



The Barriers that Hinder Effective Implementation of Principals' Instructional Leadership Practices in Schools

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to identify the barriers that hinder effective implementation of instructional leadership practices in schools in public secondary schools in Baringo County, Kenya. The target population was 6901 Form Four students, 1266 teachers, and 140 principals, during the 2017-2020 school years, 6 Sub- County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and 1 County Director of Education. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Stratified random sampling technique was applied to sample 30% of each of the categories of the study populations. The sample consisted of 2,070 students, 380 teachers, 42 school principals, six Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and 1 County Director of Education. The research instruments were questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. Data was analyzed with the aid of SPSS. The quantitative statistics used included frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviations and the results presented using tables and charts. Qualitative data were thematically clustered in relation to the objectives of the study. The study established that the main impediments to principals' instructional leadership practices include inadequate educational infrastructure, big class sizes and overburdened teachers. The study recommended that school principals should ensure that schools are adequately provided with sufficient teaching and learning resources; School principals should make an effort to construct more classrooms in order to reduce the big class sizes and overcrowding in the classrooms. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on instructional leadership and provide recommendations to educators on how to improve instructional leadership in educational institutions.*

Keywords: Barriers, Hinder, Effective, Implementation, Instructional leader

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I. Introduction

Brooks et al., (2019) identified five obstacles which seem to impede and restrict principals from exercising proper dispensation of instructional leadership roles namely: diversified roles and responsibilities, lack of expertise and knowledge of curriculum and instruction, professional norms and a lot of expectations from the education

department. These barriers often hinder instructional leaders from maximizing their abilities.

According to Bush (2020) lack of knowledge and skills of principals is definitely reflected in the performance of learners' outcome. Instructional leaders should be resourceful, healthy, tactful and intelligent. The leadership style adopted by an instructional leader determines the effectiveness with which a goal is achieved. The

principal's instructional leadership style forms a significant attribute which influence teaching and learning and in turn impacts on the level of academic performance achievement.

As argued by Eisenschmidt et al., (2019), it is very hard for instructional leadership roles of principal to be effective because of its ambiguous description of the practice. Ayeni and Adelabu (2012) contend that instructional supervision is faced with challenges such as delay in releasing teachers' observation reports, fault-finding mentality during classroom visitation, lack of discussion of lessons with teachers after the visit, laxity in teacher preparation and record keeping, untimed and unstructured teaching notes and incomprehensive schemes of work

In Ethiopia, Suleyman (2016) study was to identify the main school factors affecting the quality of education in secondary schools of Afder. The data for the study was collected from 240 students (175 Males and 65 Females), 65 teachers (62 Males and 3 Females) and 10 secondary schools principals and vice principals drawn from the five sample schools as well as five supervisors from the five woredas. The findings of the study revealed that, the dominant in-school factors that affect quality of secondary school education in the Zone were Shortage of teaching materials, large number of students in a class and poor in the language of instruction of students. The results of the study also show that to improve quality education, there was need to provide enough teaching materials, change the shift system and minimize the number of students. These are some of the ways to improve quality education.

In Kenya for example free secondary education resulted from political pressure. The politicians had a good agenda of making education free for all children but never took into consideration the repercussions. The idea was implemented in a hurry. The result was that classrooms were flooded with an ever-increasingly large number of students who could not afford to attend school preciously because of financial hurdles. The classes were finally characterized by over enrolment without corresponding provision of resources and the teaching force. This became a big challenge to the government (Republic of Kenya, 2015). The current study is guided by the following question: What obstacles hamper school principals from practicing instructional leadership in Secondary schools in Baringo County?

2. Literature Review

Leithwood et al., (2019) chronicles the role of the school principal from the days of a leader with administrative responsibilities in a school to that of today's principal with a multitude of roles serving at a time in which political

pressure is immense. With the impetus to increase the level of instructional technology use, principals find themselves in a position to serve in a newly capacity as instructional technology leader, while still focusing on traditional roles such as the management of fiscal and human resources, the acquisition and distribution of curricular materials and basic supplies, the instructional leader, the creation and maintenance of a positive tone for student learning and behavior, the implementation and facilitation of school improvements and overall maintenance, the development of business and community partnership, and a myriad of other roles necessitated by the daily rigors of the position.

