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## **Principals' Instructional Supervision Practices on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Mwatate Sub County, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

This study was on principals' instructional supervision practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following research questions: To what extent do principals' instructional supervision activities influence students' academic achievements in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County? What are the staff development programs availed to teachers to enhance the teaching and learning process in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County? What challenges do principals face in carrying out their instructional supervision practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County? What strategies can be employed to improve principals' instructional supervision activities on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County? A Mixed method research design was employed, specifically a convergent parallel design. The researcher targeted 1 Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (SQASO), 26 principals, 130 teachers and 1300 form four students of the 26 public secondary schools. Both probability sampling techniques (simple and stratified random) and non-probability technique (purposive sampling) were used in the study. Data was collected through questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guide. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies; means and standard deviation) using SPSS Version 21 while qualitative data was summarized in themes and presented in narrative form as well as raw data excerpts. Ethical considerations were upheld to avoid plagiarism, with all sources and information cited being acknowledged and high integrity levels being maintained during the study. The findings of the study indicated that most teachers (97%) and students (71.6%) were in agreement that principals check professional documents which have a direct influence on students' academic achievement in secondary schools; majority teachers (94%) and students (92.3%) were strongly in agreement that principals monitor students' academic progress in schools and majority 87.9% of teachers and 80.7% students approved that teachers attend to in-service training to improve their knowledge and skills base for better mastery and delivery of content in enhancing better performance in academics by learners. However, principals lacked supervision skills, have negative attitude on supervision and were overworked as agents of TSC. Hence having follow-up academic programs and principals ensuring proper lesson attendance helped in improving academic performance in schools. The study concluded that principals check and sign professional documents; principals to observe teachers while they teach in classes; Principals to do impromptu visits to classrooms; principals to monitor students' academic progress; principals to provide learning materials; principals to take teachers for In-service training and principals to ensure proper lesson attendance by teachers. Finally, the study recommended that Ministry of Education needs to sensitize principals and the teachers on the importance of having updated teachers' professional records and need for the MoE, TSC as well as other professional bodies in the education sector to develop a strategic plan on periodic capacity building workshops for principals and teachers on instructional supervision practices that enhance students' academic achievement in schools.

**Key words:** instructional supervision practices, professional documents, academic performance and in-service training

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### **Background and Introduction**

Education plays an indispensable role as a catalyst in the development of any nation. The development of human potential primarily through the education system contributes largely to the formation of creative persons of good morals able to deal with problems of national development (Nasibulina, A. 2015). In order to achieve high standards of education in a country, the utmost aim of schools therefore should be to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Usman, 2015). Fullan, Rincon-Gallardo and Hargreaves (2015) posit that this can only be achieved through an effective supervision in a schools' instructional program, which should improve students' performance and also enhance teacher professional development. According to Ayeni (2012), instructional supervision is an internal mechanism adopted by principals for school self-evaluation, geared towards helping teachers and students to improve on their teaching and learning activities for purposes of achieving educational objectives. Supervision of instruction is one of the most important management activities in schools as it facilitates learning and supports teachers in bringing about effective teaching (Gregory, 2011). Macharia, Thunguri and Kiongo (2014) assert that instructional supervision ensures that goals of the school are well articulated; learning environment is safe; teachers' efforts are focused on teaching and improving their professional skills; and classroom teaching. The principal's role as a supervisor of curriculum instruction cannot therefore be underestimated.

Globally, in Malaysia, the leadership and behaviour practices of a head teacher are an integral basis for consideration before appointment into the position. The country has a stringent program which forces the head teachers to undergo regular training and skills appraisal on the leadership and behaviour management. They are always supposed to act as good role models to the teachers and a high premium is attached to the position (Slarhabi, 2011). This is a key attribute which has forced the head teachers to be adept and keen to the performance of the instructional supervisory roles to the optimum as a yardstick of their output.

Regionally, in the Nigerian set up, instructional supervision is conceived as “the process of enhancing the professional growth of the teachers, the curriculum and improving the techniques of teaching in the classroom through democratic interactions between the teacher and the supervisor” (Okendu, 2012). In the current era, instructional supervision focuses on the betterment of teaching-learning situation for the benefit of both learners and teachers. Marishane (2011) points out that instructional leadership has increased acceptance in South Africa and stress is made on the academic values and the need for accountability in schools. Phillips (2012) argues that while instructional leadership is necessary in the realization of effective schools, it is

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rarely practiced. Further, Philips states that out of the many responsibilities that the principal executes; only a few are intense in providing instructional leadership.

The government of Kenya through education commissions, the Basic Education Act (2013) and other government reports has continued to emphasize supervisions of schools and instructional practices. The Education Act (2013) stresses the urgency for didactic supervisions by chartering Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council (ESQAC) whose objectives are appraisal of tutors and sustenance of specialty standards and relevance of education in educational institutions. In addition to that, the Basic Education Act (2013) warrants the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Cabinet Secretary for Education, National Education Board (NEB), national quality assurance bodies and the County Education Board (CEBs) with the consent of sustainment of quality, standards and relevance of training and education. Charles, Chris, & Kosgei (2012) identify supervisory practices that principals ought to perform such as ensuring strict teacher adherence to the curriculum, good teacher-student relationship, proper teacher use of teaching aids and backups, summary of major points at the end of the lesson, use of voice variation, previous knowledge revision, well structuring of lessons, early lesson planning and that they are regularly observed.

