

The Impact of Collaborative Peer Supervisory Competencies on Enhancing Instructional Supervision for English Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract

Professional development of teachers is a fundamental element in ensuring effective and impactful learning experiences for students. Central to this development is instructional supervision, a process aimed at improving teaching practices. Collaborative Peer Supervision (CPS) has emerged as a promising model, fostering a culture of mutual support and continuous growth among teachers through peer observation and feedback. This study therefore, sought to establish the extent to which teachers of English are equipped with collaborative peer supervisory competencies, to enable them utilize collaborative peer supervision (CPS) model, in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study was guided by Social Learning Theory proposed by Albert Bandura. The study adapted the Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design. The target population was 417 English teachers from public secondary schools in Kakamega county. Yamane formula was used to calculate the sample size of 286 teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents. The questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect the data. Reliability and validity of questionnaires was tested by conducting a pilot study. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while Qualitative data was analyzed thematically using NVIVO12 Software. The findings showed that there exists a positive relationship between supervisory knowledge and skills and teacher effectiveness ($\beta = .316$, $p < 0.05$). The positive association suggests that teachers who possess greater supervisory knowledge and skills tend to be more effective in their teaching roles. As educational systems continually strive for improved teacher performance and student achievement, the importance of investing in teacher training and development programs centered on enhancing supervisory skills becomes increasingly evident.

Keywords: Collaborative peer supervisory competencies, collaborative peer supervision, instructional supervision, English language, teachers

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Competing interests: The authors have declared that no competing interests exist

Introduction

Education is widely seen as a fundamental pillar of human advancement and societal advancement, shaping individuals, communities, and nations (Boni & Walker, 2016; Ben Hassen, 2022; Rieckmann, 2018). However, education is subject to constant evolution driven by advancements in pedagogical research, changes in technology, and the ever-growing complexity of global challenges (Becker et al., 2018; Goldin & Katz, 2007). In response to these changes, instructional supervision for teachers in schools has emerged as a critical mechanism to enhance teaching quality, foster professional development, and ultimately improve student performance (Wanzare, 2012; Musundire & Dreyer, 2019; Iroegbu & Etudor-Eyo, 2016).

The concept of instructional supervision has roots in the early 20th century, gaining prominence as educational systems recognized the need for structured oversight to ensure effective teaching (Glanz, 2018; Pajak & Arrington, 2004; Wanzare, 2012). Instructional supervision encompasses a range of systematic processes designed to support and guide teachers in their pursuit for excellence in the classroom. It involves constructive feedback, collaborative reflection, and targeted interventions aimed at refining instructional strategies and methodologies (DiPaola & Hoy, 2013). The significance of instructional supervision extends beyond mere oversight, evolving into a collaborative partnership that empowers teachers to navigate the complexities of contemporary education (Zepeda, 2013).

Beach and Reinhartz (2000) perceived instructional supervision as a procedure designed to address instruction, offering teachers feedback on their teaching practices with the aim of enhancing instructional skills to elevate performance. Wanzare and da Costa (2000) asserted that the primary objective of instructional supervision is to concentrate on enhancing teachers' instructional abilities, thereby fostering an improvement in student academic achievement.

Usman (2015) studied how instructional supervision affects secondary school students' academic progress in Nigeria. Instructional supervision practises like checking teacher record-keeping, lesson plans and notes, classroom visits, and student notebooks are significantly correlated with student academic performance and teacher effectiveness. Effective teaching practises positively affect students' academic performance, according to the study. Further, Alimi and Akinfolarin (2012) conducted research to investigate the impact of specific instructional supervisory approaches on the academic achievements of students in Nigeria. The investigation demonstrated a notable correlation between these actions and the students' academic achievements. This suggests that inadequate supervision of teachers could lead to ineffective instruction, adversely impacting the academic outcomes of students.

