



Assessment of the Competence of Heads of Schools in Leadership and Vision Implementation towards Teachers' Effective Teaching in Public Secondary Schools in Meru District Council

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Abstract: *The study assessed the competence of heads of schools in leadership and vision implementation towards teachers' effective teaching in public secondary schools in Meru district council. The study employed a mixed research approach alongside explanatory sequential design. Sample size of the study involved 130 including 120 teachers, 5 heads of schools and 5 heads of departments that were drawn from 435 targeted populations. Data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews. The data analysis methods involved descriptive statistics and thematic methods of data analysis. The study found that heads of schools are competent in leadership and vision implementation to foster teachers' effective teaching in secondary schools. Through leadership and vision implementation, heads of schools encourage teachers to engage more fully in teaching practices, help teachers to understand learning opportunities, invest in continuous learning opportunities, encourage teachers to share best practices, resources and strategies to improve instructional methods. These strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills towards effective teaching in secondary schools. The study concluded that heads of schools' competence is very crucial in enhancing effective leadership and vision implementation towards effective teaching in public secondary schools. The study recommended that there should be professional development opportunities for heads of schools that will help them to get new leadership knowledge and skills and enhancing effective supervision of teaching activities in public secondary schools.*

Keywords: *Competence, Heads of Schools, Leadership and Vision Implementation, Teachers' Effective Teaching, Public Secondary Schools*

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1. Introduction

"Heads of School" refers to individuals who hold leadership positions within educational institutions, typically overseeing the administration, academic programs, and overall operation of a school or a specific division within a larger educational system (Mincu, 2022). The role of heads of school in leadership and vision implementation is multifaceted, encompassing instructional guidance, resource management, and fostering a collaborative school culture to drive educational change and improve learner performance

(Dlamini & Dlamini, 2023). Transformational leadership theory posits that leaders can inspire and motivate followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by appealing to their higher ideals and values. For heads of school, this translates into a leadership approach where they articulate a compelling vision for the school's future, communicate high expectations, and provide the necessary support and resources for their staff to excel (Bush, 2011).

Globally, the discourse on educational leadership has shifted from purely managerial roles to instructional and transformational leadership, where heads of schools are seen as catalysts for change and improvement (OECD,

2016). Studies consistently highlighted that strong leadership contributes to a positive school climate, which in turn influences teacher motivation and effectiveness (Mbiti, 2016; Ololube, 2013; Hallinger & Chen, 2015). A meta-analysis of leadership studies found a significant positive correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement, mediated by factors such as teacher commitment and instructional practices (Fullan, 2011). The ability of school leaders to articulate and implement a shared vision is crucial for creating a cohesive and high-performing educational environment (Kouzes & Posner, 2017).

In Europe, particularly in countries like Britain, the role of heads of schools has undergone significant reforms, emphasizing accountability, strategic planning, and instructional leadership (OECD, 2016). The National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England, for example, has historically promoted professional development for school leaders, focusing on their capacity to drive school improvement and enhance teaching quality. Studies have shown that heads who effectively communicate their vision and empower teachers are more likely to see improvements in teaching practices and student outcomes (Fullan, 2011).

In Asia, particularly in China, the educational landscape is characterized by a strong emphasis on academic achievement and centralized educational policies (Huang & Li, 2012). Heads of schools in China play a crucial role in implementing national educational reforms and ensuring high standards of teaching. However, there is a growing recognition of the need for more distributed and transformational leadership approaches to foster innovation and teacher autonomy (Wang & Cheng, 2010). The implementation of a clear school vision, often aligned with national educational goals, is a key responsibility of school heads, guiding teachers in their instructional practices (Huang & Li, 2012).

In Africa, the challenges and opportunities for school leadership are distinct, often influenced by socio-economic factors, resource constraints, and diverse cultural contexts (OECD, 2016). In Nigeria, studies have highlighted the impact of leadership styles on teacher job satisfaction and instructional delivery, with transformational leadership often being associated with positive outcomes (Ololube, 2013). In Kenya, heads of schools have roles to ensure availability of resources, promoting teacher professional development, and ensuring quality education in under-resourced environments (Ngware., Oketch & Ezech, 2011). Similarly, in Tanzania, the effectiveness of heads of schools in implementing educational policies and fostering a conducive learning environment is a recurring theme (Mbiti, 2016). The ability of heads of schools to articulate and implement a vision that resonates with the local community and addresses specific educational needs is critical for improving teaching effectiveness in these regions. Previous study highlighted issues like inconsistent teaching quality, low teacher morale, lack of

alignment with educational goals, or underutilization of teacher potential in Meru district Council (Matemba, 2024), all of which could be linked to how school heads exercise their leadership and implement their vision. Thus, this study investigated the competence of heads of schools in leadership and vision implementation towards teachers' effective teaching in public secondary schools in Meru District Council.

