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**Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision Strategies and Their influence on
Effective Implementation Competence Based Education in North Horr Ward,
Marsabit County, Kenya**



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Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision Strategies and Their influence on Effective Implementation Competence Based Education in North Horr Ward, Marsabit County, Kenya

Paul Huka Kalla, Prof. Ann Kanga , Dr Paschal Wambiya 

¹Postgraduate Student, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

²Associate Professor, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

<https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5200-5514>

³Senior Lecturer, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0038-3630>

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the instructional supervision strategies employed by head teachers and their influence on effective implementation of Competency-Based Education in North Horr Ward, Marsabit County, Kenya—an arid and semi-arid region characterised by limited educational infrastructure and teacher shortages.

Methodology: An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed, combining a descriptive survey with phenomenological inquiry. Quantitative data were gathered from head teachers and teachers through structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained via interviews with educational officers, focus group discussions with pupils, and document analysis.

Findings: The findings revealed that while head teachers frequently engaged in classroom visits, collaborative planning, and review of professional documents, practices such as providing feedback, supporting continuous professional development, and recognising exemplary performance were inconsistently executed. Challenges identified included teacher resistance, heavy workload, lack of supervisory skills, inadequate resources, and limited support from education officials due to logistical constraints.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The study recommends targeted capacity building for head teachers, increased staffing, improved logistical support for supervisory officers, and the institutionalisation of professional development and feedback mechanisms to enhance curriculum delivery and teacher support in remote areas.

Keywords: *Instructional Supervision, Collaborative Planning, Professional Documents, Competency-Based Education, Education Officials*

Introduction

Instructional supervision is a pivotal mechanism for enhancing teaching practices and improving learning outcomes within educational institutions. It involves the systematic support and oversight of teachers to foster effective pedagogical approaches. In the Kenyan context, particularly in remote regions head teachers assume primary responsibility for instructional supervision due to the limited presence of external educational officers. Their leadership is crucial in guiding educators through the implementation of the Competency-Based Education, which emphasizes learner-centered and skill-based instructional strategies.

Head teachers serve as central figures in both the administrative and academic domains of school operations. This role aligns with the recommendations of the Kamunge Report (1988), which identified head teachers as the initial line of inspection within their institutions, entrusting them with the responsibility of ensuring the utilization of approved instructional tools such as lesson plans, schemes of work, and pupil exercise books. However, the effective execution of these duties is often impeded by structural challenges, including inadequate professional development opportunities, staffing shortages, and substandard infrastructure. These constraints significantly hinder the capacity of head teachers to supervise instruction effectively and to support teachers' pedagogical needs within the CBE framework. In North Horr Ward, the successful implementation of the CBE is further obstructed by contextual factors such as teacher shortages, limited training, insufficient resources, and the geographical remoteness of schools. These challenges severely restrict head teachers' ability to conduct effective instructional supervision. Consequently, this study aims to examine the supervision strategies employed by head teachers and the challenges they encounter in overseeing CBE implementation

Statement of the Problem

The implementation of the Competency-Based Education in Kenya, particularly in remote regions, faces significant challenges that impede effective instructional supervision. Head teachers in these areas are tasked with overseeing curriculum delivery, including monitoring lesson planning, classroom instruction, assessment practices, and the utilization of instructional materials. However, they often encounter obstacles such as limited teacher capacity, vast geographical coverage, understaffed schools, and a lack of ongoing professional development and policy support. These factors collectively hinder their ability to fulfill their supervisory responsibilities effectively.

Despite the pivotal role of head teachers in driving instructional change, there is a paucity of empirical evidence detailing the specific supervision strategies they employ and the unique barriers they face in the context of North Horr Ward. This gap in knowledge necessitated a focused investigation into their supervision practices and constraints they encounter, to inform targeted policy interventions aimed at improving CBE implementation in such underserved regions

Research Questions

In the light of the above gaps the study was guided by the following research questions;

1. To what extent do head teachers' supervisory strategies influence the implementation of CBE in public primary schools in North Horr Ward, Marsabit County?
2. What challenges do head teachers in North Horr Ward encounter in the execution of their instructional supervision roles under the CBE framework?

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Instructional Leadership Theory developed by Hallinger and Murphy as quoted by (Kariuki et al., 2024), which highlights the pivotal role of school leaders—particularly head teachers—in improving teaching practices and learning outcomes through effective supervision. The theory articulates three core dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, and fostering a positive school learning climate. Collectively, these dimensions illustrate the multifaceted ways in which school leaders shape curriculum delivery, influence teacher practices, and enhance the overall instructional environment. The theory underscores the significance of monitoring classroom instruction, coordinating teaching and learning processes, and nurturing a supportive atmosphere that promotes academic achievement. It further posits that instructional leadership entails both direct interventions—such as classroom supervision and teacher evaluation—and indirect mechanisms, including the development of clear expectations, support systems, and sustained professional development opportunities.

The relevance of this theoretical framework to the current study lies in its comprehensive articulation of the instructional duties and leadership responsibilities of head teachers, which are closely aligned with the research objectives. The first research question, which investigates the strategies employed by head teachers in the implementation of the Competency-Based Education, corresponds directly with the dimension of managing the instructional programme. The second research question, which explores the challenges faced by head teachers, relates to the dimension of fostering a conducive learning climate, particularly within under-resourced contexts such as North Horr Ward. This theory thus provides robust conceptual lens through which the leadership practices of head teachers may be examined, including how they set instructional priorities, support teaching staff, and oversee the pedagogical process. Additionally, it facilitates an analysis of how institutional and contextual factors mediate the effectiveness of instructional supervision, thereby informing the interpretation of results and the development of policy-oriented recommendations.