Fink & Reisnick (2017) contend that principals are faced with the challenge of inadequate training for the element of instructional leadership activities. They hardly find their graduate education to be quite helpful, especially in the part of instructional leadership. They have the feeling that they are not properly acquainted with the role of instructional leaders merely because this skill is not accorded much importance in the formal training of principals in the universities. Eventually training programs for principals place a lot of emphasis on financial management and community relations. Learners' academic results can be best achieved by securing competent and dedicated teachers whose target is to always discharge their duties to the best interest of the learners with minimal supervision.

In addition (UNESCO, 2016) reported that despite efforts and the need to improve learners' outcome in African countries, these nations are still afflicted by inadequacy of resources. This is supported by a study conducted by Parker and Day (2016) contends that teaching and learning is effective only if the necessary resources and facilities are provided which would enable teachers to carry out their tasks appropriately.

Kellough (2018) pointed out that there is need for school principals to pursue professional development agenda in order to retain qualified, competent as well as quality teachers. Once these teachers are recruited, the principal should ensure that the educators do not transfer to another school because of dissatisfaction which will result in competent staff searching for greener pastures. By retaining competent staff, automatically the instructional leader ensures that learners get the best teaching services from the educators and this is reflected in the final outcome of the learners. A vibrant staff development program is vital for ensuring qualified, competent and quality staff is kept abreast of crucial educational changes in the teaching force. It is a challenge for most school principals to maintain the right staff in schools because this depends on the governments' ability to employ more teachers to fill the existing need of more teachers in schools. This is why at times schools are understaffed hence posing a great challenge to principals to provide the proper instructional leadership roles in schools.

Mbatha (2014) identified lack of communication skills as a major barrier to implementation of instructional leadership practices. Communication is a very important tool in which leaders pass messages to the people who work under them. It is through communication that instructional leaders vividly demonstrate the schools' mission, vision, goals, objectives and values. Principals should have the skills necessary to pass information to board members, community members, teachers and students on updating issues pertaining to the curriculum and teaching and learning in school. This explains why school principals should have the knowledge and skills of communication so that they will be able to tell the stakeholders, parents, teachers and students what is expected of them. Effective communication enables the institution to achieve the set-out aims and objectives of the school.

Moreover, Smith and Andrews (2013) stated that principals are always preoccupied with too many unanticipated tasks coupled with disturbances and interruptions from non-instructional activities particularly discipline of students hence not sparing sufficient time to devote to instructional leadership activities in schools. The reason as to why it is difficult to exercise instructional activities in most cases is due to the daily conflict resulting from overburdening demands proliferated by school district which literally rewards principal for excellent managerial activities and fail to recognize the component of instructional leadership.

Van der Merwe (2013) argued that disagreements in organizations and educational institutions tend to obstruct the end planned achievements. A good example is a situation where the priority of the principal is to devote available school funds to equipping the school with teaching and learning resources. On the other hand, the priority of the school board of management is to expand the school's infrastructure to admit and accommodate more students in the school.

According to Mbatha (2014) conflicts significantly destroy the schools' instructional practices, hence affecting the productivity of the principals as instructional leaders due to mistrust, hostility, bitterness and resistance from the respective school boards and even the community. In conclusion, conflicting parties in schools should adopt effective problem-solving techniques to avoid disruption in the smooth running of the activities in schools. Problem solving is at core of all leadership actions geared towards improvement of instructional leadership roles in institutions of learning.

Wenzare (2010) investigated the challenges related to practices of internal supervision instruction in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study concluded that

supervisory skills are not well developed and as such reasonable support and follow-up need to be beefed up and that there was inconsistency and instructional supervisors lacked supervisory skills and competencies. Principals should be able to display profound influence on the teachers by their knowledge and skills by the power of their inbuilt personality, inspiration, competence and emotion. They should cultivate the desire to work through other people inculcate shared values and cultivate acceptance of cooperative goals.

Otunga, Serem and Kindiki (2008) in their study on challenges facing teachers in the African nations noted that teachers in particular work under deplorable conditions. Due to the introduction of free secondary education in 2008, class sizes have grown big. The classes are characterized by overcrowding of students. The teachers are overburdened by heavy workload hence making it difficult for effective teaching and learning to take place. Teachers are faced with difficulties finishing marking assignments and providing feedback to students at the right time. A teacher is also underpaid and in some countries payments for salaries for teachers is delayed for a month which is a factor that kills the morale of the teaching fraternity. In some countries there is a lack of sufficient teachers to handle the various subjects offered in these schools.

