



## **Influence of Supervisory Strategies on Performance of Teachers: An Empirical Study of Secondary Schools in Mandera West Sub-County, Mandera County, Kenya**

Abdi Mohamud Ali & Mary Mugwe

School of Education

Mount Kenya University, Kenya

Email: [mohamudabdi500@gmail.com](mailto:mohamudabdi500@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *There have been controversies regarding the effectiveness of teachers through the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), which is a teacher management body in Kenya. This dates back to early 2021 when the TSC launched training on teacher professional development and, consequently, began enrolling teachers across the country. This formed the purpose of the study, which aimed to examine the influence of school supervisory strategies on the performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mandera West sub-county, Mandera County, Kenya. The study adopted the Contingency Management Theory and consisted of a mixed methods approach. The study employed a descriptive research design with a target population of 404 stakeholders in the public secondary schools in the subcounty, and a sample size of 30% (121). The research subjects were selected from the larger categories of stakeholders using a stratified sampling design. Data was collected through questionnaires for BOM (Board of Management) members and teachers, and interviews were conducted with the principals. Secondary data was collected from specified documents through document analysis. The researcher piloted the research instruments using 12 (10% of the sample) secondary schools' stakeholders in the neighboring subcounty of Mandera County. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and correlation analysis was used to measure the strength of the relationship between school supervisory strategies and the performance of teachers. Qualitative data was used to triangulate the quantitative findings. The study found that various principal's supervisory strategies were evident within the public secondary schools in Mandera West subcounty. The strategies were also applied in diverse measures, where some were rated as low priority to high priority. These various strategies are associated with different advantages. The study revealed a strong positive correlation between teacher performance and supervisory strategies ( $r=0.758$ ) but this correlation was found to be statistically insignificant ( $\alpha=0.108$ ). The study recommends that school principals employ supervisory strategies that have a dominant influence on teacher performance, including establishing clear reporting channels.*

**Keywords:** *Managerial strategies, Performance, Public schools, School, Secondary schools, Supervisory strategies, Teachers*

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## **1. Introduction**

Education is defined as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction, especially at a school, university, or institution. A good quality education is an important

factor in a country's development, for instance, Indonesia. The education system is also facing some challenges. Many governments are striving to improve the quality of human resources through education (Shaturaev, 2021). Learning is a key factor in the educational process, and the focus should be on achieving all the learning

objectives, which represent the expected behavior of the learner after being taught.

Education is the most important asset to an individual as it enables them to think, work, and make informed decisions. The Malaysian government takes its education system seriously. The Malaysian National Education Blueprint (2013–2025) was implemented to equip every student to be competitive in the global market (Nor, Ilias, Abd Hamid, Siraj, Abdullah, Yaakob & Norafandi, 2022). Transforming teaching into a profession of choice is one of the efforts taken by the Malaysian Government to achieve global competitiveness. The government is striving hard to provide the best teacher training programs from the start of a teacher's career until retirement. It's the responsibility of teachers to work diligently to meet the needs of students.

A study conducted in Sweden by Toropova, Myrberg, and Johansson (2021) found that schoolworking conditions and teacher job satisfaction significantly affected teaching performance. Factors such as teacher workload, student discipline, cooperation among teachers in the staffroom, and their perception of these factors were closely related to their teaching performance. The study also revealed that student discipline was crucial for teacher job satisfaction. It also pointed out that female teachers and those exposed to TPAD (Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development) had higher levels of job satisfaction. Male teachers were found to be more effective at their jobs and at cooperating with other teachers.

Another study conducted in Malaysian secondary schools by Hoque, Kenayathulla, Subramaniam, and Islam (2020) found that there is an average level of performance among teachers. However, the attitude of teachers toward supervision and supervisory practices was not related in any way to their teaching performance.

The performance of teachers is closely related to factors such as motivation and a conducive working environment. Mahaputra and Saputra (2021) reviewed a study on the factors influencing teacher performance and found that the leadership of the headmaster significantly influenced teacher performance. Other factors affecting teacher performance included salary, work culture, workload, and working environment. Loyalty and motivation were influenced by the headmaster's leadership.

