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**The Supervision of English Language Teachers in Public Secondary  
Schools in Kenya: A Critical Role of Heads of English Department**



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## **The Supervision of English Language Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya: A Critical Role of Heads of English Department**

1. Wakasa Diana Barasa, PhD student, University of Eldoret, Kenya
2. Onsare Paul Onchera, Lecturer, University of Kabianga, Kenya
3. Okari Florence Mokeira, Lecturer, University of Eldoret, Kenya

Phone: 0726131827; email: dianawakasa@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The study assessed the role of heads of English department in the supervision of English language teachers in public secondary schools in Kakamega county, Kenya among other objectives. Supervision is key in enhancing learning-teaching experiences. In order to ensure better supervision of English language teachers, the heads of English department should play a key role in supervision. When their roles are not carried out efficiently, the teachers may not reach their full potential and learners may underperform. In Kenya, there is no official supervision approach that is exclusively used for supervising teachers of English in secondary schools, which means that teachers of English are not being effectively supervised, and this leads to negative impact on curriculum delivery.

**Methodology:** This article is based on the research study done in Kakamega County, which explored English Language Teachers` opinions about the usefulness of Collaborative Peer Supervision (CPS) approach in enhancing Teacher Effectiveness in the teaching of English Language in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study adapted the Convergent Mixed Methods Research Design, where, 25 heads of English department were purposively sampled from the 417 public secondary schools in Kakamega county, and were interviewed using a researcher-developed in-depth interview schedule. Data collected was thematically analyzed using NVIVO12 Software.

**Findings:** The results revealed that, the major supervisory roles of HODs currently, is administrative i.e., supervision of curriculum implementation at the departmental level, conducting teacher appraisals, and general management of departmental issues. This is formal supervision through the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, which is the current supervisory approach, recognized by the Teachers` Service Commission (TSC), the teachers` employer in Kenya. The study also revealed that HODs are not fully sensitized about other key supervisory roles that they should play, in accordance with the literature. The results were presented thematically, by way of verbatim quotes as expressed by the participants` responses, and researcher commentaries.

**Unique Contribution to theory, practice and policy:** The study concluded that teachers of English in public secondary schools in Kenya, are not being effectively supervised because the HODs are

not fully sensitized about their full supervisory roles. The study recommends the development of capacity building programs on supervisory roles for HODs through workshops and seminars, and the introduction of CPS as a complementary supervision approach for supervising teachers of English in secondary schools, in which HODs will take the centrality of guiding supervision in their departments. This should guarantee the delivery of high-quality instruction.

**Keywords:** *Supervisory roles, Heads of English Language Department, English Language Teacher Supervision, Collaborative Peer Supervision*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the study**

Any society's progress relies on the quality of its education, which in turn is influenced by the calibre of its teachers, pupils, and parents' successful involvement in the educational process, (Ngole and Mkulu, 2021). Supervision of instruction is one of the most effective tools that guarantees quality curriculum delivery of educational programs. The type of supervision approach used, and the role of HODs in supervision, are crucial for effective supervision of teachers. Collaborative Peer Supervision (CPS) is an approach where, teachers who teach the same subject supervise themselves on collegial terms, and has been found to enhance teacher effectiveness. For heads of English department (HODs) to effectively undertake CPS in the supervision of teachers of English, it is crucial that they have supervisory capacity and are fully aware of their supervisory roles.

In Kenya, there is the lack of an official supervision model for supervising teachers of English exclusively, where HODs can fully exercise their supervisory role at departmental level. Teacher supervision is done through Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, carried out by institutional heads, most of whom are not teachers of English to competently supervise the teaching of English. The Heads of English department are thus not fully aware of their role in supervision of instruction, which is a problem.

Supervision of instruction is an effective tool for ensuring quality curriculum delivery in schools. To ensure high productivity and achievements for teachers, supervision of instruction has to be strengthened. To attain the full goals of English language teaching in schools, it is critical to administer the individual English subject curriculum, while meeting the specific objectives set out in the syllabus of learning institutions (Barrow, 2015; Hişmanoğlu & Hişmanoğlu, 2010). In order to achieve success in supervision, it is important for the supervisors to be involved in the supervisory activities. This is because the capacity of a head of department to give direction and guidance to language teachers is crucial for good professional growth of the teachers (Middlewood & Bush, 2013). HoDs normally have a major role as instructional leaders. They are accountable for learner performance in their departments (Munje et al., 2020) and have a significant

responsibility in the leadership structures of schools (Mpisane, 2015). It is therefore important that they are fully aware of their supervisory mandate.