According to Brockmeier et al (2015), noted that in today's time of increased access to technology it becomes problematic when the instructional leaders lack computer technology to enable the quick analysis of student performance and to effectively track school activities with modern techniques, considering that the role of the instructional leader is varied. Principals are strategic leaders, organizational leaders, instructional leaders, community leaders, political leaders, and change leaders.

UNESCO (2016) reported that in the African context particularly Kenya, the curriculum in schools is overloaded so that it becomes difficult for teachers to cover the syllabus on time. Many teachers embark on important curriculum elements and concentrate on what they expect to be set in the national examinations. Kenya Education, according to the report, was driven by the performance in national examinations. It does not address issues of instilling knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In a related study in Kenya, Bomett (2011) reported that poor examination results in other instances may be caused by student indiscipline in schools. Failure by stakeholders to address the grievances of students ends up causing expansive destruction to school properties by rioting students. The burden of this destruction is transferred to

parents. Instead of parents supporting school resources, they end up paying for losses because of students' unrest. Examination performance and curriculum supervision will be low unless stakeholders, parents and teachers develop a systematic way of addressing students' plights and providing amicable solution. The current study was carried out in the context Baringo County to establish the hurdles that school principals face in the course of practicing instructional leadership activities in public secondary schools.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The major purpose being to describe the state of affairs as it exists. It involves measurement, classification, analysis comparison and interpretation of data (Orodho, 2009). The data collected was used to describe the nature of existing conditions. For instance, how the Principals'

Instructional Practices were enhancing quality teaching and learning in Secondary Schools in Baringo County.

3.2 Area of Study

The research study was carried out in Baringo County, Kenya which is divided into six Sub-Counties as follows: Baringo Central, Mogotio, Koibatek, Marigat, Tiaty, and Baringo North.

3.3 Target Population

Lior (2012) defines a population as an entire group of people or institutions, events or any other objects of the study that one wants to describe and understand. The target population in this study was 6901 Form Four students, 1266 teachers, and 140 principals, during the 2017-2020 school years, 6 (six) SCQASOs and the County Director of education (CDE) of Baringo County. Table 1 shows the distribution of the target population of the study.

Table 1: Target population

Sub-County	Students	Teachers	Principals	SC-QASOs	CDE
Baringo Central	1613	323	32	1	-
Mogotio	1223	231	26	1	-
Koibatek	1356	283	36	1	-
Marigat	1030	171	16	1	-
Tiaty	522	92	6	1	-
Baringo North	1157	166	24	1	-
Total	6901	1266	140	6	1

Source: Baringo CDE's office (2020).

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Sampling involves selecting a given number of persons from a defined population in such a way that the sample selected is representative of that population (Orodho, 2009). The study selected a sample size which was a representative of the population. Gall and Borg (2007) recommend that in descriptive research, 10-30% of the target population can be chosen as the sample for the study.

Thus, this study selected 30% of each of the categories of the target population (students, teachers, and principals). Out of 140 schools 42(30%) were selected for the study. By using stratified sampling method, the population of schools was divided into strata according to sub-counties. There were six sub-counties, which formed six strata. After stratification of the schools, a simple random sampling technique was used to get the sample from each stratum. This technique ensured that all the elements in the universe had equal chance of being selected as well ensuring greater

representativeness of the entire population and reducing sampling error and enabling greater precision in estimation (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2015).

In order to get a representative sample from each of the categories of respondents, in each stratum, the technique of comparative distribution was followed under which the sample sizes from the diverse strata were set aside proportionately to the sizes of populations in each of the stratum using the procedure below;

$$n = \frac{p}{q} \times \left[\frac{z}{e} \right]^2 \quad (\text{De vaus, 2002})$$

Where:

n = sample size

p = proportion belonging to the specified category

q = proportion belonging to the unspecified category

z = value corresponding to the level of confidence required

e = margin of error

For example, in the case of students in Baringo central sub-county on the table below with $N_1 = 6901$, we have $P_1 = 1613/6901$ and hence $n_1 = n \cdot P = 2070(1613/6901) = 483.83$ which is rounded to 484 students as a sample for Baringo central sub-county. This implies that from a population of 6901 students in the entire county, 484 students formed a proportional sample to the size of the stratum of Baringo central. The same formula was applied to the sample for teachers and principals in each stratum.