In Kenya, instructional supervision has often been seen as the main vehicle through which to improve teaching and learning in schools, with headteachers as instructional supervisors. In Kenya, Wanzare (2012) conducted research on instructional supervision in public secondary schools, revealing that it played a role in enhancing students' academic performance in national examinations and contributed positively to the overall results of the schools. Ayeni (2012) argues that the responsibilities carried out by supervisors in instructional supervision encompass monitoring teachers' attendance during lessons, ensuring the thorough preparation of lesson notes, and verifying the sufficiency of both the scheme of work and record of work. Nonetheless, according to Sibanda, Mutopa & Maphosa, (2011) instructional supervision encounters challenges, including delays in releasing teachers' observation reports, a fault-finding mentality during classroom visits, a lack of post-visit discussion of lessons with teachers, teacher laxity in preparation and record-keeping, and the presence of untimed and unstructured teaching notes, as well as incomplete schemes of work. Collaborative Peer Supervision (CPS) has emerged as an innovative and potentially

effective model that encourages teachers to collectively engage in the observation and feedback processes (Thomasgard & Collins, 2003; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). CPS is a professional development approach that promotes peer-to-peer observation, feedback, and support among teachers (Hamilton, 2013; Thurlings, 2012). This collaborative model aims to enhance teaching practices, improve teacher effectiveness, and ultimately contribute to better student learning outcomes (Graham, 2007; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). The potential benefits of collaborative peer supervisory competencies, wherein teachers actively engage in the supervision process with their peers, remain underexplored globally and in Kenya. This study therefore, sought to establish the extent to which teachers of English are equipped with collaborative peer supervisory competencies, to enable them utilize collaborative peer supervision (CPS) model, in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Theoretical framework

Social Learning Theory

The social learning theory by Bandura (1977) emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Bandura & Walters, 1977). The theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences (Devi, Khandelwal & Das, 2017; Bandura, 2014). In collaborative peer supervisory practices, English teachers have the opportunity to observe and learn from their peers' instructional strategies, classroom management techniques, and effective teaching methodologies. Through this observational learning, teachers can acquire new skills and refine their instructional practices.

The theory suggests that teachers are more likely to imitate and adopt these behaviors when they observe positive outcomes, creating a cycle of continuous improvement in instructional practices within the school community

(Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018; Zhou & Brown, 2015). In the context of collaborative peer supervision, teachers' behaviors and instructional practices are influenced by their interactions with peers, the feedback they receive, and the overall school environment. This reciprocal determinism fosters a collaborative culture where the learning process is continuous and adaptive.

Empirical review

According to Pajak (2003), supervision is the process of ensuring that tasks, activities, or locations are carried out appropriately through the act of monitoring them. As an aspect of the administrative process, supervision aims to provide guidance for the daily operations of the work group by motivating, directing, and coordinating the employees and their activities, as well as fostering positive professional relationships among them in order to facilitate a more streamlined pursuit of the task objective (Archibong, 2012; Mprah & Firempong, 2018; Amough & Odeh, 2018; Yilma, 2018).

Assefa Ekyaw (2014) and Yilma (2018) views instructional supervision as the actions that enable teachers to improve the quality of instructions for students and as an act of improving the quality of instructions for students and that improves relationships and meets both personal and organizational needs. According to Archibong (2012) instructional supervision as a collaborative effort involving a set of activities designed to improve the teaching and learning process. The purpose of supervision is not to find fault or to punish, but rather to work cooperatively with the teacher.

Research conducted in Kenya has examined the impact of instructional supervision on students' academic performance. In a study conducted by Mavindu (2013) focusing on the influence of principals' instructional supervision practices on students' performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) in Trans-Mara West District, it was found that instructional supervision has a positive effect on the academic performance of students in the KCSE.

In a separate investigation conducted by Too, Kimutai, and Kosgei (2012) on the influence of head teachers' supervision of teachers on students' academic performance, it was disclosed that supervision exhibited a positive correlation with the overall mean scores in KCSE examinations for the schools. The study put forth the suggestion that head teachers should enhance their supervision of teachers to facilitate improved performance in KCSE examinations. The outcomes and recommendations from this research contribute valuable insights to initiatives aimed at enhancing teacher supervision in Kenyan secondary schools.

Instructional supervisors face many challenges as they carry out their instructional roles in the schools. The challenges range from material resources, professionalism, management of staff and inter-relationship. In a study by Samoei (2015) focusing on the instructional supervisory responsibilities of principals and their impact on academic achievement in public secondary schools in Nandi North District, Nandi County, Kenya, it was found that instructional supervision played a significant role in enhancing students' academic performance. Nevertheless, principals encountered major challenges, including financial constraints, insufficient staffing, a high turnover of teachers, and interpersonal difficulties. The study suggested a recommendation that principals allocate sufficient time for instructional supervision within schools.