Supervision of learning in schools is known to be a general leadership function intended to improve the quality of curriculum delivery by teachers (Kayaoglu, 2012; Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). There are also various concepts and connotations associated with supervision, including “teacher evaluation and assessment” (Kayaoglu, 2012; Sullivan & Glanz, 2013), “collaborative process” (Steele, 2017) and “bureaucratic authority” (Barnawi, 2016), among others. In an educational setting, supervision comprises assisting, directing, motivating, and inspiring teachers to enhance their involvement in the teaching-learning process (Marzano et al., 2011). A teacher has potential that needs help, guidance and directing, hence, teacher supervision is a service activity that exists to help teachers do their job effectively.

It is not always the case that they carry out their duties perfectly and without difficulty. In some instances, the Heads of Department (HODs) may face a wide range of challenges in carrying out their roles. These may range from teacher’s absenteeism and late coming and their increased workload. Another challenge may be that they may not be fully aware of their roles. Due to their position as middle managers in schools, heads of departments can significantly influence teacher performance through effective supervision of teachers, and when there are challenges faced, or their duty as HODs is not well executed, then the learning process is affected. This eventually leads to low learner achievement (Mpisane, 2015). The HODs should play a big role in motivating teachers to participate in workshops and offer helpful criticism during staff or subject meetings.

In Kenya, there is the lack of an official supervision model for supervising teachers of English exclusively and a likelihood of English HODs not being fully aware of their supervisory roles, which means that they are not effectively supervising teachers of English and this may lead to low quality curriculum delivery, leading to low learner achievement, which is a problem. Teacher supervision is done through Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool, carried out by institutional heads, most of whom are not teachers of English to competently supervise the teaching of English. The English language Heads of department are thus not fully aware of their role in supervision of instruction. This could partly explain the poor performance in English language by learners in public secondary schools in Kakamega. Furthermore, studies done on HODs supervisory activities have not addressed the lack of supervisory capacity by English HODs in the supervision of teachers of English in secondary schools in Kenya, which is a knowledge gap that this study sought to fill. It is for this reason that this study sought to investigate the roles of the heads of departments in the supervision of English language teachers in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

These study findings that teachers of English in Kenya are not effectively supervised due to HODs’ lack of supervisory capacity, make a contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of English

Language Teaching (ELT) and English Language Teacher Education (ELTE). Since, no known study has been done in Kakamega on the role of the Heads of departments in supervision of English language teaching, these study findings will give an insight on the understanding of the knowledge of the supervisors on their roles. This will help in the creation of awareness to the HODs on their roles in order to improve supervision and generally the performance of English Language in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Furthermore, the study findings have positive implications for practice and policy decision-making, in that, the researcher has developed and recommended a subject-based supervision model, carried out by teachers of English themselves, and anchored on Peer Supervision model principles, to complement the current supervision approach which is administrative and negatively perceived by teachers of English. In this approach, the English HODs play a key role in ensuring effective teacher supervision in their departments. This should inform policy on an effective supervision approach for teachers of English in secondary schools in Kenya.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

An effective English language teacher instructional supervision model, according to the literature, should build trust, and a sense of partnership and collegiality between the supervisor, who is a colleague, and the teacher. The model should also enable teachers acquire pedagogical skills in a friendly, rather than, a hostile environment. Ideally, language teacher supervision is meant to help teachers of English attain their full potential in the manner they teach, plan for instruction, mastery of content, teaching strategies, instructional materials, classroom management, and assessing learner progress, which is important for learner achievement. The literature views instructional supervision as a cooperative undertaking in which, supervisors and teachers are in dialogue aimed at improving instruction and student learning. This leads to a smooth process that has no antagonism between the supervisor and the teacher, and the process is viewed as a colleague critiquing a colleague positively to make him/her improve on his/her professional practice, and both parties have a common goal, which is, improving teacher performance through quality curriculum implementation and delivery, and learner achievement.