2. Literature Reviews

Strengths of heads of schools in leadership and vision implementation towards teachers' effective teaching have been discussed with different perspectives globally as follows; in developed countries such as USA, Australia, Britain, Spain, New Zealand, Thailand, and Hong Kong heads of schools or principals have given authority to lead and promoting teaching activities in public secondary schools (Indra et al, 2023). However, in India and Latin America, decentralization system to lack any significant improvement in the provision of quality education because of limited leadership and vision implementation skills for heads of schools on provision of quality education (Joseph, 2019).

Similarly, studies conducted in developing countries show that heads of schools are rarely prepared for the duties of leading and vision implementation in public secondary schools. Ugwu et al. (2018) observed that there is lack of leadership training in Sub-Saharan Africa and East Africa. Heads of schools are appointed from teachers because they are good in one way or another, but most of them lack enough leadership skills and knowledge (Haryanto, 2020).

Similarly, Ampofo, et al (2018) studied on the influence of school heads' direct supervision on teacher role performance in senior high schools, central region, Ghana. Slovin's formula, the proportional allocation method, was adopted. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were employed to get a sample of 617 respondents, teachers, class prefects, heads of departments and school heads. The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The study established that school heads allocated very little time for supervision of lesson planning and lesson delivery supervision, which affects teachers' effective teaching activities. Therefore, it was suggested that school heads should have direct supervision of teachers and a reduction in the teaching load of teachers.

Furthermore, Massawe (2014) made a study on the leadership practices at school level in community secondary schools in Tanzania. The study had teachers, heads of schools and academic teachers as participants. The study adopted questionnaire and interview methods to get data from participants. The study showed that heads of schools in secondary schools did not articulate and collaborate with teachers and students in realizing the school goals and mission. Also, it was noted that they did not supervise teaching and learning activities

effectively. Furthermore, as leaders, the heads of schools were gradually losing theory symbolic traits because they have withdrawn from teaching and curriculum related responsibilities. The study suggested that heads of school need close supervision of curriculum implementation in the schools they administer, and design ways and mechanisms for monitoring teachers and students' attendance as well as the fulfillment of their tasks. Also, it is supposed to adopt collaborative structure and leadership styles which provide room for stakeholders to participate in decision making about school wide issues.

3. Methodology

The study area was in Meru district council. Mixed research approach with explanatory sequential research design was employed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. These approaches made sure that enough data was collected and analyzed to give strong evidence over the phenomena studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Purposive sampling technique was adopted to choose teachers, heads of schools and heads of departments who had directly influenced educational practices to ensure that the data collected are pertinent and insightful. Sample size of the study involved 130 including 120 teachers, 5 heads of schools and 5 heads of departments that were drawn from 435 targeted populations in five public secondary schools.

The study employed questionnaires and interview methods of data collection. Open and close-ended questionnaires were adapted. Open ended- and closed ended questions were prepared based on study's objectives. Using questionnaires each teacher received the same set of questions, which minimizes variability and allows for easier comparison and analysis across different respondents (Bryman, 2016). Structured and semi-structured interviews were also employed to get valid data from heads of schools and heads of departments about the topic under investigation. Structured interview guides were prepared, while semi-structured interviews were generated promptly during interviewing. Through interviews it was possible to get

logical information from heads of schools and heads of departments because they have extensive knowledge about educational practices, policies and challenges within their institutions. Hence, their insights provided a comprehensive understanding of how leadership influences teaching effectiveness.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic method. Descriptive statistics were adapted to analyze the quantitative data in form of percentages (%), frequency and mean scores via table. Thematic data analysis method was used to make analysis of qualitative data by analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis methods were employed due to its effectiveness and flexibility for analyzing quantitative and qualitative data.

The validity of the study was ensured through a pilot test instrument in two selected schools, whereby 10 teachers were selected to be participants. A pilot test with a smaller sample was helpful to identify potential issues with wording, clarity, or response options before the main study. The reliability of the study was ensured by establishing clear and consistent procedures for data collection, scoring, and analysis. The researcher also adhered to key ethical principles included respect for persons, beneficence, and justice.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The study thought to understand the competence of heads of schools in leadership and vision implementation towards teachers' effective teaching in secondary schools. Data was collected from teachers through questionnaires and presented in table 1 in a likert scales namely, SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, SD-Strongly Disagree, and D-Disagree. The remark was made by using a mean value, whereby a mean value between 1.00 and 2.4 were considered Disagreed and from 2.5 to 5.00 was considered Agreed. Mean score was used to determine the average score of participants' responses for each item.