Literature Review

Instructional supervision, a fundamental aspect of educational leadership, involves the systematic oversight, evaluation, and support of teachers to improve instructional quality and learner outcomes (Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022). Head teachers occupy a central position in this process, balancing instructional and administrative responsibilities necessary for effective school management (McGhee & Stark, 2018). In Kenya, the Kamunge Report (1988) identified head

teachers as the first-line inspectors of schools, a role that has gained prominence due to the Ministry of Education's limited capacity for regular supervision (Jonyo, 2019). Their responsibilities include reviewing professional documents such as schemes of work and lesson plans, and ensuring that teachers monitor learners' progress through proper assessment, marking, and feedback (Faizuddin et al., 2022; Senol, 2020). These supervisory practices not only help maintain educational standards but also enhance teacher accountability and professional growth.

Glatzt and Sullivan (2017) reported findings from the final phase of a three-part investigation examining the state of instructional supervision in selected public schools in New York City. Employing mixed methods research design, the study utilized interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, observations, and document analysis to ensure triangulation and credibility of data. In the earlier phases, the researchers discovered primarily through surveys and interviews, that centralized education reforms had adversely affected the practice of instructional supervision. The findings revealed that school principals were often overburdened with administrative responsibilities, leaving them little time for consistent and meaningful instructional oversight. Many teachers perceived supervision as superficial and predominantly evaluative rather than developmental. Glatzt and Sullivan study was conducted in a well-resourced context with highly trained teachers in a developed country. The study, additionally was presented as a conference paper and had not yet reached completion at the time of presentation, gaps that the current study aimed to address.

Hoque and Kenayathulla (2020) used quantitative methods to investigate secondary school teachers' productivity in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and how supervision related to it. Questionnaires using 5-point Likert scales were used to gather data, which was then analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. A total of 300 teachers and 100 administrators (male and female) were randomly selected for the research using simple random sampling. Inadequate incentive via monitoring has a detrimental impact on teacher performance, according to the data. Teachers who did not fully embrace or absorb monitoring were more likely to show signs of hostility and resistance, according to the research. Hoque and Kenayathulla study was limited to secondary school settings and focused exclusively on teachers and supervisors. It did not investigate the supervisory strategies employed by head teachers or their influence on teachers' performance in implementing CBE which constituted gaps addressed by the study.

Mwambo and Epah (2022) carried out a study whose focus was on curriculum supervision and school effectiveness in public nursery and primary schools in Fako division, South West Region of Cameroon. The objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between curriculum supervision and school effectiveness in public primary schools. The survey research design was adopted for the study. Data was collected from 406 teachers and 62 head teachers from both nursery and primary schools and the number of accessible nursery and primary schools were 23. Questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were the instruments used for the study. The instruments consisted of both close and open-ended questions. Results showed that there was

significant, positive and moderate relationship between supervision of curriculum and school effectiveness ($P=0.000 < 0.05$). This led to the conclusion that schools are more likely to be effective when supervisory practices (pedagogic, administrative, instructional and curriculum) are carried out effectively. Despite providing valuable insights, the study by Mwamba and Epah was geographically limited and employed survey design relying primarily on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which may not have sufficiently captured the depth and triangulation of data attainable through more diverse methods. The current study addressed these gaps by employing mixed methods research design, incorporating questionnaires, interviews, observations, document analysis, and focus group discussions, thus enhancing the richness of findings.

Teacher supervision, as in many other countries, has received considerable scholarly attention in Kenya due to its perceived potential to enhance student academic performance (Dafa, Cheloti, & Muthaa, 2020). Koskie, Sang, and Ngeno (2020) conducted a study to examine the relationship between head teachers' leadership competencies and effective school management in public primary schools in Narok County, Kenya. The study was grounded in Katz's theory of administrative abilities and Mintzberg's Managerial Roles Classification Model. Convergent mixed methods research design was employed, utilizing questionnaires, interviews, and checklists for data collection. The target population included 665 head teachers, 25 Curriculum Support Officers, and a county auditor. Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers and CSOs. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS to generate both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings indicated that head teachers' leadership competencies significantly influenced staff and pupil discipline in public primary schools. Furthermore, the study revealed that limited administrative competencies among head teachers contributed to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, including classrooms, desks, water, and electricity. Although the study employed similar methodology, it was geographically limited and did not incorporate certain data collection tools, such as teacher questionnaires on supervisory strategies, gaps that the present study addressed.

Chepkonga (2023) conducted a study to assess the training needs of head teachers in the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools in Marakwet East Sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design and focused on Quality Assurance and Standards Officers and head teachers as the target population. A total of 47 head teachers and four QASOs were purposively selected to participate in the study. Data were collected using questionnaires administered to head teachers and interview schedules for QASOs. The collected data were analysed through both qualitative methods, specifically thematic content analysis and quantitative approaches using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Findings were presented using tables, graphs, and percentages. The study revealed that many head teachers were not effectively executing their supervisory responsibilities to support the proper implementation of CBC. It also found that training opportunities were infrequent, and the few provided by the Ministry of Education (MoE) had minimal impact on enhancing head

teachers' capacity for institutional supervision. Although the study generated useful insights, it was limited to head teachers and QASOs, excluding teachers and pupils who are directly affected by supervision practices. It also did not include document analysis to verify the frequency and feedback loop of supervision. These methodological gaps were addressed in the current study.