Since teachers are the curriculum implementers in schools, it is vital that they fully understand and appreciate how supervision helps them to grow in their professional realm as they participate in developing whichever supervision instrument will be utilized, without imposing it on them. Therefore, the model used for effective supervision of teachers of English must be collaborative, coordinated by HODs having supervisory capacity, and done by teachers of English themselves, who understand the subject content, planning for instruction, instructional materials, pedagogy, and can assess the degree of language acquisition during a lesson. This therefore means that the English HODs should not only possess supervisory capacity, but also be fully aware of their supervisory mandate.

In Kenya, there is the lack of an official supervision model for supervising teachers of English exclusively, where HODs can fully exercise their supervisory role at departmental level. Teacher supervision is done through a common teacher evaluation tool for all subject teachers, known as Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD). This does not enable English HODs to exclusively supervise teachers of English in their departments, leading to HODs not being fully aware of their role in supervision of instruction, which means that instructional supervision of teachers of English is not effectively carried out, and this negatively impacts on quality delivery of the English curriculum in secondary schools in Kenya, which is a problem that this article addresses.

### **1.3 The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore the critical role played by heads of English department in the supervision of teachers of English in public secondary schools in Kenya.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study found out that teachers of English in Kenya are not effectively supervised due to HODs' lack of supervisory capacity, which makes a contribution to the body of knowledge in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) and English Language Teacher Education (ELTE). Since, no known study has been done in Kenya on the role of the Heads of departments in supervision of English language teaching, these study findings will give an insight on the understanding of the knowledge of the supervisors on their roles, which will help in the creation of awareness to the HODs on their roles in order to improve supervision and generally the performance of English Language in public secondary schools in Kenya.

## **2. RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Roles of a Supervisor in the Context of a School**

The Heads of departments usually have a variety of roles in supervision. Shah & Al Harthi (2014) posit that the supervisory duties of HODs include observing teachers informally in the classroom, giving comments, modelling lessons for teachers to observe, ensuring that teachers are employing effective teaching methods, and promoting uniformity amongst teachers in the department. On the other hand, (Napwora, 2017), found out that the HODs' additional managerial duties included training new teachers, overseeing quality control and maintenance, and promoting goodwill among the department's instructors. Jarvis and White (2013) on the other hand believe that heads of departments should have a variety of roles which range from ensuring the welfare of the teachers, organizing and chairing departmental meetings, coming up with a training agenda aimed at helping teachers improve and become more reflective, supervision of teaching, and monitoring and following the gain of content knowledge.

Classroom supervisors assume many roles ranging from leadership, interpretative, cooperative, observational, counselling, analysis, evaluative, clinical, and humanistic (Essiam, 2016). Supervisors are also expected to act as active agents in conflict resolution and problem-solving among teachers. He further asserts that the formation of common understanding across all stakeholders participating in the school system is required for proper supervision; thus, it "cannot be a mechanistically repetitive and routine series of acts." (Essiam, 2016 p.436) and thus it has to be shaped and reshaped constantly through the contribution of the participants.

According to Mecgley (2015), the major function of the supervisor is to assist others to become efficient and effective in executing assigned duties. However, Oyedeji (2008) and Ikegbusi, Eziamaka, and Nonye (2016) see the functions of school supervisors as including, making classroom visits, supervising heads of departments and teachers by checking their scheme of work and lesson notes, checkmating teachers' classroom attendance, checking absenteeism and rewarding hardworking teachers, while punishing indolent ones by assigning administrative duties to them as a means of encouraging them to do the right things.

The supervisor's job is to guide and instruct the teacher, as well as model and assess the teacher's mastery of specific behaviors. Supervisors using a directing approach feel that teaching is a set of specific skills with well-defined standards and competencies that all teachers must master to be successful in their classrooms (C. D. Glickman et al., 2012). According to this approach, the roles of the supervisor are to direct, model, and assess competencies. These researchers observe that supervisors use this approach to present their ideas on what information is to be collected and how it will be collected, direct the teacher on the action plan to be taken, and demonstrate the appropriate teaching methods. The directed supervisor establishes improvement standards based on preliminary baseline data from classroom observations, instructs teachers and determines the most effective method of improving instruction.