Table 1: Strengths of Heads of Schools in Leadership and Vision Implementation towards Teachers' Effective Teaching

Statement	SD		D		A		SA		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Heads of schools encourage us to engage more fully in teaching practices	-	-	1	0.8	86	71.7	33	27.5	3.2583
Heads of school help us to understand learning opportunities in our school	2	1.7	2	1.7	83	69.2	33	27.5	3.2250
Heads of schools encourage us to share best practices, resources and strategies to improve instructional methods	1	0.8	2	1.7	89	74.2	28	23.3	3.2000
Heads of school guide us in curriculum implementation	-	-	1	0.8	75	62.5	44	36.7	3.3583
Supportive innovative teaching practices emphasized by heads of schools in our school	-	-	1	0.8	77	64.2	41	34.2	3.3361
Heads of schools ensure that teachers have necessary teaching facilities	-	-	1	0.8	84	70.0	35	29.2	3.2833
Heads of schools inspects scheme of work and lesson plans often	-	-	2	1.7	82	68.3	36	30.0	3.2833
Heads of schools promote mutual cooperation between teachers and educational stakeholders	1	0.8	-	-	90	75.0	29	24.2	3.2250
Heads of schools provide a roadmap for teachers to follow	2	1.7	3	2.5	87	72.5	28	23.3	3.1750

Teachers' responses in table 1 describe that heads of schools are competent in leadership and vision implementation towards teachers' effective teaching in secondary schools. Data from teachers show that 86(71.7%) agreed, 33(27.5%) strongly agreed and 1(0.8%) which is proportional to 3.2583 mean score disagreed opted that heads of schools encourage teachers to engage more fully in teaching practices. This detail suggests that heads of schools are competent in using encouragement aspect in enforcing leadership and vision towards teachers' effective teaching in public secondary schools. To verify this, head of school A explained that:

We always articulate a clear vision for teaching and learning within our school. This vision aligns with educational standards and reflects the needs of the students. We also set specific goals related to teaching practices. For examples, we have professional development workshops which impart teachers with necessary knowledge and skills on pedagogical approaches (Interview on 27th July 2024)

The results reveal that insertion of clear vision and goals enable heads of schools to improve teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills towards effective teaching in secondary schools.

Data also shows that 83(69.2%) agreed, 33(27.5%) strongly agreed, 2(1.7%) disagreed and 2(1.7%) strongly disagreed which is proportional to 3.2250 mean score opted that heads of school help us to understand learning opportunities in our school. The finding implies that

through leadership and vision implementation heads of schools assisting teachers to get and know various learning opportunities in promoting teachers' effective teaching. Head of school A approved this, as explained that;

"It is our role to shape the educational environment and ensuring that teachers have access to professional development and learning opportunities. This is done through strategic vision-setting, resource facilitation, collaboration encouragement and time allocation. This is a key aspect of leadership and vision implementation within our educational institutions" (Interview on 27th July 2024).

The results reveal that heads of school play a significant role in helping teachers know about and access learning opportunities through strategic vision-setting, resource facilitation, collaboration encouragement and time allocation.

Teachers' response also describes that 89(74.2%) agreed, 28(23.3%) strongly agreed, 1(0.8%) strongly agreed and 2(1.7%) disagreed which is proportional to 3.2000 mean score opted that heads of schools encourage us to share best practices, resources and strategies to improve instructional methods. To verify this, head of school B explained that:

We always act as pivotal in facilitating an environment where teachers feel empowered to share best practices, resources, and instructional strategies. This collaborative culture not only fosters

teaching effectiveness but also contributes significantly to student learning outcomes. (Interview on 27th July 2024)

The results give evidence that heads of schools play a significant role in promoting cooperation among teachers to share best practices, resources and strategies to improve instructional methods.

Teachers' response again shows that 75(62.5%) agreed, 44(36.7%) strongly agreed, and 1(0.8%) disagreed which is proportional to 3.3583 mean score opted that heads of school guide us in curriculum implementation. Meaning that guiding curriculum implementation is an aspect of leadership and vision implementation used by heads of schools towards teachers' effective teaching. To verify this, head of school B explained that;

We always establish clear vision for the school. This vision serves teachers as a guiding framework for curriculum implementation. Also, we ensure that teachers understand the goals and objectives of the curriculum (Interview on 27th July 2024)

The results imply that through leadership and vision implementation heads of schools supporting and guiding teachers on curriculum implementation towards teachers' effective teaching.