Research was carried out by Adhiambo, Aringo, and Okemasisi (2023) in order to determine if the supervision strategies of head teachers in Kisumu Central Sub-County, Kenya, affected the performance of teachers during the implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum in public primary schools. Managerial role classification theory served as the theoretical framework for the study. The study used convergent parallel mixed methods research design. All twenty public primary schools in the sub-county, together with twenty head teachers and one quality assurance and standards officer, were part of the study's purposive sample respondents. Three hundred and four teachers were sampled using random sampling. To collect data, teachers were given questionnaires to fill out, while information from head teachers and the QASO was collected via interviews. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 25 and shown graphically, tabularly, and by use of frequency and percentage distributions. Qualitative data were analysed Using narrative descriptions and direct quotes and thematically presented. The results revealed that head teachers failed to adequately oversee the CBC implementation rollout. Teachers, 202 (68.3%) expressed disagreement with the assertion that principals supervised classroom teaching and learning. When asked if head teachers provided professional development opportunities to assist with class planning and delivery, 157 teachers (53.0%) disagreed and 98 (33.1%) were unsure. Teachers, 196 (66.2%) strongly disagreed that head teachers kept tabs on how often instructors used problem-solving techniques in the classroom. Although this study used comparable methodology, it was geographically limited and did not include Curriculum Support Officers or pupils who are key stakeholders in the CBE implementation process, gaps the study filled.

Research Design

The study adopted Mixed Methods Research design, specifically the explanatory sequential mixed methods approach, which supports the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of instructional supervision strategies and challenges in the implementation of Competency-Based Education in North Horr Ward. The study is anchored on the principle that practical problem-solving should guide the choice of research methods. MMR allows for the use of multiple data sources and methodological approaches to explore complex, real-world phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This mixed methods approach was deemed most suitable for the current study as it facilitates the initial measurement of patterns in instructional supervision through quantitative analysis, followed by a deeper exploration of the contextual experiences of head teachers and educational officers through qualitative inquiry.

For the quantitative strand, the study employed descriptive survey design, targeting head teachers and teachers using structured questionnaires. This design is appropriate for examining the prevalence and patterns of instructional supervision practices and identifying commonly experienced challenges across schools in the ward (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The qualitative strand of the study utilized phenomenological design, focusing on the lived experiences of head teacher, the Sub-County Director of Education, Curriculum Support Officers, and Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Phenomenology was selected for its strength in uncovering rich, contextual insights, including perceptions and systemic barriers that may not be adequately captured through quantitative methods (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The combination of descriptive survey and phenomenological designs enabled the study to both quantify observable trends and interpret the underlying meanings and institutional realities. In the context of North Horr Ward—a remote and underserved ASAL region—this approach offers a nuanced and contextually grounded understanding of the instructional strategies used and challenges faced by head teachers in supervision of effective implementation of CBE.

Target Population

The study targeted all the ten public primary schools in the ward (N= 10). The study also targeted all the eighty six public primary school teachers who taught from grade1 to 6 in North Horr ward (N=86), the 10 head teachers of public primary schools (N=10); the curriculum support officer (N=1), Quality assurance and Standards officer (N=1) of the ward, the sub county director of education and TSC (N=2) and pupils of grade 5 and 6 in the ten public primary schools (N= 480) were targeted (Office of the SCDE, North Horr, January, 2025)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Given the relatively small size of the population, the study employed census approach for headteachers, teachers, and education officials, thereby including all individuals within these categories. This approach aligns with recommendations for comprehensive data collection when the population is manageable (Lakens, 2022). For the pupil component, a stratified random sampling technique was utilised. Pupils in Grades 5 and 6 (N = 480) were stratified by grade and sex, and a sample of 80 pupils—eight from each of the ten schools—was randomly selected, ensuring equal representation across grades and genders. This method facilitated a balanced and representative sample, capturing a wide range of learner experiences and perceptions. In qualitative research, sample size is often determined by the principle of data saturation, where data collection continues until no new information emerges (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). This study's inclusive approach, encompassing various stakeholders and employing multiple data collection methods, aimed to achieve data saturation, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the findings.

Data Collection Tools

The study employed a variety of data collection instruments to ensure methodological rigour and facilitate comprehensive data triangulation. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and headteachers to obtain structured and quantifiable data on infrastructural availability and its influence on CBC implementation. Interview guides were used with sub-county education officials to elicit in-depth, narrative responses regarding policy enforcement, resource allocation, and administrative challenges. Observation checklists were utilised to systematically assess the physical infrastructure and learning environments across schools. Additionally, document analysis was conducted to review existing school records, thereby strengthening the validity of findings through secondary data. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with learners in Grades 5 and 6 to capture their perceptions and experiences, offering valuable insights from the pupil perspective. The use of multiple data sources ensured triangulation, enhanced the credibility of the findings, and provided a well-rounded understanding of the research problem.

. Data Analysis Procedures

The study employed mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to achieve comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. Quantitative data, primarily collected through structured questionnaires, were analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means to summarise general trends and characteristics within the target population. To examine the strength and direction of relationships between key variables, inferential statistics were applied, notably the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. This statistical measure is appropriate for assessing linear relationships between two continuous variables and provides insights into the degree of association between variables (Turney, 2024). Qualitative data, obtained through interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, were subjected to thematic analysis. This method involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data, allowing for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perspectives. Thematic analysis is particularly effective in capturing the complexities of qualitative data and provides a nuanced understanding of the contextual factors influencing the research problem (Ahmed, Pereira, & Jane, 2024).

The integration of quantitative and qualitative data was achieved through convergent parallel design, wherein both data types were collected and analysed concurrently but independently. The findings were then merged during the interpretation phase to provide a comprehensive perspective on the research questions. This approach enhances the validity of the results by corroborating evidence across different data sources and offers a more robust understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

Results and Findings

Head Teachers' Supervision Strategies

The Research sought to examine the instructional supervision strategies employed by head teachers to ensure the effective implementation of Competency-Based Education. This

section is organized into two parts: the supervision strategies adopted by head teachers and the challenges they encounter in executing these strategies.

