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Skills and attributes of instructional supervisors: Experience from Kenya

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In recent years, instructional supervision has been given a great deal of attention in teacher education professional literature. However, few reported studies have specifically focused on desired qualities of instructional supervisors, especially in Third World countries. This paper reports the perceptions of teachers, headteachers and senior government education officers regarding skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors in public secondary schools in Kenya. Findings indicated the following major desired skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors: (a) ability to lead by example; (b) high integrity; (c) knowledge about delegation; (d) knowledge about public relations; (e) supervisory skills; and (f) competence in teaching subjects. In addition, headteachers, as instructional supervisors, should be qualified and experienced teachers. The reported findings are part of a large-scale qualitative and quantitative survey research undertaken in Kenya to determine the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior government education officers regarding the practices of internal instructional supervision and staff development in Kenyan public secondary schools.

Key words: Instructional leadership, instructional supervision, supervisor skills and attributes, quality assurance

INTRODUCTION

Instructional leadership has been discussed increasingly in teacher education literature over the years; has been a key subject in many professional development conferences, workshops, and seminars; and has received a great deal of attention and interest among school administrators (Glickman et al., 2009; Young and King, 2002; Zepeda, 2003). The major reason for the increased interest in instructional leadership, as Hallinger and Heck (1996) noted, relates to its central role in determining school effectiveness.

A review of the literature indicates varying definitions of the term *instructional leadership*. For example, Blasé and Blasé (1999, citing Smith and Andrews, 1989) defined instructional leadership as a blend of several tasks, such as supervision of classroom instruction, staff development, and curriculum development. Furthermore,

Hallinger (2008) and Hallinger and Heck (1996) cited three dimensions of instructional leadership, namely, defining the school mission, managing the instructional programs, and promoting a positive school learning climate.

A major sub-set of instructional leadership relates to instructional supervision (Blasé and Blasé, 2004), defined as the process through which the principal attempts to work with teachers and other staff members cooperatively to improve teaching and learning in the school (Drake and Roe, 2003). According to Wanzare (2012), instructional supervision embraces all activities that are directed specifically toward establishment, maintenance, and improvement of teaching and learning process in schools.

The individuals who function in supervisory positions in

the school, who provide leadership to teachers, and who have the primary responsibility for working with teachers to increase the quality of student learning through improved instruction, are referred to as *instructional supervisors*, and may include principals (headteachers), assistant principals, specialist consultants, curriculum directors, instructional lead teachers, departmental heads, and master teachers (Beach and Reinhartz, 2000; Glickman et al., 2004; Wanzare, 2012).

The literature suggests that school principals are the chief instructional leaders of their schools whose leadership role is central to establishing and maintaining an effective school (Glickman et al., 2009; Sergiovanni, 2001). In Kenya, the headteacher's role relative to instructional leadership includes the following (Ministry of Education, 1987; Olembo et al., 1988; Wekesa, 1993): (a) monitoring teachers' work by referring to their schemes of work, lesson notes, records of work done, and pupils' exercise books; and also by actual visits to classrooms to see the work of individual teachers; (b) selecting subjects appearing in the school curriculum so as to ensure a well-balanced education; (c) teaching a reasonable teaching load as a way of being in touch with the actual teaching and learning situation in the school; and (d) maintaining a visible presence in the school.

The research findings of Adhola (1985), who surveyed the role of Kenyan secondary school headteachers in the 1980s, underscore the importance of the headteacher's instructional leadership role. His findings revealed that supervision of instruction is one of the major functions of the headteacher. These findings are also consistent with the effective school literature which puts a great deal of emphasis on instructional leadership role of the school principal in effective schools. Tausere (1990), for example, in a study that examined leadership training needs of secondary principals in Fiji, concluded that effective schools are the result of effective principals who demonstrate strong instructional leadership by creating positive school climate conducive to teaching and learning and by knowing how to manage time and people efficiently and effectively.

A survey of the literature shows that instructional supervisors must be highly skilled in their supervisory responsibilities. As Oliva and Pawlas (2004) noted, a supervisor must have a wide repertoire of knowledge, skills, and techniques to fulfill the various supervisory tasks to which they are called.

Among the major skills required of instructional supervisors include the following (Chell, 1995; Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Stronge, 1998; Wiles and Bondi, 2004): (a) interpersonal skills, which include those of communication, motivation, decision making, problem solving, and conflict management; (b) technical skills, which include ways to approach goal setting, assessment, planning, instructional observation, and research and evaluation; (c) information skills; (d) human relations skills, the ability to work with and through others in a

morally elevating way; (e) administrative skills (influencing, recording); (f) skills for managing change; (g) self-awareness skills; and (h) conceptual skills, the ability to see the big picture to imagine, to speculate, and to envisage change.