The principals' instructional supervision has been linked to academic performance of the students. It is the principal who sets the pace; leading and monitoring the staff and the students to perform to their best. Principals in effective schools therefore involve themselves in the improvement of day to day assignment of duties and supervision of teachers. Wawira (2011) observed that principals' job and teaching experiences influence teachers' perception towards the principal's instructional supervision practices. Studies done in Kenya by Nyandiko (2008) and Kirui (2012) found that principals' experiences have a positive influence on implementation of curriculum change and instructional supervision practices. Supervision of instruction is important because it is a means of advising and stimulating interest in teachers, pupils, help to improve teaching and learning situations in educational institutions (Oyewole & Alonge, 2013). Despite its importance supervision of instruction is not effective in most schools (Kieleko, 2015).

Instructional supervision involves appropriate recognition of teachers' abilities which assists in giving clear direction for their work in the school (Khun-inkeeree, Dali, Fauzee and Khalid, 2019). Osman and Mukuna (2013) in their research findings on improving instructional supervision in schools through building principals' capacity also add that, even though stakeholders in education may be aware of the value of the principal's instructional leadership responsibilities, effective instructional leadership skills are hardly practised. They further note that information on skills and tasks are urgently required to support practices of instructional leadership in Kenyan public secondary schools, a gap filled by the current study.

An instructional supervision programme that is well managed is often reflected through the behaviour of the teachers (Wanzare, 2012). Despite the importance of instructional supervision, several challenges are being encountered as impediments to the achievement of educational goals. However, the major parameter used to measure educational output is performance in examinations. Performance is achieved after various inputs are placed in an educational process. These inputs include the student, the teacher, teaching- learning resources,

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the school facilities and the school environment. A healthy interaction of the given inputs results into good performance. The principals’ instructional supervision practices in Mwatate Sub county public secondary schools, however, have been questioned owing to the poor performance in national examinations. This public outcry is what prompted this study to be carried out, as indicated in Table1. Such a problem should be looked into, since the place of instructional supervision in education cannot be over emphasized in the economic development of a nation.

**Table 1: KCSE Performance Analysis 2015-2019 Mwatate Sub County**

Year	No of Schools	Candidates	Mean-Score	Grade
2015	27	1576	4.91	C-
2016	29	1691	4.09	D+
2017	31	1736	3.84	D+
2018	31	1858	4.12	D+
2019	31	1825	4.54	C-

Source: Education County Director, Mwatate, 2019

Poor academic achievement, as portrayed in Table 1 raises concern as to whether principals’ supervisory activities take place in schools and whether they have any bearing on academic achievement. Principals are expected to closely observe teachers’ lessons, plan for classroom visits, motivate, stimulate and consult with teachers in order to improve students’ academic performance. The Ministry of Education through Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) in liaison with Quality Assurance and Standards Office to organize workshops and in-service training for principals in order to equip them as instructional supervisors. In view of the above considerations, there has been a major concern about secondary school students’ performance in national examinations as measured by the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Reports from the Ministry of Education reveal that, every year when the KCSE examinations results are released, records indicate that a large percentage of the students score grade “D” (Mean Score: 3.00 out of 12.00), (KNEC, 2019). At such times, fingers point at the school principal, seeking answers for the poor results. Leadership in this case becomes key towards fulfillment of stakeholder expectations in as far as academic performance is concerned (Hadebe, 2013). It is pertinent to note that the supervision of teachers is necessary to guarantee and instill professional standards in the teaching profession. It is on this note that the researcher was interested in investigating on the influence of principals’ instructional supervision practices on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County, TaitaTaveta County, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since principals play a significant role in school due to their varied tasks and roles, their tactful fulfillment of their roles together with their constant supervision of the teachers determines the level of teacher input and academic achievement of the students. In spite of this, there has been an outcry about low academic achievement among learners and it’s not clear whether principals

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have been providing instructional leadership and what instructional practices have been adopted in secondary schools. The reasons for this poor performance cannot be easily discerned without focused investigation. The poor performance in Mwatate Sub County, as shown by the mean score for the schools, causes many cries and concerns to the stakeholders and parents in particular. Such results are pathetic and deny most students the opportunity to further their education in universities and other tertiary institutions. Despite the KEMI training that principals have received on supervision, there is little to show they are actually putting into practice all that pertains to supervision in their various schools. Studies of Mugambi (2014) examined determinants of effective institutional strategic planning but did not research on how this influences students' academic achievement; Irungu (2013) study determined the influence of head teachers' instructional supervisory role on pupils' performance in KCPE but did not research on secondary students. None of the two studies addressed students' academic achievement in secondary schools and study area Mwatate Sub County; which was the focus of the current study. Therefore, this study sought to investigate on the influence of principals' instructional supervision practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted psychological theory of supervision explored by Planturroot (2006). According to Planturroot within an organization there's a body of people where at least one person stands out as the leader or the one who supervises the rest of the body. Usually someone has appointed this person. In order for one to have a purposeful organization, someone within should oversee the transitional processes of that organization. The supervisor is the overseer in most organizations and many times delegate duties to others within the organization. In educational institutions Planturroot (2006) explains that supervisors seek to improve schools, classroom instruction, and the growth of the organizational body by using one or more of the three philosophies namely: (i) essentialism (ii) experimentalism and (iii) existentialism. These three philosophies determine the manner in which the supervisor will direct the body of the organization. This study is going to build on the three philosophies because the strengths of each are useful for the principals' instructional supervisory roles. These philosophies also complement each other in their limitation, bringing in a positive blend for instructional supervision in school.