Head Teachers Instructional Supervision Strategies

This section outlines the findings on the instructional supervision strategies adopted by head teachers to support the implementation of Competency-Based Education in public primary schools. The study identified key strategies used, after which both head teachers and teachers were asked to respond with a simple “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether each strategy was being applied in their schools. A summary of the results is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Strategies used by Head Teachers in Their Instructional Supervision

	Head Teachers n=10				Teachers n=80			
	Yes F	%	No F	%	Yes F.	%	NO F	%
Class visits to assess individual teachers	8	80	2	20	61	76	19	24
Gives Feedback loop to teachers, pupils and other stakeholders	7	70	3	30	25	31	55	69
Check learners exercise books for homework and marking	4	40	6	60	16	20	64	80-
Facilitate Continuous Professional Development	5	50	5	50	24	30	56	70
Carry out Collaborative Planning with teachers and other stakeholders	8	80	2	20	60	75	20	25
Checking Teachers professional Documents	9	90	1	10	68	85	12	15
Holds Prefect meeting	6	60	4	40	20	25	60	75

Source: Field Data 2024

From the data presented in table 1, it can be inferred that majority of both head teachers (80%) and teachers (76%) reported that classroom visits by head teachers to assess individual teaching practices were being conducted. This suggests that instructional observation remains a commonly utilized supervision strategy in public primary schools.

Qualitative evidence obtained from interviews with education officials reinforced the findings on classroom visits. The officials affirmed that head teachers, together with quality assurance officers, undertake supervisory visits. However, the officials also acknowledged significant logistical constraints that hampered the effectiveness of these efforts. One education official noted:

We rarely carry out thorough quality assurance due to vastness of the ward, the poor facilitation by the ministry and also sometimes due to lack of transport to the schools due

to poor road network. Some schools are so far from the headquarter and there are no hospitality facilities around the schools for us to spend the night. (Education official Interview 11th Oct, 2024)

Document analysis further supported this finding, as most head teachers provided records of classroom observations conducted by Quality Assurance and Standards Officer as well as their own internal teacher assessments. However, it was noted that the most current assessment records available in several schools were over three years old. This raises concerns about the continuity and consistency of supervision practices, indicating either lapse in regular assessment activities or failure in record-keeping.

The findings align with those of Olima, Ajowi, and Onditi (2020), whose study in Kisumu County revealed that head teachers' classroom observations were irregular, feedback mechanisms were underdeveloped, and coaching or mentoring of teachers was infrequently undertaken. A study by Hussein (2023) in Northern Kenya reported that while supervision was acknowledged as essential for CBE implementation, most schools lacked operational resources and dependable transportation, resulting in infrequent supervision visits and limited instructional support.

Table 1 illustrates that while 70% of head teachers reported providing feedback on regular basis, only 31% of teachers acknowledged receiving such feedback. Teachers (69%) disagreed, suggesting that feedback mechanisms may be either insufficiently implemented or poorly communicated. This discrepancy reveals a gap between head teachers and teaching staff concerning the frequency and effectiveness of feedback practices.

Document analysis provided limited corroboration of the head teachers' claims. In most schools, there was no documentary evidence such as feedback reports and observation summaries demonstrating that systematic feedback had been provided. Only two schools presented meeting minutes that included remarks or action points addressed to teachers following classroom observations. The absence of consistent documentation suggests that while head teachers may believe they are offering feedback, the process may be informal, inconsistent, or lacking in structure and traceability. The qualitative data obtained from the interview with the education officials added an important dimension to the analysis. They acknowledged that feedback was an expected supervisory responsibility but pointed out that many head teachers failed to provide timely and structured feedback following classroom visits. One of them noted:

In many cases, head teachers conduct classroom observations but do not follow through with post-observation discussions or written feedback. This could be because head teachers are also classroom teachers and after supervision they have to rush for their lessons. This undermines the improvement process, as teachers are left unaware of what to correct or build upon. (Education official Interview 11th Oct, 2024).

The findings are consistent with those of Hussein (2023), whose study in Northern Kenya revealed that most teachers perceived school leaders as disengaged from providing actionable

feedback. Their study emphasized that without formalized feedback systems, teachers were less likely to make instructional adjustments aligned with CBE principles. Furthermore, they recommended the institutionalization of routine performance review meetings and documentation practices to ensure feedback is both visible and actionable.

As shown in the table, only 40% of the head teachers and 20% of the teachers confirmed that head teachers regularly checked pupils' exercise books for homework and correction. On the contrary, 60% of head teachers and 80% of teachers stated that such monitoring is not conducted. The practice of checking pupils' exercise books is a key element of instructional supervision, as it offers insight into the quality of teaching, learner progress, and the effectiveness of follow-up on assigned tasks. This inconsistency in practice suggests a supervisory gap in ensuring accountability in routine classroom tasks.

These responses were further validated through qualitative data from focus group discussions with pupils. In two of the sampled schools, pupils reported that head teachers had checked their exercise books, though this was only once per term. In contrast, in eight schools, pupils unanimously reported that their head teachers had never checked their exercise books. One pupil remarked:

Our head teacher has never checked our exercise books for assignments given and marking. Some of our teachers do not mark our books regularly. There are times when three or four home works are not marked. Many times, some of our teachers do not give us homework, especially for some learning areas such as agriculture, religion, and home science. (FGD School 6, 20th Oct, 2024)

The findings of this study concur with Ngui (2023), whose research in Machakos County revealed that 77.8% of head teachers and 79.6% of teachers reported that head teachers rarely checked learners' exercise books. The study concluded that lack of consistent exercise books checks undermined efforts to monitor teaching effectiveness and delayed remedial support for struggling learners. Kiptanui and Chepkorir (2024), carried out a study in Uasin Gishu County, whose findings were that neglecting routine checks on learners' written work contributed to the accumulation of unmarked assignments and reduced learners' motivation, particularly in non-examinable subjects. CBE emphasizes continuous assessment, timely feedback, and learner engagement. The failure to regularly check learners' work reflects misalignment between curriculum expectations and supervisory practices.