This researcher agrees with the views of Essiam, (2016), that a participatory approach to supervision by a supervisor is effective since it draws from the contributions of all the participants. This underscores the view that these participants, therefore, can only be effective if they are teaching the same subject in a department, such as teachers of English, and this is what this study sets out to investigate. Important to note is that a directive supervisor is viewed as judgmental, and may not yield participation among supervisees, hence such a supervisor is likely to demotivate rather than boost teacher morale.

## **2.2. Supervisory Activities (components of supervision)**

There are various components of instructional supervision, as discussed below.

### **2.2.1 Informal visits**

Some researchers have theorized that supervisors who frequently visit classrooms (walkthroughs) make their presence felt in the school (Range, Scherz, Holt, & Young, 2011). Such visits are usually not planned, but to put teachers on the alert to ensure that they (teachers) make good use of instructional time, and chip in support to teachers when necessary. Lack of contact between teachers and instructional supervisors negatively affects instructional practices when supervision is meant to improve instructional practices (Baffour-Awuah, 2011). Empirical studies have also shown that teachers were inspired to enhance their instructional practices as a result of casual visits (Baffour-Awuah, 2011). Teachers believe that their supervisor's frequent visits and calls are important activities, whereas others report that their supervisors are not seen in the classrooms enough. Further, they are energized when supervisors “drop by” the classrooms and interact with the students (Baffour-Awuah, 2011; Ing, 2010). This is seen as a demonstration of supervisors' concern for teachers, students and the program. Hence, informal class visits can increase teacher effectiveness. This researcher agrees with the assertion that informal class visits increase teacher effectiveness, since the teacher will ensure proper planning for class at all times because a supervisor can walk into class unannounced, and this makes teachers professional, and hence effective in their work.

### **2.2.2 Observing Lessons**

Classroom observations are a part of school life, and they continue throughout a teacher's career, whether they are part of an inspection, peer observations, or routine monitoring by senior managers, and as Moradi et al. (2014), posits, observations can provide a positive critical framework for evaluating your practice, improving your skills, and developing your strengths. At worst, they can pile on the stress and dent teachers' confidence. Since new approaches and methods in the distinctive properties of teaching and learning may be unfamiliar to young teachers, supervision could function as a support and training service for teachers through structured phases of making plans, observation, and intensive analysis of actual teaching performances (Moradi et al., 2014).

Teacher observation is a crucial part of supervision, and supervisors may tackle it in a variety of ways. There are numerous advantages to conducting teacher observations. Administrators can learn how teachers deliver instruction, how curriculum, equipment, and unique projects are deployed within and across levels, what difficulties students may face, the benefits and drawbacks of using technology, as well as encouraging pedagogical approaches that can be conveyed with other teachers through observations.

Lesson observation is one major function of supervisors. In almost all models discussed earlier, lesson observation has been seen as a major tool supervisors use to examine teachers' knowledge and their competency in instructional strategies and practices, to provide the necessary assistance

to improve instruction. In such visits, the supervisor must focus on what was agreed upon to be observed during the pre-observation conference (Canh, 2014; Ochieng' Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011; Shah & Harthi, 2014).

This is supposed to guide supervisors to stay on track and be objective in their practices. Empirical research has shown that although some supervisors were able to observe lessons, others were unable to do so (Hoque et al., 2016). Some participants have indicated that their supervisors visited classrooms to supervise instruction but were unable to provide professional support to the teachers (Kayaoglu, 2012; Ochieng' Ong'ondo & Borg, 2011). Other participants, however, claimed that their supervisor monitored classes and took notes simply based on what was going on in the classroom. Participants who got comments said their supervisors conducted classroom monitoring in a way that was encouraging to them. They also reported that supervisors have also been found not to have enough time to observe lessons (Kayaoglu, 2012).

On the concern of some supervisors not being able to provide professional support to the supervisees, this researcher notes that it is true if the supervisor has no expertise in the subject that they are observing, and further argues that it is only a person who understands the subject content, instructional strategies of that subject, and methodology applied in the teaching of that subject that can observe a lesson in that subject effectively. It is a gap which this study aims to fill by investigating the effects of CPS, a subject-based supervision methodology, on the performance of English teachers.