In a study that investigated the in-service teachers' perceptions of the importance for instructional supervisors to possess content knowledge in the areas that they supervised in Maryland School District, US, Debra (1995) reported that teachers strongly supported the premise that supervisors should be content specialists in the content areas they observed.

To prepare school administrators, especially principals, for an instructional supervisory role, pre-training programs should incorporate courses in instructional supervision. However, as noted by Oliva and Pawlas (2004), pre-service training never prepares principals fully for the realities of a principalship; and, as a result, most of the learning about principalship in general, and supervisory skills and abilities specifically can be acquired through on-the-job training; for example, by participating with groups of teachers in drafting plans for various activities or in writing curriculum guides.

In recent years, the Kenyan government, through various official documents, has emphasized the need to improve teaching and learning in secondary schools through instructional supervision. For example, *The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond* (Republic of Kenya, 1988; referred to hereafter as the *Kamunge Report*) has emphasized that supervisory and advisory services for secondary schools be identified to increase the quality of teachers.

In this study, internal instructional supervision refers to supervision conducted by school-based supervisors, such as headteachers, heads of departments, and subject heads, who are based within the institution in which supervision takes place. In recent years, the government of Kenya, through various official documents (Ministry of Education, 1987; Republic of Kenya, 1988) has expressed the need to facilitate internal or school-based school supervision to supplement the work done by external supervisors from the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (formerly known as the Inspectorate).

According to Lodiaga (1995), moves toward school-based arrangements relative to supervision of teaching are more cost effective than maintaining a team of external school inspectors who cannot function effectively. Furthermore, the involvement of school-based supervisors ensures that all schools will be inspected simultaneously, thus making it possible to make meaningful comparisons across schools (Wanzare, 2002).

The involvement of headteachers in instructional supervision is particularly crucial. According to Sergiovanni (200), headteachers may be in a position to observe both the instructional activity of the teachers and the

learning activities of the students. In a study of the headteacher's instructional achievement in secondary schools in Vihiga District, Kenya, Musungu and Nasongo (2008) concluded that effective supervision of teachers by their principals is necessary if the teachers are to remain productive.

In Kenya, headteachers, as instructional supervisors, perform both summative and formative evaluations of their teachers. This dual function of the headteachers impacts on their own perceptions regarding practices and procedures of internal instructional supervision and their degree of satisfaction with practices. Undoubtedly, this dual function also impacts on teachers' perceptions about practices of instructional supervision and staff development.

For the purposes of this study, senior education officers include the Director of Quality Assurance and Standards (formerly known as Chief Inspector of Schools), Provincial Directors of Education (PDsE), District Education Officers (DEOs), and Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) (formerly known as Inspectors of Schools). Supervisory practices include practices employed by instructional supervisors as they work with teachers, for example, observing classroom teaching, and holding conferences with teachers.

In the Kenyan context, *school* "means any institution in which not less than ten pupils receive regular instruction, or an assembly of not less than ten pupils for the purpose of receiving regular instruction" (Republic of Kenya, 1980, p. 5), while the term *secondary school* refers to the second level of the 8 -- 4 -- 4 system of formal education and involves four years of instruction -- forms 1 to 4. Secondary education "prepares young people between ages 14 - 17 years for higher education, training, and the world of work" (Ministry of Education, 1994, p. 47). According to the Ministry of Education, secondary schools which are developed, equipped, and provided with staff from public funds by the Government, parents, and communities, are regarded as public schools.

In this study, skills refer to special proficiencies or expertness that instructional supervisors need to conduct instructional supervision, such as communication skills, observation skills, and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, attributes include qualities or characteristics that instructional leaders need to execute their instructional leadership roles effectively, for example, abilities to analyze teaching effectiveness, to do long-term planning, and to analyze complex problems.

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the current state of internal instructional supervisory practices and procedures in Kenyan public secondary schools from the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior government education officers. The degree to which headteachers, teachers, and senior education officers perceive the current state of internal instructional Supervision in secondary schools as credible will illuminate the

current state of the art.

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. Determine the purposes, foci, and practices of internal instructional supervision;
2. Determine the documents and guidelines regarding internal instructional supervision provided by the Ministry of Education;
3. Explore the actual and needed skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors;
4. Determine staff development programs for teachers and headteachers; and
5. Establish changes needed to improve internal instructional supervision practices and procedures.