It is evident from table 1, only 60% of head teachers reported that they facilitated continuous professional development activities, while a substantial 40% admitted they did not. In contrast, only 30% of the teachers affirmed participation in CPD facilitated by their schools, with 70% indicating that such opportunities were not being provided. CPD is a foundational pillar in the implementation of CBE as it ensures that teachers remain equipped with updated pedagogical

skills, assessment strategies, and curriculum interpretation frameworks. The findings of the study revealed notable shortcomings in how school leadership supported and facilitated CPD initiatives

These quantitative findings were further confirmed through document analysis. None of the schools availed any records such as CPD registers, training reports, or certificates of participation that demonstrated internally organized retooling activities. This lack of documentation suggested systemic absence of school-based teacher retooling initiatives. During the interviews, the Education Officials confirmed that no CPD sessions had been organized at the school level. They attributed this to inadequate funding, stating that retooling only occurred when facilitated by the Ministry of Education, typically once per year. One of the education officials explained:

Training of teachers is core to the effective implementation of CBE. Unfortunately, the only amount allocated for training in school capitation by MoE is so meagre. Most of the NGOs in the ward only support health and livelihood activities and not education. No school in the ward has been able to organize training for teachers. (Education official Interview ,3rd Oct, 2024)

These findings concur with those of Mwanzia and Kathambi (2023), whose study in Kitui County revealed that although school leaders recognized the importance of CPD, most schools were unable to organize any form of in-service training due to financial and logistical constraints. They emphasized the need for devolved training funds and multi-stakeholder support to strengthen teacher development. Otieno and Odhiambo (2024), in their study conducted in Siaya County, observed that most head teachers relied entirely on MoE-sponsored training workshops and did not initiate school-level CPD, citing inadequate capitation and lack of training expertise within their institutions. CBE reform is premised on ongoing professional development; the sustainability and frequency of teacher retooling remain problematic. Without institutionalized funding mechanisms or partnerships focused on capacity-building, schools are unable to autonomously support their teaching staff. This compromises the overall quality and effectiveness of CBE implementation.

From the table, both head teachers and teachers (80%) agreed that head teachers engage in collaborative planning with teachers and other stakeholders. This high level of agreement suggests strong commitment to inclusive leadership and stakeholder engagement. Collaborative planning is an essential component of effective instructional leadership, particularly under CBE where collective problem-solving, shared visioning, and participatory decision-making are central to educational reform. The results indicate that collaborative planning is extensively practiced within the schools.

Qualitative evidence from interviews with education officials affirmed this finding. The officials confirmed that collaboration is institutionalized in many schools through routine Board of Management meetings held once every term, parents' days conducted annually in some schools,

and regular staff meetings held at least twice per term. This was substantiated during document analysis, where all schools had well-maintained files containing minutes of BOM and staff meetings. In three schools, additional documentation of parents' meeting schedules, attendance lists, and signed minutes were also available, reflecting transparency and commitment to engaging parents in school governance. One education official noted:

Most head teachers understand the importance of working collaboratively with teachers and stakeholders. BOM meetings are now standard practice each term, and staff meetings are regularly convened to address curriculum issues and administrative challenges. However, more effort is needed to increase the frequency and effectiveness of parent engagement. (Education official Interview, 3rd Oct, 2024)

These practices are consistent with findings by Adhiambo and Wambua (2023), whose study in Turkana County found that collaborative planning, especially when involving teachers and BOM members improved curriculum implementation and led to better school performance. They emphasized that effective collaboration allows for contextual problem-solving, especially in marginalized regions where resources are limited. A study by Wekesa and Kirui (2024) in Bungoma County revealed that schools with routine collaborative planning mechanisms, such as structured staff forums and parent-teacher associations, reported smoother CBE rollout and fewer conflicts during implementation phases. The high prevalence of collaborative planning among head teachers in the study area is an encouraging sign of responsive and inclusive leadership.

From the table it is evident that majority of head teachers (90%) and teachers (85%) agreed that head teachers frequently checked professional documents. This suggests that the supervisory practice is well institutionalized in the schools. The regular review of teachers' professional documents such as lesson plans, schemes of work and records of work is fundamental aspect of instructional supervision under CBE. These documents not only reflect pedagogical planning but also serve as indicators of instructional preparedness, accountability, and curriculum alignment.

Qualitative insights from interviews with education officials reinforced the quantitative findings. One of them remarked:

I commend our head teachers for keeping good track of teachers' professional record preparation. Whenever we visit schools, the records are provided promptly despite the shortage of teachers in some schools. We still have a long way in teachers' preparation of IEP and LEP. The teachers require further training on this. (Education Official interview 11th, Oct, 2024)

Document analysis supported these responses, as all schools provided evidence of professional documents being checked and signed on weekly basis. These included signed and dated lesson plans, schemes of work, progress records, and KNEC summative assessment results. This level of documentation is indicative of strong internal quality assurance mechanisms.

