision of curriculum activities.

The study also investigated the experience of head teachers' supervisory, managerial and administrative practices, which are associated with effective school operations and curriculum supervision (Mureithi, 2015), including preparation of teaching instruments. The results are presented in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Experience Levels of Primary School Head Teachers**

Data presented in figure 1 indicates that 43.8% of head teachers were in the lowest range of experience (1-3 years). This group was followed by 37.5% head teachers who had experience of between (4-6 years). Another 12.5% and 6.2% had experience of (7-9 years) and above 10 years respectively. This study results indicated that head teachers with experience of above 4 years were more than 50% and hence head teachers were adequately experienced to supervise preschool teachers' preparation of teaching instruments. These results are in agreement with Ogott and Odera (2012) who indicated that teachers with less than 5 years teaching experience had a negative attitude towards language material selection, development and use while the seniors with more than 6 years teaching experience held positive attitude.

Supervision is a central element of monitoring the quality of education services. The major supervisors of public preschool teachers are the primary school head teachers as well as the curriculum support officers in the county and their practices are related to the extent to which they visit preschool sections in the primary school. The results relating to head teachers' supervisory visits are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Distribution of Frequency of Head Teachers' Visit to the Preschool Class**

Headteachers Visit	Frequency	Percent
Daily	6	17.6
Weekly	20	58.8
After two weeks	2	5.9
Once a month	3	8.8
Once in a term	3	8.8
Not at all	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results presented in table 2 indicate that majority of preschool teachers (58.8%) reported that their head teachers visited their class on weekly basis. Another 17.6% indicated that head teachers visited their class everyday. A smaller number (5.9%) reported that head teachers visited their class after two weeks. While 8% indicated that their head teachers visited them once in a month and once in a term respectively. These results mean that most head teachers visited the preschool section regularly.

The curriculum support officers (CSO's) supervise preparation of teaching instruments and other curriculum aspects in the preschools that they visit. Findings on their supervisory visits to preschools are presented in table 4.9.

**Table 3: Frequency of Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) supervision**

Frequency of CSOs supervision	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	0	0.0
After two weeks	0	0.0
Once a month	8	23.5
Once a term	20	58.8
No supervision at all	6	17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Results displayed in table 3 show that majority of preschool teachers (58.8%) reported that CSOs supervise curriculum activities once in a term. Another 23.5% reported that CSOs supervise them once in a month. The rest (17.6%) indicated that CSOs did not supervise them at all. This means that CSOs supervision of preparation of teaching instruments in Kesses Sub-County is not sufficient. These findings agree with Wawire (2006) and Mudaki (2011) who reported that supervision by QASOs and DICECE officers in Nairobi was generally poor. Schemes of work and lesson plans are the major teaching instruments, their preparation is therefore very important. This study sought to find out how often headteachers supervised preparation of schemes and lesson plans. Findings are presented in table 4.

**Table 4: Headteachers' frequency of assessing schemes of work and lesson plans**

Frequency of Assessing Schemes of Work & Lesson Plan	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	6	17.6
Monthly	3	8.8
Termly	25	73.5
None of the above	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings displayed in table 4 indicate that 73.5% of preschool teachers reported that head teachers assessed their schemes of work and lesson plans once in a term. Another 17.6% reported that head teachers assessed their instruments weekly, While 8.8% assessed instruments once in a month. This means that majority of head teachers do not concern themselves with assessment of schemes of work and lesson plans. It also implies that despite teachers reporting that head teachers visit their class regularly, they only concerned themselves with other curriculum and administrative aspects and not the preparation of teaching instruments.

Primary school head teachers were also asked to indicate in which ways the teaching instruments prepared by preschool teachers are useful in their administrative practices. Results are displayed in table 5.