Essentialists argue that schools should transmit the traditional moral values and intellectual knowledge that students need to become model citizens. They maintain that classrooms should be controlled by the teacher who ideally serves as an intellectual and moral role model for the students. Essentialism is applicable to supervision because it emphasizes the principal as the person who teaches truths about teaching and learning to teachers. Principals who are instructional supervisors are those most knowledgeable educators about curriculum and standards. A supervisor who possesses the essentialist philosophy meets individual teachers to help them grow and develop in their instructional practices. This philosophy has been criticized for adopting an authoritative kind of leadership by being too traditional and rigid in its approach



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Dewey (1920) in rejecting the essentialist philosophy and practice of traditional education set a new type of philosophy known as experimentalism. John Dewey (1859-1952) is a proponent of experimentalism. Dewey claimed that man behaved out of habit, and change often led to unexpected outcomes. The thinking faculty helps human beings therefore to understand and connect with the world around them. Students are helped through the instruction of teachers to use their thinking faculty to understand their world. A new situation and a different approach may alter yesterdays' reality (Glickman et al., 2010). Experimentalist therefore views knowledge as a result of the interaction between the scientific people in this case a teacher and his /her students. Dewey applied experimentalist thinking to supervision. Principals who are the immediate supervisors of teachers view schools as laboratories for working with teachers to achieve collective ends that will help everyone. The principals involve teachers in his or her instructional supervision strategies. Collegial supervision is preferred method where principals work with teachers to explore the best and relevant instructional practices. Teachers are involved in planning and executing the planned instructional supervision programs. Supervision becomes developmental in nature because it encourages the involvement, and collective action of teachers. In this case instructional supervisors, who utilize the experimentalist approach, allow teachers to test old ideas and try new ones. While this philosophy has helped to fill the gap of collective approach and teacher involvement in instructional supervision it leaves out the non-directional approach to supervision. This gap therefore creates room for another philosophy to fill in the gap of non-directional supervision which contributes to instructional supervision.

Existentialism is a school of thought that was derived from the rejection of essentialism and experimentalism. Existentialism was born in nineteenth century in Europe. The proponents of this philosophy are diverse thinkers such as Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and Fredrick Nietzsche (1811-1900). They argue that essentialist and experimentalism do not adequately respect the unique concerns of each individual. Humans are totally free not to be shaped by others or restricted by the changing times. They hold within themselves the capacity to form their own destiny (Glickman et al., 2010). In applying existentialism to supervision, the individual teacher is respected for his/her individual choice. In this case the principal provides an environment that enables the teacher to explore his or her own physical and mental capabilities. Principals do also help protect the rights of teachers to self-discovery and meet the teacher as a person of full importance. The instructional supervisor has to understand that learning is self – paced, self-directed and includes a great deal of individual contact with the teacher. The principal therefore uses the non-directional informational strategy approach where he listens to staff and offer help when needed.

We can conclude that an instructional supervisor has to apply different supervisory strategies to enable the teachers choose from the multiple choices of teaching styles. Planturroot (2006) points out that supervision is not a particular position but a systematic way of meeting the needs and accomplishing the goals of a mission. Principals work with teachers in a collaborative and democratic manner to test old hypothesis and try new ones. Finally, principals as instructional supervisors facilitate teacher exploration and autonomous decision making by use of non-directional approach. The application of these three philosophies by the principals brings

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in the three approaches of direct assistance, collegial and non-directional instructional supervision. These approaches complement each other in their strengths and limitations to guide principals' instructional supervision and hence influence students' academic achievement.

The strengths that essentialist brings in to supervision is the direct control of teachers to deliver tested knowledge through tested teaching methods. Teachers therefore get direct assistance from principals through clinical supervision. Experimentalism which is centred on human experience brings in the collegial approach. Collegial and team building between principals and teachers in planning instructional supervision in schools is one of its strengths. Existentialism promotes human dignity and the uniqueness of every individual. There exists no universal form of human nature and hence everyone has the capacity to grow towards their individual destiny. Existentialism contributes the non-directional aspect of supervision in schools.