Secondly, (Kayaoglu, 2012), reports that some supervisors did not have time to observe lessons. This is true, especially where, those in administration are the ones that supervise teachers across the subjects in a school, and this is the problem of an administrative model of supervision, because, they get overwhelmed and just give up. In some instances, while some teachers may be observed only once in a term, which is not sufficient, some may complete a term without being observed at all. The CPS model, a subject of investigation in this study, may address this problem, as it involves peers supervising each other at the subject level, and easing the burden of supervision from one person- the principal, the HOD, or the Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), in the Kenyan context.

### **2.2.3 Trust and Respect**

Researchers believe that teachers have confidence and trust in a knowledgeable supervisor and an instructional expert. Supervisors are expected to be knowledgeable in content and teaching strategies to be able to provide assistance and support to teachers. Teachers' trust in the head teacher's ability to assist and support them in their instructional practices is essential in the supervisory process (Canh, 2014; Shah & Harthi, 2014). They suggest that teachers must be able to rely on supervisors for instructional assistance, morale-boosting, and curriculum planning. They also suggest that supervisors should be honest with their teachers and be open to discussions. They

finally propose that supervisors must have a working knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy and, is a “master teacher” (Canh, 2014; Shah & Harthi, 2014).

Similarly, educators (supervisors) must demonstrate evidence that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to make important decisions on what they do as well as on how they do it, hence the need for departmental collaborative supervision (Farhat, 2016; Marzano et al., 2011). Credentials alone do not inspire trust, but rather how they are applied in practice. Furthermore, teachers trust a supervisor with whom they can confide. Teachers will not trust a supervisor who discusses teachers’ performances and practices of instruction with other people, whether openly or surreptitiously. A supervisor’s continued attendance at in-service training helps him/her to be able to provide useful assistance, advice, and support to teachers; and thereby develop the trust that teachers have in him/ her. Knowing alone is not important, but using it judiciously to help teachers grow professionally is the ultimate objective (Apolot et al., 2018; Chen & Cheng, 2013; Chepkuto et al., 2018).

The knowledge espoused above about an effective supervisor relates to this study in several ways. First, the propositions raised by (Canh, 2014; Shah & Harthi, 2014), point to a subject-based supervision model, since it’s only a subject teacher, who is knowledgeable in the subject content, pedagogy, and instructional strategies. This is relevant to this study since it aims to examine the impact of CPS, a subject-based approach of supervision for teachers of English, on enhancing the teaching of English in Kenya. Secondly, colleagues in a department observing each other’s lessons can create confidence and trust in each other, and therefore, open up freely on their instructional challenges, which is expressed in the tenets of CPS, rather than in a senior/junior relationship, where, there is lack of trust. CPS will hopefully fill this gap, and this is why the study is necessary.

#### **2.2.4 Offering Suggestions**

Another supervisory practice that researchers have found to be fruitful is the provision of suggestions to guide instruction (Zepeda, 2016). Suggestions serve as guides to help teachers choose among alternative plans, varied teaching strategies, and classroom management practices. Supervisors make suggestions in such a way as to broaden or enrich teachers thinking and strengths while encouraging creativity and innovation, as well as a supportive work environment (Marzano et al., 2011; Mecgley, 2015). The teachers in the study by (Irungu (2013), reported that successful head teachers (supervisors) offered suggestions to improve learning and teaching, and vary their methods of instruction, as they ep to solve problems. The participants found the head teacher’s suggestions fruitful, and strongly enhanced reflection and informed instructional behavior.

On the contrary, Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) found that principals spent the least amount of time in instructional related activities including coaching teachers, and Range et al. (2011) found that principals were frustrated with supervision as teachers were unwilling to change. This implied that teachers did not incorporate the suggestions they were given to improve their practice.

On the findings by Irungu (2013), this researcher's take is that one can only give a useful suggestion from a subject knowledge viewpoint. Teachers who teach the same subjects as their colleagues are more likely to make helpful advice as compared to a supervisor who is unfamiliar with the subject they are observing. This knowledge gap has necessitated this study on the CPS model for supervising ToE, whose core characteristic is that colleagues supervise each other for effective classroom practice.