The study sought to answer the following five specific research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior government education officers regarding the purposes, foci, and practices of internal instructional supervision?
2. What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior education officers regarding documents and guidelines on internal instructional supervision provided by the Ministry of Education?
3. What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior government education officers regarding the actual and needed skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors?
4. What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers, and senior government education officers regarding staff development programs for teachers and headteachers?
5. What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers and senior government education officers regarding the changes needed to improve internal instructional supervision practices and procedures?

The population for the study included active headteachers and teachers serving in public secondary schools, and senior government education officers. A total of 200 public secondary schools were selected randomly to participate in the study. The sample for the study consisted of 136 teachers, 56 headteachers, and 21 senior government education officers, making a complete sample of 213 participants.

A survey was used in the study to gather information from teachers, headteachers, and senior government education officers regarding internal instructional supervision practices and procedures. Data collection for this study included survey of opinions through mailed questionnaires as well as interviews. For this study, two similar, semi-structured questionnaires - "Questionnaire for Headteachers" and "Questionnaire For teachers" were developed by the researcher, based on a review of the literature. The use of semi-structured questionnaires to collect research data has been successfully used in previous studies elsewhere (Maphosa and Mubika, 2008; Chireshe, 2006).

A semi-structured interview protocol for teachers, headteachers, and senior government education officers containing a set of questions was developed by the researcher based on: (a) the review of relevant literature and (b) preliminary analysis of questionnaire data used in the study. The strengths and weaknesses of these data collection methods were considered.

The first part of the study included survey of opinions through mailed questionnaires which were distributed to 136 teachers and 56 headteachers sampled randomly. The second part of the study was qualitative, involving in-depth interviews conducted with 21 participants who included 5 teachers, 5 headteachers, and 11 senior government education officers. Interview participants were selected by convenience sampling, based on two major criteria: (a) time available for participants and (b) participants' willingness to be interviewed.

The data were analyzed in the following two major ways: (a) using descriptive statistics (e.g., percentages, relative frequencies, means, medians, and standard deviations) to describe the raw data

Table 1. Comparison between the importance attached to and need for further preparation regarding skills and attributes of instructional supervisors as perceived by teachers.

	Importance			Need for further preparation		
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1. Instructional problem-solving skills (n=125)	3.94	1.00	3	4.18	1.14	1
2. Ability to communicate effectively (n=126)	4.25	0.88	1	4.17	1.30	2.5
3. Skills in building upon strengths of staff members (n=123)	3.73	1.10	7	4.12	1.24	5.5
4. Skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom (n=126)	3.03	1.31	15	3.55	1.35	15
5. Skills in how to design an instrument for evaluating instruction (n=126)	3.27	1.25	14	3.75	1.24	13
6 Ability to develop interpersonal relations (n=127)	3.77	1.14	5	4.12	1.10	5.5
7. Ability to explain the relationships that exist between teaching and learning (n=124)	3.63	1.18	11	3.98	1.27	12
8. Ability to analyze teaching (n=126)	3.76	1.11	6	4.02	1.26	10.5
9. Ability to monitor teaching performance and adjust supervisory guidance on the basis of that monitoring (n=126)	3.71	1.18	8	4.02	1.25	10.5
10. Skills in holding on-to-one conferences (n=127)	3.37	1.36	13	3.68	1.35	14
11. Ability to be sensitive to other people's concerns (n=122)	3.63	1.18	12	4.13	1.20	4
12. Ability to analyze complex problems (n=127)	3.66	1.14	10	4.06	1.17	9
13. Ability to do long-range planning (n=125)	3.86	1.14	4	4.10	1.29	7
14. Ability to anticipate potential problems (n=126)	3.69	1.13	9	4.07	1.23	8
15. Ability to bring people together to discuss issues (n=126)	4.06	1.06	2	4.17	1.26	2.5

Response scale: Importance: 5= great; 4 =high; 3 = moderate; 2 = some; 1 =no importance; Need for further preparation: 5= great; 4 =high; 3 = moderate; 2 = some 1 =none;

based on semi-structured questions in the questionnaires and (b) using content analysis in which qualitative data, based on interviews and open-ended responses from the questionnaires, were sorted into appropriate categories according to the purpose of the study and research questions.