These results align with the work of Gichuhi, Nyakundi, and Onyango (2024), who established that head teachers in public primary schools in Narok North Sub-County consistently reviewed teachers' instructional documents and underscored their contribution to strengthening curriculum delivery. Wambugu and Cheruiyot (2023) also in a study conducted in Baringo County, observed that schools with regular supervision of professional documents demonstrated improved teacher punctuality, lesson preparedness, and learner assessment practices. Their study concluded that regular document checks were directly linked to improved instructional planning and learner outcomes. The consistent checking of teachers' professional documents is a commendable supervisory practice that enhances instructional integrity and ensures curriculum alignment.

Table 1 illustrates that while 60% of head teachers reported organizing prefect meetings for academic consultation, only 25% of teachers affirmed the same, with 75% of teachers and 40% of head teachers indicating that such meetings were not conducted. Engagement of pupil leadership through prefect meetings is crucial in narrowing the communication gap between learners and school administration, providing a forum for academic consultation, addressing learner challenges, and promoting democratic school governance, principles that resonate with the learner-centered philosophy of the CBE.

Document analysis confirmed the irregularity of this practice. Only three schools produced documented evidence of prefect meetings, such as files containing meeting minutes. Pupil responses during FGDs provided compelling qualitative data. In eight of the sampled schools, pupils reported that prefect meetings were either non-existent or held extremely infrequently. In one school, a pupil remarked:

Our head teacher does not hold any prefect meeting. When we have problems, especially in the boarding, we report to the matron and boarding master. Sometimes our problems are solved, but many times not. The head teacher has never called for prefects' meeting the whole of this year. (FGD School 5, 20th Oct 2024)

This feedback points to a missed opportunity for school leadership to engage with learners directly, understand their concerns, and collaboratively address academic and welfare issues.

The results are corroborated by a study conducted by Hassan and Njoroge (2023) in Garissa County, which found that most head teachers did not involve student leaders in regular consultation forums. The lack of structured engagement was linked to poor communication flow and unresolved grievances among learners, particularly in boarding schools. A study by Chege and Mwanzia (2024) in Kitui County also observed that prefect meetings were seldom convened, with many school heads prioritizing administrative tasks over participatory leadership.

The table shows that 70% of head teachers and 90% of teachers indicated that head teachers do not recognize exemplary performance. Recognition of exemplary performance is a key motivator for learners and plays significant role in promoting positive school climate, enhancing academic achievement, and encouraging active participation in co-curricular activities. Under the

Competency-Based Education, learner recognition aligns with the goals of holistic development and the nurturing of individual talents and effort. However, the current study found that this practice is largely neglected in the schools under investigation.

This trend was corroborated by data from focus group discussions, where the majority of learners indicated that they were not acknowledged or rewarded for outstanding performance, either in academics or co-curricular activities. In only one school did pupils report regular recognition of achievement. A pupil in that school stated:

We are very happy with our head teacher. Whenever we perform well in games, especially interschool competitions, he takes us out for a party. During Parents' Day and National holidays when we perform well, he slaughters a cow to celebrate our good work. For school work, the best three and the three most improved pupils are given a reward at the end of the term. (FGD school 1, 30th Oct 2024)

This exception highlights the impact that intentional recognition practices can have on learner morale and motivation. Unfortunately, such efforts appear isolated and not representative of the wider school context.

These findings are consistent with those of Barasa and Mwangi (2023), in West Pokot County, where majority of public primary schools were found to lack structured reward systems for academic and co-curricular achievement. Their research highlighted that the absence of motivational strategies diminished learners' sustained effort and contributed to reduced participation in school-based competitions. Mutie and Rono (2024), likewise observed in Samburu County that only a small number of schools had recognition programs in place, a situation largely attributed to limited financial resources and inadequate awareness among school leaders regarding the significance of learner motivation in influencing educational outcomes. They recommended the adoption of affordable reward mechanisms within school improvement initiatives to ensure regular acknowledgment of learners' efforts and accomplishments.

Data from Document Analysis

This section presents findings from the document analysis conducted across ten public primary schools in North Horr Ward, focusing on the availability and utilisation of essential records that support supervision, assessment, and planning within the framework of Competency-Based Education. The analysis offers critical insights into how documentation practices reflect both strengths and gaps in institutional processes that directly influence the effective implementation of CBE. The analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Data from Document Analysis

	Availability	Remarks
Teachers' attendance Register	Available in all schools	Available and marked daily
Records of professional documents checked	Available in all schools	Available, checked by the head teachers and stamped weekly
Record of class/prefect meeting	Available in only a few schools	Available only in two schools
CBA Feedback & reporting tools	Available in a few all schools	Only summative assessment report available
Teachers' supervision record	Available in schools	The only available ones in few schools are three years. Only available record was TPAD
School improvement Plan	Available in a few schools	Available in very few schools

Source: Field Data 2024

The document analysis presented in table 2 offers valuable insights into the availability and utilisation of key instructional and supervision records essential for the effective implementation of CBE in public primary schools within North Horr Ward, and these findings closely concur with the quantitative results of the study. Both data sources reveal notable strengths in certain aspects of record-keeping, such as the availability and daily marking of teachers' attendance registers, which reflect consistent administrative compliance and align with survey data indicating regular monitoring of teacher presence. Similarly, the presence of professional documents, including schemes of work, lesson plans, and records of work covered which are checked and stamped weekly by head teachers, confirming the quantitative findings that indicated head teachers actively monitored instructional planning and delivery. These practices align with the expectations of TSC and the Instructional Leadership Framework, which emphasis the head teacher's role in ensuring curriculum fidelity.