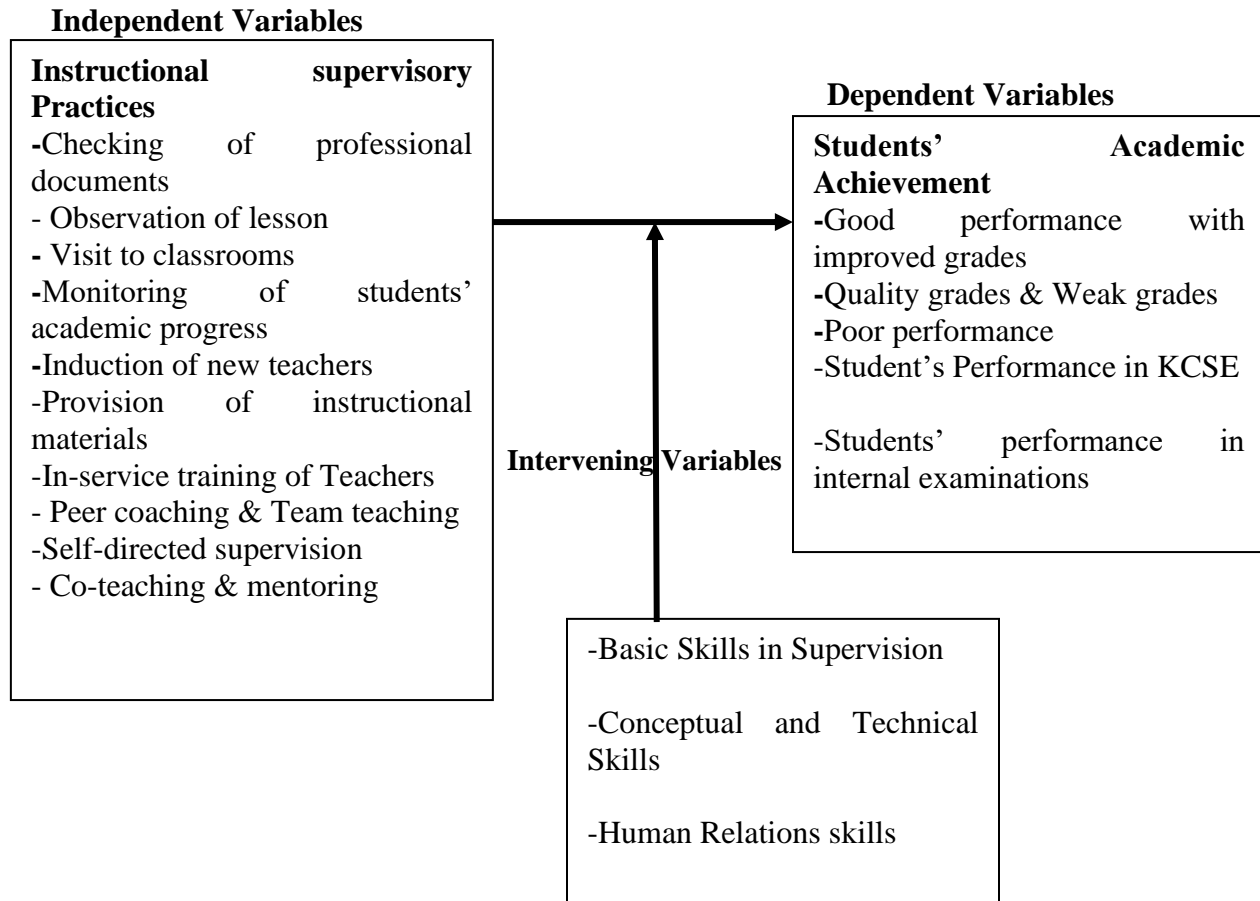
However, Essentialism was limited in the sense that it adopts the authoritative kind of leadership; in this case it limits teachers' and students' growth. The weakness of experimentalism was the fact that resources can be wasted when trying new ideas every now and then and sometimes those new ideas might remain unutilized. Existentialism once not checked can be subjective in contribution especially if an individual is not mature and does not possess a high level of concern for the common good.

The psychological theory was relevant to this study because it provided the three aspects of instructional supervision for the principals namely directional, collegial and non-directional approaches. This theory was applicable because the principal is the chief supervisor in schools and has the responsibility to oversee all the educational processes for the purpose of achieving the goals of the schools. Psychological theory lays the foundation of the different strategies of the principal's instructional supervisory roles that is used for improving classroom instruction to facilitate student's academic achievement.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This conceptual framework describes the relationship between the main concepts of the current study arranged in a logical structure so as to give a mental picture and a visual display of how ideas relate to one another (Osanloo, & Grant, 2016).

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**Figure 1: A framework showing factors that enhance students’ academic achievement**

**Source: Authors 2020**

**Research Design and Methodology**

This study adopted a mixed research method, specifically a convergent parallel design. A Cross sectional survey design (quantitative design) was useful in describing the characteristics of a large study sample, thus making the study results significant and the design also allowed the use of questionnaire on students and teachers. Phenomenological (qualitative design) research design enabled the use of in-depth interview and document analysis guide for the key informants who were selected from public secondary schools’ principals and Sub County education office. The sample in the study was generated by both probability and non-probability (purposive) sampling approaches. Reliability of quantitative instruments and trustworthiness of qualitative instruments was determined by administering the instruments to a pilot sample and making adjustments and



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corrections on the items. The data was analyzed descriptively by frequencies distributions. For qualitative data, the researcher transcribed, did a content analysis of the interview transcripts, checked lists to come up with codes, categories and themes and presented them in form of themes supported by raw data excerpts/quotes (Creswell 2014).

### **Findings of the Study**

The Section shows results and discussions on instructional supervision practices influence on students' academic achievement in Mwatate Sub County as responded by students and teachers to questionnaire distributed to them by the researcher and shown in Table 2.