FINDINGS

The major objective of this section is to report the perceptions of teachers, headteachers, and senior education officers regarding the following specific research question of the study: What are the perceptions of headteachers, teachers and senior government education officers regarding the actual and needed skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors? For the purpose of this paper, only findings related to the above-mentioned specific research question have been reported. Findings regarding other aspects of the study, such as foci, purposes, and practices of internal instructional supervision, documents and guidelines on instructional supervision given by the Ministry of Education, staff development programs relevant to the roles of instructional supervisors, and changes needed to improve internal instructional supervision practices and procedures, are beyond the scope of this article.

The findings regarding the skills and attributes of Internal instructional supervisors reported in this section

are based on both questionnaire and interview data.

Table 1 reports the findings regarding teachers' perceptions of (a) the skills and attributes of instructional supervisors, and (b) the need for further preparation of the headteachers in skill and attribute areas. The skills have been ranked from highest to lowest degree of importance and level of need for further preparation based on teachers' mean responses.

As revealed in Table 1, teachers ranked the ability to communicate effectively most important, followed by the ability to bring people together to discuss issues, and then by instructional problem-solving skills (Table 1). At the other end of the continuum three skills were ranked lowest in order of importance by teachers: (a) skills in holding one-to-one conference, (b) skills in how to design an instrument for evaluating instruction, and (c) skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom (Table 1).

Considering the need for further preparation of the headteacher for the instructional supervisory role, instructional problem-solving skills ranked first. The ability to communicate effectively and the ability to bring people together to discuss issues formed a cluster in second rank in terms of the need for further preparation, and the ability to be sensitive to other people's concerns ranked fourth (Table 1). At the extreme end the data in Table 1 indicate that three skills ranked lowest in terms of the need for further preparation: (a) skills in how to design an

Table 2. Comparison between the importance attached to and need for further preparation regarding skills and attributes of instructional supervisors as perceived by headteachers.

	Importance			Need for further preparation		
	Mean	S.D.	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1. Instructional problem-solving skills (n=55)	4.33	0.77	4	4.53	0.66	1
2. Ability to communicate effectively (n=54)	4.57	0.74	1	4.45	0.84	3
3. Skills in building upon strengths of staff members (n=52)	4.29	0.70	6	4.46	0.85	2
4. Skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom (n=55)	4.02	0.93	13	4.09	0.99	14
5. Skills in how to design an instrument for evaluating instruction (n=55)	3.95	0.95	14	4.22	0.81	9.5
6 Ability to develop interpersonal relations (n=55)	4.56	0.60	2	4.33	1.04	6.5
7. Ability to explain the relationships that exist between teaching and learning (n=54)	4.30	0.74	5	4.37	0.98	5
8. Ability to analyze teaching (n=55)	4.24	0.86	9	4.27	1.06	8
9. Ability to monitor teaching performance and adjust supervisory guidance on the basis of that monitoring (n=53)	4.21	0.86	11	4.11	1.01	13
10. Skills in holding on-to-one conferences (n=55)	3.93	1.09	15	3.95	1.11	15
11. Ability to be sensitive to other people's concerns (n=53)	4.28	0.91	7	4.17	1.01	12
12. Ability to analyze complex problems (n=55)	4.17	1.01	12	4.18	0.84	11
13. Ability to do long-range planning (n=55)	4.24	0.92	9	4.22	0.88	9.5
14. Ability to anticipate potential problems (n=54)	4.24	0.82	9	4.33	0.89	6.5
15. Ability to bring people together to discuss issues (n=55)	4.49	0.79	3	4.40	0.99	4

Response scale: Importance: 5= great; 4 =high; 3 = moderate; 2 = some; 1 =no importance; Need for further preparation: 5= great; 4 =high; 3 = moderate; 2 = some 1 =none.

instrument for evaluating instruction, (b) skills in holding one-to-one conference, and (c) skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom.

The findings regarding headteachers' perceptions of the skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors are reported in Table 2 in terms of the importance attached to skills and attributes and the need for further preparation of the headteacher in skill and attribute areas. As indicated in Table 2, the ability to communicate effectively ranked first in order of importance in the headteacher's supervisory role, the ability to develop interpersonal relations ranked second, and the ability to bring people together to discuss issues ranked third. At the other end of the continuum, as the data in Table 2 indicate, three skills received the lowest ranking in terms of degree of importance: (a) skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom, (b) skills in how to design an instrument for evaluating instruction, and (c) skills in holding one-to-one conference.