However, both the document analysis and quantitative findings also expose significant weaknesses. For instance, records of prefect meetings were found in only two schools, mirroring survey results that suggested limited engagement in participatory governance. In addition, the minimal availability of Competency-Based Assessment feedback and reporting tools, which were limited to summative reports, and the presence of teacher supervision records, last updated up to three years ago, corroborate quantitative findings highlighting insufficient supervision and feedback mechanisms. The absence of School Improvement Plans in most schools affirms the quantitative evidence of weak strategic planning processes. SIPs are fundamental in guiding school priorities, including teacher retooling, infrastructure development, and learner support services. Their limited availability reflects systemic planning gap that could negatively affect the structured implementation of CBE and hinder resource mobilisation from stakeholders and development partners. This strong alignment between qualitative and quantitative findings underscores the

pressing need to strengthen documentation systems, enhance instructional supervision, and establish structured planning practices to support the effective and sustainable implementation of CBE in North Horr Ward.

Challenges Faced by Head Teachers in Their Instructional Supervision

To better understand the challenges that head teachers experience in carrying out instructional supervision strategies, both head teachers and teachers were requested to highlight the specific difficulties associated with this role. Responses from the open-ended questionnaire items were quantified, systematically analysed, and triangulated with qualitative evidence obtained from interviews with education officials, focus group discussions with pupils, and information derived from the document analysis guide. The consolidated findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Challenges Faced by Head Teachers in Their Supervision

Emerging Themes	Frequency	Percentages
Increased workload	63	70%
Negative attitude towards supervision	59	66%
Inadequate resources	48	53%
Lack of supervisory skills	45	50%
Lack of confidence	45	50%
Limited Support	39	43%

Source: Field Data 2024

From table 3, 70% of the head teachers and teachers indicated that increased workload significantly hinders head teachers from effectively performing instructional supervision. In all the schools within the ward, head teachers were also full-time classroom teachers. Some of them were responsible for lower primary classes, where they manage learners single-handedly. When a head teacher leaves the class to conduct supervision even for just one teacher, their own class remains unattended.

These concerns were corroborated by education officials during interviews, who confirmed that the dual role of teaching and supervising places substantial burden on head teachers, particularly in understaffed schools. One of them remarked:

All our head teachers handle a class on their own. There is a school where we have only two teachers, including the head teacher, responsible for teaching four grades. The head teacher must handle two grades every day. It is therefore impossible for the head teacher to leave two grades unattended in order to supervise a teacher who, within those same 40 minutes, is also managing two different grades. (Education official Interview, 3rd 2024)

These findings are consistent with Mulatya (2022) study in Lower Yatta which found that in Kitui County, head teachers often experience role conflict due to their dual responsibilities as administrators and classroom instructors, leaving them with limited time for instructional supervision. Similarly, a study conducted by Education Development Trust. (2023) in Turkana County reported that teacher shortages, particularly in remote public schools, forced head teachers to prioritize teaching over supervision duties, compromising the quality and frequency of instructional support.

Table 3 indicates that 66% of head teachers and teachers reported that negative attitudes among teachers present significant challenge to effective instructional supervision. Respondents noted that some teachers exhibit resistance to supervision or perceive it as a threat. When supervision is viewed as punitive rather than supportive, it creates a strained environment that inhibits constructive feedback and collaboration between head teachers and staff.

This observation was reinforced by education officials during the interview. One of them remarked:

Some of our teachers view instructional supervision as a witch-hunt and a fault-finding mission. Especially in urban schools, they feel threatened by supervision. They worry that any issues identified might result in their transfer to remote schools. As a result, they resist supervision from both us and the head teachers. It is crucial to demystify supervision as a form of punishment and instead promote it as a professional consultation and developmental activity. (Education official interview, 11th Oct, 2024)

These findings align with research conducted by Gichuhi (2020) in Nyandarua County which established that negative teacher attitudes significantly impeded the effectiveness of head teachers' instructional supervision. Teachers often viewed supervision as criticism rather than support, leading to resistance. Wambugu and Ngugi (2022) also reported that in Nakuru County, teachers' perceptions of supervision as punitive contributed to lack of cooperation, making it difficult for head teachers to implement supervision strategies successfully.

Head teachers and teachers (53%) identified inadequate resources as a major challenge to effective instructional supervision. Respondents reported that schools are underfunded and lack essential inputs needed to facilitate instructional improvement. In the absence of adequate instructional materials such as textbooks, teaching aids, and consistent access to professional development opportunities, head teachers are constrained in their ability to provide meaningful support to classroom instruction.

These observations were corroborated during interviews with education officials, who noted that most schools receive government capitation funds late, and parental financial contributions were limited due to widespread poverty in the region. One of them elaborated:

Many schools operate on shoestring budgets. Capitation often are disbursed late, and in most cases, parents cannot fill the gap due to economic hardships. This means head

teachers are forced to supervise teaching in environments where there are no sufficient textbooks, no charts, and no incentives for professional development. It becomes extremely difficult to expect improvement in instructional quality under such conditions. (Education official Interview, 11th Oct, 2024)

These findings highlight systemic challenge in which effective instructional supervision is not solely a function of leadership competence but is critically dependent on the availability of financial and material resources. Curriculum Implementation Theory supports this interpretation by asserting that the effective enactment of curriculum reforms depends not only on competent leadership but also on the availability of institutional support in terms of resources, infrastructure, and funding. Inadequate or delayed resource allocation weakens the supervisory role of head teachers, thereby constraining instructional leadership and hindering the achievement of desired curriculum outcomes. These findings are consistent with those of Ekitoe, Kimotho, and Atoni (2023), who, in a study conducted in Turkana County, identified financial constraints as a major impediment to instructional supervision. Their research further revealed that the inability of school leaders to provide sufficient resources, coupled with limited supervisory expertise, diminished teacher motivation and compromised the quality of supervision. Similarly, Njiru and Karanja (2022) reported that in public primary schools in Isiolo County, delayed funding and inadequate infrastructure restricted head teachers' ability to effectively support teaching and learning.