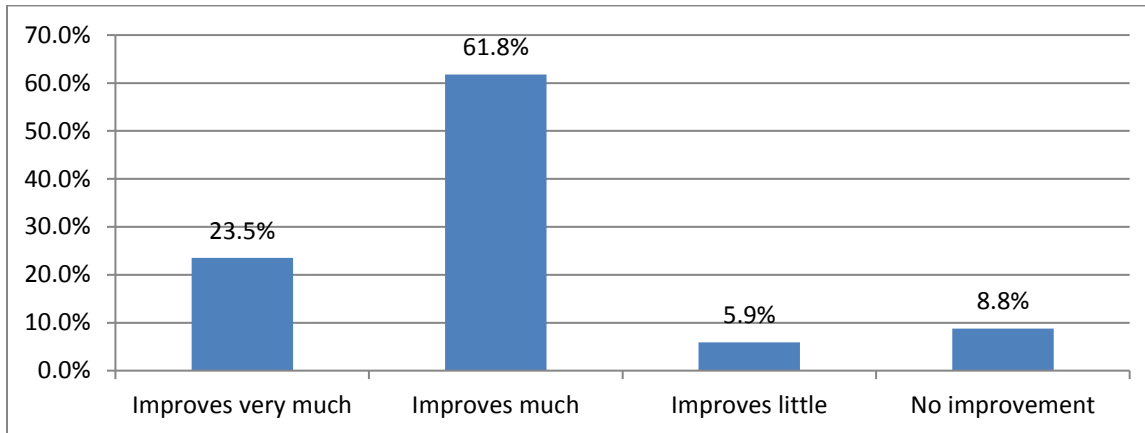
**Table 5: Distribution Table on Application of TR in Administration by Head Teachers**

Administrative applications	Frequency	Percent
Pupils assessment	4	25.0
Teacher evaluation	3	18.8
Monitoring syllabus coverage	7	43.8
Future reference	1	6.2
Not useful	1	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 5 shows that most head teachers 43.8% indicated that they used teaching instruments to monitor syllabus coverage whereas 25% used teaching instruments to assess preschool pupils' achievement and progress. Another 18.8% indicated that they used preschool teachers instruments to evaluate teachers' productivity. While 6.2% used

prepared teaching instruments for future administrative reference. The rest 6.2% found no use for the prepared teaching instruments. It is notable that results presented show that teaching instruments are deemed important in regulating and controlling syllabus coverage.

Teacher supervision has been a key aspect of education and an emphasis of the Ministry of Education as advanced in Early Childhood Education standard guidelines (KIE, 2006). This study sought to establish preschool teachers' opinion on whether supervision improves their preparation of teaching instruments. Results are displayed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Distribution of Teachers View on Supervision and Instrument Preparation**

Results displayed in Figure 2 indicate that majority of preschool teachers (61.8%) reported that supervision improves their instruments preparation "much". This means that the supervised teachers have high chances of preparing instruments than the unsupervised teachers. This also implies that despite low reports of head teachers and CSOs preschool supervision, teachers contend that supervision improves their preparation of teaching instruments.

These findings are consistent with (Wairimu, 2011; Mudaki, 2011; Musee, 2011) who reported that despite the revelation that supervision of preschool teachers is poorly done, the majority of teachers in their studies agreed that supervision improved their instructional practices and instrument preparation. These findings are also consistent with (Mureithi, 2015; Ngigi&Orotho, 2015) who reported that supervision influence preschool teachers instructional practices and curriculum implementation.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study established that, although most of the head teachers (58.8%) visited the preschool section on a weekly basis, they assessed preschool teachers teaching instruments once in a term. Majority of the preschool teachers reported that curriculum support officers visited the preschool for supervision once in a term. The study concluded that, despite high frequency of head teachers' supervision of preschool sections they did not supervise preparation of teaching instruments. However, supervision increased the possibility and tendency of preschool teachers' preparation of teaching instruments.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The head teachers should work with teachers to ensure that they prepare all instruments required to ensure improved instruction outcomes and curriculum implementation.

The County Government should provide infrastructural and financial allocations or support to the CSOs such as motorcycles, cars and computers to enhance regular visits and supervision of preschool teachers. Computers will enhance easy information management about preschool supervision schedules and practices.



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