Furthermore, teachers' responses in table 4.3 describe that 77(64.2%) agreed, 41(34.2%) strongly agreed, and 1(0.8%) disagreed which is equivalent to 3.3361 mean score opted that supportive innovative teaching practices emphasized by heads of schools in our school. Therefore, supporting innovative teaching practices is another aspect of leadership and vision implementation adopted by heads of schools towards teachers' effective teaching.

Also, 84(70%) agreed, 35(29.2%) strongly agreed, and 1(0.8%) disagreed which is proportional to 3.2833 mean score opted that heads of schools ensure that teachers have necessary teaching facilities. This reveals that ensure that teachers have necessary teaching facilities is an aspect of leadership and vision implementation used by heads of schools in strengthening teachers' effective teaching. Head of school A concurred the findings that

We always have comprehensive planning that aligns resources with educational goals. This involves evaluating existing facilities, understanding teachers' needs, and forecasting future requirements based on curriculum changes. Also, we ensure that adequate funding is allocated for teaching facilities including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and technology resources. (Interview on 27th July 2024)

The results describe that through leadership and vision implementation heads of school ensure that teachers have sufficient teaching facilities in enhancing effective

teaching. Situational Leadership Theory (SLT) by Hersey and Blanchard (1960s) provides a framework for school leaders to foster the availability and effectiveness of teaching facilities for their teachers. Also, understanding teachers' readiness levels and adjusting leadership styles accordingly, heads of school may foster an environment where both resources are optimized and teachers' effectiveness is maximized.

Again, teachers' responses show that 82(68.3%) agreed, 36(30%) strongly agreed, and 2(1.7%) disagreed which is proportional to 3.2833 mean score opted that heads of schools inspect scheme of work and lesson plans often. Meaning that heads of schools have regular inspection of teaching documents like scheme of work and lesson plans to foster effective teaching in public secondary schools. To support this, the head of school C said;

Our school head often inspects teachers' scheme of works and lesson plans to know the accountability of teachers in teaching activities and get feedback on teachers' weakness on preparation of pedagogical strategies. This in turn become an important measure to foster teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills towards effective teaching activities (Interview on 29th July 2024)

The results describe that heads of schools regularly inspect teaching documents such as scheme of works and lesson plans to understand teachers' level of accountability and give feedback in promoting teachers' knowledge and skills towards effective teaching and learning activities.

Data also show that 82(68.3%) agreed, 36(30%) strongly agreed, and 2(1.7%) disagreed which is proportional to 3.2833 mean score opted that heads of schools promote mutual cooperation between teachers and educational stakeholders.

While 87(72.5%) agreed, 28(23.3%) strongly agreed, 3(2.5%) disagreed and 2(1.7%) strongly disagreed which is proportional to 3.1750 mean score opted that Heads of schools provide a roadmap for teachers to follow. This means that heads of schools establish a clear vision and foster a supportive environment that prioritizes student learning and professional growth. The head of department from school D said that;

Heads of school have visible and approachable leadership, coupled with a "no judgment" policy, creates a safe space for teachers to experiment, seek help, and grow without fear of failure (Interview on 29th July 2024)

The results reveal that heads of schools attempt as a roadmap to teachers by collaborating with teachers in decision making and promote conducive working

environment. By doing so, teachers work hard towards successful teaching activities.

4.2 Discussion

The study found that Heads of schools play a crucial role in creating an environment that encourages teachers to engage more fully in their teaching practices and to understand learning opportunities. This involves fostering a culture of open communication, trust, and shared vision within the school. When teachers feel supported and valued, they are more likely to invest deeply in their work and explore innovative pedagogical approaches (Leithwood et al, 2004). Research by Mincu (2022) emphasizes that transformational leaders motivate teachers by articulating an inspiring vision, providing intellectual stimulation, and offering individualized support, all of which contribute to increased engagement and a deeper understanding of student learning needs. Similarly, a study by Chaula (2023) found a significant positive correlation between principal leadership and teacher commitment and efficacy, which are essential for effective teaching. By actively promoting professional dialogue and collaborative inquiry, school leaders help teachers critically reflect on their practices and identify areas for growth and improvement, thereby enhancing their understanding of diverse learning opportunities for students.

The study also found that heads of schools investing in continuous learning opportunities for teachers. This commitment extends beyond mandatory professional development sessions to include personalized learning pathways, mentorship programs, and opportunities for peer-to-peer learning (Wang & Cheng, 2010). Transformational leaders recognize that ongoing professional growth is vital for teachers to adapt to evolving educational landscapes and to implement evidence-based instructional strategies (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Massawe (2014) highlights that effective professional development is sustained, collaborative, and focused on student learning outcomes, requiring significant investment and strategic planning from school leaders. A meta-analysis by Timperley et al. (2007) further supports this, demonstrating that professional development that is intensive, sustained, and linked to teachers' specific needs has a substantial positive impact on teaching practices and student achievement. School heads who prioritize and allocate resources for such initiatives empower teachers to refine their skills, explore new methodologies, and ultimately enhance their instructional effectiveness.