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**Table 2: Instructional supervision practices influence on students' academic achievement**

Statement	P	SD	D	NS	A	SA
Principals check professional documents	S	7(5.4)	16(12.3)	14(10.8)	56(43.1)	37(28.5)
	T	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1 (3.0)	16(48.5)	16(48.5)
Principals come to observe teachers while they teach	S	10(7.7)	20(15.4)	17(13.1)	55(42.3)	28(21.5)
	T	1(3.0)	2 (6.1)	5 (15.2)	23(69.7)	2 (6.1)
Principals do impromptu visits to classrooms	S	3(2.3)	15(11.5)	8 (6.2)	60(46.2)	44(33.8)
	T	3(9.1)	5(15.2)	1 (3.0)	21(63.6)	3(9.1)
Principals monitor our academic progress	S	5(3.8)	4 (3.1)	1 (0.8%)	42(32.3%)	78(60.0%)
	T	1(3.0)	0(0.0)	1 (3.0)	19(57.6)	12(36.4)
Principals have programs for induction of new teachers and students	S	3(2.3)	2 (1.5)	21(16.2)	52(40.0)	52(40.0)
	T	0(0.0)	4 (12.1)	4 (12.1)	17(51.5)	8 (24.2)
Principals provide learning materials	S	4(3.1)	3 (2.3)	10 (7.7)	43(33.1)	70(53.8)
	T	0(0.0)	2 (6.1)	2 (6.1)	13(39.4)	16(48.5)
Principals take teachers for In-service training	S	0(0.0)	8 (6.2)	29(22.3)	39(30.0)	54(41.5)
	T	3(9.1)	2 (6.1)	2 (6.1)	16(48.5)	10(30.3)
Principals ensure proper lesson attendance by teachers	S	4(3.1)	3 (2.3)	5 (3.8)	54(41.5)	64(49.2)
	T	1(3.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	14(42.4)	18(54.5)
Principals provide safe environment for studies	S	4(3.1)	1 (0.8)	7 (5.4)	53(40.8)	5(50.0)
	T	0(0.0)	1 (3.0)	1 (3.0)	13(39.4)	18(54.5)
Principals promote cooperation among teachers and students	S	6(4.6)	1 (0.8)	4 (3.1)	47(36.2)	72(55.4)
	T	2(6.1)	1 (3.0)	3 (9.1)	11(33.3)	16(48.5)

**\*Key: P=Participants, S=Students and T=Teachers; Students n=130 and Teachers n=33**  
Source: Field Data 2019

As shown in Table 2 above, students and teachers were asked in the questionnaire to indicate their views on whether Principals check professional documents. For students 56(43.1%) agreed and 37(28.5%) strongly agreed while 16(12.3%) disagreed, 7 (5.4%) strongly disagreed, with 14(10.8%) not sure to the statement that principals check professional

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documents. Most students (71.6%) were in agreement that principals check professional documents which have a direct influence on students' academic achievement in secondary schools. For the teachers, 16(48.5%) strongly agreed and 16(48.5%) agreed while 1 (3.0%) was not sure; hence most teachers (97%) were strongly in agreement that principals check professional documents that enhance students' academic achievement in secondary schools. The principals before start of every new term have to check professional documents such like schemes of work duly prepared and in line with Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) guidelines. The teachers also provide their record of work covered books to the principal to sign fortnightly; also heads of departments (HODs) have to submit departmental meeting minutes to principals for signing. All these processes are in line with the Ministry of education set guidelines. However, Mobegi, Ondigi and Oburu (2010) explain that head teachers' instructional supervisory methods were mainly limited to observing professional records belonging to teachers and gave minimal attention to class visits and self-appraisal. This is a reflection of internal supervision failure to impact on teachers' performance on best practices in teaching.

Most principals interviewed indicated that they usually check and sign schemes of work dully prepared by subject teachers termly, they also check and sign record of work book weekly, lesson plans fortnightly, teachers' notes termly, class registers weekly, TPAD termly among the many other documents availed by teachers in school. In addition, the SQASO said that all the mentioned documents by principals were a must in enabling them run their respective schools effectively as they are per ministry of education laid down guidelines. Wanjiku, (2018) study found that checking and ensuring the preparation of the schemes of work and checking the preparation and use of lesson plans were the most common instructional supervision practices whereas classroom visitation during lesson progress was rarely practised. The study also found that holding model teaching sessions and organizing programmes which cater for individual teacher differences were the most effective practices of instructional supervision.

On document analysis guide it was revealed that most schools conform to ministry of education guidelines by having the following documents that enhance principals' instructional supervision in schools: schools had attendance registers that teachers and support staff checked in and out of school; schemes of work were available, prepared termly and endorsed by Heads of departments and principals for use however, it was noted that some teachers follow it while teaching and others did not; lesson plans were available but not used frequently; record of work book was updated, however, sometimes they were not signed by principals. The finding concurs with Dangara, (2015) who established that regular instructional supervision using robust supervision strategies like checking of students' notebooks, classroom visitation/inspection by school administrators, checking teachers' lesson plan/notes and inspection of teachers record keeping have significant correlation with teachers' performance and academic achievement of students in Secondary schools.