In a study conducted in Tanzania by Matete (2021), it was found that teachers in both Mbeya and Dar es Salaam did not agree with the practice of demoting a teacher due to poor performance in national examinations. They believed this undermined the credibility of the teaching profession. Teachers also disagreed with being supervised by school committees, as most committee members were not education professionals. Teachers thought that the school committee's role was to ensure a conducive learning environment both internally and externally. However, some teachers believed that school committees should be involved, as they are key

stakeholders in the school. The study proposed the need for school management to implement measures and strategies to enhance teacher performance, as they represent the interests of parents who want value for their investment in their children's education.

In a study conducted in Kericho County, Kenya, by Kibett, Manduku, and Chepkwony (2020), it was found that although strategic plans were implemented, they had no impact on teacher performance in primary day schools. The study revealed a positive correlation between the results of the strategic planning process and head teachers' performance. On the other hand, Luhangala and Anyieni (2019) reported that organizational structure and top leadership influenced the implementation of teacher performance strategies in public secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya.

There have been controversies about the effectiveness of teachers through the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), a teacher management body in Kenya. This controversy dates back to early 2021 when the TSC launched training on teacher professional development and initiated teacher enrollment across the country (Gekonge, 2021). The issue of teacher performance was further highlighted by the TSC's proposal to overhaul teacher training by removing the Bachelor of Education Course and replacing it with a Bachelor of Science or Arts, followed by a postgraduate diploma in education. Wilson (2020) raised questions about whether the real issue is related to pedagogical skills or content mastery. He argued that the gaps in teacher performance might be attributed to disjointed and fragmented pre-service training. Existing training assumes that teachers will achieve pedagogical goals while in service, but many still struggles.

Research indicates that pedagogy is linked to teacher performance but fails to identify the specific aspects that contribute to teacher effectiveness (Wilson, 2020). This suggests that teacher performance can be addressed through in-service training and strategies. The challenges facing teacher performance in Kenya, including Mandera West sub-county, point to school-centered aspects. These aspects are the focus of this study, aiming to answer the research question: What is the influence of supervisory strategies on the performance of teachers in secondary schools in Mandera West Sub-County, Mandera County, Kenya?

## 2. Literature Review

A quantitative study was conducted in Malaysia by Hoque, Kenayathulla, Subramaniam, and Islam (2020). The research aimed to examine the relationship between teacher performance and supervision in secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. The study employed a 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaire to gather inferential and descriptive data. The selection of respondents was achieved through simple random sampling.

This study focused on secondary schools in one district in Kuala Lumpur and involved 200 teachers and 50 supervisors as respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to illustrate teachers' attitudes toward supervision, the conditions of supervision practices, and the level of teacher performance and supervision. Regression analyses were employed to test the connections between teachers' attitudes, performance, and supervision.

The findings indicated that the state of supervisory activities, teachers' attitudes toward supervision, and teacher performance after supervision were at an average level in Malaysian secondary schools. Overall, supervision practices did not show significant relationships with teacher performance and attitudes. However, the study highlighted that directive supervision had a significant relationship with both the attitude and performance of teachers. The study's outcomes may provide insights for policymakers, school administrators, and principals when selecting appropriate supervisory practices to enhance teaching performance. It is important to note that this study focused on performance and supervision as dependent variables, leaving room for further investigation into specific problem areas.

In Thailand, Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2021) investigated the mechanisms within organizations that influence the psychological well-being of employees in institutions affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This study concentrated on those employed in two international higher learning institutions in Thailand who were directly impacted by the pandemic. The study was based on the job-demand resource model of job stress and the social support theory. It aimed to explore the role of supervisor support in explaining the levels of emotional exhaustion and perceived uncertainty experienced by employees due to the pandemic.

The study also examined the effects of supervisors providing support to employees in dealing with problems related to workplace resistance to change. Data for the questionnaires were collected from a sample of 300 employees working in two private international higher learning institutions. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used for data analysis. The findings confirmed that supervisor support had a negative impact on employees' perceived uncertainty and mitigated the impact on emotional exhaustion. The analysis also revealed that the negative effect of supervisor support on employees' perceived uncertainties was only significant for those working in a low resistance working climate, which opens avenues for further study on managerial strategies and teacher performance.