Regarding the need for further preparation of the headteacher, instructional problem-solving skills ranked first, followed by skills in building upon strengths of staff members, and then by the ability to communicate effectively (Table 2). The following one attribute and two skills ranked lowest in terms of the need for further preparation of the headteacher: (a) ability to monitor teaching performance and adjust supervisory guidance on the basis of that monitoring, (b) skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom, and (c) skills in

holding one-to-one conference (Table 2).

Interviews with the participants revealed numerous skills and attributes required of headteachers as instructional supervisors. The following skills and attributes were suggested by three education officers and two headteachers interviewed: (a) ability to lead by example, (b) high integrity, (c) knowledge about delegation and public relations, (d) supervisory skills, and (e) competence in teaching subjects. In addition, according to the beliefs held by two education officers and one teacher who were interviewed, headteachers as instructional supervisors should be qualified and experienced teachers.

Ability to lead by example

Four headteachers and three education officers suggested that instructional supervisors should have the ability to lead by example by doing what they are supposed to do; practicing what they preach; giving people clear guidance; modeling the same behaviors they would expect in teachers; ensuring that their followers understand what is expected of them; and providing useful feedback and follow-up support.

As one headteacher recommended:

It would be good if instructional supervisors are able to lead by portraying good examples, in teaching, general behavior, and discipline. They must set the best possible

example to their students and staff.

One deputy headteacher, in a general remark, expressed the need for instructional supervisors to endeavor to model what they say in meetings with teachers and parents. One education officer echoed:

I think a head should convince himself that he knows what he is supposed to be doing and should show by example. Perhaps do as I say is not the issue; should be do as I do. Lead by example. Leading by example means that I must also be a teacher. I must be in the classroom. I must also produce results.

High integrity

Several interview participants expressed the view that individuals serving as instructional supervisors, especially headteachers, should be of high integrity and the right people for the job. As one teacher commented:

Those people appointed as internal supervisors of teaching and learning in our secondary schools must be of high integrity and high caliber, who understand the social context in which supervision takes place. Without such qualities, their supervisory roles would not be regarded as credible by teachers. We should be extremely careful in identifying instructional supervisors.

Knowledge about delegation

Another attribute of instructional supervisors that received a great deal of attention from five of the interviewees was concerned with knowledge about delegation of duties and responsibilities. Commenting on this attribute, one education officer suggested that, "For heads of schools to be effective internal instructional supervisors, they must be knowledgeable about delegation and public relations. Success of a school depends on teamwork involving sharing of duties, especially on areas of curriculum and instruction". One headteacher expressed a desire for instructional supervisors who have the ability to foster teamwork that builds strong relationships among staff members and a strong knowledge base in public relations. This headteacher stated:

Let us have instructional supervisors who can promote team spirit, a sense of cohesiveness, and collegiality among staff. In this way, people can share duties and responsibilities very well.

Supervisory skills

Eleven interview participants especially expressed their desire to have instructional supervisors who possess

appropriate supervisory skills. In recognition of centrality of school-based supervisors in facilitating teaching and learning, one teacher stated as follows:

For these supervisors, particularly headteachers, to be effective in promoting teacher performance and student learning, they must be equipped with supervisory skills. Have supervisors who have acquired skills in supervision through in-service training to improve teaching standards in our schools.

Also, one education officer expressed the view that instructional supervisors who are skilled in supervision are likely to impact positively on teacher professional growth.

Competence in teaching

Another attribute of internal instructional supervisors mentioned by some participants was concerned with competence in their teaching subjects. Four teachers and two education officers specifically suggested that those appointed as headteachers should be well-conversant with their subject areas to assist teachers effectively in those areas. An education officer stated:

I think we need to have internal supervisors who know their teaching subjects thoroughly. They must also be competent and committed teachers in their respective areas of specialization so that they can offer meaningful advisory services, especially to new teachers.

One teacher spoke about the need to have supervisors who have a high level of expertise in subject matter and teaching strategies.

Qualification and experience in teaching

A final attribute of instructional supervisors proposed by some interviewees was concerned with qualification and teaching experience. Two education officers suggested that headteachers, as internal supervisors, should be qualified teachers with adequate classroom teaching experience to promote instructional awareness and prompt change in teachers. One education officer echoed:

For successful supervision of teaching and learning, the head of the school should be teacher number one and be able to demonstrate that he has adequate experience in the teaching profession. If this is achieved, teachers are likely too feel comfortable inviting the headteacher into their lessons; they will accept his visits to their classes.

Further suggestions echoed by a few teachers centered on the need to regard qualification and teaching

experience as the major criteria in recruiting new heads of schools.