Other research highlighted challenges faced by instructional supervisors, including issues in appointing suitable officers, absence of supervision manuals (Assefa Ekyaw, 2014; Abera, 2020), financial and resource constraints (Ts, 2022; Ashun, 2022; Abera, 2020), resistance from teachers due to a lack of awareness (Terra & Berhanu, 2019), heavy workloads for headteachers (Rotich, 2014; Rashid, 2016) and supervisors, and inadequate training for supervisors (Umar, Hauwa'u & Nura, 2017).

The collaborative supervision approach integrates both directive and non-directive

supervisory orientations, with active participation and shared responsibilities between supervisors and teachers. It operates on the fundamental principle that learning is a partnership between educators and students. Research suggests that collaborative supervision involves peer observation, feedback, reflective discussions, and joint planning. Wiyono et al. (2015) demonstrated that emphasizing enthusiasm and humanistic principles in collaborative supervision can impact teacher competence. However, the study noted that not all collaborative supervision techniques effectively enhance teacher competency. Notably, there is a gap in research linking supervision approaches, techniques, performance-based learning models, and student achievement.

Several studies have explored the impact of collaborative supervision on teacher professional development. Wiyono, Rasyad & Maisyaroh (2021) found that teachers engaged in collaborative supervision reported increased self-efficacy, greater instructional adaptability, and improved student engagement. The ongoing dialogue and shared reflections inherent in collaborative supervision contribute to a continuous cycle of improvement (Coimbra et al., 2020).

The greatest advantage of peer evaluation is that it can improve teacher performance (Ban & Soudah, 1978). Teachers have the professional opportunity to make recommendations for instructional improvement as well as receive recommendations that will stimulate their own teaching, which, in turn promotes staff development and improves the quality of public education. When teachers are involved in peer evaluation, administrators have additional time to devote to problem areas, incompetent teachers and general administrative duties (Winoyo, 2021). The author notes that principals will have more time to devote to these functions as peer assessment replaces traditional evaluations.

Methodology

The study adopted the Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design. The target population was 417 English teachers from public secondary schools in Kakamega County. Using Yamane formula, a sample size of 286 English teachers was arrived at. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents who participated in the stud. Structured questionnaire and interview guide was used to collected the data from English language departmental head. A pilot study was conducted in Bungoma county to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. Content validity was assessed to determine the validity, while reliability was evaluated through the use of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, resulting in an Alpha value of 0.87, indicating a high level of reliability. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and regression analyses, while Qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically using NVIVO12 Software, and were presented thematically, by way of verbatim quotes as expressed by the participants` responses, and researcher commentaries.

Results

Teachers engagement in CPS supervisory activities in their schools

The teachers were asked how often they engage in supervisory activities, which are

classified as CPS supervisory activities in the literature. Results in Table 1 show how often the teachers of English engage in CPS supervisory activities. The results show that (91.0%, n=223) of the teachers cooperate to set and mark examinations, (78.8%, n=193) cooperate to make schemes of work. Teachers engaged in team teaching were 75.9% (n= 186) and those engaged in discussions/informal talks were 78.4%(n=192). On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being never/seldom and 5 being often/very often), the results showed a mean of 4.6 (SD=0.7) for those cooperating to set and mark examinations (implying they often engage).

In terms of peer observation, 50.2% (n=123) are often engaged and 39.2% (n=96) are occasionally engaged. Benchmarking was seldom used as a supervisory activity as reported by 46.9% of the teachers of English. The teachers who reported that they occasionally engaged in seminar and conferences were 44.5% (n=109). Overall results indicated that most teachers of English often engage in supervisory activities (Mean=3.7, SD=0.6). This implied that they were competent in using the Collaborative Peer Supervision approach since they had the knowledge and skills required as indicated by their frequency of engaging in supervision approaches. These findings are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: English teachers' engagement in CPS supervisory activities