Afzal, Arshad, Saleem, and Farooq (2019) conducted research to investigate the mechanisms underlying the relationship between perceived supervisor support (PSS), turnover intention (TI), and task performance in Pakistan. The study involved administering 304 questionnaires to academic staff at Pakistani universities. The theoretical model was tested using structural

modeling techniques, and mediation analysis was performed with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

The study revealed that PSS had a negative impact on TI through the mediation of self-efficacy. PSS also had a positive influence on task performance through self-efficacy mediation. The findings indicated a direct effect of PSS on employees' task performance. According to the study's results, supervisors need to provide sufficient support to academic staff to enhance their self-efficacy. However, the study did not specify the type of supervisory strategies employed, which the current study addresses.

Onyango, Ampofo, and Ogola (2019) investigated the impacts of direct supervision by school administrators and headteachers on teacher performance in public senior high schools in Ghana. This study utilized a mixed methods design, with a sample size of 617 respondents selected from the Inspectorate Division of Ghana Education Service using various sampling techniques. Data collection involved oral and written questionnaires and interview guides. Data analysis included frequencies, means, multiple regression, and thematic analysis.

The study revealed that school administrators allocated limited time for monitoring lessons and teacher performance. The research indicated that school heads' lesson planning and lesson delivery significantly influenced how teachers performed their roles. The study recommended that the Ghana Education Service promote a strategy for school headteachers that emphasizes effective teacher supervision. Additionally, the study suggested reducing the workload of heads of departments to allow them to focus on instructional supervision. However, the Kenyan context faces challenges of congested classrooms due to the 100% transition from primary to secondary school, making it difficult to reduce teacher workload.

Maldrine and Kiplangat (2020) investigated the relationship between supervision practices and teacher job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nakuru West Sub-County. The study used a correlation research design and was conducted in Nakuru West Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. It was guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and aimed to recruit 326 teachers from nine public secondary schools in Nakuru West Sub-County.

Stratified random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 150 respondents. The study employed structured questionnaires for data collection, which were analyzed using inferential and descriptive statistical methods. The results indicated that supervision practices had little impact on job satisfaction. The study recommended that school administrators and heads create a positive rapport with their teaching staff and allocate more time to supervision.

## Theoretical Framework

The study utilized the Production Function Theory. When we critically examine the production function, it is treated as a mathematical function due to its significance in relation to its role as a source of well-being (Saari, 2011). However, from a mathematical perspective, the focus is usually on the input and output sets. The production function is defined as the maximum output achievable from every possible combination of a given input (Mishra, 2007).

Assuming that the maximum output of a teacher is derived from specific inputs into students without taking into account technological and managerial influences, we explore how available factors can be combined. In the context of service inputs, the production function itself involves a non-monetary relationship between output and inputs. This encompasses the performance of teachers, which can be assessed from various angles,

including teacher-student interactions, class attendance, and time management.

## 3. Methodology

The study utilized a mixed methods approach and employed a descriptive research design. The target population consisted of 404 stakeholders from the public secondary schools in the subcounty, including teachers, principals, BOM members, and education officials in the county. A sample size of 30%, which equates to 121 participants, was recommended.

The research subjects were selected from various categories of stakeholders using a stratified sampling design. The target population and sample size from different strata are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Target Population and Sample Size**

Stratum	Population	Sample	% Sample of Population
1 Principals	15	5	33
2 BOM	150	45	30
3 Teachers	225	67	30
4 County Education officials	14	4	29
Total	404	121	30

Data was collected using questionnaires administered to both the BOM members and teachers, while interviews were conducted with the principals. Additionally, document analysis was employed to gather secondary data from specified documents.

The research instruments were pilot tested with 12 individuals, which accounted for 10% of the total sample, and this was conducted in a neighboring subcounty in Mandera County. To assess the reliability, a half-split method and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient were utilized.

Content validity was ensured by having experts, such as supervisors, assess the items to ensure they accurately matched and represented the concept of school managerial strategies and teacher performance.