The findings in Table 2 show that, 55(42.3%) of students in Mwatate Sub County agreed and 28(21.5%) strongly agreed, with 17(13.1%) not sure while 20(15.4%) disagreed and 10(7.7%) of respondents strongly disagreed that principals come to observe teachers while they

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teach in classes. A majority of students 63.8% were in agreement that principals came to observe teachers while they taught in classes. Although many of the principals ensured that they observed teachers in classes as they taught, a few did not take their responsibility to observe as teachers taught. Among the teachers, 23(69.7%) agreed and 2 (6.1%) strongly agreed, with 5 (15.2%) not being sure while 2 (6.1%) disagreed and 1 (3.0%) strongly disagreed that principal comes to observe teachers while they teach in classes. The results showed that majority of teachers 75.2% had a view that principals come to observe teachers while they teach in classes. The principals of schools should make it a routine to visit teachers in classes as they teach the students. This concurs with Zaare (2013) finding that teachers who were observing their qualified and experienced colleagues on teaching methodology learned much about teaching procedure. It is highly likely the teachers who observe their qualified and highly experienced peers while teaching would help them in becoming more reflective teachers while improving their self-awareness. In as much as this was not done by instructional supervisors, the findings imply that classroom observation particularly the teaching procedure definitely has influence on students' academic outcome. The provision of feedback to the teachers who are supervised would ultimately help them improve their teaching methodology for the benefit of the learners.

Most principals interviewed indicated that they visited classes once per term to observe how teachers teach and interact with students. The students were excited whenever principals visited their classes to see how the teachers taught. Charles, Chris, & Kosgei (2012) identify supervisory practices that principals ought to perform such as ensuring strict teacher adherence to the curriculum, good teacher-student relationship, proper teacher use of teaching aids and backups, summary of major points at the end of the lesson, use of voice variation, previous knowledge revision, well structuring of lessons, early lesson planning and that they are regularly observed. On the other hand, the SQASO indicated that him and the team visited schools once per year to check on how teachers execute their lessons and these were pure assessment visits which teachers appreciated at the end of the lesson. However, the SQASO noted that there was no interaction between them and students.

From the results, 60(46.2%) of students agreed, 44(33.8%) strongly agreed, with 8 (6.2%) were not sure while 15(11.5%) disagreed and 3 (2.3%) strongly disagreed that Principals do impromptu visits to classrooms. Most students (80%) were in agreement that Principals do impromptu visits to classrooms, an indication that most principals perform their instructional supervision duties in schools as laid down by the ministry of education. From the data collected from teachers, 21(63.6%) agreed and 3(9.1%) strongly agreed while 5 (15.2%) disagreed and 3(9.1%) strongly disagreed with 1 (3.0%) not sure. A majority of teachers (72.7%) were in agreement that Principals do impromptu visits to classrooms, an indication that principals routinely do their supervisory duties hence visit classrooms to check if students are learning effectively. Most principals interviewed said that they make impromptu visits in classrooms to supervise curriculum implementation; check school discipline, staff and students' class attendance, checking learners' exercise books and enquiring if students have issues with teachers. Regarding open ended questionnaire one of the teachers (Teacher 2) noted that:

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Principals do movement in schools, sometimes they enter classes to check learners' notebooks, are at times aroused by noise making students in classes, sometimes they check class prefects monitoring books to ascertain teachers' promptness to lesson attendance and many times they make follow-up on errand students from specific given classes (Teacher 2).

The finding concurs with Sweeney (2012) who pointed that head teachers should be interested in what goes on in the classroom because that is where the customers are served to determine the quality factor of service provided. This is ensured through effective communication in the school, which eventually impacts on the school academic achievement in national examinations. Effective head teachers are instrumental in schools' success in national examinations.

From the results, 78(60.0%) of students strongly agreed and 42(32.3%) agreed while 5 (3.8%) strongly disagreed and 4 (3.1%) of students disagreed, with 1 (0.8%) not sure that principals monitor students' academic progress. The finding shows that the majority students (92.3%) were strongly in agreement that principals monitor students' academic progress in schools. From the data collected from teachers, 19(57.6%) agreed, 12(36.4%) strongly agreed while 1 (3.0%) strongly disagreed, with 1 (3.0%) not sure that principals monitor students' academic progress. This indicated that most teachers (94%) were in agreement that principals monitor students' academic progress in schools. The principal has a serious duty in ensuring that high standards of students' academic achievement are upheld by teachers in their schools. This is in line with Wanjiru (2015), that the capacity of education to effectively impact positively on the consumers can only be actualized by the quality and standards upon which the beneficiaries access it. Pedagogical supervision has, therefore, been employed as a tool to assure quality and standards upholding in many countries.

Most principals interviewed said that planning for a new term at the end of the previous term ensures that teachers and students are put in the limelight for good performance. In addition, the SQASO said that through principals, they monitor the progress of syllabus coverage, which according to ministry of education regulations should be covered on time before the next class; this ensures good performance in schools. The finding concurs with Bambrick-Santoyo (2010) who established that using students' progress data had a positive impact on achievement. Students are made to know their areas of weaknesses and strengths, expectations and aspirations. Teachers are aware that planning of lessons, term meetings for teachers, professional development, and vigorous academic interventions for weak students is a basis for meaningful student learning.