The findings again revealed that heads of schools encourage teachers to share best practices, resources, and strategies. This fosters a collaborative professional learning community where teachers learn from each other, collectively solve problems, and disseminate innovative approaches (Ololube, 2013).

Transformational leaders facilitate this by creating structures and opportunities for collaboration, such as professional learning communities (PLCs), team teaching initiatives, and peer observation programs (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Okendo (2018) argues that PLCs are highly effective in improving teaching and learning by promoting shared inquiry, collective responsibility, and continuous improvement. By actively promoting a culture of sharing, school leaders leverage the collective expertise within their staff, leading to a richer repertoire of instructional methods and more effective curriculum implementation across the school. This collaborative environment not only improves individual teacher performance but also builds collective efficacy within the teaching staff (Wang & Cheng, 2010).

The findings also show that school heads significantly contribute to enhancing curriculum implementation by providing clear guidance, necessary resources, and ongoing support. Effective curriculum implementation requires more than just distributing new materials; it demands a deep understanding of the curriculum's goals, pedagogical approaches, and assessment strategies (Mincu, 2022). Transformational leaders work to ensure that teachers not only understand *what* to teach but also *how* to teach it effectively (Wang & Cheng, 2010). Fullan (2011) emphasizes that successful curriculum implementation is a complex process requiring strong leadership that fosters shared meaning, builds capacity, and sustains momentum. This involves providing professional development specifically tailored to new curriculum initiatives, facilitating collaborative planning sessions, and offering constructive feedback on instructional practices related to the curriculum. By actively monitoring and supporting curriculum implementation, school leaders ensure consistency and quality in teaching and learning experiences for all students (Okendo, 2018).

Finally, the findings revealed that Ensuring that teachers have necessary teaching facilities and regularly inspecting schemes of work and lesson plans are practical yet vital contributions of school heads. Adequate facilities, including well-maintained classrooms, appropriate technology, and sufficient learning materials, directly impact on a teacher's ability to deliver effective instruction (Marzano., Waters., & McNulty, 2005). A lack of resources hinders even the most dedicated teacher. Furthermore, the regular inspection of schemes of work and lesson plans serves as a mechanism for quality assurance and instructional improvement (Hallinger & Chen, 2015). While some might view this as purely supervisory, transformational leaders approach this as an opportunity for constructive feedback and professional dialogue, rather than mere compliance checking (Huang & Li, 2012). Dlamini and Dlamini (2023) highlighted that effective supervision is developmental and aims to improve teaching, not just evaluating it. By reviewing plans, school heads can

identify areas where teachers might need additional support, resources, or professional development, thereby ensuring alignment with curriculum objectives and pedagogical best practices. This proactive approach helps maintain high instructional standards and supports teachers in their ongoing professional growth.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that heads of schools are competent in leadership and vision implementation to foster teachers' effective teaching in secondary schools. Through leadership and vision implementation heads of schools encourage teachers to engage more fully in teaching practices, help teachers to understand learning opportunities, investing in continuous learning opportunities, encourage teachers to share best practices, resources and strategies to improve instructional methods, enhance curriculum implementation, ensure that teachers have necessary teaching facilities, and inspects scheme of work and lesson plans often. These strengthen teachers' knowledge and skills towards effective teaching in secondary schools.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommended the following:

1. Policymakers should establish and fund robust professional development programs specifically designed for school heads. These programs should cover areas such as strategic planning, instructional leadership, change management, and performance evaluation, tailored to the local context of Meru District Council. Furthermore, policymakers should establish clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of school heads, along with measurable performance indicators related to vision implementation and teacher effectiveness, are crucial. Regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms should be in place to ensure accountability.
2. School heads should actively engage in instructional leadership, which involves observing teaching, providing constructive feedback, mentoring teachers, and facilitating professional learning communities. This direct involvement helps align teaching practices with the school's vision.
3. School heads should develop a compelling and shared vision for the school that focuses on student learning and teacher effectiveness. This vision must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders, especially teachers, to foster a sense of shared purpose.

4. Finally, it is important for heads of schools to adapt instructional leadership theory; this theory should emphasize the school head's role as the primary instructional leader, directly influencing teaching and learning processes. Effective instructional leaders focus on curriculum, instruction, and assessment to improve student outcomes.

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