In the data analysis process, descriptive statistics were employed to provide descriptions of the phenomenon

under investigation. Measures of relationships, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, were used in the quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data was employed to triangulate the quantitative findings, and findings from interviews and observations were thematically analyzed based on the study's objectives and their respective constructs.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The questionnaire respondents were asked to rate the level priority the principals gave the following in his/her supervisory roles in their school. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages. The results are presented using Table 2.

**Table 2: Influence of supervisory strategies on performance of teachers**

		Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential	Total
Conferencing	F	12	22	31	21	19	105
	%	11.4	21	29.5	20	18.1	100
Impromptu visits	F	17	23	18	25	22	105
	%	16.2	21.9	17.1	23.8	21	100
Reporting channels	F	12	22	20	29	22	105
	%	11.4	21	19	27.6	21	100
Syllabus coverage	F	13	22	24	26	20	105
	%	12.4	21	22.9	24.8	19	100
Class attendance	F	12	22	29	21	21	105
	%	11.4	21	27.6	20	20	100
School Attendance	F	18	24	24	20	19	105
	%	17.1	22.9	22.9	19	18.1	100
Tests setting and administration	F	16	23	20	24	22	105
	%	15.2	21.9	19	22.9	21	100

Table 2 revealed that the largest percentage of the respondents (29.5%) rated conferencing as having a medium level of influence on the performance of teachers. Impromptu visits were considered a high priority by the largest portion of the respondents, accounting for 23.8%. A similar trend was observed in reporting channels, which were rated as a high priority by 27% of the respondents. Syllabus coverage (rated as high priority by 24.8%) and test setting and administration (rated as high priority by 22.9%) also received considerable attention. On the other hand, class attendance and school attendance were rated as having medium priority by the largest percentages of the respondents, accounting for 27.6% and 22.9%, respectively.

These findings suggest that various supervisory strategies employed by principals were evident in public secondary schools in Mandera West Sub-County. These strategies were applied in different ways, with some being considered low priority while others were deemed high priority. Each of these strategies carries distinct advantages.

For instance, impromptu visits, also known as unannounced or surprise visits, can be valuable tools in supervising teachers. While formal and planned observations have their merits, impromptu visits offer unique advantages and serve specific purposes in assessing teacher performance and enhancing overall teaching quality. They provide an unfiltered view of a teacher's typical classroom practices since teachers are unaware of the visit, making it less likely for them to stage or modify their lessons. This allows supervisors to assess teaching in its natural state. Moreover, impromptu visits enable supervisors to provide immediate feedback, as observations can be followed by focused discussions

shortly after the visit while the observations are still fresh in the minds of both parties.

Through interviews, one of the principals pointed out the reason why they used impromptu visit:

*Knowing that impromptu visits may occur at any time encourages teachers to maintain consistent, high-quality teaching practices throughout the school year. This can help establish a culture of accountability. Moreover, impromptu visits can help ensure that all teachers are subject to the same level of scrutiny, reducing potential biases associated with planned observations (KII 01).*

The findings indicate that impromptu visits were commonly used by principals as a supervisory strategy. Concerning syllabus coverage, the study revealed that principals set clear expectations for syllabus coverage at the beginning of the academic year or term. This involved specifying the content to be covered, the pace at which it should be taught, and any relevant deadlines. It was noted that supervising syllabus coverage among teachers by headteachers is a critical aspect of ensuring effective teaching and learning in a school. These findings align with the observations made by Afzal, Arshad, Saleem, and Farooq (2019), who emphasized the pivotal role of supervisors in providing support to academic staff for the development of their self-efficacy.

The role of supervisors in academia is indeed of paramount importance, and providing support to academic staff constitutes one of their core responsibilities. Supervisors often function as mentors to academic staff, especially junior faculty members and early-career researchers. They offer guidance across

various academic domains, including research, teaching, and career advancement. Supervisors play a key role in helping academic staff set and attain their professional objectives and navigate the intricacies of academia. Furthermore, principals and supervisors can assist academic staff in advancing their research pursuits. This assistance may involve offering feedback on research proposals, aiding in securing research funding, and fostering collaborative opportunities. They can also guide staff members in selecting appropriate research methodologies and in publishing their work in reputable academic journals.