DISCUSSION

The findings regarding the skills and attributes of internal instructional supervisors based on the questionnaire data revealed clearly that the attribute of the ability to communicate effectively received the highest ranking in terms of importance in headteacher's supervisory role and need for further preparation of the headteacher as perceived by teachers and headteachers. On the contrary, two skills ranked lowest in terms of importance in the headteacher's supervisory role and the need for further preparation of the headteacher as perceived by teachers and headteachers: skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom and skills in holding one-to-one conference.

The findings based on interview data indicated one skill and six attributes of internal instructional supervisors: (a) ability to lead by example, (b) high integrity, (c) knowledge about delegation, (d) knowledge about public relations, (e) supervisory skills, (f) competence in teaching, and (g) qualification and experience in teaching. A discussion of the skills and attributes identified in the study is included in this section.

The headteacher's ability to communicate effectively, especially in developing the school as a learning community, has been well documented. For example, Speck (1999) stated that, to communicate the school's vision toward becoming a learning community, the principal needs to acquire communication skills and that communicating the school's vision again and again is a key role of principals as leaders. This finding was also corroborated by views from other writers who saw effective communication as being inseparable from effective instructional leadership (Daresh and Playko, 1995; Wiles and Bondi, 2004). Highlighting the importance of communication, Oliva and Pawlas (2004) recommended that school supervisors be able to communicate effectively with individuals and groups. In their view, the ability to project and to understand messages is a fundamental skill of administrators and supervisors.

In Kenya, as noted by Sogomo (2000) and Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (1998), communication skills are essential to the headteacher's changing role, especially to convening and conducting regular staff meetings. In an apparent recognition of the centrality of communication in the headteacher's supervisory role, the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI), currently known as Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), established in Kenya mainly to provide induction courses in management skills to educational managers, such as headteachers, has incorporated communication into its course content as a tool of management.

That skills in how to observe teachers in the classroom and skills in holding one-to-one conferences ranked lowest in terms of both importance and need for further preparation of the headteacher as perceived by teachers and headteachers was noted. Teachers and headteachers did not seem to regard these two types of skills as being essential in internal instructional supervisors' leadership roles, especially in classroom observation and conferencing with teachers. Furthermore, these findings suggest that teachers and headteachers in this study had already developed negative attitudes toward classroom observation and conferencing with teachers, perhaps based on the manner in which these supervisory practices had been conducted. Wanzare (2012), in findings of a study regarding instructional supervision practices and procedures in secondary schools in Kenya, revealed that teachers studied, in general, perceived that some instructional supervisors often used classroom observations as occasions for parading teachers' shortcomings and as fault-finding exercises aimed at catching teachers on the wrong and, as a result, teachers did not benefit from classroom observations.

The participants in this study did not seem to regard holding conferences with teachers, especially after classroom observation, as an important component of headteachers' instructional supervisory role and, consequently, their perceptions regarding this supervision practice were largely negative. Perhaps, in instances where instructional supervisors held post-observation conferences with teachers, they were dominated by the instructional supervisors themselves, with no tangible input from teachers observed.

However, the findings that skills in observation and conferencing were ranked lowest in terms of importance and need for further preparation are contrary to the belief that supervision requires the supervisors to possess, among other skills and attributes, skills in observing and conferencing (Gupton, 2003; Hunter, 1984; Oliva and Pawlas, 2004; Wiles and Bondi, 2004). As Oliva and Pawlas noted, classroom observation, in particular, demands a high level of technical and analytical skills on the part of the supervisor to enable him or her to know what to look for, how to look, and how to collect, analyze, and interpret the data. The low need for further preparation of the head teacher in the areas of observation and conferencing skills contradicts the belief held by Hunter and, more recently, Oliva and Pawlas that, through pre-service and in-service training programs, supervisors should develop a grounding in conferencing and other skills essential to observing the teacher and students in action.

The headteacher's attribute, namely, the ability to lead by example revealed by interview data has been advocated by several writers. For example, Wiles and Bondi (2004) observed that instructional leaders must be excellent teachers in the classroom to be able to help novice teachers, to demonstrate new techniques to

experienced teachers, or to go into classrooms to model teaching. In Kenya, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (1998) recommended that, to improve and to maintain high educational standards in schools and to provide well-rounded, morally upright, and reasonable individuals, schools should have headteachers who are more than role models, who are capable of setting the tone and tempo in their schools, who should set good examples as teachers, and who should deliberately encourage their teachers to be committed workers. Also, Onyuka (2000), concurring with Mumo (2002) and Wafula (2001), observed that, as professionals and flag-bearers of their schools, headteachers should be role models to pupils, to teachers, and to the entire society who lead by example, who are able to demonstrate to teachers what competent teaching entails by registering a sterling performance in national examinations, and who deliver in the classroom.