On the findings in the study by (Horng, Klasik, and Loeb, 2010), this researcher agrees that principals not only have little time to supervise all teachers across subjects, but the majority of them may also not be competent in supervising subjects they do not teach. This is a gap that this study aimed at determining the use of the CPS model, which is a subject-based supervision model, where, subject teachers supervise each other, under the guidance of the HOD, and this would ease the burden of supervision from the principals.

Secondly, the findings of (Range, et al. 2011), that teachers were not willing to change even after principals offered them suggestions. This researcher's view is that the teachers may not have found those suggestions useful to their profession because the principal may not possess subject content, pedagogy, and strategies for teaching subjects other than what he/she teaches. This gap of supervisors not being competent enough to supervise teachers of subjects they do not teach can be filled by this study by investigating the use of the CPS model, which enables teachers teaching the same subject to supervise and critique each other interactively.

### **2.2.5 Feedback**

A vital task of supervisors is to visit classes and provide feedback to teachers. Teachers might use feedback to reflect on what happened during the teaching-learning process. Al-Wadi (2018) and Lochmiller (2016) believe that feedback should not be a formality, but should serve as a guide for instructional improvement when it is given genuinely. In the same way, feedback (whether formal or informal, written or oral) should concentrate on observations instead of opinions. Lochmiller (2016) theorizes that feedback reflectively informs teacher behavior; and this results in teachers implementing new ideas, trying out a variety of instructional practices, responding to student diversity, planning more carefully and achieving better focus. Teachers in Von Bergen, Bressler, and Campbell (2014) study reported that effective head teachers provided them with positive feedback about observed lessons. They indicated that such feedback was specific; expressed caring, interest and support in a non-judgmental way; and encouraged them to think and re-evaluate their strategies.

### **2.2.8 Modelling Lessons**

Researchers have theorized that lesson demonstration can improve teachers' instructional practices (Marzano et al., 2011; Mecgley, 2015). Supervisors use demonstration lessons to assist teachers individually and in groups. This method is utilized to guide not just relatively inexperienced

teachers, but also veterans. Supervisors may learn strategies from teachers during their classroom observations, and transfer such learning activities to other teachers to try them out in their classrooms. Research studies have shown that supervisors use lesson demonstrations to help teachers to improve their instructional practices (Marzano et al., 2011).

Participants in the (Mwendia, 2018) study in Kirinyaga County in Kenya reported that model teaching lessons and tailor-making solutions for teachers' individual needs were the most effective forms of instructional supervision received. In senior schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, (Edo & David, 2019), found that both teachers and head teachers perceived that teachers' performance was greatly influenced by demonstration as a supervisory practice. This was similar to findings by (Chidi & Victor, 2017) that principals' demonstration practices had a significant relationship with teachers' job performance in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. On the contrary, Nigeria, (Sule, 2013) found that headteachers' supervisory practices did not influence teachers' performance including classroom management, instructional ability and student evaluation.

This researcher opines that, in the above research findings, a demonstration by supervisors can be more effective if it is done by teachers who teach the same subject because they share content knowledge, methodology knowledge, instructional strategies, and common challenges in their classroom practice. This view is confirmed by the contrary findings by (Sule, 2013) above. This knowledge gap is what this study on the CPS model sought to fill, where colleagues in the English department supervise and critique each other collaboratively, coordinated by English heads of department.

### **3. METHODS**

#### **3.1 Study Design**

The study employed mixed methods research design, Convergent Mixed Method Research (CMMR) strategy, to establish the supervisory roles of English heads of department in the supervision of teachers of English in secondary schools in Kenya. Qualitative data, which was used to answer the research question in this article, was collected through an in-depth interview guide, and administered to a sample of 25 English HODs, purposively sampled from 417 Heads of department in all the 417 public secondary schools in Kakamega County. Data were coded and analyzed thematically, using the NVIVO software, and were presented thematically, by way of verbatim quotes as expressed by the participants' responses, and researcher commentaries.