The researcher obtained the list of schools in each sub-county (stratum) from the office of the county director of education, Baringo County. In order to select schools from each stratum, a number was assigned to each school. The researcher later used a table of random numbers to draw a sample from the list based on the sub-county the schools were selected. To use the random numbers table, the researcher randomly selected a row as a starting point, and then selected all the numbers that followed in that particular row. The researcher later proceeded to the next rows until the proportionate number of schools was obtained from each stratum. For example, from the list of schools in Baringo central sub-county, out of 32 schools

which were proportionately assigned to this stratum, 10 schools were randomly selected.

The first step was to select the sample of students from each stratum. The lists of students were provided by the principals of each of the selected schools in each stratum. A random number was assigned to each student. Further, the researcher used a table of random numbers to draw a sample from the list based on the sub-county the schools were selected. To use the random numbers table, the researcher randomly selected a row as a starting point, and then selected all the numbers that followed in that particular row. The researcher later proceeded to the next rows until a sample of students assigned to each stratum was obtained. For example, out of 1613 who were proportionately assigned to Baringo central sub-county, 484 students were selected from 10 schools selected from the stratum.

The second step was to select the number of teachers from each stratum. The lists of teachers were provided by the principals of each of the selected schools in each stratum. A random number was assigned to each teacher. Further, the researcher used a table of random numbers to draw a sample from the list based on the sub-county the schools were selected. To use the random numbers table, the researcher randomly selected a row as a starting point, and then selected all the numbers that followed in that row. The researcher later proceeded to the next rows until a sample of teachers proportionately assigned to each stratum was obtained. For example, out of 323 teachers who were proportionately assigned to Baringo central sub-county, 97 teachers were selected from 10 schools selected from the stratum. Principals of each of the selected schools formed the sample for principals. The principals of each of the selected schools formed the sample for the principals. Purposive sampling method was used to select 6 sub county quality assurance and standard officers from each sub-county and the County Director of Education. Purposive sampling was used as a method of extending knowledge by deliberately selecting sample participants who are known to be rich source of data.

Table 2: Sampling Frame

Sub-County	Students		Teachers		Principals		SCQASOs CDE		
	Population sample		population sample		population sample				
Baringo central	1613	484	323	97	32	10	1	-	
Mogotio	1223	367	231	69	26	8	1	-	
Koibatek		1356	406	283	85	36	10	1	-
Marigat	1030	309	171	51	16	5	1	-	
Tiatiy		522	157	92		28	6	2	1 -
Baringo North		1157	347	166		50	24	7	1 -
Total		6901	2070	1266	380	140	42	6	1

Source: Field Data

Table 2 indicates that out of a total population of 6901 students, 2070(30%) formed the sample. Out of a total population of 1266 teachers, 380(30%) formed the sample for the study. The proportionate samples which were picked from each stratum are also shown. The sample for the students is 2070 divided by the schools selected which is 42. Therefore 49 students were selected from each of the sampled schools. The sample for teachers is 380 divided by 42 selected schools which comes to 9 teachers to be picked from every selected school. Purposive sampling method was used to select 6 sub county quality assurance and standard officers from each sub-county and CDE of Baringo County.

3.4 Research Instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were utilised as the research instruments for collection of primary data.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

After all the data had been collected, data cleaning followed for the purposes of identifying any incomplete, inaccurate or unreasonable data for the purpose of improving on quality through correction of detected errors and omissions. The data collected for this study were analysed using quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis describes patterns and general trends in the data sets and is used to examine or explore one variable at a time (Serem et al., 2013). The descriptive statistics used included frequencies, means, percentages and standard deviation respectively. Quantitative data were presented using tables and charts. The descriptive analysis was appropriate for this study because it involved the description, analysis and

interpretation of circumstances prevailing at the time of study.

Regarding qualitative data, responses were thematically clustered in relation to the objectives of the study. Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend thematic analysis for its ability to help identify, analyse, and report on patterns (themes) of data, as well as for its ability to potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data. Thematic analysis goes beyond descriptions by interpreting various aspects of the research topic.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Barriers of Instructional Leadership Activities

The objective of the study was to identify the barriers that hinder effective implementation of instructional leadership roles of principals in schools.

4.1.1 Views of the participants (students, teachers and principals) on Barriers of Instructional Leadership Practices

Participants (students, teachers, and principals) were asked to provide their views on the obstacles facing principals while dispensing their instructional supervisory roles in schools. The research study was guided by the following question: What are the obstacles that hinder principals while dispensing their instructional supervisory roles in schools? Based on a Likert scale where very frequent = 1, Frequent = 2, Moderate = 3, Less frequent = 4 and not at all = 5.

Figure 1 below shows a summary of the combined average scores of the responses of participants (students, teachers and principals).