	Never/Seldom		Occasionally		Often/Very often		Mean	SD
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Peer observation	26	10.6	96	39.2	123	50.2	3.6	1.1
Team Teaching	13	5.3	46	18.8	186	75.9	4.2	1.0
Cooperating to make schemes of work	29	11.8	23	9.4	193	78.8	4.1	1.2
Cooperating to set and mark examinations	5	2.0	17	6.9	223	91.0	4.6	0.7
Discussions/informal talks	11	4.5	42	17.1	192	78.4	4.2	0.9
Benchmarking	115	46.9	67	27.3	63	25.7	2.7	1.3
Workshops/Seminars/Conferences	65	26.5	109	44.5	71	29.0	2.4	0.8
Training	94	38.4	96	39.2	55	22.4	2.8	1.2
Overall							3.7	0.6

Regression analysis for the relationship between supervisory knowledge and skills and teachers' effectiveness

A simple linear regression model was also used to determine if a relationship exists

between supervisory knowledge and skills, and teacher effectiveness. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Regression results on supervisory skills and teacher's effectiveness

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
	(Constant)	2.966	.224		13.230	.000
1	Supervisory knowledge & skills	.316	.060	.319	5.251	.000

As shown in Table 2, the model had a positive outcome with a coefficient of 0.316. The outcome was also positive and statistically significant with an associated p-value of <0.001. This shows that there exists a positive relationship between supervisory knowledge and skills and teacher effectiveness. The regression coefficient implies that a unit increase in

supervisory knowledge and skills would improve the teacher's effectiveness by 0.316 units.

Model summary

The model summary was used to show the performance of the model. R-squared shows the proportion of variation in teacher effectiveness that is explained by supervisory knowledge and skills. Table 3 below is a summary of the model.

Table 3: Supervisory skills and teacher's effectiveness model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.319 ^a	.102	.098	.58217

a. Predictors: (Constant), Supervisory knowledge & skills

The result as shown in table 3, indicated that 10.2% of the variance between teacher effectiveness and supervisory knowledge and skills is explained by the model's output. However, the qualitative findings on teacher CPS knowledge and skills were contrary. The HODs were asked if teachers were trained on the use of CPS in the department. From their responses, it came out that, though some teachers undergo capacity building through workshops and seminars, these were not supervision courses, but rather general capacity building programs, and that there was a need for more thorough training to equip them with requisite knowledge and skills to handle CPS. This, therefore, revealed that those schools, whose teachers of English are practicing CPS in their departments to supervise

each other, do not have the requisite CPS supervisory skills and knowledge gained through training to enable them to competently carry out CPS. They also recommended training for teachers to handle CPS efficiently, as evidenced in the following verbatim quotes:

“Yes, we normally have workshops, for example, you have, what to call the jet family, we have quite several National Schools, which we normally meet. We normally go there for training like we did the last term, we congregated in Butere Girls, we were there all English teachers, and we were taken through the curriculum afresh with experts in various areas. -[HOD 24].

“There is a bit of training but it is not thorough. “The principal normally allows us to attend workshops. There are several workshops where we went like for example there are examiners of different papers like for paper one, paper two and three. For example, the previous one was an examiner of a paper one, so he shared with us and after sharing with us we come back here and also share”. [HOD 8]

Therefore, the findings are that, despite engaging in CPS supervisory activities in the departments as revealed by the quantitative results, teachers of English do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out the CPS approach to supervision. There is a need for them to be trained specifically on how to handle the CPS approach, to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills to handle CPS.

Discussion

The study sought to establish the supervisory knowledge and skills that English Language teachers possess, to fully utilize the Collaborative Peer Supervision approach in supervising the teaching of English in public secondary schools. The Quantitative results indicated that most of the teachers of English often engage in CPS supervisory activities (Mean=3.7, SD=0.6). This implied that they were competent in using the Collaborative Peer Supervision approach since they had the knowledge and skills required as indicated by their frequency of engaging in supervision activities.

These findings are consistent with those of Napwora et al. (2017), who established that coaching, peer observation, team teaching, departmental professional meetings, discussions/informal talks, co-operating to make schemes of work, co-operating to set and mark exams, seminars, workshops, conferences, action research, benchmarking, journal writing among others are some forms of collaborative supervision activities that were frequently used

in secondary schools. These findings are also in agreement with those of (Von Bergen et al., 2014) who established that teachers engaged frequently in rotatory peer supervision, a feature of CPS, which enhanced their professional development through supervising each other’s classes. The teachers were trained on offering supervisory feedback, which is not the case with this study, as revealed by the qualitative results that teachers are not specifically trained on CPS supervisory competencies.