Head teachers and teachers (50%) reported that head teachers lack adequate supervisory skills, which hindered their ability to conduct effective instructional supervision. The education officials noted that many head teachers have not received sufficient professional training in classroom observation, feedback provision, or instructional support. Without the requisite skills and knowledge, head teachers are often unable to offer constructive guidance to teachers, thereby limiting the potential for instructional improvement.

Another challenge highlighted by 40% of respondents was the limited confidence among head teachers. It was noted that some head teachers experienced feelings of intimidation, especially when tasked with supervising teachers who possessed higher academic qualifications. This led to feelings of insecurity and reluctance to carry out classroom supervision. These concerns were reinforced during interviews with education officials. One of them stated:

Some of our head teachers are new, and even those who have been in service for a while have never received proper training on how to conduct class observation or compile an observation report. Some of our teachers are also Master degree holders while some head teachers are P1 certificate holders. It is unfortunate that due to limited resources, we rarely visit schools, except those located near the headquarters. Consequently, head teachers lack the necessary skills for effective instructional supervision. (Education official Interview 11th Oct, 2024)

These findings are consistent with those of Okeyo, Areba, and Obuba (2024), who, in their study in Kisii County, identified inadequate supervisory competencies and ineffective training as significant barriers to successful instructional supervision by head teachers. Similarly, Wekesa and Mutisya (2023) found that in Bungoma County, many head teachers lacked formal training in supervision and often avoided conducting class visits due to limited confidence and professional preparedness.

Head teachers and teachers (43%) reported that insufficient support significantly hindered the effectiveness of instructional supervision. In some schools, head teachers operate without the assistance of deputies or senior teachers who might otherwise help with supervisory duties. Respondents also cited lack of consistent support from education officials, who rarely visit schools due to vast geographical distances and logistical constraints such as inadequate transport and facilitation.

These concerns were echoed during interviews with the education officials. One of them candidly admitted:

We have schools located in extremely remote areas, and some of them haven't been supervised in over two years. With limited transport, staff, and funding, our supervision is largely restricted to schools near the headquarters. Unfortunately, this leaves many head teachers without any professional support in carrying out their supervisory duties. (Education official Interview 3rd Oct, 2024)

Focus Group Discussions with pupils revealed similar sentiments. In several cases, pupils confirmed that head teachers rarely visited classrooms to observe teaching practices, with some stating that this happened only once a year or not at all. Document analysis showed lack of records indicating classroom supervision conducted by either head teachers or external supervisors during the current academic year. The only documented form of supervision was the mandatory Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) conducted by nearly all schools as required by the Teachers Service Commission each term.

The findings reveal fundamental weakness in the supervisory framework, where effective instructional supervision depends not only on the competence of head teachers but also on layered institutional support from deputies, senior teachers, and education officials. In the absence of this collaborative structure, supervision is reduced to a procedural compliance exercise rather than a developmental process that enhances teaching and learning. Curriculum implementation theory underscores that successful enactment of curriculum reforms requires strong institutional support systems, adequate facilitation, and coordinated roles among education stakeholders. These findings correspond to a recent study by Chepkemboi and Bett (2023) in Elgeyo Marakwet County, which found that supervisory support systems in public primary schools were weak due to understaffing, poor infrastructure, and limited monitoring by education officials. Similarly, a study by Abdullahi and Adow (2024) in Wajir County, revealed that the scarcity of QASO and CSO

visits caused by insecurity, poor road networks, and underfunding contributed to inadequate supervision and professional stagnation among head teachers and teachers.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that while head teachers in North Horr Ward employ a variety of instructional supervision strategies to support the implementation of the Competency-Based Education, the actual execution of these strategies is often inconsistent and insufficient. Strategies such as class visits, collaborative planning, and the checking of teachers' professional documents appear more frequently implemented, with supporting evidence from both document analysis and responses from teachers and head teachers. However, critical strategies such as giving feedback, facilitating continuous professional development, checking learners' exercise books, holding prefects' meetings, and awarding exemplary performance are poorly executed or largely absent in most schools. These gaps are exacerbated by systemic challenges including increased teacher workload, negative teacher attitudes, lack of supervisory skills, inadequate resources, and limited external support from education officials. The findings underscore that effective instructional supervision is not only a function of strategy availability but also of the contextual realities that enable or hinder execution—particularly in marginalized regions like North Horr Ward. These findings align with studies in Kisumu, Machakos, Turkana, and Narok North Sub-Counties, which reported similar patterns of weak supervision and systemic barriers.

Recommendation

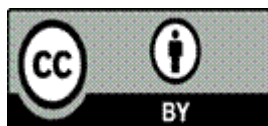
To enhance the effectiveness of instructional supervision and strengthen CBE implementation in North Horr Ward, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Teachers Service Commission should prioritize the deployment of additional teaching staff to reduce the instructional burden on head teachers. Furthermore, targeted training programs should be designed and funded to build the supervisory capacity of head teachers, particularly in classroom observation, feedback delivery, and collaborative leadership. Annual retooling workshops—preferably during school holidays—should be institutionalized, with budgetary allocations specifically earmarked for professional development. The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards should also be facilitated with reliable transport and logistical support to carry out regular and thorough supervision across all schools, including those in remote areas. In addition, schools should establish routine mechanisms such as feedback sessions, prefects' meetings, and performance recognition programs to promote accountability and a culture of excellence. Building partnerships with NGOs to support education initiatives, especially in resource-scarce ASAL areas, could also provide much-needed support for infrastructure, materials, and teacher motivation.

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