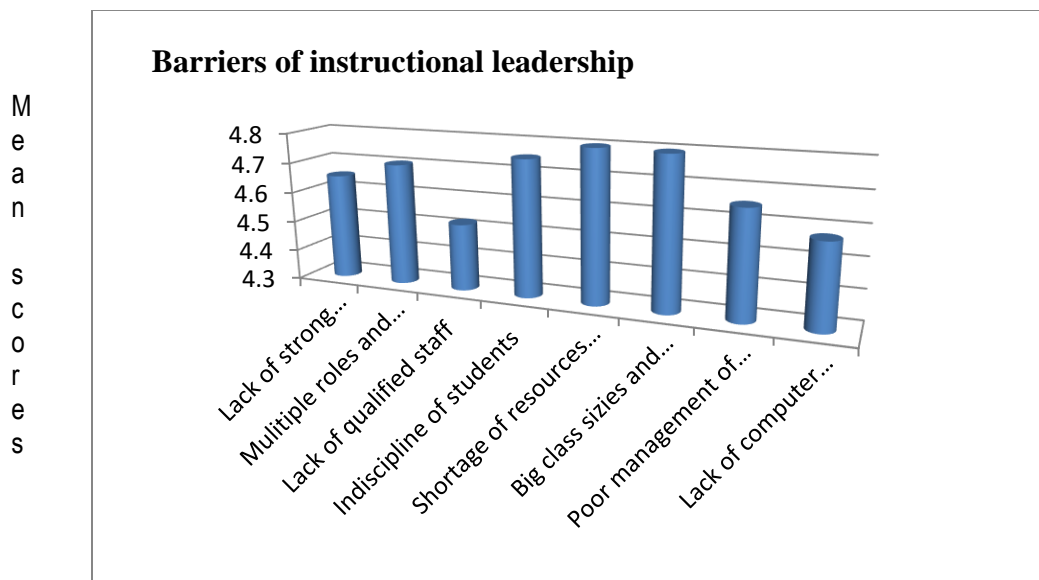


Figure 1: Summary of combined mean scores of the views of participants on barriers of instructional leadership in schools.

Results in figure 1 above shows that shortage of resources was rated as the most frequent (4.8) barrier, followed closely by big class sizes and overburdened teachers since all the combined mean scores were above 4.5. This concurs with Suleyman (2016) study in Ethiopia which revealed that the dominant school factors that affect quality of secondary school education in the region were shortage of teaching materials, large number of students in a class. The results of the study also show that to improve quality education, there was need to provide enough teaching materials, change the shift system and minimize the number of students. These are some of the ways to improve quality education. Similarly, UNESCO (2016) reported that despite efforts and the need to improve learners' outcome in African countries, these nations are still afflicted by inadequacy of resources. This is supported by a study conducted by Parker and Day (2016) contends that teaching and learning is effective only if the necessary resources and facilities are provided which would enable teachers to carry out their tasks appropriately.

4.1.2 Responses of education officers (SCQASOs) and County Director of Education (CDE) on Barriers of Instructional Leadership Activities

The Research Question sought the views of Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) and County Director of Education (CDE) on barriers that hinder effective implementation of instructional leadership activities in public secondary schools.

From the interviews with the education officers their verbatim were analyzed manually. Based on the reports of the interviews, some of the obstacles which school principals in schools include lack of experience and ability to be an instructional leader in order to manage instructional activities in schools. Moreover, participant education officers cited lack of expertise and knowledge of curriculum as a great impediment to effective implementation of instructional activities in schools. The management of an educational institution demands knowledge, skills and attitudes that would enable the educational manager to work effectively. This aligns with a study by Fink & Reisnick (2017) contend that principals are faced with the challenge of inadequate training for the element of instructional leadership activities. They hardly find their graduate education to be quite helpful, especially

on the part of instructional leadership. They have the feeling that they are not properly acquainted with the role of instructional leaders merely because this skill is not accorded much importance in the formal training of principals in the universities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that school principals are unable to discharge their mandate as instructional leaders since schools are afflicted by inadequacy of teaching and learning resources. In addition, the classrooms were characterized by over-enrolment and congestion of students, hence placing a big burden of work load for teachers.

5.2 Recommendation

1. There is need for school principals to mobilise parents and the ministry of education to support schools in the provision of teaching and learning resources.
2. There is need for the Ministry of Education to place strong emphasis on staffing of schools to reduce the work load of teachers.

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