Having high integrity on the part of internal instructional supervisors as revealed by interview data means being honest, sincere, transparent, and accountable. In Kenya, headteachers, as instructional leaders, are encouraged to be transparent and accountable, especially in all cases related to financial management, administration, and transaction (Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, 1998). Because the headteacher is the financial controller, the accounting officer of the school, and is responsible for all revenue and expenditure in the school (Ministry of Education, 1988), and to win and retain confidence of all the stakeholders in education (Onyuka, 2000), high integrity on the part of the headteacher is critical to the success of the headteacher's instructional leadership role, especially regarding the management of instructional resources.

The knowledge of delegation on the part of instructional supervisors, such as headteachers, revealed by interview data is an important component of instructional leadership role of the headteachers because they are expected to appoint heads of departments and subject heads as well as delegate duties to other members of the teaching staff to ensure proper running of the school (Ministry of Education, 1988). Delegation by the headteachers involves dishing out to teachers, to pupils, and to support staff areas of duties and responsibilities to ensure maximum, desirable teaching and learning in the school (Lodiaga, 2000).

The knowledge about public relations cited by interview participants is important, especially for headteachers' roles in establishing, maintaining, and developing a cohesive working groups, both within and outside the schools, and as the chief actors in relations with the Boards of Governors (BOGs), Parents teachers Associations (PTAs), the sponsors, and the Ministry of Education (Sogomo, 2000; Ministry of Education, 1987).

As Sogomo noted, public and human relations skills are essential for the headteachers' roles as professional chief executives of their schools who are responsible for

ensuring that the relations between their schools and external communities and all stakeholders in education are maintained on a continuous basis. This view would support the beliefs held by Ubben et al. (2004) that the principals are in the best position to have a positive impact on the relationship between the schools and the external communities; that skilled principals have the potential to analyze the existing public relations programs and the communities they serve; and that the modifications in the public relations programs will be based on the principals' analyses.

A major role of the Kenyan headteacher concerns supervision of teaching process and regular inspection of pupils' books and homework assignments. Toward this end, the headteacher requires an awareness of curriculum development. But, above all, supervisory skills would be critical to the headteacher's role in facilitating curriculum supervision and implementation in the school. In the Kenyan context, this role involves reviewing the following six ASPECTS of the curriculum (Isanda, 1999): (a) AIM (What are the school's overall aims for offering that particular curriculum?); (b) Structure (How does it look like? Is it useful in effective implementation of the curriculum?); (c) Program (How is the curriculum programmed/timetabled?); (d) Evaluation (Are the end products of this curriculum desirable?); (e) Cost (What costs are involved? Are funds available?); and (f) Timing (At what stage should students select relevant subjects?).

The finding relating to internal instructional supervisors' competence in teaching subjects was noteworthy. This finding supports the views of several Kenyan writers and scholars, especially with reference to the headteacher's competence in supervision of teaching and learning. For example, Khaemba (1998), commenting about the headteacher's involvement in teaching, observed that a headteacher is first and foremost a classroom teacher who should teach the subject he or she is trained to teach. According to Mutuku (1994), all headteachers are supposed to have teaching classes to ensure that they are in touch with their schools. Contributing to this point, Ochieng (1984) advocated that teachers aspiring for positions of headship should have been good classroom teachers and that the teaching experience should have been preferably gathered from more than one school.

The finding relating to qualification and experience of internal instructional supervisors was noted. This finding concurs with the views of several Kenyan writers and scholars who have been particularly concerned about administrative problems in Kenyan schools and the qualifications and experiences of the headteachers heading them. For example, Ochieng (1984), in highlighting the reasons why headteachers fail, blamed the failure of some beginning headteachers on the lack of vital experience and qualification. Similarly, Kamotho (2001), Omongo and Kamau (2001) and Nthiga (2001) cited poor or ineffective management of the schools as one of the major causes of protests and general

indiscipline among students in schools. These observations underscore the importance of qualification and experience in the success of instructional supervisors' leadership role.