#### **3.2 Study Site**

The study was done in Kakamega county, which was targeted by the investigator on account of it being the second largest county in terms of population (Kenya Census Report, 2019), and also, one of the most populous in terms of the number of public secondary schools in the country, and yet, English language achievement at The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE),

has remained low (Kakamega Panel of Assessment Report, 2019). This made it appropriate for the study because, given its large population in terms of public secondary schools and teachers of English, if an appropriate instructional supervision model, which enables English HODs to take a central role, is ascertained through the study, this would easily impact positively on the teaching effectiveness of teachers of English in other counties in the country, through Regional Conferences, seminars and Workshops.

Secondly, to the researcher's best knowledge, no known such study had ever been carried out in this county before, hence, the necessity to situate the study in the county.

## **4 Study Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Results**

The study sought to assess the current supervisory roles of Heads of English and Library Department in the supervision of English language teachers in public secondary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. To get this information, the researcher asked the question: What are the current roles of Heads of English and Libraries Department in the supervision of teachers of English in public secondary schools in Kenya?

Heads of department teaching English in secondary schools, through an in-depth interview, reported that the roles of Heads of department was majorly administrative; supervision of curriculum implementation, ensuring the smooth running of the department through following upon the teachers' professional records, lesson plans, schemes of work and methods of delivery in teaching, carrying out teacher appraisals, and holding follow-up meetings, as well as consultative meetings, with peers of the department to discuss performance, progress and emerging issues in the department. This is expressed in the following quotes:

#### **a) Supervision of teachers.**

With regard to one of the roles of Heads of departments being supervision of teachers, One of the Heads of department stated that;

*"I ensure that all the classes are catered for, in subject allocation, the preparation of work book, I confirm if the teachers really teach. I follow up with the teachers to ensure that they fill the marks before the deadline as required. I also ensure that the teachers have schemes"- [HOD Secondary School]*

Another stated that;

*"Another role is to ensure the running of the department and uniting the teachers in the department to make sure that they have done their work in time, we have covered the syllabus in time, they have submitted examinations in time, and they have revised the papers. We check whether they*

*have revised with the students and write comments why the class did not score as expected or pass in a particular question; we comment on that’’- [HOD Secondary School]*

And yet another said that;

*“Yes, and they are outlined in my mandate. One, I have to supervise if lessons are being attended to. If you allocate lessons they must be taught. So, it is up to me to ensure that the lessons are attended to. Two, if the teachers in my department have professional documents. Things to do with the schemes, the syllabus, the record or workbook, the progress, report of the students, they must have them.”- [HOD Secondary School]*

### **b) Supervision Follow-ups.**

The Heads of department when interviewed also said that they were involved in making supervision follow-ups;

One of the Heads of English department said that;

*“Yes, we do. When we opened, we already have a meeting and we have laid down strategies for this term. We have set our targets. We have assigned duties and responsibilities for everyone. For example, in my case I was to make schemes for form three. I have made schemes for form three, I have set exams for the first cat and the end term examination. Those meetings are there because if you do not hold those meetings, you will not know who will set which examinations and who will set which schemes.”- [HOD Secondary School]*

This shows that one of the methods employed was having meetings to set up strategies to help the teachers and would be regular so that the objectives were achieved.

And yet another on the same point said that;

*“Yes, sometimes we usually have some impromptu meetings especially maybe when we realize that whatever we had targeted or we had set, we are not seeing anything indicating that we are going to achieve it at the end of the term. So maybe that is half-way the term. When we realize that we must have an impromptu meeting so that we come together so that we readjust whatever we had implemented, so that we change that, so that at the end of the day, we are really assured that whatever we had set, we are going to achieve it’’- [HOD Secondary School]*

This implied that they could have regular meetings just to make sure that everything is running smoothly.