The findings in Table 2 show that, 52(40.0%) of students strongly agreed, 52(40.0%) agreed while 3 (2.3%) strongly disagreed, 2 (1.5%) disagreed, with 21(16.2%) of students not sure that principals have programs for induction of new teachers and students. This shows that majority of students (80%) were strongly in agreement that principals had programs for induction of new teachers and students in their respective schools. For teachers, 17(51.5%) agreed and 8 (24.2%) strongly agreed while 4 (12.1%) disagreed, with 4 (12.1%) not sure that principals have programs for induction of new teachers and students. The result shows that



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majority of teachers (75.7%) were in agreement that principals have programs for induction of new teachers and students.

The newly employed teachers and new students entering the school formation must be introduced to what happens in a particular school. This is done through orientation programs organized by principals in order to enlighten the new individuals on the school culture, mission, vision, values and motto in general. Majority of principals interviewed said that on inducting new teachers they are usually taken round the classes by respective heads of departments, housing arrangements are done through colleague teachers who stay near the school, they are lectured on how to interact with the community, are taken through school routine, school rules and regulations, then introduced to the staff before being handed to the heads of departments for further orientation on subject allocations. The result is in line with Kweku Esia-Donkoh Stella Baffoe, (2018) study that indicated orientation of new teaching staff was the dominant supervisory practice among the head teachers while the least practised was provision of in-service training for teachers. Generally, teachers in public basic schools in the Circuit were highly motivated, and there was a statistically significant positive but weak relationship between head teachers' supervisory practices and teacher motivation.

From the results, 70(53.8%) of students strongly agreed and 43(33.1%) agreed that principals provide learning materials while 4 (3.1%) strongly disagreed, 3 (2.3%) disagreed, with 10 (7.7%) of students not sure. This showed a majority 86.9% of students were strongly in agreement that most principals provide learning materials in their schools to aid proper teaching and learning process to take place. Among the teachers, 16(48.5%) strongly agreed, 13(39.4%) agreed while 2 (6.1%) disagreed, with 2 (6.1%) not sure that principals provide learning materials. The findings indicated that 87.9% teachers were strongly in agreement that principals provided learning materials to enhance teaching and learning process in schools, hence improving students' academic achievement. The principals have a duty to ensure that they provide adequate teaching and learning materials such like text books, manila papers, charts, demonstration models in mathematics and science-oriented subjects and provision of laboratory equipment and chemicals.

Most principals interviewed said that through government funding, parents' donations; they are able to avail to teachers the learning materials that contribute positively towards raising the academic standards of schools. In addition, the SQASO said that government funding through provision of text books to a ratio of 1:1 has ensured distribution of books to schools. The finding concurs with Mugambi, (2015) study that established there was an association between the school's performance and its principal's instructional management practices. Findings also revealed that principals used several approaches in supervising the implementation of instructional practices. Some approaches like use of students to monitor teacher lesson attendance and visiting class to observe a teacher were rarely used. Most principals involved their deputies, and teachers in decision making.

The findings in Table 2 show that, 54(41.5%) of students strongly agreed, 39(30.0%) agreed while 8 (6.2%) disagreed, with 29(22.3%) of students not being sure whether principals take teachers for In-service training. Most students (71.5%) were in agreement that principals

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take teachers for In-service training to enhance their professional development in mastery of content hence higher student academic achievement in schools. For teachers, 16(48.5%) agreed, 10(30.3%) strongly agreed while 3 (9.1%) strongly disagreed, 2 (6.1%) disagreed, with 2 (6.1%) not being sure principals take teachers for In-service training. A majority 78.8% of teachers were in agreement that principals take teachers for In-service training. The teacher must be the cause of all the efforts to enhance high standards in classroom instruction (Isa and Jailani, 2014). The quality of schools in a nation therefore depends on the high standards of training given to teachers. According to Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2017), a long-term objective of supervision is to develop teachers professionally towards a point where the teachers, coached by supervisors, can take complete charge of instructional enhancement.

In open ended questionnaire, one of the teachers (Teacher 3) said that:

Through in-service programs they are able to attend SMASSE trainings, subject seminars organized by county and sub county education committees. Many principals encourage teachers to frequently attend workshops and occasionally subject specialist is brought to schools to talk to both teachers and students. Also, there is benchmarking to performing schools; they encourage use of ICT programs in classes and encouraging teachers go for further studies (Teacher 3)

One student (Student 2) noted that:

Principals ensure that teachers attend workshops and seminars; they bring motivational speakers in schools and frequently allow teachers to attend subject specialist seminars and even games clinics (Student 2).

The results agree with Kinyua (2010), who established that head teachers should undergo in-service courses in order to execute their duties as expected. As part of their duties, the head teachers ought to carry out among other duties, practices of instructional supervision including checking, approving and consenting the use of lesson plans and schemes of work prepared by the teachers, ensure the marking, correction as well as checking the learners' notebooks. In addition, the head teachers as part of their instructional supervisory practices have to make classroom visits to observe teaching-learning practices employed by the teachers and hold periodic academic staff conferences on educational standards. Furthermore, the head teachers have to make available to the teachers the teaching and learning resources that are necessary.