Similarly, (Winoyo, et al. 2021) studied the effect of the CPS Approach and Collegial supervision techniques on teacher performance, and identified supervision techniques as teaching demonstrations, workshops, training, upgrading and discussions, as the most significant determinants of teacher performance. Another study by (Gitonga, 2018), investigated teachers’ perceptions of instructional supervisory competencies of Quality Assurance & Standards Officers (QASOs), and identified, human relations competencies; technical competencies; and conceptual competencies, as the most significant supervisory competencies. (Zachariah, 2013), observed that supervisors need to demonstrate competencies in teaching subjects.

Therefore, the above-cited studies resonate with the findings of this study, in that, teachers of English, who participated in the study engaged in the supervisory activities that demonstrate the cited supervisory competencies. Similarly, Canh, 2014; Ochieng’ Ong’ondo and Borg, (2011); Shah and Harthi (2014) found that classroom/ lesson observation was the most common form of observation used in the supervision of teachers in secondary schools, and was a major tool that supervisors use to examine teachers’ knowledge and their competency in instructional strategies and practices, and the provision of the necessary assistance to improve instruction. The researchers concluded that classroom observation was preferred because of its ability to measure general teaching practices or subject-specific techniques and that it can occur once or several times a year.

However, the qualitative findings on teacher CPS knowledge and skills were contrary. The HODs were asked if teachers were trained on the use of CPS in the department. From their responses, it came out that, though some teachers undergo capacity building programs through workshops, seminars and training, these were not supervision courses, but rather general capacity building programs, and that there was a need for more thorough training to equip them with the requisite knowledge and skills to handle CPS. This, therefore, revealed that those schools where teachers of English are practicing CPS in their departments do not have CPS supervisory competencies gained through training. They also recommended training for teachers to handle CPS efficiently.

Therefore, the findings are that, despite engaging in CPS supervisory activities in the departments as revealed by the quantitative results, teachers of English do not have the requisite knowledge and skills to carry out the CPS approach to supervision. There is a need for them to be trained specifically on how to handle the CPS approach, if it is to be introduced in schools.

Subject-based model for peer evaluation

The researcher has developed a subject-based peer evaluation model anchored on CPS principles. This model is a high breed version of the researcher's own ideas informed by the study findings, and the literature adduced from (Dornbusch et al.1975; Roper and Hoffman, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1986).

This model should follow six simple steps, guided by the HOD, as shown:

1. Sensitization drive-by HoS: creating rapport with teachers, and explaining the benefits of the model.
2. Conference with teachers: setting of subject goals based on the syllabus, professional records, timelines etc.
3. Consensus- building on the expectations of supervision focus during classroom observation, and assigning of supervision pairs by HODs. The pairs reciprocate

roles (they switch supervisor/supervisee roles), as necessary.

4. Pre-class meeting: they meet and agree on the parameters and scope of supervision, and areas to focus on during class observation, as informed by the English syllabus.
5. Class observation
6. Post-class meeting for feedback, and agree on an improvement plan. This should form the basis of the next classroom visit.

(Source- the researcher).

The model has no provision for student assessment of the teacher, since learners have no evaluative competencies and also, they may be very subjective in their judgements. This model will ensure teachers' positive perception of CPS, and, if the teachers are trained on CPS supervisory competencies, it should translate into effective teacher supervision, effective teaching, and improved learner achievement. At the end of the term, the HOD can then use the peer supervision records to appraise the teachers in the department, as required by the TSC, which should allay fears of witch hunt.

Conclusion and recommendation

The study concluded that teachers of English in public secondary schools in Kenya, are not being effectively supervised because they do not have CPS competencies to enable them carry out CPS approach to supervision, which has been found effective. in order for (ToE) to fully adopt CPS model, they need to be skilled with appropriate competencies through special training to enable them supervise each other collaboratively. The study recommends the development of capacity building programs on CPS supervisory competencies for ToE through formal training, and also, workshops and seminars,

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