Moreover, supervisors support academic staff in their teaching roles. They can provide valuable insights into curriculum development, teaching methodologies, and classroom management. Conducting classroom observations and furnishing constructive feedback are part of their efforts to enhance teaching effectiveness.

Moreover, through the interviews with the principals, it was evident that most of them used peer feedback as well as formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). One posited:

*In my supervisory duties, I encourage teachers to engage in peer observation and provide feedback to one another. Peer collaboration can enhance teaching practices and promote a culture of continuous improvement. I also facilitate the formation of PLCs where teachers collaborate on instructional strategies, share best practices, and collectively solve problems (KII 02).*

Another principal agreed that the use of classroom observation was necessary to supervise teachers in their work. He posited:

*I conduct formal classroom observations to assess teacher performance. I use structured observation tools and checklists to evaluate teaching methods, classroom management, and*

*instructional strategies. I tend to do informal classroom visits to allow administrators to gain a broader understanding of daily classroom dynamics. These visits provide opportunities for real-time feedback and support (KI 04).*

These qualitative findings align with the quantitative results, collectively suggesting that effective supervisory strategies play a crucial role in fostering a supportive and growth-oriented educational environment, benefiting both teachers and students.

The findings are consistent with the results observed in Malaysian secondary schools, where Hoque, Kenayathulla, Subramaniam, and Islam (2020) noted that directive supervision had a significant relationship with the attitudes and performance of teachers. Directive supervision is an approach in education where supervisors provide specific instructions and guidance to teachers regarding their actions in the classroom. It often involves clear directives, expectations, and close monitoring of teachers' activities. The relationship between directive supervision and teacher attitudes and performance can be intricate and context dependent.

Directive supervision can directly influence teacher performance. When supervisors offer clear guidelines and expectations, teachers are more likely to adhere to them, resulting in consistent and predictable classroom practices. This approach can be particularly effective when working with new, inexperienced, or struggling teachers. On the other hand, teachers' attitudes toward directive supervision can vary. Some may value the clarity and support it provides, as it can help them enhance their teaching skills. However, others may perceive directive supervision as overly controlling or intrusive, leading to negative attitudes and resistance.

The questionnaire collected data, which was used to conduct correlation analysis between school managerial strategies and teacher performance in public secondary schools in Mandera subcounty. The results were presented using Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlation Analysis between school managerial strategies and teacher performance**

		1	2
1 Teacher performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	105	
2 Supervisory strategies	Pearson Correlation	0.758	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.108	
	N	105	105

Table 3 indicates a strong positive correlation between teacher performance and supervisory strategies ( $r=0.758$ ). However, the correlation was not found to be significant

( $\alpha=0.108$ ). This finding is reminiscent of the research by Charoensukmongkol and Phungsoonthorn (2021), who discovered that the support provided by supervisors has

a negative impact on employees' perceived uncertainties, subsequently mitigating the aforementioned impact on supervisors' emotional exhaustion.

These results suggest the presence of a complex relationship between teacher performance and supervisory strategies in public secondary schools. The correlation between teacher performance and supervisory strategies is intricate and multifaceted. Teacher performance is influenced by a multitude of factors, one of which includes the strategies employed by school administrators or supervisors to support and assess teachers.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study determined that supervisory strategies had a discernible influence on teacher performance. Notably, impromptu visits were considered a high priority by a significant proportion of respondents, at 23.8%. This pattern was similarly observed for reporting channels (rated as a high priority by 27.0%), syllabus coverage (high priority at 24.8%), and tests setting and administration (22.9% prioritized as high). Public secondary schools in Mandera West subcounty demonstrated a variety of supervisory strategies, with varying degrees of priority.

These diverse strategies offer distinct advantages. The study revealed a robust positive correlation between teacher performance and supervisory strategies ( $r=0.758$ ), albeit with an insignificant level of significance ( $\alpha=0.108$ ).

The study recommends that school principals in public secondary schools in Mandera West subcounty should focus on employing supervisory strategies that have a substantial impact on teacher performance, including improving reporting channels.

For future research, it is suggested to investigate the effectiveness of supervisory strategies on teacher performance in public secondary schools within Mandera West subcounty.

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