The one area that questionnaire and interview participants agreed on in terms of skills and attributes of instructional supervisors was concerned with ability to foster human relations. The importance of facilitating effective human relations is well-documented in the literature. For example, according to Robbins and Alvy (1995), displaying effective human relations is a key to leadership which forms a thread that runs throughout the organization and affects the culture, climate, personnel practices, and every individual who has contact with the organization. In their view, human relations skills include working with people, building trust, creating a climate for teachers to discuss their own classroom practices, and helping individuals reach their potential. Also, Oliva and Pawlas (2004) endorsed the need for instructional supervisors to acquire personal traits associated with human and interpersonal relations, like apathy, sincerity and warmth.

This finding supports the belief held by Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (1998) that, to motivate staff and students, to facilitate effective participatory management, school/community relations, and harmonious co-existence, and to coordinate co-curricular activities, the headteacher requires, among other abilities, knowledge about human and public relations. The knowledge of public relations would also enable the headteacher to facilitate and to encourage the establishment of the Parents Teachers Association, both with parents and with the local community (Ministry of Education, 1988).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: WHICH WAY FORWARDS?

In sum, the need for headteachers to have appropriate skills and abilities to facilitate quality education has been a major priority in the Kenyan education system which has featured in numerous professional forums. For example, Onyuka (2000), in her key note address at Kenya Education Staff Institute (KESI) in-service course seminar for secondary headteachers, Maseno, Kenya, observed that, because education institutions depend on management abilities of their leaders, there was need for the headteachers to equip themselves with proper management skills. Similarly, Adongo (1990), in his address during the conference of the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KSSHA) in Mombasa, Kenya, observed that,

Management requires knowledge, skill and right attitude. The knowledge required by a manager to perform well constitutes the science of management. The skills

required by a manager to put into practice what he knows constitute the artistic side of management. And yet, the managers must also have the correct attitudinal traits to be able to apply their skills smoothly. The attitudinal dimension is the lubricating aspect for effective management.

He also suggested that heads of schools require management and teaching skills and leadership qualities to provide hope to students, to teachers, and to other workers. Further to this, Ministry of Education (1988) has underscored the need for headteachers to have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities for efficient leadership in secondary schools.

Findings of this study would suggest that (a) the participants in this study were aware of the crucial importance of equipping internal instructional supervisors with the necessary supervisory skills for effective supervision of instruction; (b) instructional supervisors must be competent enough to facilitate instructional activities and professional development of teachers in their schools; and (c) skills and attributes of instructional supervisors are critical to the success of instructional supervisory process. That means the quality of instructional supervision is heavily dependent upon the competencies of the supervisors. Therefore, one of the most aspects of instructional leadership is to provide opportunities for ongoing in-service training to supervisors in the desired supervisory competencies. Efforts to improve the competencies with respect to instructional leadership through in-service training, seminars, and workshops which incorporate desired supervisory skills and attributes should be a major priority. Findings of this study would support Johnson's (2000) belief that "although supervisors have, as their mission, to help develop instructional skills of teachers, the field of supervision has, as its mission, to develop supervisory skills in supervisors" (p. 296).

In a nutshell, this study has shed light on the major skills and attributes required of internal instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Kenya. In the process it has offered some strategies to improve the competencies of these professionals. Skills and competencies identified in this study may be used by school heads to enable them to assist secondary school teachers in bettering their teaching and to foster in secondary school teachers a commitment to professional growth and enthusiasm for learning new instructional skills. The overall outcome would be the improvement of the standards of secondary education, the general improvement of the performance of pupils in the final examinations, and the increased number of pupils seeking further education and training or entering the job market.

But, the findings of this study are likely to provide practicing teachers, headteachers, policymakers, and researchers with more questions than answers. Obviously,

these are the questions that are important to all those who care about improving teaching and learning via school-based instructional supervision.

Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for practice and for research.

Practice

Given the importance of instructional supervision and the role of instructional supervisors, staff developers, such as the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), and the Kenya Secondary School Heads' Association (KSSHA), should consider incorporating knowledge regarding skills and attributes of instructional supervision in their training programs, especially for headteachers and departmental heads. For headteachers, in particular, this strategy would enable them to be professionally competent to provide "on-the-spot" assistance and guidance to their teachers when needed. As Kosmoski (1997) noted, instructional leadership orthodoxy implies that principals should have specific knowledge related to teaching and learning and should recognize that, to generate a more positive and trusting relationship among teachers, professional credibility depends upon developing high levels of expertise related to instruction in addition to positive interpersonal skills.

This endeavor could be initiated at the national, provincial, or district education levels through the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards, the County Directors of Education, and the District Education Officers.

Research

Studies are needed that would determine the skills and attributes of instructional supervisors identified in this study that most likely lead to improved supervision of instruction.

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