Another Head of department said that;

*“Yes, we do follow-ups, for instance if I observe or supervise you in class then I realize that maybe you had not checked the learners’ book or the learner’s assignment, then I’ll remind you. Maybe in your schemes of work there are columns that you had not filled. At the end of the day, I need to*

*remind you that you need to do this and this. Then I'll give it a timeline that by this time at least you need to have done ABCD.”- [HOD Secondary School]*

Another HOD speaking of meetings and follow-ups said;

*“...Now, on the onset of the term, we normally have the departmental meeting, where we meet, deliberate on what is to be done during that term and then after that, now we go to the implementation stage. And even in the course of the term, that is when the program is actually rolling, if we see maybe there's an issue or whatever, then we normally have, these meetings, you can call it an impromptu meeting to deliberate on an issue that actually is of concern”- [HOD Secondary School]*

Therefore, the study revealed that the major supervisory roles for HODs currently, is administrative i.e., supervision of curriculum implementation at the departmental level, conducting teacher appraisals, and general management of departmental issues. This is formal supervision through the TPAD tool, which is the current supervisory approach, recommended and recognized by the TSC and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). The study also revealed that HODs are not fully sensitized about other key supervisory roles that they should play.

#### **4.2 Discussion**

This study sought to assess the current supervisory role of Heads of the English and Library Department in the supervision of English language teachers in public secondary schools in Kakamega County. The findings were that the major supervisory roles for HODs currently, are administrative i.e., supervision of curriculum implementation at the departmental level, conducting teacher appraisals, and general management of departmental issues. This is formal supervision through the TPAD tool, which is the current supervisory approach, recommended and recognized by the TSC and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST).

These findings are in agreement with the study by (Moradi, et al. 2014), whose study revealed that the major supervisory role of HODs is to supervise curriculum implementation through lesson observations and teacher appraisals.

However, the findings of this study seem to fall short of other HODs' roles as revealed by other scholars. (Cahn, 2014; Bog, 2011; Shah & Harthi, 2014), posit that, HODs' supervisory roles are to carry out supervision of teachers through informal class visits, give feedback to the teachers, model lessons as a way of demonstrating to teachers, ensure that teachers are using appropriate teaching techniques, and foster collegiality among teachers in the department. Furthermore, Napwora (2017), found out that among other supervisory responsibilities of the HODs, were mentoring novice teachers and ensuring quality assurance and maintenance, and fostering positive human relations among teachers in the department.

The results also fall short of a study done by Shah & Al Harthi (2014) which revealed that a Supervisor has a wide range of roles which include; observing teachers informally in the classroom, giving comments, modelling lessons for teachers to observe, ensuring that teachers are employing effective teaching methods, and promoting comity amongst teachers in the department. Also, Mpisane (2015) recommends that HODs should engage parents of students and regularly supervise and monitor classwork. Additionally, they should establish their own procedures and organizational frameworks to keep track of and reduce tardiness and absenteeism in their departments. The HODs should play a big role in motivating teachers to participate in workshops and offer helpful criticism during staff or subject meetings. This clearly has not been fully met by the Heads of department in Kakamega.

The findings are further supported by Mpisane (2015) who stated that the Heads of Department (HODs) may face a wide range of challenges in carrying out their roles. One of the challenges highlighted in the study was lack of awareness on their roles in supervision.

This implies that HODs underperform their supervisory role for lack of adequate knowledge of their full mandate. Thus, teachers in those departments are not being adequately supervised. Consequently, the English curriculum is not being appropriately implemented. The implication is, therefore, low learner achievements, because, literature abounds on the strong relationship between instructional supervision, teacher effectiveness and learner achievement. The researcher, therefore, concludes that English HODs are not carrying out effective supervision of teachers of English in secondary schools in Kenya, because they are not fully sensitized about their roles, and recommends capacity building courses through workshops and seminars on CPS supervisory responsibilities for English language HODs. This should ensure quality curriculum delivery by teachers of English.

### **4.3 Subject-based Model for Peer Evaluation**

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. Conclusion

The major supervisory roles for HODs currently, is administrative i.e., supervision of curriculum implementation at the departmental level, conducting teacher appraisals, and general management of departmental issues. This is formal supervision through the TPAD tool, which is the current supervisory approach, recommended and recognized by the TSC and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). However, the HODs are not carrying out effective supervision of teachers because they are not fully sensitized about their supervisory roles, especially CPS supervisory roles, which is done at departmental level, and by teachers themselves. There is need for English heads of department to be sensitized on their supervisory mandate, to ensure effective supervision of teachers of English in their departments.

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