The results from Table 2 show that, 64(49.2%) of students strongly agreed, 54(41.5%) agreed, 5 (3.8% were not sure while 3 (2.3%) disagreed and 4 (3.1%) strongly disagreed that principals ensure proper lesson attendance by teachers. These findings showed that, majority of students (90.7%) were in agreement that principals ensured proper lesson attendance by teachers, hence improved delivery of content that ensured improved students' academic achievement. From the teachers, 18(54.5%) strongly agreed, 14(42.4%) agreed while 1 (3.0%), strongly

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disagreed that principals ensure proper lesson attendance by teachers. The 96.9% agreement by teachers showed that most principals ensure proper lesson attendance by teachers, hence improved student academic achievement in respective schools. Teachers' a 100% lesson attendance in schools with proper content delivery gives students an upper hand to understand the subject and are able to effectively do examination without many problems.

In document analysis guide it was noted that schools had master timetable and departmental timetables displayed for use, teachers' notes were available, updated and used in lessons. Though students had notes and assignments were done regularly, checking of notes and marking of assignments was not done regularly. The merit lists for internal and external examinations were available and displayed and teachers' mark books were available, displayed mean scores and subject targets were met. These were strong indicators of proper curriculum implementation in schools. Alimi (2012) adds that head teachers need to observe their teachers formally on regular basis, make notes in the classroom and work with a clear commitment. The head teacher should discuss classroom observation with a teacher promptly in-order to provide for in-school professional development.

According to the results in Table 2, a majority 65(50.0%) of students strongly agreed and 53(40.8%) agreed while a few students, 4 (3.1%) strongly disagreed and 1 (0.8%) disagreed, with 7 (5.4%) not sure that principals provide safe environment for studies. Over 90.8% students' responses showed that principals provided safe environment for studies. For teachers, 18(54.5%) strongly agreed, 13(39.4%) agreed while 1 (3.0%) disagreed, with 1 (3.0%) not sure that principals provide safe environment for studies. Most teachers (93.9%) were in agreement that principals provided safe environment for studies, hence students' improvement academically. The school environment is key to addressing how students and teachers relate, work and eventually produce good and quality academic results. In open ended questionnaire, one teacher (Teacher 4) said:

Principals ensure that school security is enhanced during the day and night through employing security personnel, they create a conducive environment of learning through provision of adequate teaching and learning materials, provision of staff briefs for teachers on daily basis and student assemblies, have trained students on tackling emergencies like fire and they are readily available in schools for any eventualities (Teacher 4).

The finding agrees with Wawira (2011) who observed that principals' job and teaching experiences influence teachers' perception towards the principal's instructional supervision practices. Macharia, Thunguri and Kiongo (2014) assert that instructional supervision ensures that goals of the school are well articulated; learning environment is safe; teachers' efforts are focused on teaching and improving their professional skills; and classroom teaching.

In Table 2, 72(55.4%) of students strongly agreed, 47(36.2%) agreed whereas 6 (4.6% of students strongly disagreed, 1 (0.8%) disagreed, with 4 (3.1%) not being sure that principals promote cooperation among teachers and students. A majority of students (91.6%) were in

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agreement that principals promoted cooperation among teachers and students in schools and that enhanced better academic achievement of students in schools. For teachers 16(48.5%) strongly agreed, 11(33.3%) agreed while 1 (3.0%) disagreed and 2 (6.1%) strongly disagreed, with 3 (9.1%) not sure that principals promote cooperation among teachers and students in schools. Hence, most teachers (81.8%) were of the view that principals promoted cooperation among teachers and students which propelled students to perform better in their respective schools. The good relationship between teachers and students enhances both discipline and cohesive existence in school. In open ended questionnaire, one student (Student 5) said that:

Through teacher-student cooperation, principals have been able to provide remedial classes to address syllabus coverage and revision, it has enhanced proper attendance to lessons by both teachers and students through prefect monitoring tool and checking of teachers during preps time (Student 5)

However, according to one of the principal's interviewed (Principal 7) had this to say:

Parents were reluctant to pay school levies and this obvious lack of cooperation hinders the implementation of most school functions and activities such as teachers' professional development programme to the satisfaction of the teachers; more so, funds allocated to the schools by the Ministry of Education were inadequate to cover staff development programme (Principal 7, Interview 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2020)

The views of Principal 7 provide a comprehensive stand of most principals. There was recurrence of lack of funds as a major obstacle in addressing most school needs. It affected professional development of teachers and made the work of principals difficult. The lack of cooperation from parents in paying levies made the situation worse in most schools.

## **Conclusions**

This study investigated on the principals' instructional supervision practices on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Mwatate Sub County, Taita Taveta County, Kenya and concluded that instructional supervision practices influence on students' academic achievement can only be ensured through principals checking and signing professional documents; principals observing teachers while they teach in classes; Principals' impromptu visits to classrooms; principals monitoring students' academic progress; principals' provision of learning materials; principals taking teachers for In-service training; principals ensuring proper lesson attendance by teachers; principals' provision of safe environment for studies and principals' promoted cooperation among teachers and students in schools.

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### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions the study recommended that the Ministry of Education and TSC needs to sensitize principals and the teachers on the importance of having updated teachers' professional records and all times be used to implement the curriculum. The MoE to regularly disburse funds without delay to schools; in order for principals to actualize provision of teaching and learning resources to enable students' academic performance in schools. The principals to provide constant and adequate information to the teachers on supervision activities as well as professional development programmes organized in or outside the Sub County.



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